

Varying reports and striking images from last week's spring freeze in Italy.



Above: *Tenuta di Trinoro* burns bucket-sized candles in its vineyards to mitigate frost damage after last week's spring freeze. Images like this have been common in France over the last decade. They are becoming more common in Italy (image by [@enea_barbieri_photo](#)).

Inboxes teemed this morning with press releases from Italian wine-focused PR firms and growers consortia. Each had a different take on the impact of last week's late spring freeze.

At the time of the extreme weather event, budding had begun across most of Italy. When frost occurs at this delicate stage in the vine's cycle, it can arrest the plant's fruit production. If the buds freeze, they won't appear again until the following year. In some cases, growers lost up to 70 percent of their crop. The Thurner firm in Florence, one of the country's premier agencies, issued these stunning photos (above and below) from the Trinoro estate in Tuscany's Val d'Orcia.

They show the bucket-sized candles that vineyard workers traditionally use to warm the plants during extreme cold. Images like these from France have not been uncommon in recent years. For northern and central Italian growers, on the other hand, the now more frequent occurrence of spring frost and efforts

to mitigate the impact mark the second time in the last four years that they have had to face nature's heartless caprice. The last late spring freeze came for them in 2017.



The Consorzio di Tutela Barolo Barbaresco Alba Langhe e Dogliani (the Barolo, Barbaresco, Alba, Langhe, and Dogliani growers association) took a different tack in their dispatch.

“Overall,” wrote the authors of their release, “it appears this early spring frost only affected a few vineyards and did not impact the whole production area — contrarily to what occurred in 2017, when late April frost affected more areas at all altitudes. After a first inspection, we do not believe the vintage will suffer from significant production drop due to recent freezing temperatures.”

They also point out that late-ripening (and late-budding) grape varieties like Nebbiolo were less affected by the extreme weather.

While northern Italian growers have remained mostly silent or have taken a euphemistic approach to the fallout (as above), Tuscan winemakers are reporting significant losses.

The Brunello di Montalcino consortium was among the first last week to issue [a statement](#) about the damage and efforts to contain it.

And earlier this week, [the Col d’Orcia winery in Montalcino reported in a Facebook post](#) that “budding was advanced” at the time of the frost. As a result, “the damage was extensive.”

All of this comes as nearly all of Italy remains in lockdown. With restaurants shuttered and wine tourism on hold, many wineries — especially small family-owned estates — are struggling to stay afloat. The recent extreme weather event is yet another challenge they must face.