

Vintage 2016

Riverina

Good winter rainfall filled the dams and topped up sub soil moisture profile setting up for a perfect start to the 2016 growing season. Budburst was early due to the above average temperatures with most varieties and with the mild conditions no frost was seen to cause any damage.

Mild to warm and dry conditions continued throughout October through to November with good top up rain in November (32mm) and December (40mm). This took the pressure off the irrigation, with ideal conditions for veraison. The warmer conditions continued throughout December and into January. We started our harvest on the 20th and then when we had 15mm of rain on the 23rd of January followed by three wet days from the 27th to 29th of January dropping another 35mm over this period. Warm and hot humid conditions continued for almost a week, just as we were getting ready to pick our early whites. This was bitter sweet as it did cause some botrytis and brown rot outbreaks in these early whites but it did top up soil moisture and set the reds up for ideal ripening conditions. We harvested the whites almost two weeks earlier than we would normally for two reasons. One was to beat the disease outbreaks and two the season was already advanced due to the warmer spring.

The warmer above average conditions prevailed though February, with minimal disease pressure once we had it contained as we now entered the dry spell. Hot dry conditions continued from the early February right through to the end of April. With no rainfall or disease pressure, ripening accelerated quickly with the reds and we were harvesting Shiraz, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon all at the same time when we would normally have good separation in ripening times. The local harvest was completed the earliest I can remember on the 14th of March.

All in all a trying start but a great finish. The decision to pick the whites early was the right one as they are delicately fruity and fresh with good acidity and length. The reds are the stand outs the early pre version conditions and dry later ripening helped to give us rich ripe juicy wines with great length and great depth of colour.

Eden Valley

Eden Valley experienced very different ripening season and conditions this year. The weather was exceptionally dry – we received no rainfall during the vintage period which meant little to no disease pressure and ideal ripening conditions after veraison.

The Sauvignon Blanc was first to be picked on the 19th February and was machine harvested at night. The fruit was fresh and crisp and taken to Mount Adam for crushing, pressing and destemming. It was then trucked to Yenda for fermentation. The Chardonnay was harvested on the 24th of February and also came back to Yenda for fermentation.

The reds managed to hold on until the 17th of March when they were harvested. They were picked at about 14 baume – this is the earliest we have ever picked these reds and the Cabernet is usually slower to ripen than the Shiraz. Due to the lack of rain and warm summer these were picked approximately 4 weeks earlier than usual.

The reds were picked and transported back to Yenda (approximately 8 hour truck ride!) for crushing and fermentation.