

Vintage 2019

The lead up to vintage was perfect – spring weather was cool, mild and dry, with flavours developing steadily and late. We were very excited about the quality of the fruit late in 2018. We experienced some very hot weather after Christmas and vintage was delayed as a result of the slower ripening – it felt like vintages of years past when we started after Australia day in late January!

Unfortunately for the early ripening varieties, we experienced a heatwave that lasted for a record three weeks with temperatures also breaking records. Those vineyards with early ripening whites on drip irrigation with little subsoil moisture suffered the most – as there was no significant rain in January.

30–40% more water was required to hydrate the vines, drip irrigators in the Riverina region with sandy soils were affected the most – some crops lost as much as 50% yield but most were down 20%.

Surprisingly the heat didn't destroy flavours as was expected – the fantastic spring conditions meant that flavour loss was minimal as the foundations were there. Some vineyards experienced sunburn but it was not across the board. Vineyards on clay soil with flood irrigation definitely fared better as they had larger canopies and managed to retain moisture in the soil and also shade the fruit from sunburn. The reds ripened later than normal and as such they fared much better. Shiraz lost volume and weight but the flavours and colour were looking superb, and the fruit continued to ripen rather than shut down with the hot weather. Cabernet with the thicker skins fared much better, harvest was exceedingly late compared to recent years, and again those vineyards with flood irrigation were able to cool down the soil and the vineyard micro climate.

Bunches were much smaller across the board – extraction rates are also down so far – we are at the tail end of vintage with wines still going through primary and malolactic fermentation.

2019 will be remembered as a tough vintage in the riverina with the heatwave conditions. Other regions fared better – especially Padthaway – flavours are looking fantastic. Vineyards in South Australia such as One Tree hill and Eden Valley were also hit with hail, frost and then heat – crops were down approximately 50%, but concentration of flavour is terrific.