

Deep Down V23 Harvest report



We travelled through the 2023 growing season with bated breath, nervously watching countless rain events swirl around New Zealand. Having experienced one of the wettest winters on record, it was no surprise that this weather pattern ran right through spring and into early summer.

Our first hurdle was at flowering, as a cold and wet period preceded this most important growth stage. Not ideal, but we dodged the first punch, and we escaped any major crop reduction. Our bunches set well, producing an even berry set, but with slightly reduced berry numbers per bunch. Even berry size is one of the keys to great wine, providing a consistency of fruit character and acidity in the whites, and an optimal tannin / colour relationship for Pinot Noir. In a season with high humidity, a loose bunch structure is optimal, helping to reduce disease pressure within the bunch as the season draws to a close.

The La Nina pattern continued as the sun struggled to come out over summer and the rain events continued. Next came the cyclones! Cyclone Hale hit the North Island of NZ at the end of January but worse was yet to come as the larger Cyclone Gabrielle arrived in mid-February. These were dramatic events for our country, with widespread flooding, damage and devastation of farms and vineyards in Hawkes Bay and Gisborne. We were incredibly fortunate in Marlborough as the Cyclones grazed our shores with heavy rain but no damaged was taken. It could have been so much worse.

Finally, the sun came out to stay over the critical weeks running up to harvest, and although it wasn't overly hot, the rain disappeared, and the grapes kicked on with their ripening superbly. Despite all the rain and humidity, the grapes were completely disease free, and the berries plumped up nicely. Happily, that was the end of the stress, and the actual harvest was relaxed as we picked pristine fruit across all varieties. Due to the classic cool-climate conditions of this season, the main picking considerations were around the grapes acidity, with little consideration given to the lower sugar levels we were encountering. The final two weeks of the season played out perfectly and we were able to lock in the ideal picking dates, free from any weather related stress.

Reflecting on an eventful season, it's fair to say we're relieved to have made it through, and yet are delighted with the wines we have in tank and barrel. Amazingly, early thoughts are that 2023 looks to be one of the finest we have encountered. There is a beautiful balance and relationship between the fruit ripeness, acidity and texture of all our wines, and we look forward to showing them off to you later in the year.