



**WAKEFIELD**

OF CLARE VALLEY AUSTRALIA

# VINTAGE REPORT

THE VINEYARD UPDATE FROM WAKEFIELD WINES

SEPTEMBER 2010



## Harvest 2010

For the start of the new growing season, June until the end of September 2009, our Clare Valley estate experienced more than 100 mm above average rainfall; primarily due to heavy rainfall in the last week of September. The run-off from these falls was significant enough to see the Wakefield River flow for the first time in 5 years! During this same period the average daily maximum temperature was above average, especially in August, stimulating bud burst and enhancing shoot growth rates for most blocks. Up until this point the outlook for above average yields was promising.

The first half of October 2009 was much cooler than average, with maximum temperatures of only 12 to 16°C, along with four minor frost events (below 1.5°C). Warm conditions returned later in October, and the vines responded with rapid growth. Then, in mid-November, the prospect of a high yielding vintage was seriously damaged when an unprecedented heat-wave occurred. The Clare Valley experienced 13 consecutive days above 30°C, reaching a maximum of 41.6°C on the 19th. This heat-wave coincided with the peak of vine flowering, which proceeded to have a negative effect on berries per bunch at harvest. The heat-wave was finally broken by over 30mm of much needed

rainfall, which slightly reinvigorated the vines enabling them to start growing again. December weather conditions were typical with little rainfall and the odd hot day (i.e. > 35°C). Into the new year 2010, February was warmer than average with no rainfall or heat-waves, and this contributed to favourable sugar and flavour ripening conditions for the fruit.

Harvest commenced on February 3rd 2010 with Gewürztraminer from the 80 Acres block and all white varieties were completed by the 3rd of March. The red harvest began on 17th February 2010 with Shiraz from the Lodden block.

The weather during the start of March was similar to that of February and it was looking to be another early finishing vintage, until we received 35mm of rainfall on March 8th. This wet spell temporarily delayed the harvest of the already ripe fruit. In addition, due to higher levels of water uptake by the grapes on the vine, ripening of the remaining fruit was slowed. Fortunately, berry size this vintage was small and this meant that berry splitting was not an issue.

Harvest on the estate was completed on April 8th when the last of the Cabernet Sauvignon on the St Andrews vineyard was picked.

## Vintage 2010

The total grape intake to the Wakefield winery during vintage 2010 was 6,700 tonne with 2,200 tonne coming in from the estate and the remainder from our grower partners. This was approximately 16% down on our expected forecast. Every variety except Shiraz recorded a shortfall in yield with the largest variances occurring in Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Cabernet Sauvignon. The yields for Chardonnay, Riesling, Merlot and Pinot Noir were also down but not to such an extent. The good news is that invariably when yields are down, quality is up. To craft our wines from the 2010 vintage, we harvested twelve different grape varieties with Shiraz, Cabernet and Chardonnay being the dominant varieties; accounting for 75% of the vintage fruit intake.

Other major varieties harvested in 2010 were Merlot 7%, Pinot Noir 6%, Riesling 3%, and Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Semillon, Viognier, Gewürztraminer and Tempranillo accounted for the remaining 9% of fruit harvested this year.

The majority of the white varieties were processed through the new Jaraman Cellar utilising the extremely gentle French Pera press. We are able to use the Pera to 'whole berry' press all of our Riesling, Chardonnay, Semillon and Pinot Gris. The ability to do this comparatively large scale 'whole berry' pressing is unique to Wakefield Wines and

has resulted in wines that display great elegance; retaining delicate fruit flavours and aromas - even at the more commercial end of our portfolio.

This year we are also trialing some new French oak barrels. We have 100 barriques aptly named 'Seduction' and 'Distinction' from our French cooper Vicard. From AP Johns, a local cooper house who imports French oak, we purchased another 100 barriques named 'Le Bordeaux' and 'Le Burgundy'. These prestige barrels will be employed to barrel ferment and oak mature a selection of our premium St Andrews wines from the 2010 vintage.

All of our white wines have now completed fermentation and we are very happy with the quality, in particular the Rieslings, which is the standout white from the 2010 vintage. Of our red varieties, some are still going through secondary malolactic fermentation at the time of writing but all should be complete by mid September. At this stage, early indications point to an outstanding vintage for the reds with most parcels showing excellent depth of colour, tannins which are ripe and flavour profiles that are quite expressive of the region's distinct terroir. The Shiraz will no doubt be the stand-out red from the 2010 vintage.

Mitchell Taylor

## Weather Data for Season 2009 / 2010

Recorded from Auburn estate weather station

	Dormant		Budburst		Fruit development				Harvest			
	May-09	Jun-09	Jul-09	Aug-09	Sep-09	Oct-09	Nov-09	Dec-09	Jan-10	Feb-10	Mar-10	Apr-10
<b>Monthly Rainfall (mm)</b>	21.2	68.6	89.4	83.4	129.4	43.0	46.0	19.0	16.2	0.0	38.4	36.2
YTD Rainfall (mm)	21.2	89.8	179.2	262.6	392.0	435.0	481.0	500.0	516.2	516.2	554.6	598.2
<b>Av. Daily Max (°C)</b>	16.6	13.8	13.2	15.6	17.2	19.9	30.5	27.5	32.1	32.3	27.2	23.5
Max Temp (°C)	20.4	18.0	18.4	24.3	28.3	31.3	41.6	39.5	41.6	38.9	34.1	30.0
Lowest Maximum (°C)	11.9	11.1	9.4	11.1	10.9	12.2	17.7	17.2	21.1	25.6	18.9	16.3
<b>Av Daily Min (°C)</b>	7.0	6.3	6.2	6.2	6.0	7.2	13.6	11.5	14.1	15.1	12.7	11.2
Min Temp (°C)	-0.4	1.7	0.1	0.2	0.0	0.9	3.6	4.9	5.4	8.0	6.4	2.8
Highest Minimum (°C)	12.9	12.5	10.1	11.0	12.0	15.5	22.4	21.4	24.3	22.3	19.4	16.3
Mean January Temp	23.1											

DRINK RESPONSIBLY

FOR FURTHER DETAILS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR WAKEFIELD AGENT