



WAKEFIELD

CLARE VALLEY

VINTAGE REPORT 2011



HARVEST 2011

Early on, the 2010 growing season was shaping up to be one of our best seasons. Whilst June and July rainfall was below the long term averages, we received better than average rainfall in August and then in September there were extensive falls with the Wakefield River breaching its banks and flooding the surrounding low-land. More rain fell during December, resulting again in localised flooding. During August and September the Estate experienced maximum temperatures that were 2.6°C below average, resulting in budburst being delayed 2-3 weeks. October through to December continued to be mild, with average temperatures remaining around 1°C below average. These mild conditions along with the Estate dams brimming to the edge appeared to be a great bonus for us, as leading into summer months there was an abundance of water. January was warmer than average, however there was no threat of heat stress to the vines. February was warm enough but wet again, so the start of vintage was delayed until the first week of March.

Harvest on our Clare Valley Estate began on the 4th of March 2011 with Gewürztraminer from the 'Old Lands' block. By the 31st of March, all white varieties had been harvested. We began harvesting the first red varieties on the 30th of March with Shiraz from the Eighty Acres block. We picked the last grapes for the 2011 vintage on the 6th of May.

The mild temperatures and wet conditions continued throughout harvest although April was drier and warmer than average, which gave the later ripening varieties a chance to ripen before the change-of season rains, which came in early May.

Whilst we have endured adverse weather conditions such as frost, drought and hail events in the past, not many could have envisaged the widespread disease of grape crops that affected growers not only here in the Clare Valley but in most of the regions around the south eastern parts of Australia. This meant that across the board, decisions were made not to pick affected fruit.

VINTAGE 2011

The total grape intake to the Wakefield winery during vintage 2011 was 3441 tonne with 1439 tonne coming in from the estate and the remainder from our grower partners. This was about 40% down on our expected forecast, mainly due to the widespread incidence of crop disease associated with the extremely unusual vintage conditions. The later ripening red varieties were most affected by the adverse conditions with Shiraz the worst affected. Only good quality, clean fruit came into the winery so subsequently the volume of grapes processed was reduced. The white varieties mostly fared better in the conditions, although Chardonnay volumes were less than expected.

The majority of the white varieties were 'whole berry' pressed using the extremely gentle French Pera press in the new Jaraman Cellar.

In our constant pursuit for quality improvements, this year saw us trialing a new method to improve the preservation of the fruit characters at the first 'port of call' in the winery - the grape receiving bin. The idea was to find a way to 'blanket' the grapes with an inert gas that is heavier than oxygen, thereby reducing oxidation and improving wine colour and aromatic expression. To do this, we employed the use of liquid carbon dioxide. The theory is similar to that adopted by many fine wine bars and restaurants which use special machines to 'float' inert gas on top of the wine after it's opened to keep it fresh. The results of this trial are very encouraging and we intend expanding this practice in vintage 2012.

All of our white wines have now completed fermentation and the unoaked styles are already making their way into the marketplace. Both the Riesling and Pinot Gris look particularly outstanding. Of our red varieties, the Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon look particularly promising based on our early assessment at post vintage tasting. Despite the pessimism surrounding this vintage, and because we only took in fruit that met our high quality standard, we are very happy with the overall quality of the wines. The other side of that coin, of course, is that we simply have less than we would have liked.


Mitchell Taylor

WEATHER DATA FOR SEASON 2010 / 2011

Auburn Vineyard	Dormant			Budburst		Fruit development				Harvest		
	May-10	Jun-10	Jul-10	Aug-10	Sep-10	Oct-10	Nov-10	Dec-10	Jan-11	Feb-11	Mar-11	Apr-11
Monthly Rainfall (mm)	67.0	34.0	28.2	93.4	95.4	60.6	29.6	99.4	9.8	50.8	75.8	11.0
YTD Rainfall (mm)	67.0	101.0	129.2	222.6	318.0	378.6	408.2	507.6	517.4	568.2	644.0	655.0
Av. Daily Max (°C)	18.0	13.5	13.2	12.3	14.5	20.1	23.0	26.2	32.0	29.8	23.7	21.8
Max Temp (°C)	24.7	16.6	16.3	18.0	18.8	27.9	34.1	40.4	42.1	42.1	33.7	29.2
Lowest Maximum (°C)	12.8	9.5	10.2	8.3	10.9	10.8	12.7	15.8	20.4	19.2	15.1	13.5
Av Daily Min (°C)	6.8	4.8	3.6	5.2	5.9	7.2	9.7	12.4	14.8	15.8	12.5	8.5
Min Temp (°C)	0.7	-0.7	-1.0	-0.6	-0.4	1.2	1.6	6.8	6.3	7.5	4.4	2.8
Highest Minimum (°C)	15.2	10.9	8.6	8.1	10.7	13.3	20.6	22.4	24.8	25.9	20.6	14.5
										Mean January Temperature	23.4	