



WAKEFIELD

CLARE VALLEY

VINTAGE REPORT 2012



HARVEST 2012

In the lead up to harvest, the Taylor family estate experienced average amounts of rainfall, with some good soaking of over 35 mm occurring through autumn and winter. The average daily minimum temperature during winter was 1.3°C warmer than average. These relatively warm conditions continued during August stimulating budburst about one week earlier than normal. A number of minor frost events were recorded between late August and late September and one in particular was severe enough to burn the newly formed vine shoots, consequently affecting the fruitfulness of these vines. All told, around 86 hectares of estate vineyard was affected with the most severe damage occurring in blocks of Chardonnay and Shiraz. This combination of frost damage and rainfall levels 50 mm below average for the month of September resulted in reduced overall yields.

Spring started out in a wet, cold and windy fashion with severe wind conditions experienced during flowering most likely a contributor to reduced fruit set and consequentially lower yields. During November the estate received good rainfall and with minimum temperatures above 10°C, this helped boost vine vigour. December continued with ideal conditions for the newly formed hard berries to develop and on Dec 18th there was 35mm of much needed rainfall received which helped promote fruit and shoot development. The New Year started with a minor heatwave before a cool change and a sprinkling of rain in early January which helped reinvigorate the vines. During the last half of January there was a run of 14 straight days with temperature of between 30-38°C, which accelerated grape veraison. Harvest began on Jan 25th with Pinot Noir for sparkling base. The beginning of February was relatively cool, providing ideal conditions for white varieties which allow the development of fine delicate flavours and the retention of natural acids in the fruit. Similar to January, the last half of the month in February was very warm and these conditions helped promote flavour and sugar ripening to a point where all white varieties were harvested before the end of February. Whilst many of the established Shiraz and Merlot blocks also reached the target baume, a cool change on the last day of February produced 33mm of rain which diluted the sugar and acid levels in the fruit, giving more time for the flavours to develop. At the start of March, cool nights and mild days lead to slow ripening; again perfect for the development of optimal flavours. Mid-March the estate received 12mm of rain and this, along with cool temperatures slowed the ripening process further. The last of the Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot were harvested before April 6th (Good Friday) with the last remaining fruit; some young blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon and Carmeneré picked on April 10th to complete harvest for 2012.

VINTAGE 2012

The total grape intake to the Wakefield winery during vintage 2012 was almost 6,000 tonne with 2,800 tonne coming in from the estate and the remainder from grower partners. This was only 5% down on the expected forecast. The vintage was a very positive one in many respects and particularly when compared to the challenges faced during the 2011 vintage. For one, this year Mother Nature delivered perfect conditions for slow, even ripening which allows winemakers space and calm to carry out processing and more importantly, the development of flavours and tannins in the grapes was optimal.

This vintage the new Jaraman cellar really came into its own. All of the white varieties harvested were gently pressed as 'whole berries' utilizing the French Pera press. The ability to do this on a comparatively large scale 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 the portfolio. With the reds, the winemakers were able to utilize the capacity in the new cellar to separate all pressings for separate malolactic fermentation and maturation. Whilst this process takes time and extra effort, it yields great rewards for the winemakers; providing greater control over the level of phenolics in the final red wine blends. Because of the amazing growing season, the resulting fruit had impressive colour imprints and the aromas in the fermenting winery were simply superb.

For vintage 2012, the oak work was focused on three core suppliers; Vicard for Cabernet Sauvignon, AP John for Shiraz and our new and very special cooerage, Louis Latour for Chardonnay. Barrel fermentations were undertaken with great success on the Chardonnays and again on the Shiraz. It is the most labour intensive practice during vintage and the finished wine is destined mainly for the St Andrews range.

All in all, it would be hard to nominate anything negative about vintage 2012. The weather behaved, the grapes ripened beautifully and consequentially there was none of the challenges faced in recent years. In 2012, the investments made by the Taylor family since 2008 are about to be truly realised as the winemakers set about crafting some of the finest wines Wakefield have ever released.


Mitchell Taylor

WEATHER DATA FOR SEASON 2011 / 2012

| | Leaf fall | | Dormancy | | Budburst | | Shoot and Fruit Development | | | Veraison | Harvest | |
|-----------------------|-----------|--------|----------|--------|----------|--------|-----------------------------|--------|--------|----------|---------|--------|
| | Jun-11 | Jul-11 | Aug-11 | Sep-11 | Oct-11 | Nov-11 | Dec-11 | Jan-12 | Feb-12 | Mar-12 | Apr-12 | May-12 |
| Monthly Rainfall (mm) | 51.2 | 69.2 | 75.6 | 20.2 | 53.8 | 48.2 | 44.2 | 13.2 | 19.8 | 43.0 | 16.6 | 39.0 |
| YTD Rainfall (mm) | 105.2 | 174.4 | 250.0 | 270.2 | 324.0 | 372.2 | 416.4 | 429.6 | 449.4 | 492.4 | 509.0 | 548.0 |
| Av. Daily Max (°C) | 19.2 | 19.8 | 19.6 | 19.4 | 20.5 | 26.5 | 26.6 | 31.2 | 28.4 | 25.0 | 23.7 | 16.8 |
| Max Temp (°C) | 24.7 | 27.0 | 26.0 | 30.0 | 31.7 | 35.8 | 38.1 | 40.3 | 38.1 | 33.1 | 33.1 | 27.6 |
| Lowest Maximum (°C) | 12.0 | 11.8 | 11.5 | 12.1 | 12.1 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 20.8 | 19.8 | 16.4 | 13.6 | 8.8 |
| Av Daily Min (°C) | 4.7 | 4.4 | 5.3 | 5.8 | 8.7 | 10.7 | 11.8 | 15.0 | 12.9 | 11.5 | 9.7 | 5.1 |
| Min Temp (°C) | -1.8 | -2.5 | -1.5 | -1.2 | 0.9 | 2.1 | 2.3 | 7.6 | 4.8 | 4.5 | 3.5 | -1.0 |
| Highest Minimum (°C) | 10.5 | 10.6 | 9.8 | 10.9 | 18.1 | 18.1 | 19.0 | 21.4 | 23.1 | 20.0 | 17.8 | 11.1 |

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