



## WAKEFIELD WINES VINTAGE REPORT 2015



### HARVEST 2015

The growing season in the lead up to vintage 2015 saw slightly higher than average amounts of rainfall, around 14% above the long term average. During the vine's dormancy period over winter, the average temperatures were in line with the long term averages, although minimum temperatures were marginally higher. After 10mm of rainfall at the beginning of August 1st, only 6.6mm fell during the remainder of the month making it the driest ever August recorded at the estate. These conditions were conducive to frost and there were 14 events recorded. The first evidence of budburst appeared in the last week of August which is relatively normal. Rainfall for spring was well below average, with four minor and three major frost events recorded during this time; the last and most severe occurred in mid-October. Approximately 180 ha of vines were affected including Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Pinot Gris and Viognier. Not only was the spring weather extremely dry, it was also warm and windy. These conditions led to higher evapotranspiration (water loss), and despite our significant irrigation effort during October and November, still had a detrimental impact on flowering with resultant bunch numbers down around 20 - 25% on average. December and January were relatively mild, with 55mm of rain falling during the second week of January. The timing of this rainfall was excellent, as veraison had not yet started, hence we found very little splitting. The moisture was a welcome relief after such a dry spring, with the white varieties on the estate responding well for both yield and quality. Veraison followed soon after, approximately two weeks ahead of average due to the overall dry growing season.

Vintage intake commenced on the 20th of January with Pinot Noir harvested early for sparkling wine base. The harvesting of fruit from the estate commenced on the 3rd of February when Semillon was picked, quickly followed by Chardonnay, Riesling and Pinot Gris. February was a hot month, with the average daily maximum temperature 3.0°C above long term average, although no heatwaves as such. The conditions caused rapid sugar accumulation, especially for Shiraz. The white varieties were harvested at night as quickly as possible during this period, which maintained yields and resulted in excellent fruit quality. The last white variety to come into the winery was the Sauvignon Blanc from the Adelaide Hills which was harvested in the last week of February. The first of the still red wine varieties to be picked was Tempranillo, which was harvested on the 11th February. This was quickly followed by Shiraz. March was significantly cooler, however the dry conditions continued, meaning that harvest progressed uninhibited through to completion with the last red variety, Cabernet Sauvignon picked on the 1st of April.

### VINTAGE 2015

The total grape intake to the Wakefield winery during vintage 2015 was just over 9,000 tonne with almost 20% coming in from the estate and the remainder from grower partners. The warm weather in February hastened ripening in some varieties which meant the winery had to gear up pretty quickly to cope. It's exactly in situations like these that the enhanced processing and storage capacity of the winery on the Taylor family estate comes into its own and harvesting can continue unimpeded as the winemakers desire. In the last week of February the cellars team managed to cope with a peak of just over 400 tonnes in one day. Far from complaining though, the team were excited as usual to be in the thick of things. Another source of excitement was the delivery of not one but two new vessels for the winemakers to experiment with. The first, a stainless steel egg-shaped fermenter caused a great deal of interest, both at the winery and in the news as it was a prototype - the only one of its kind in the world. The inventor had asked our winemaking team to give it a trial run and report back on its usefulness. Some small parcels of Chardonnay and Pinot Gris were exposed to this new technology with the vessel contributing to enhanced mouth-filling texture in the wines - a most desirable result indeed. Later, the winemakers had yet another delivery of new equipment; the aptly named Oak Experience - a large format oak vat (2100 litres) crafted from 50mm fine-grained French oak staves. The vessel came complete with an 'in place' submersible header board which served to completely 'drown' the cap, ensuring maximum colour and tannin extraction from the red ferments whilst protecting the primary fruit characters. In addition, the wine can be left to soak on skins for extended periods. The Cabernet Sauvignon that was fermented in the vessel during vintage was left in it for 10 weeks!

Now with the post vintage assessments of both the white and red wines from 2015 completed, the winemakers have reported encouraging results. Of the whites, the Chardonnay and Riesling look particularly stunning with reports of 'very good' also being applied to Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc. We counted ourselves lucky to escape any major smoke taint issues arising from the Stanley Flat fires with fruit sourced from the Adelaide Hills in 2015. Of the reds, the reports were good overall but the standout was Shiraz with reports of extraordinary fruit flavour concentration in this variety.

Mitchell Taylor

### WEATHER DATA FOR SEASON 2015 / 2015

	May-14	Jun-14	Jul-14	Aug-14	Sep-14	Oct-14	Nov-14	Dec-14	Jan-15	Feb-15	Mar-15	Apr-15
Monthly Rainfall (mm)	50.2	83.8	68.6	16.8	28.0	6.8	12.8	8.6	62.6	2.0	0.8	67.6
YTD Rainfall (mm)	50.2	134.0	202.6	219.4	247.4	254.2	267.0	275.6	338.2	340.2	341.0	408.6
Av. Daily Max (°C)	18.4	13.7	12.8	14.8	18.5	25.2	27.0	27.2	27.8	32.1	25.3	19.2
Max Temp (°C)	23.8	16.6	16.8	22.6	28.6	36.0	37.2	35.5	41.0	39.6	36.0	31.0
Lowest Maximum (°C)	10.0	8.1	9.0	9.3	12.1	13.6	16.4	20.0	16.8	21.4	16.4	12.8
Days over 35°C	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	1	5	12	1	0
Av Daily Min (°C)	8.6	6.5	5.2	2.2	6.0	8.1	10.8	11.0	14.1	14.4	11.2	7.9
Min Temp (°C)	1.6	1.6	-1.5	-2.2	0.0	-1.0	2.8	5.6	8.1	8.3	5.9	3.1
Highest Minimum (°C)	12.6	11.8	10.9	7.6	13.6	18.1	22.3	19.0	22.1	23.8	17.6	13.6
Days below 0°C	0	0	3	8	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0