

WAIPARA HILLS



2011 Vintage

2011 has been one of those harvests that seemed really long, but when looking back you realise that it wasn't as long as many. There have been plenty of weather concerns and the different varieties and clones have performed differently as a result of these.

The season started off early, with stable and unexpectedly warm temperatures in Spring waking the vines about two weeks earlier than normal. The frost period didn't affect things too badly either. The vines went into the growing season in good condition. The crops that set weren't as heavy as those we saw in 2008, but were still very generous considering what the vines could realistically carry through to ripeness. The vineyard managers started a serious programme of crop adjustment to bring those varieties that we had concerns about into line.

The early growth meant we anticipated an early to mid March start for harvest, but cooler weather and rain in February delayed this. Our first fruit in the winery this year was the Central Otago Pinot Noir on the 25th March. The Waipara Valley Sauvignon Blanc came in soon after, approx a week later than normal.

The variety that really stood out this season was Waipara Valley Pinot Gris. I've always thought that it liked the longer "hang-time" season as I call it, and this year really re-enforced this opinion. The Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc also showed some lovely flavours and good texture and the Waipara Valley Chardonnay is looking fresh and vibrant. The 10-5 clone of Pinot Noir had a great year, developing depth and concentration that has rarely been seen in other years. The Dijon and Davis clones found this season a lot more difficult, although they're looking nice and vibrant now they're in tank.

Simon McGeorge, Winemaker