

WAIPARA HILLS



2014 Vintage

Every year when I come to describing how the past vintage has gone I inadvertently end up using quite similar words, like “challenging”, “stressful” and “rewarding” and I guess this is due to the nature of wine growing, which is so dependent on the weather and the “ups and downs” of the season. This season has been no exception in that way and yet has taken things further than ever before in certain ways.

We started the season without too many surprises with budburst about the usual time, followed by a few frosts but nothing unusual and nothing that couldn't be managed. The flowering was however not so good and the crops that we went into the season with were estimated to be 15-20% down on normal. This isn't the end of the world as it meant that considerably less shoot and fruit thinning was required to get a balanced crop. Then the Summer arrived, or didn't arrive as the case may be. I don't have the stats, but it felt like one of the coolest Summers here for quite some time and while it didn't rain significantly more than usual, the cooler temps really delayed the ripening of the fruit.

By mid-March, when our Harvest Crew was starting to arrive, we were still a long way from looking to harvest anything and with occasional showers coming through we were starting to get nervous. However the Autumn settled in, the warmer weather did finally arrive and eventually (about three weeks late) the first fruit was harvested in great condition. From a late start the harvesting picked up quickly after that and we ended up having one of the most condensed harvest periods in recent memory, which made for a busy time.

The cooler season overall has produced wines with higher levels of Malic acid than normal, which means crisper acidity and in some cases more structured wines. The Riesling has lovely fruit depth, crisp acidity balanced with a generous mid palate. The Pinot Gris is really quite opulent and lifted already, which is surprising given its age. The Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough shows lovely vibrancy and depth. The Pinot Noirs all look bright and fruity yet with some decent structure and length, even though a number of them have yet to finish MLF. It's hugely satisfying to see the wines looking as good as they are after what was quite a stressful and worrying harvest season.

Simon McGeorge, Winemaker