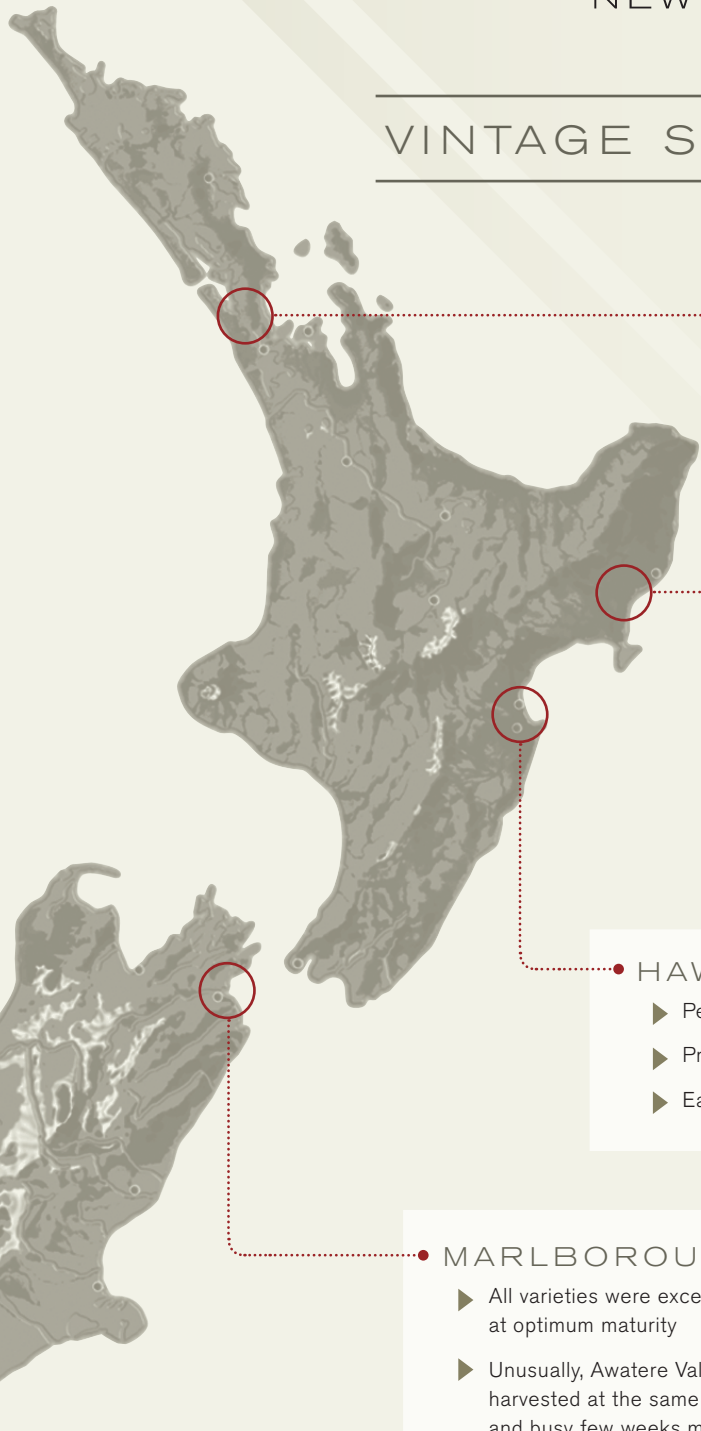




VILLA MARIA

NEW ZEALAND

VINTAGE SUMMARY 2013



AUCKLAND

- ▶ Exceptionally warm and dry season meant harvest was slightly earlier than previous years
- ▶ Very good quality across all varieties

GISBORNE

- ▶ A cool start to the growing season created naturally low yields for most varieties
- ▶ Harvest took place when grapes were at physiological ripeness rather than due to weather pressure
- ▶ Chardonnay and Pinot Gris stand out for the excellent fruit and naturally lower sugar levels

HAWKES BAY

- ▶ Perfect grape growing conditions across all varieties
- ▶ Pristine fruit at harvest
- ▶ Early days but Merlot is shaping up to be a standout

MARLBOROUGH

- ▶ All varieties were exceptional and able to be picked at optimum maturity
- ▶ Unusually, Awatere Valley and Wairau Valley were harvested at the same time making for a very condensed and busy few weeks mid-April
- ▶ Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Chardonnay are early highlights



VINTAGE SUMMARY 2013



AUCKLAND

The harvest commenced approximately one week earlier than in previous years.

With an extremely dry season, the harvesting was fast with clean fruit and the total tonnage was reduced compared to previous years. However the quality was excellent as there was no botrytis or slip skin at harvest. The Chardonnay volume was slightly higher than previous years and the quality was great. The overall Gewürztraminer volume was down due to poor fruit set on some blocks, however its quality was excellent. The organic Verdelho and Pinot Noir quality was excellent.



GISBORNE

It was a cool start with some late frosts and cool flowering impacting on the crop loads of some Chardonnay, Gewürztraminer and Viognier blocks. Dry warm weather then continued from December right through until harvest. It was great to be harvesting when the grapes were at their optimum ripeness.

Chardonnay was a variety that was more affected by the cold spring nights and near frosts and canopies and yields were moderated as a result. Pinot Gris was amazing and the wine already looks great. Viognier was a variety that was quite early this season and flavour and sugars accumulated well. Arneis was slow to ripen but also developed great flavours. Merlot and Muscat performed above expectation.



HAWKES BAY

Vintage in Hawkes Bay is always an interesting time, particularly as we grow such a diverse range of grapes from earlier ripening whites through to Cabernet Sauvignon. The 2013 vintage goes down in history as being remarkable for the perfect grape growing conditions and all varieties looked and tasted fantastic on the vine at harvest. We have never seen everything look so pristine and the flavours were amazing. Tasting through the vineyards, the flavours were so pure and clean that the differences in flavours between soil types and even different clones of the same variety were very distinct. It is early to be making calls around the best variety for the vintage, but Merlot was a real standout and will likely become a benchmark for the variety.



MARLBOROUGH

The Marlborough growing season was characterised by dry conditions and although flowering conditions were favourable, yields were naturally limited by the lower bunch numbers per vine as a result of the previous cool vintage. Fine dry weather meant that all varieties produced exceptional fruit that was able to be picked at optimum maturity. The Awatere Valley ripened quite early this year due to lower yields, coming in at the same time as the larger Wairau Valley crops resulting in a very busy few weeks in the middle of April getting all the fruit into the winery. The best variety of the season is a tricky one; Sauvignon Blanc is always going to be very strong given the great season and our Pinot Noirs are starting to look promising. The early highlight is the Chardonnay with excellent concentration and flavour.



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