

# 2015

Vintage Report



  
ANNO. 1695  
**KLEINE ZALZE**  
STELLENBOSCH

Comparable to the previous year, the 2015 growing season was also preceded by a wet winter. In fact, for the period May to August it was the wettest in half a century. From September however, the proverbial tap was turned off with only 60mm of rain until the end of March, thus making it actually one of the driest growing seasons on record!

With the early spring, bud break was two to three weeks early in our vineyards and with good soil moisture from a wet winter, the vines were growing well. Along with the strong growth, canopy management was of particular importance, and multiple passes were made to carry out suckering (removal of unwanted shoots), shoot postioning and leaf removal. Even with the relatively vigorous growth, the vineyards were very healthy and disease pressure was low owing to the dry and windy conditions experienced during the run up to harvest. The crop levels returned to normal levels (after a big 2014 crop) for most cultivars, with Cabernet markedly down after some wind during its flowering period. The dry temperatures were the most constant and moderate that we have experienced in our area, which led to the vineyards ripening very evenly and falling into a natural balance without manipulation. Consequently harvest was very early this year and with some blocks, we were a full four weeks earlier than previous seasons! We also had some very low night-time temperatures, which meant a high diurnal temperature fluctuation (the difference between day and night time temperatures). This resulted in high natural acidities and good pH levels which made it easier to make fresh and balanced wines.

Due to the even ripening the harvest proceeded at a good pace. With the very healthy and concentrated fruit, we focused on making sure that the best balance possible was achieved. We were careful not to over-work the fruit as we really wanted to highlight the quality of the vintage.

The whites are showing some amazing balance of fruit density and minerality that is beautifully complemented by the fresh, natural acidities of the vintage. The reds too are showing positively in the early stages – they have wonderful concentration and structure, while at the same time have some of the most elegant tannin profiles ever seen. We are very excited to observe how these wines develop.

Overall this was a very strong vintage, and we hope it may even evolve into one of the great ones... for that, only



**HATCH MANSFIELD** 

Hatch Mansfield Agencies Limited | New Bank House | 1 Brockenhurst Road | Ascot | Berkshire SL5 9DJ

Telephone 01344 871800 | E-mail [info@hatch.co.uk](mailto:info@hatch.co.uk) | [www.hatchmansfield.com](http://www.hatchmansfield.com)

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