

2018

Vintage Report



LEFTFIELD

The Leftfield wines became part of the Te Awa Collection in 2006 with the release of an un-oaked style of Chardonnay grown on the left-hand side of the vineyard and released under the Leftfield brand which has grown and evolved into the range of wines we know and love today.

The last 25 years has been a dynamic time in the New Zealand wine industry and the level of experience and knowledge of those who work in it grows with every passing year. Much of the learnings of the last 25 years are being put into practice as we remove old vines of less suitable varieties and clone and rootstock mixes in preparation for replanting our valuable vineyard land with vines that are a better match for the climate and soil. One highlight for me personally has been seeing 25% of our Estate managed Organically for the first time with a short term goal of the Estate being 100% Certified Organic in the near future.

Spring is always a great time of year as the previous vintage wines have normally been put to bed, either in bottle or barrel, and the warmer days herald the start of a new season and new hope for a good vintage to follow. The 2017 spring in our home region of Hawkes Bay was warm and dry and resulted in a short flowering and excellent fruit set. By Christmas, the region was dry but well set up for the season. Similar conditions existed in our satellite regions, Gisborne, Nelson, and Marlborough. The summer was a warm one, with many hot days helping the fruit attain physiological ripeness.

As the critical months of February and March rolled around, we were once again faced with dodging significant rainfall events as the abnormally warm ocean temperatures of the Pacific encouraged sub-tropical storms to make their way south. These rain events always throw a spanner in the works around vintage when it comes time to make picking decisions, however meticulous vineyard management resulted in good clean fruit being harvested across all of our different regions. The grapes that were harvested reflect the excellent summer we had.

At the time of writing (November), it is the aromatic wines we make that give us the first indication of the quality of the vintage and in 2018 the Albariño, Sauvignon Blanc, - and Rosé, are all showing exceptional quality and I think they are the best set of these wines we have produced.

The Albariño from Gisborne showed once again how resilient and flavoursome it is with the grapes coming in at full ripeness and in pristine condition. 2018 was the first harvest of some new vineyards we have planted in Gisborne to help meet the demand for this very popular wine.

Our Sauvignon Blanc from Nelson survived adverse weather in February remarkably well and the resulting wine is intensely flavoured, dry and textural. The 2018 is showing great promise.

Richard Painter
Left Field Winemaker

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