

# 2018

## Vintage Report



EST. 1905  
ANTHONY JOSEPH  
**VIDAL**  
of HAWKES BAY

2018 was a memorable vintage for Vidal Estate. Seasonal challenges and rewards arose but that is not unusual. This year though was the end of an era and the start of new beginnings.

Vidal Estate was established in 1905 at our historic cellars in Hastings but as we grew, so too did Hastings and today the once rural winery location is nestled in the heart of residential suburbia. Limitations on space and restricted operating times proved to be challenging around harvest and ultimately forced our hand to consider relocating. It's exciting to report that we have just completed our first vintage at our new winery, now nestled in the heart of the Gimblett Gravels, one of the great vineyard sub-regions of the world.

These are exciting times, and while it's been immensely satisfying to ferment and age our wines in our historic cellars in Hastings, there's no denying there have been some challenges. Being closer to our vineyards and working within a winery designed for quality will without a doubt further push us into the premium market.

And if 2018, our inaugural vintage is anything to go by then we're well on the way and the future is bright! In the era of less is more one of the most exciting things about our new winery is that it allows us to do less, simply acting as a gentle intermediate stage from vineyard to bottle. As each season passes we seem to be intervening less and less, adding less, taking away less and generally allowing the wines to express the vineyards and the season. We are even more entrenched in our classical approach and feel comfortable with our minimalist/ natural progression. Ironically, our new "place" takes us closer to this path.

As usual, vineyard site and seasonal conditions have the most significant impact on our wines at Vidal Estate, leaving an indelible imprint and ultimately determining the quality of the final wine. Here are a few simple facts that have contributed to the quality of our 2018 Hawke's Bay wines.

- A frost-free spring leading to good yields and a healthy start for the vines.
- The 2017-2018 growing season was the second warmest on record for the period 1990-2018 with six of the eight months recording above average temperatures with the other two recording average temperatures.
- Rainfall for the season was below the long-term average with some rain events around harvest leading to an early harvest for the early ripening varieties.

In summary the 2017/2018 growing season was one of the warmest on record at 1502 growing degree days. While rainfall for season was lower than the long-term average there were some rainfall pressures early harvest necessitating early picking decisions to retain grape integrity. 2018 was yet another year where we saw good flavor ripeness at low sugar and good acid balance. I can't help but think our desire to control yields and not over crop is contributing to this. Initial concern of a rain event early March close to harvesting some of our Chardonnay blocks was unfounded and in fact we have in barrel some of the strongest Chardonnays we have ever produced.

Our reds still have some way to go during their maturation period but early indications in barrel are that we will have some exciting Gimblett Gravels reds to release. Our Cabernet Sauvignon batches are looking particularly strong showing depth, finesse and robed in fine tannins and our Syrah's showing heightened fragrance, finesse and that endearing quality of refreshment that we often see in our Hawke's Bay examples.

As usual time will tell and it's too early to make strong judgement calls but at this point of the wine's development the foundations look truly promising for some great wines ahead.

Hugh Crichton, Vidal Winemaker

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