

2019

Vintage Report



EST. 1905
ANTHONY JOSEPH
VIDAL
of HAWKES BAY

There is no question that 2019 vintage reds and whites have the potential to be the greatest wines produced at Vidal Estate over our 114 years of production. I say potential because there's still maturation ahead, over which time the wines will evolve, but even considering their youthful energy and early rawness - the wines are exceptional.

I mentioned last year that we continue to progress down the path of less is more, with the aim to have our winemaking act as a gentle intermediate stage between vineyard and bottle. Some vintages allow you to do this more than others - adding less, taking away less and generally allowing the wines to express the vines and the season. 2019 exemplified this approach. Fruit across our varietal spectrum was nothing short of outstanding allowing us to pick purely on flavour, acidity and balance. Our classical approach and minimalist, natural progression continues.

As is the case every year, vineyard site and seasonal conditions have the most significant impact on our wines at Vidal Estate, leaving an indelible imprint, ultimately determining the quality of the final wine. I've outlined a few simple seasonal facts that have contributed to the quality of this incredible

2019 Hawkes Bay vintage:

A frost free spring leading to a healthy start for the vines growing season. A relatively cool and wet flowering which reduced yields and created open bunch architecture reducing the risk disease pressure later in the season.

In terms of 'growing degree days' (GDD) the 2018-2019 season was well above the long term average with only two years surpassing it in the last ten seasons.

A warm and dry harvest period – the most critical period allowing the harvest of fruit in disease free condition at a time of optimal flavour, balance and structural ripeness.

An extended period of water stress for the vines from January through to harvest resulting in the vines focusing energy on ripening fruit as opposed to vegetative growth.

Small berry size resulting in outstanding flavour concentration.

In summary the 2018/2019 growing season was warm at 1,540 GDD and well above the long term average. This combined with relatively low rainfall, particularly over the key harvest period led to the harvest of ripe, disease free fruit. The recent trend of good flavor ripeness at low sugar and good acid balance continues, resulting in balanced alcohols in part allowing the wines to express fragrance.

I can't help but think our desire to control yields and not over crop is contributing to this. The Chardonnays have completed their natural fermentation and show lovely concentration and complexity with freshness of natural acidity.

Our reds have some way to go during their maturation period with the last press being pressed off on the 16th of April following long post ferment maceration periods. Across the board the Cabernet Sauvignons, Merlots and Syrah's are outstanding – all showing intense fruit concentration, lovely evolved and ripe tannin structure but not within a "heavy" framework. Our Syrah's in particular this year are showing lovely perfume and heightened fragrance with that endearing quality of freshness that we often see in good Hawke's Bay examples.

HATCH MANSFIELD 

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