

2019

Vintage Report



VILLA MARIA
NEW ZEALAND

As the dust settles on the 2019 vintage in New Zealand our Winemaking team can begin to pass judgement on the quality of the wines produced, and it's quickly becoming apparent that 2019 will go down in the history books as one of our greatest ever harvests!

Harvest commenced nationally on the 21st February in the Gisborne region and was complete on the 18th April with the last of the Hawkes Bay reds. This is a fairly typical spread however following on from an exceptionally warm, dry summer the majority of varieties across our key regions were harvested slightly earlier than usual and the overall harvest was well spread, the vast majority of fruit was harvested when ready under clear blue skies with no pressure from the weather, with incredible flavours and in pristine condition!

In Hawkes Bay and Gisborne the highlights are numerous. Rare to see are harvests which are considered equally as good for whites and reds alike, but that was the case in 2019. Beautiful Chardonnay's now rest in barrel, with intensely aromatic and flavorsome Pinot Gris, Rose and Albarino wines also showing great promise. In a year with such high quality fruit in abundance, Winemakers were in a position of increasing the ratio of hand-picking and whole bunch pressing, followed by natural/wild fermentation to yield the best results. Arguably the highlight of Hawkes Bay was the quality of the Merlot, which according to Nick Picone Chief Winemaker, is potentially the greatest he has seen across the region in 23 vintages! Exceptional Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon wines are also on the cards, the hallmark of the reds is their intensely deep colour, ripe tannin and intense fragrance. Excitingly, all our Hawkes Bay brands will be well placed to make their full suite of high-end Reserve and Icon level wines across the varietal spectrum!

Villa Maria Winemakers in Marlborough get to enjoy a beautiful autumn as an early harvest season draws to a close. While the vineyards change colour the team can reflect on a successful season that can only be described as outstanding.

Due to a cold and drawn out flowering in spring fruit set was lower than average compared to previous vintages. As a result we saw excellent quality fruit; balanced crop levels ensured the development of open bunches with small and flavourful berries. Once the New Year rolled around Marlborough experienced a summer of the century. Blenheim's signature high sunshine hours coupled with a dry season saw crops ripen early without any disease pressure. Long and hot days with moderately cool nights provided the perfect environment to ensure physical and flavour ripeness.



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