

2020

Vintage Report



LEFTFIELD

12 May 2020

When you work alongside nature to craft a product such as wine, every vintage is different and memorable in its own way. 2020 however, is one vintage that will truly live long in the memory predominantly for the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic hitting New Zealand right about when our grapes were ready to harvest.

Whilst the country went into lockdown on March 25, the New Zealand wine industry was incredibly privileged to be classed by the government as an essential service and allowed to continue the harvest. This was extremely fortunate on many levels however most importantly for us winemaking folk, the quality of the vintage was proving to be one for the ages with outstanding fruit quality and ongoing settled weather across our diverse wine regions.

At the Leftfield home-base in Hawkes Bay, we survived the usual fruit salad of spring weather conditions which this season included some heavy rain and even the odd hail storm to then enter one of the driest summer and autumn periods in recent memory. This culminated in a very early start to the vintage with superb Pinot gris, Chardonnay and Rosé grapes being harvested in pristine condition and tucked away safely in the winery before the words 'lockdown' or 'bubble' had entered the everyday lexicon. The long dry summer also meant excellent quality for the Hawkes Bay red wines and the Leftfield Malbec is no exception with an inky black colour to go along with its trademark dark fruits and spice.

Gisborne was blessed with the same warm east coast summer and early harvest that Hawkes Bay basked in, and the Leftfield Albariño vineyards carried healthy crops through to harvest with intense flavours and the trademark acidity and vibrancy which gives this wine its freshness and drinkability.

In a first for the Leftfield brand, we harvested some new parcels of Sauvignon blanc from select vineyard sites in Hawkes Bay and Marlborough which will be blended with our Nelson Sauvignon blanc to create a New Zealand appellation blend. By blending the riper fruit flavours of the North Island with the crisp green flavours of the top of the South, we will be able to deliver the diverse flavours of New Zealand Sauvignon blanc in a glass whilst challenging some of the traditional notions of how wine should be made.

The other exciting development to share with you is that we are currently focussed on all Leftfield wines becoming suitable for Vegan diets. This will be rolled out from the 2020 vintage onwards. I have always had a soft spot for the traditional method of cracking free-range organic eggs, separating the whites and using them to fine our Red wines. However, the tribe has spoken, and we have listened and will no longer use any animal derived fining products in the Leftfield wines.

As I write this, we have heard that some of the isolation restrictions in New Zealand will be eased this week and we can reconnect with family and friends. Whilst a return to normal in the world is somewhat off at present, connecting with people over food and wine is a big part of normal for me and I look forward to having the opportunity to do that this weekend and reflect on both the trials and the triumphs of a truly memorable vintage.

Richard Painter
Left Field Winemaker

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