

2020

Vintage Report



EST. 1905
ANTHONY JOSEPH
VIDAL
of HAWKES BAY

In over 100 vintages at Vidal Estate we have never experienced one like 2020! Of course, every vintage is different, with the wines reflecting the season just gone and telling the story of the land, the climate and the people of that season and before. Some years are more challenging than others due to climatic pressure but not this year. We couldn't have wished for a better summer and autumn with warm and dry conditions throughout, allowing a record early start to our Chardonnay harvest on the 25th of February, a theme which continued for all varieties, leading to a record early finish to our harvest season. This year our challenge and extra pressure came from something completely unexpected – the Covid-19 pandemic.

Despite this and thanks to a remarkable season of weather we couldn't be happier with the young wines now sitting safely in tank and barrel, starting their long maturation period where further layers of intrigue and complexity will develop through to the release of the wines.

Over time the 2020 vintage wines will be remembered for what they are and their quality attributes rather than the challenges of Covid-19. Looking at the wines in their barebones it is clear that we will be releasing high quality examples of what we do and although it's early days, the Chardonnay and Syrah from our estate in particular are looking exceptional and reflect the near perfect growing season we experienced right through to last day of picking. The wines have a freshness about them and are true to our vineyards and our style - wines showing elegance, complexity, depth and texture and have been made in a manner that is respectful of the time honoured and natural approach of making wine. For the reds, this year it's our Syrah from our Gimblett Gravels vineyard that stand out, showing fragrance and the lovely florals this variety can achieve in this part of the world. Achieving this in a mid-weight style is a direction we've been working toward for a while.

It is always interesting to look back at the season and reflect on its nature. For Hawkes Bay it was remarkably early with budburst, flowering, veraison and harvest well ahead of what we normally experience. Some early spring moisture gave way to a sustained warm and dry period with the last three months of the season delivering less than 50mm of rainfall compared to the Long Term Average (LTA) of 190mm. Growing Degree Days (GDD) for the season were also above normal at 1,362 compared to our LTA of 1,303.

Marlborough also told a similar story with higher than normal GDD at 1,306 against a LTA of 1,244. What was remarkable here was how dry it was. Between the 21st December 2019 and 21st April 2020 Blenheim received just 43mm of rain. The lowest 123-day rainfall total on record in the last 79 years!

While the 2019/2020 growing season in our regions was warm it wasn't hot, allowing us to pick grapes with good natural acidity relative to their sugar and flavour ripeness. This is a good thing for our wine style – wines with freshness, moderate alcohols and good flavour. It was the combination though of the warm and dry growing season that will be most memorable for me resulting in impeccably clean, disease free fruit to an extent I've never witnessed before.

We look forward to seeing how the wines develop through maturation and look forward to their release in the future.



H Crichton

Hugh Crichton
May 2020



HATCH MANSFIELD 

Hatch Mansfield Agencies Limited | New Bank House | 1 Brockenhurst Road | Ascot | Berkshire SL5 9DJ

Telephone 01344 871800 | E-mail info@hatch.co.uk | www.hatchmansfield.com

 @HatchMansfield  hatchmansfield  hatchmansfielduk  Hatch Mansfield