

Vintage 2022 – Experience reaped rewards

Vintage report from Senior winemaker Phil Brodie

“A memorable, incredibly early vintage, with significant highlights and some challenging moments. It resulted in wines with great varietal expression, restraint, tension, power, and length.”

Winter – Spring

Winter was warm and dry. This led to an early bud burst and the earliest veraison in the last 30 years.

Summer – Autumn

Early summer we experienced a healthy amount of rain giving fully saturated soils, which led to strong vine growth and full canopies for ripening. Then over two months a rapid accumulation of Growing Degree Days (GDD), with a record number of days above 30 degrees Celsius, led to a record high GDD for this time of year. Vine stress came in mid-late summer – at a critical time of the season – to produce small berries with balanced canopies. Despite a rain event just before harvest and another late season with only a few blocks left to pick, we were able to pick quality fruit. This coupled with a huge amount of early vineyard work and the employment of some new viticultural practices, created the foundation to make some great wines.

Harvest

Logistically, it was a challenging harvest working around Covid regulations and team health. Except for a few blocks at the start of the harvest (which showed signs of being fragile and needed to be picked earlier than normal), fruit condition this year looked very good. Walking the vineyards daily, sampling, visualizing, and tasting was paramount.

Nature can be capricious; however, it is precisely the succession of vintages – each so different and unique – that gives Hawke’s Bay and Te Mata’s wines their interest.

The whites are balanced with intense varietal expression, natural acidity, and length.

The reds are also balanced, from the scented notes and moreish acidity of Gamay Noir through to Cabernet Sauvignon, one of the highlights of the vintage, so noble with pedigree, both fine and dense at the same time; they are deeply coloured with great varietal complexity, acidity, and tannins. We are excited about the assemblage tastings to come.

Conclusions and notes of significance

- Exceptionally early bud burst.
- The earliest veraison of reds I can recall.
- A huge amount of work done in the vineyard prior to the New Year, by hand and with our new tractor herd.
- Small berries from low crops.
- Coordination of up to five handpicking teams.
- A challenging harvest with two large rain events leading to some early picks from fragile crops.
- Heat and record GDD’s before harvest at a critical time.
- The use of two hand-harvested processing lines.
- The R&D work done over the last number of years in the vineyards and winery, literally coming to fruition.
- And, yet again, the importance of:
 - estate-owned vineyards and setting our own standards for quality.
 - geographic spread with multiple varieties across four Hawke’s Bay sub-regions.
 - experienced personnel in both the vineyard and winery.