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2015 Vintage Report

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The Vineyard

The 2014/2015 growing season got off to an early start with budburst occurring 10 days earlier than average in most varieties. A warm and dry spring ensured disease free vines with moderate crops and healthy canopies.

Red varieties were shoot thinned in early spring to regulate yields and encourage balance between fruit and foliage. They were also leaf plucked around the bunch zone immediately after fruit set to improve colour, flavour and tannin.

White varieties were also shoot thinned and the foliage was lifted to encourage dappled sunlight on to the developing bunches.

Early summer was reasonably dry but also quite cool. Combined with good rainfall in December and January, this has delivered some of the best fruit in years.

Whites; especially Pinot Gris and Chardonnay had fantastic flavour ripeness at lower Baumes and held their acidity nicely right through to harvest.

During February and March the vineyard received only 37mm of rain which gave us the perfect ripening conditions for our reds. We were able to harvest each block as it ripened and exactly when we were happy with the flavours.

In summary, it was a grape grower's season. Can't wait to see the results!

Winery

Generally speaking flavours were ripe at lower sugar ripeness this year, combined with an early start to the season, meant we started harvest far earlier than usual, with every variety along the way was harvested earlier than usual. This also meant we finished harvest early & actually got Easter off this year – which is highly unusual!



Chardonnay

Harvest started on 28th January with block 11B Chardonnay that we picked for part of our sparkling base. Nice high natural acidity and a tight elegant palate structure. After the sparkling harvest, we moved very quickly onto some low cropping Rolling Chardonnay blocks 42 & 47. Fermented with high juice solids in tank. Post ferment kept on yeast lees for stirring in tank.

Early February, and we were harvesting our best Chardonnay blocks for Cumulus & 600 Above. A selective hand pick in blocks 15 & 14B – with the juice going to barrels with full solids and wild yeast ferment at relatively warm temperatures. Post ferment, barrels were topped and are now being stirred weekly.

Mid February we harvested the last of our Chardonnay blocks. Slightly riper fruit characters & more palate weight. Fermented with high juice solids in tank. Post ferment kept on yeast lees for stirring in tank. These parcels will be used to blend into our Rolling, Block 50 & Five Friends wines.

Riesling

Block 48B Riesling was picked on 9th Feb & block 50 Riesling was picked on 10th Feb, both with high levels of natural acidity, but great flavour. A small parcel from block 50 was crushed to open fermenters and fermented on skins for 7 days, before being pressed off just at the end of ferment. This parcel will form part of the Luna Rosa Blanco blend & has wonderful aromatics but very chewy texture! The remainder of the Riesling fruit was pressed, the juice clarified very clean & fermented at quite cool temperatures. The ferment was stopped just before completion to deliberately leave some natural residual sugar to balance to crisp acidity.

Mid February, we moved on to harvesting our Pinot Grigio & Pinot Gris blocks. Block 25A was picked for our Pinot Grigio style, lower in potential alcohol, crisp fruit characters & crunchy acid. Juice was clarified & fermented cool in tank.

Whereas Block 8 was picked for our Pinot Gris style, so we aimed for riper fruit characters, lower acidity, and more palate weight. We kept a high level of juice solids in the ferment & fermented at warmer temperatures. This parcel was partly wild fermented in old French oak barrels & partly fermented in tank. Post ferment both the barrel & tank parcels are been stirred on yeast lees regularly to build further palate weight.

Sauvignon Blanc was harvested at 3 ripeness levels, with an early pick on 10th Feb, a mid pick on 19th Feb & a late pick on 5th March. The early pick had crisp crunchy fruit & high natural acidity; the mid pick herbaceous grassy Sauvignon Blanc character; the late pick aiming for riper tropical fruit character. These separate parcels were fermented cleanly in tank at cool temperatures. Clarified straight after ferment was finished & ready for blending.

Semillon

Our Semillon block was harvested in early March, the last of the white blocks to be picked, it was also the ripest of all the white varieties. A small parcel of the Semillon juice was taken directly out of the press, on full juice solids, and transferred to barrels for a wild ferment. This parcel will form



part of the Luna Rosa Blanco blend & has a lot of palate weight & texture. The remainder of the juice was clarified off juice solids & fermented cool in tank. Clarified straight after ferment was finished & ready for blending.

Shiraz

Mid February we harvested our first Shiraz block. Still being so early in the season, it remained relatively low in sugar ripeness, but being a low cropping block, had great flavour ripeness – so a perfect combination for our Rolling & Climbing Pink rose wine. The Shiraz fruit was de-stemmed & then cold soaked on skins for several hours before been drained off. Juice was clarified & fermented cool in tank. Ferment was stopped just before completion to retain a small amount of residual sugar in the final wine.

Next we harvested our best Shiraz block for the season, block 51. Being low cropping, shoot thinned & leaf plucked, its flavour & tannins ripened up early. A selective hand pick was performed to ensure that we could do 25% whole bunch in our small open fermenters. Ferment kicked off wild, was hand plunged twice daily, pressed off skins & straight to barrel – we will most certainly be releasing a 2015 Cumulus Shiraz from this fruit.

Late February through until early March we harvested Climbing & Rolling Shiraz, with blocks 16, 17, 19, 20, 21 & 22. These blocks were fermented separately in upright static fermenters, with a twice daily pump over regime. Longer duration of pump overs early during ferment, shortening as ferment neared completion. The resulting wines have bright fruit, juicy generous mid palates and soft tannins.

Sangiovese

Late February we harvested a small block of Sangiovese with our Luna Rosa Tinto wine in mind. Pre ferment we cold soaked on skins to help with colour extraction & stabilisation. Then a relatively gentle pump over regime during ferment to ensure we got nice chewy textural tannins, without over extracting.

Merlot

Late February we harvested our two best Merlot blocks, 31 & 34. Block 31 we did a trial of 20% whole bunch versus none, with some very interested results, the tannins on the whole bunch ferment looking softer & rounder. Block 34 we de-stemmed & fermented in small open fermenters, with hand plunging twice daily. The resulting wine has silky soft tannins, a generous palate, and varietal fruit characters – another contender for a 2015 Cumulus Merlot.

Early March we moved on to our Rolling Merlot blocks 2 & 5B. Slightly riper fruit spectrum leading to fuller bodied wines, we aim for a shorter time on skins with warm ferment temperatures to enable good colour & flavour extraction from the skins.



Cabernet

Shortly after, in early March we harvested our best Cabernet from block 52N. The fruit had an excellent balance of varietal fruit, sugar and tannin ripeness. We trialled different fermentation techniques including cold soak pre ferment, small percentage of whole bunch fruit & fermentation kicking off naturally.

Kind weather later in the season meant there was no rush to harvest the remainder of our Cabernet blocks, with the weather cooling off, ripening slowed down to a steady pace allowing the remainder of the Climbing & Rolling Cabernet blocks to be harvested through mid March up until late March. We aimed for warmer ferment temperatures, longer pump overs early in ferment, shortening to once daily short pump overs later in ferment – giving us medium bodied wines with balanced structural tannins & ripe varietal fruit characters.

Grenache & Mourvedre

Our last blocks to ripen up – Grenache & Mourvedre were harvested on the 26th March. A large portion of both our Grenache & Mourvedre pick was destined for our Luna Rosa Rosado – so this was drained off skins very quickly to ensure we had minimal colour pick up. The juice then clarified & cool fermented in tank to retain bright aromatic fruit. The remainder of the Grenache & Mourvedre was fermented on skins for red wine – the ferments were warmed to help build colour, tannin & flavour into the wines.

To summarise, a slightly crazy year, where we harvested later ripening whites on the same day as pressing earlier ripening reds. But all in all, an excellent year with generous fruit flavours & ripeness across the board.



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