

## 2021 VINTAGE REPORT

### VINEYARD - from viticulturist Lindsay Hill

On the back of two years of drought, we entered spring with virtually zero soil moisture. With winter 2020 being the mildest on record, we encountered a super early budburst with massive frost risk. We survived a -2.8 C frost on the 30th of September that randomly took out whole areas of the Waipara region's vineyards (depending on site and type of frost control) only to lose parts of our lower terraces to a -0.8 C snap frost on the 16th of October. It was a very brief 20 minutes of sub-zero temperature but too much for this sappy stage of growth. The upper terraces were unaffected.

We had another drought summer, but this year we did not suffer the water restrictions and irrigation shortfalls of the previous year. There was an absence of the horrific winds of the last summer. We kept the vines well irrigated and well away from the stress point. Moderate flowering weather with a few cool showery periods meant for a relatively good set. The irrigation held up, but as we are only irrigating a wetted strip that represents 40% of the area, we can only irrigate part of the soil profile and therefore there is no buffer zone for the roots to explore and the root blooms that occur in spring and autumn have not been occurring for the last few years, decreasing the capacity of the vines. With a reduced capacity of the root systems and cane length and lower bud numbers, we never expected a big crop, but the bunch and berry size was tiny, making for a small but incredibly intense, super-ripe crop.

Summer 2021 had virtually no rainfall, and the property turned to the colour of straw and looked like Mexico! A small crew of experienced pickers (many who had helped us through the previous covid lockdown pick) harvested a small but incredibly intense super-ripe crop that had amazing flavours. Good hot weather meant that we could pick as it quickly ripened. Some of the fruit is really special and should make some fantastic wine, but the conditions it has been created under are a bit disturbing. We may never see fruit like this again!

### WINERY - from winemaker Willie Trew

There were a few notable physical features that covered all the varieties. Firstly, the fruit was tracking reasonably early in terms of ripeness - the first fruit to come in this year was Pinot Noir on the 17th of March. Secondly, there was no pressure from disease. The combination of weather and viticultural care resulted in clean, disease-free fruit. Also, the weather over the harvest period was very settled but dry.

It allowed us to pick our parcels of fruit without too much external pressure, meaning we were able to let the fruit hang until acid, phenolics and brix all lined up nicely.

Not including the parcels of fruit that were touched by frost, all the bunches were notably small due to the size of the individual berries, which were very small but very even in size. The exception to this was the Mendoza Chardonnay, which still showed good millerandage.

We knew this was going to make for some very concentrated fruit. With having such small intense berries, attention to how we managed the caps of the red ferments was going to be necessary. Deep colour in the must was prevalent early on. Generally, we smell and taste our ferments early in the morning and plan what management needs to be done according to those results. We could see structure coming through on the ferments very early and only gentle handling required for extraction.

The resulting wines show great typicity, with concentrated fruit, bright acid, and great structure. They will be in high demand.

Overall, Vintage 2021 will be known for high-quality wines with limited quantity.