

# L | E | R | I | D | A E | S | T | A | T | E

## 2008 Vintage Report

For us, 2008 was the vintage from heaven; we had cooler conditions generally with more rainfall (no buying water) ending with a perfect, dry, warm March for ripening.

Light, but substantial winter rains (188mm) gave us a great start, budburst was late September / early October with a few light frosts but no damage. After the trials of 2006 and 2007, the vines responded vigorously to the good season. More rain in spring (160mm) gave us rapid, strong growth, so we short-trimmed the Pinot Noir to reduce crop levels. The two foliage wires were put up early followed by short-trimming to control Viognier. Spring gave below average temperatures and promised a very good vintage with about average crop level.

Summer started quite cool with a few very hot days in January. February started to cool down further; it was looking like it could be a late vintage. We read with amazement of the 3 week heatwave in Adelaide, which had a significant adverse impact on the vintages for many in the Barossa and the Adelaide Hills. None of this reached the Canberra District. We also avoided the heavy rain which damaged the Hunter crop. Rainfall for summer (198mm) had some disease pressure but was kept under control (just!), thanks to some 3am starts and a lot of weekend work.

The perfect March experienced at Lake George – low rainfall, temperatures 28-32C for 3 weeks - ripened all varieties giving a good balance of sugar, flavours, and, in the red grapes, colour and tannins.

The only variety that developed botrytis was Pinot Gris. In retrospect, we could have thinned some bunches early in summer to tilt the balance towards drier, early picked instead of botrytis, sticky sweet, late picked. However since James Halliday has just given the 2007 sticky 90 points, maybe it will all turn out for the best.

### Picking dates:

Sparkling – Pinot Noir	26-27 February
Sparkling – Chardonnay	4 March
Chardonnay	11 March
Pinot Noir	14-15, 19-23, 27, 29 March
Viognier	27 March
Pinot Gris	28 March, 12 April
Merlot	11-12 April
Cabernet Franc	11 April
Shiraz	22 April
Botrytis Pinot Gris	13-15 May

The best news is that with early pick, no early frost, large healthy canopies carried through to May, the vines are in excellent health for 2009 and, with reasonable rain, we can expect an even higher lift in quality. That said, we would echo the consensus of the cooler, higher districts, namely, that 2008 is likely to prove our most outstanding vintage so far.

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