

Vintage 2012

The Mornington Peninsula experienced little disease incidence this year, with some mildew in early season and some botrytis late in cooler areas but in the most, although we had significant rains, the vineyards have remained clean and comfortable. A much easier season than 2011! Warmer areas started late February/early March and were completed by the end of March whilst cooler, elevated areas started at the end of March and finished mid-April. An extended difference of 1-2 weeks more than usual was seen between harvesting in the north and south parts of the region this year. A hot weekend saw harvest start in Northern areas, then decent rains came and stayed on and off until a lovely couple of weeks of sunshine which has completed the vintage in the southern hills. Yields are slightly down and flavours are looking fantastic with winemakers expressing relief for another year that crops are in the shed and looking promising.

Vintage 2011

With the 10 year drought in Victoria finally broken winter rain in 2010 was above average and was followed by two very wet spring months in September and October. Fortunately it dried up in late November and early December to allow flowering and fruit set to occur. The wet periods were presenting downy mildew events in many vineyards which, coupled with a shortage of appropriate chemicals, caused problems particularly when bunches were infected. This cold wet weather pattern continued into 2011 with February and March both being two degrees below average temperatures. Fortunately April temperatures returned to normal allowing fruit to ripen slowly into vintage which was two to three weeks later than has been the norm. For the first time in many years vineyards on the Mornington Peninsula, in keeping with most Australian vineyards, faced all three major disease threats, downy and powdery mildew and botrytis appearing as fruit ripened.

Despite the weather and disease pressure most vineyards picked fruit in good condition with average yields. The wet growing season saw higher than average berry weights compensating for any fruit that may have been lost to disease.

Good flavours were apparent, particularly in white varieties, and high levels of acid were retained. Some interesting Pinot Noirs may also be expected following such a long cool ripening period.

Vintage 2011 has been the most difficult for many years but vineyards with good canopy control and proper fruit exposure will still produce wines with good structure and flavours.

Vintage 2010

Vintage 2010 Winemakers Sandro Mosele, Mike Aylward with Ben Edwards - The Wine Guide

Following significant spring rain periods (above average rainfall in October and December) the early growing season in vintage 2010 started with vineyards growing extremely well with good vigor, strong canopies and very good vine health. Rain episodes occurred throughout the season at very useful stages ensuring healthy vine growth was maintained. Generally weather through flowering was fine and warm ensuring good berry set. Disease pressure remained very low.

Picking started in late February about one week earlier than recent average and was probably the earliest start in the last ten years. Harvest continued into early to mid April as normal. Average February/March temperatures ensured an extended slow ripening period was enjoyed. The Mornington Peninsula was fortunate not to experience the extremes in weather, such as hail and flooding, which were experienced in Melbourne and other close by regions. The protection offered by the maritime influence on the unique location of the region is significant.

Crop levels generally came in as expected with very high quality fruit and no disease pressure.

Winemakers' feedback so far shows fruit with high natural acidity and great flavours. Pinot Noir will again be a stand out with some reports of exceptional chardonnay crops with low sugars and magnificent flavours.

Keith Harris, the Group Vineyard Manager at Yabby Lake, noted that early reports from the winemakers suggest there may be some exceptional single block wines available from this

vintage. Vintage 2010 looks to be yet another good one for the Mornington Peninsula, particularly for the Pinot Noir variety which has won much acclaim in recent years.

Vintage 2009

The Mornington Peninsula wine region has fared better than many other regions throughout Australia, however recent weather has had a severe impact. Following a cool December last year, some vineyards were affected when flowering and fruit set was diminished, which resulted in predicted lower yields, particularly in the cooler areas of the Peninsula. By the middle of January all vineyards were growing extremely well with good vigor and vine health

Following three days of extreme heat in the mid 40s in early February, many grapes were sunburned which resulted in some shrivel in vineyards where rows which face west, or run north/south, were particularly exposed to the scorching sun. The vineyard aspect, elevation and management practices are always tested in such extreme conditions, and the timing of any irrigation, leaf plucking and bunch exposure will have resulted in specific outcomes in each vineyard.

A small number of growers have harvested small parcels of fruit in late February but in general harvest appears to be generally consistent with previous later ripening years. Smoke taint is not an issue at all, with no fires and negligible smoke present in the region following the terrible Victorian bushfires in other regions.

However, the overall effect of the above on Mornington Peninsula yields was expected to be an average loss of between 5 - 30% of 'normal' yields. The MPVA is mindful of calling anything normal in any agribusiness, as by the nature of the business, the yearly impacts will always be a result of the preceding year as well as the prevailing climatic conditions through the current season, quite apart from the individual aspect, orientation and management practices. Winemakers' feedback so far shows fruit with high natural acidity and good flavours.

As harvest continued into early to mid April reports have been much more positive than an initial gloomy outlook. Surprising, following the extreme heat incidents in late January/February, the cool climate autumn returned and the vintage ended similarly to one of our later ripening seasons. Winemakers are very pleased with the quality of grapes picked

and regrettably the quantity will be reduced in most varieties although typically some varieties fared better with these odd occurrences than others. We look forward to another fantastic vintage in 2009 which shows the viticultural integrity of the region yet again.

Vintage 2008

The growing season followed a very dry winter and started with an early bud burst. A cool spring with some hail and frost in pockets within the region in October and November resulted in some poor fruit set which ultimately resulted in reduced yield in some parts of the region. The soil type and water availability at specific sites dictated the fruit weights and ultimate yields. Some rain in January and February helped vines to present in good condition for harvest. Harvest occurred perhaps earlier than 2006 in higher areas but generally harvest was around the same timeframe as 2006. Low yields were due mainly to low berry weights, in some cases 50g instead of 80g bunches were experienced. About 75% of average yield has been experienced due to the unusual growing conditions but particularly the one in one hundred year drought. Although almost all growers reported reduced crops, variations due to varieties and the actual yield have been seen throughout the region. Fruit quality has been good with the smaller berries leading to some quite intense fruit flavours.

Vintage 2007

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Vintage 2006

A very warm start to the season led to early budburst and flowering. Good rains during spring continued during the start of summer. Post Christmas temperatures cooled down significantly which slowed the ripening rate although in general harvest was 2 weeks early. Disease pressure had been a concern due to early humidity it did not eventuate as a significant problem. The quality in both red and white grapes is extremely good - for the fourth year in a row. Yields were less than average in red and average in white varieties.

Vintage 2005

A very wet end to winter and a wet start to spring saw some vineyards showing signs of stress from wet roots early in the growing period. There were also some signs of salt damage with the wet weather bringing up salt that had accumulated through the preceding dry years. The season moved on to be cool and dry. Flowering and fruit set was good and vine growth healthy. Very little disease pressure was encountered this season. A late cool vintage was expected but autumn turned out to be dry and very warm and grape maturities accelerated to see harvest getting underway about a week later than normal and then rushing quickly through with real pressure on to get the grapes picked at optimum maturity. Analysis of the grape juice showed good balance with slightly higher than usual levels of acid. 2005 could be seen as one of the best ever on the Mornington Peninsula.