

Vintages on the Mornington Peninsula 2001 - 2004

Vintage 2001

Overall the 2001 season on the Mornington Peninsula was very good with excellent fruit of good quality and flavour being picked. The 2001 vintage produced above average yields, and with new vineyards coming on line was the biggest harvest to date on the Mornington Peninsula. The season started with a wetter than average spring resulting in wet soil conditions which restricted root growth and caused some stress and early disease pressure. A hot dry summer that saw good fruit set and very good crop levels followed. Some shoot and fruit thinning was required to achieve desired crop levels to produce quality fruit with good sugar and flavour levels. Pest and disease pressure was about average and was easily managed with proper canopy management and a planned spray program. Harvest began 2 to 3 weeks earlier than normal and went well into the third week of April when a major rain event caught some growers whose crops were slower to ripen due to heavier than usual crop loads.

Vintage 2002

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. It was the summer of our discontent. A mild winter saw a very early bud break with good fruitfulness apparent. Unfortunately at flowering the weather closed in and it was cold, wet and windy. This caused significant amounts of cap stick resulting in the worst fruit set in memory. One long term vigneron said it was the worst season he had seen in 27 years. But he cautioned against despair. The finest wines in the world come from regions that are on the edge climatically. Crop levels dropped to around 30% of the prior year. A warm dry autumn however ensured the crop available was harvested in excellent condition and reports on the 2002 wine show the quality to be very good.

Vintage 2003

A good dry growing season with no disease pressure. Dry weather at flowering led to good fruit set with uniform bunches unlike last year where we had a lot of Hen & Chicken berries. The weather was hot and dry. The Mornington Peninsula was a declared drought area but all growers had sufficient water for irrigation to ensure the vines were not badly stressed. Crops of moderate size have ripened fully. Fruit of excellent quality and flavour was delivered to the wineries - clean and free of disease the outlook for the 2003 vintage proved excellent. Generally crops came in up to 15% below forecast. This means the forecast oversupply of Pinot Noir grapes will not be a problem. Rain

in mid-vintage slowed things down a little but the fruit coming in is still very good quality with superb flavours. Winemakers are talking of this having the potential to be the best vintage for some time.

Vintage 2004

Late spring weather from the previous vintage indicated a potentially very fruitful crop. A mild winter and early spring led to fairly typical and even budburst. Spring was average to slightly warm, resulting in steady vine development. November and December were warmer than average, leading to highly fruitful buds for next (2005) vintage and very good flowering and fruit set for the 2004 vintage. Bunch weights were thus high and for Pinot Noir were at the very high end of recorded figures. A very cold January then slowed vine development considerably, ensuring late ripening and relatively high acid levels. February and March were about average and fortunately April was warmer than usual. Conditions were also very dry, meaning this late ripening could occur with relatively low disease pressure. The fruit coming in is very good quality with superb flavours. Winemakers are talking of this having the potential to be the best vintage for some time