



ESTABLISHED IN 1896, TE MATA ESTATE IS NEW ZEALAND'S OLDEST WINERY
AND REMAINS FAMILY OWNED, PRODUCING INTERNATIONALLY RECOGNISED WINES
EXCLUSIVELY FROM ITS HAWKES BAY VINEYARDS.

2008 Harvest Report

2008 was a warm and dry growing season and our fifth consecutive high quality vintage.

Bud break was earlier than usual by at least a week which is quite rare. Two frosts in October caused problems on the Heretaunga Plains, but our Woodthorpe and Havelock Hills vineyards were unscathed. The Bullnose and Isosceles vineyard were touched in places by the frost, but our vineyard crew removed all frosted shoots which ensures that the remaining crop ripens normally and evenly.

The rest of the spring was exceptionally dry and quite warm, with many days in the mid to high 20s. There was some rainfall leading up to Christmas, but a further warm and very dry patch of weather gave us the critical water stress conditions for red grapes by mid January. The favourable weather continued for the whole of February, with the temperature gauge over 30°C on several occasions.

We began harvesting Chardonnay on the 9 March, a few days earlier than usual. From then until we finished picking the warm and dry conditions persisted, despite several weather forecasts to the contrary.

Our Bordeaux varieties ripened early and were harvested by the 4 April, all at optimum sugar levels and low acid, indicating they were physiologically ripe. We held most of our Syrah crops on the vine to achieve the most from the season, but a diabolical forecast for the following week had us finishing Syrah in lovely weather on Saturday 5 April.

We would have gained nothing from trying to achieve a few more days ripening, as after we finished harvesting the weather turned cool and wet. A few days later, an ex tropical system delivered over 50mm of rain and humid conditions, but by this time harvest was finished.

2008 was the earliest season we have experienced, apart from 1989, and it is often said that the best vintages tend to be early ones. The white wines have lovely fruit aromas, flavours and good concentration. The red wines are as dark as we have seen them and the ripe flavours and tannins show the benefit of all the very good weather over the growing season.