



Te MATA E S T A T E

Est. 1896

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.

2010 Vintage Report

The 2010 season began very early. The hottest August on record was followed by a warm and dry September making budburst two weeks early, amidst thoughts of a “global warming” vintage. However, October turned out to be the coldest on record and, with greater than usual rainfall, led to a slowing down of vine growth and reduced bunch numbers on some varieties. Spring’s variable weather pattern continued through until mid-summer. November was dry with average heat, but then December was cooler. Still, by early January many of our vineyards were dry enough to require irrigation. This drying of vineyard soils by midsummer is crucial for red vineyards in particular as it leads to good ripening and concentration. To maximize our chances we crop thinned many vineyards even further than normal in January and February, especially the later ripening cabernet sauvignon and syrah.

The second half of January was wet with warm nights and relatively cool days producing a note in the diary that “we need some hot dry weather soon”. Then, we got exactly that! The weather was miraculous from 1 February until the end of harvest in early May. Warm, dry, settled weather extended over all of Hawkes Bay with total rainfall for the three months less than that of one average month and temperatures constantly in the mid to high 20s, ideal for ripening, flavour development, and acid retention for balanced wines. Harvest began with chardonnay on 18 March. Our white grapes were mostly harvested at slightly lower sugar levels and the wines will therefore have lower alcohols than has been the recent norm.

The best Indian summer we can recall allowed us to hang the red grapes on without fear of deterioration to get the very last heat needed to ensure full ripeness. Our final pick for 2010 was cabernet sauvignon from our 1892 Vineyard on 6 May, as late as we have ever experienced.

Reflections

It is curious that, over the last 30 years here, the three vintages which we could truly say had Indian summers were all in the last decade (‘02, ‘04, and ’10), and all came after a less than spectacular start to summer. In some warm dry years, rapid ripening can make it difficult to pick at the exact alcohol level desired in the final wine. The leisurely ripening and longer hang time in 2010 gave us the flavour for fruity vibrant Hawkes Bay whites, at slightly more elegant alcohol levels. Chardonnay quality in 2010 looks remarkable.

Many of our red vineyards picked up tremendous flavour as the bunches hung out in the warm, late summer, sun. Of particular note was the delicious, almost jammy dark berry notes in the cabernet sauvignon grapes, and syrah berries had more flavour than we have seen in the 20 years of growing that variety. The seeds and pith of the berries coloured up nicely before picking, giving every indication of beautifully ripe tannins in the finished wines.

The proof will be in the final wines, but all signs are that 2010s Indian summer completed a game of two halves with the right result for the home team.

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