

# Te MATA

ESTATE 1896

## 2012 VINTAGE REPORT

Spring was dry but cool, delaying early budbreak until mid September, one week later than normal. This weather pattern continued through October and November, further slowing vine canopy growth.

For the early grape varieties, flowering went well and had finished by mid December in warm dry weather. The flowering of cabernet sauvignon, syrah and sauvignon blanc was interrupted by cooler temperatures. This turned into a blessing with small berries and light, open bunches accelerating ripening. The rest of December and January were warm with plenty of days between 25 ° - 30° but the dry conditions were punctuated by two short, heavy downpours in early January.

Berry colour change began on 9 February, two weeks later than usual. It then advanced rapidly, which led to even ripening within the bunches. We aggressively reduced the crop levels in most red blocks to further advance ripening. Overall February had less than average rainfall, although the humidity was noticeable at times.

Until late March temperatures were mild to warm, with no rain to speak of. Vineyard soils were drying out and, in the driest blocks, irrigation had been underway for several weeks. Two very wet rain days on 19 and 20 March were followed by 27° nor'westers. The vineyards dried out quickly, but the condition of the white grapes began to show signs of deterioration so picking began on 24 March.

Rain forecast for early April kept us focused on picking and we finished our white grapes on 1 April. A new record for us - the shortest harvesting period for white grapes! Purchasing an extra press paid dividends in our ability to manage such a quick grape intake. Once again, our hand harvesting gave us clean, ripe fruit.

We began picking merlot on 5 April. As the weather remained gloriously warm and dry we were able to hang out most of our red grapes throughout April, and indeed into May for syrah and cabernet. The fruit remained in good condition while it ripened in the fine weather.

2012 was a year to harvest on flavour rather than grape sugar levels. It was certainly possible to make high quality wines, albeit in smaller quantities and we

are very happy with our young wines. Now that we have fermented and pressed the early red picks we can say that we are delighted with their colour, fruit and tannin content. As usual the drying out of the soils in the red vineyards prior to veraison has again shown that this critical timing puts a quality stamp on the vintage.