



HARVEST 2017 – FAST AND FURIOUS

Winter finished very dry with aquifers at record low levels. Spring bud break was early and showed compact flowering that's always a quality factor - leading to even ripeness within the bunch. Flowering was finished with cabernet sauvignon on December 5th, a good week earlier than usual during a dry month with half December's average rainfall.

January, too, was very warm and very dry. Hawke's Bay basked in lovely summer weather. Most days reached 25 degrees and many were 30 degrees or more. The low 7mm of rain for the month, on top of the dry November and December, led to very dry soils.

February began as January had finished – hot and dry. The ideal warm and dry weather up to mid-February had a very positive effect on the crops at that stage. It was a brilliant early season, with perfect conditions. Ripeness was advanced, and bunches set smaller berries with thicker skins. Flavours, sugars, acids and tannins were riper than usual for the time of the year with berries set up to stand any weather change. Vintage 2017 was looking extremely promising with a great year on the cards.



Harvest began on March 6th. Estate Vineyards Chardonnay fruit was picked on March 6th and 7th. But this point marked a change in the weather pattern. Temperatures remained warm, but from March 7th the weather can be fairly described as unsettled - with alternating weeks of dry then wet, and cool then warm conditions.

Our hand-picked Elston blocks hung for another week in the dry and were picked on March 21st and 22nd. By the 19th many merlot and syrah blocks were reaching their potential for the year and these were harvested in mainly dry conditions over the following week. Cabernets, gamay and the best of our syrahs were picked around the end of the month. Some very nice merlot and cabernet at our Havelock Hills vineyards was picked on March 31st and April 2nd among continued dry spells. Four high-potential Bordeaux variety blocks at Havelock were left out as more dry weather followed. We finished harvesting with these hill sites on our last day, April 11th. Four weeks from start to finish – it was a fast and furious harvest.



2017 was a year when the Te Mata team and the Te Mata method of production made all the difference. Hand picking and hand sorting, and careful vineyard management shone through and delivered fruit in remarkable condition. Our hand harvesting crew worked overtime, enabling the last possible day of ripening for those blocks. The 'growing' season was textbook-perfect, setting us up with incredible

groundwork. Harvest weather was unsettled, but modest crop levels continued to ripen in the conditions, with all crops picked before any disease pressure could take over. Grape flavours were good, and berry weights were smaller than average, giving all the positive features this confers.

Immediately post-harvest, the white wines look fresh and fruity, and the pressed reds have excellent colour and flavour. Red wines look impressive with 2017 cabernets looking particularly spectacular, again showing this varietal's quality attributes. Thanks to our team's outstanding efforts, many long hours, and a fast and furious harvest, we've ended up with a lot to look forward to.



