

VINTAGE



REPORT



Welcome

Do you ever think about the journey a bottle of wine has made before it ends up in your hands?

Here at Enotria&Coe we certainly do. From the moment vines are planted to the time a bottle of wine is stocked on the shelf at your local store or restaurant, there are myriad different processes. Integral to this is the harvest period when, after months of care and cultivation, grapes are finally plucked from the vine and begin their evolution into wine. For winemakers and staff throughout a winery, harvest is a time full of extremes and emotions. The days are long and the work demanding. While plenty of trendy

tools have been developed over the years to help winemakers minimise the merciless effects of Mother Nature, when it all boils down there is only so much that can be done before throwing caution to the wind and embracing whatever may lie ahead.

To celebrate this incredibly wonderful time in the winemaking journey, and the people who make it happen, we've asked some of our producers to share their stories from this year's harvest season.

Contents

Australia

- 06** Henschke
- 08** Glaetzer
- 10** Heartland
- 12** d'Arenberg
- 14** Chalmers
- 16** Fowles Wine
- 18** Kooyong
- 20** Mount Pleasant
- 22** Burch Family Wines
- 24** Stargazer

New Zealand

- 26** Carrick
- 28** Man O' War
- 30** Urlar
- 32** Yealands

South Africa

- 34** Tamboerskloof
- 36** Ken Forrester
- 38** Thelema
- 40** Morgenster
- 42** Martin Meinert
- 44** FRAM

Argentina

- 46** Trapiche
- 48** El Esteco

Chile

- 50** Viña Leyda

Henschke

Eden Valley, Australia

Winemaker summary

Vintage 2018 has shaped up to be an excellent one, with below-average to average yields giving us a good cue of the quality level. The hand-picked fruit that arrived at the winery in the cool of the morning was clean, with good concentrated flavours. While January and February were both warmer than average, curiously this did not lead to the advancement of maturity of all grape varieties in our regions, even despite the early Easter date. The warm weather continued well into March, and without any rain in sight, the harvest became quite compressed. Our white varieties are showing great purity in aroma and flavour; a result of little to no vine stress through the preceding wet Spring and mild early-Summer period. Our red wine quality is looking to be extremely high, thanks to some 'green thinning' at veraison to ensure that the maturity of the bunches across the vines remained consistent.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage?

A few memorable moments: beautiful clean Chardonnay berries that looked like they were painted on the vine; leaving the Abbotts Prayer Merlot to ripen through 70mm of rain was a nail-biting experience, but an incredible result; and picking Hill of Grace and Mount Edelstone in near-perfect condition.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying and why?

Hill of Grace and Mount Edelstone – 2018 was a stunning vintage for Eden Valley Shiraz because of the incredible quality of the fruit.

When it comes to vintage, what foods get you through the long days and nights?

Gourmet pizzas for the winery team from our local Barossan pizzeria.

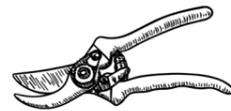
How do you celebrate the end of the harvest period?

At the end of harvest, we invite our vineyard teams to the winery for a long, relaxing lunch with Henschke wines and local beers. Everyone deserves a break by then! We deliver a vintage update and thank them for their great contribution to producing our wines. We then take the winemaking team out to dinner with their partners (cheekily nicknamed 'the vintage widows') and enjoy some beautiful wines gifted to us from our international (this year French and Spanish) interns and a selection of back vintage local and international wines from the cellar.



Pruning

22 May – 8 September



What happened with the weather?
The winter rains started late.

What does this mean?
Soil profiles were full going into the growing season.

Bud Burst

17 September – 3 October



What happened with the weather?
Average rainfall during budburst and very little frost.

What does this mean?
Even budburst and good canopy development.

Flowering

12 November - 3 December



What happened with the weather?
Some rainfall but managed to avoid Downy Mildew issues. Comfortably warm weather.

What does this mean?
Good growth and vigour.

Fruit Set

11 December – 2 January



What happened with the weather?
Rainfall was well below average in December onwards.

What does this mean?
Very small berries and loose clusters, resulting in very little disease.

Ripening

22 January – 5 February



What happened with the weather?
Our maximum temperatures were reached during this period. Received some rain.

What does this mean?
Despite a small amount of rainfall, the vines maintained loose clusters and very healthy fruit.

Harvest begins

23 February



What happened with the weather?
Early vintage due to early Easter.

What does this mean?
Picking earlier resulted in more concentrated flavours and balanced natural acidities, eg. Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

Harvest ends

27 April



What happened with the weather?
Temperatures cooled down considerably.

What does this mean?
Careful yield management with bunch thinning took quality to the next level for our Shiraz. Healthy canopies delivered evenly ripened fruit with good tannins and flavour maturity, due to the warm, dry Autumn.



Glaetzer

Barossa Valley, Australia

Winemaker summary

We have just wrapped up the 2018 vintage which has produced excellent fruit with solid yields. The growing season started well, with above average winter rainfall, however the spring rainfall through to December was down on average. This produced drier soils and, when combined with warmer than average October and November days, meant the vine canopies grew quickly, flowered well and set a good number of bunches. The January and February months were warm and dry, slowing down the pace of ripening. The Indian summer of March and April featuring average temperatures without extremes, plus the low rainfall, was ideal for finishing off vintage.

Although very juvenile at this stage, the wines are showing great purity and lift with incredible flavour intensity and colour. We are very confident that the 2018 vintage will prove to be outstanding vintage for Glaetzer Wines.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage?

The beginning of it and the end of it. The middle three and a half months are

a blur.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying and why?

I taste all components for all wines daily for four months as ferments, malos and finished wines so I know them very well. I'm very happy to have any of them this year.

When it comes to vintage, what foods get you through the long days and nights?

Schnitzels and pasta and anything with flavoursome substance.

How do you celebrate the end of the harvest period?

Usually just a lunch and then back in to it. Finishing the harvest in no way means finishing ferments, barrel work and the like. It all keeps rolling on.

Pruning

July



Bud Burst

October



Flowering

November



Fruit Set

Late November



Ripening

January – February



Harvest begins

Late February



Harvest ends

Early May



What happened with the weather?
Winter rains, cool days and nights.

What happened with the weather?
Spring rains and warmer days (17-20°C)

What happened with the weather?
Spring rains and warmer days (17-20°C)

What happened with the weather?
Days continue to warm up (22-25°C)

What happened with the weather?
Days 24-35°C

What happened with the weather?
Warm days (26-35°C)

What happened with the weather?
Days cooler (15-20°C)

Heartland

Langhorne Creek, Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Brilliant year. We didn't take too much volume in as we were anticipating a little heat effect, but that did not eventuate.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Long-lived Cabernet Sauvignon and luscious, soft and generous Shiraz.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

We will make Foreign Correspondent for only the second time. This vintage has offered lively and forward Dolcetto to dominate this wine and give a great refreshing palate experience. We should have it in bottle in a month or so.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

There was a week where we thought all our top end Malbec was going to raisin on the vine due to dry, distressed conditions. It all turned around just before it was harvested and gave us another lovely, if small, crop.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

One small batch of our Cabernet came in a little under ripe. I had a tantrum. Then we blended it into something inexpensive to sell as bulk.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

Beer stops me from worrying too much.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

It is better to get others to do the heavy lifting.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

A meat pie from the Strathalbyn bakery can be eaten in a shorter period than it takes to drive between our two vineyards.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Rehab – Amy Winehouse.



Capture the vintage in three words...

“My back hurts”



Fifth generation Ruby Osborn earning her stripes during vintage. All d'Arenberg red wines are foot trod, a messy and tiring job, but the results are worth it!

d'Arenberg

McLaren Vale, Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

The 2017 Winter was quite wet with July, August and September being way above average in rainfall. October, November and December were a little below average and January, February and March were more or less bone dry.

Temperatures were mild until late January, so vines seemed to be delayed and harvest appeared like it was again going to be late. However, a few hot days and nights brought the ripening forward with slight sacrifice of acidity. The above-average temperatures of February and March, and the dryness made everything ripen relatively quickly. Yields appeared on the lighter side, because the heat and dry conditions did reduce them significantly, however they were still quite respectable across all varieties.

How did this year compare with other years?

Much drier than recent years. It seemed as if it would be late, but a hot spell brought it forward and it fell at a pretty normal time.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Most reds were quite tannic (if allowed to extract). Strong varietal characters prevailed in all varieties, with lots of length of character. Richness might not be quite as profound as some years. Overall the wines are exciting and quality is relatively high in the better vineyards. Disease was non-existent.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

It's still too early to predict quality, however the Grenache looks fantastic with great tannins and character. I most look forward to trying these.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Most memorable vintage moment would actually be the end of vintage show, and karaoke with the winery team.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

It was one of the driest I've seen from early December through to mid-April. This winery has been certified organic and biodynamic by NASAA, bringing into line our already organically and Biodynamically certified vineyard practices.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Tannins in reds were high. Normally we would foot tread Pinot Noir in peak ferment every four to six hours; however, we decided to only do it twice daily which meant berries stayed whole longer, and dragged the ferment out longer which is less aggressive and provided more skin contact.

We also experimented with a new winemaker in the d'Arenberg Cube; it's a fully automated natural winemaking machine. The first of its kind. We have been making wine for many months, Sagrantino from frozen berries from 2017. Soon to be 2018.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

Our senior winemaker Jack Walton cooking up a Porchetta lunch for the Norwood Football Club, who came to the winery in celebration of their 140th anniversary. The club's first captain was Joseph Osborn, first generation d'Arenberg winemaker.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Radiohead – High and Dry.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Dry and varietally expressive.

Chalmers

Heathcote, Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

2018 was an exceptional year for quality in Heathcote, central Victoria. It was a particularly hot, dry season and yields were quite low resulting in great colour, complexity and intensity in flavour of the fruit.

How did this year compare with other years?

The warm vintage made it short and sweet, with over 25 different varieties in our vineyard ranging from early whites to late ripening reds, this year, unusually, it was all harvested within about six weeks from mid-February to late March. Usually harvesting continues for over 10 weeks from mid-February and often into late April. The dry condition resulted in immaculate fruit with little disease pressure, which is always a blessing.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

We are really excited with the quality we are seeing in the winery already. All 2018 wines have finished fermenting and most of the reds are through malolactic fermentation. Our wines are made using wild yeast, native to our vineyards and winery, and therefore both primary and secondary fermentation can vary from year to year, often with much longer ferments finishing in Winter and Spring.

The whites are classically textural, savoury and complex. Rosato is as good as ever, and the reds have a new level of fruit, structure and strength with the naturally lighter crops this year. Nero d'Avola is currently a standout, and possibly the best we've made yet. It has lush fruit, fresh medium weight, and is absolutely delicious. Being a red that goes through malo in stainless steel tank to retain vibrancy, this wine will be in bottle before we know it, ready to be enjoyed young and lively. It's one of the Italian red varieties that is performing incredibly well in Australian soil and our warm climate. Watch this space.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

Our 2018 'Felicitas' traditional method Fiano. We will still have to wait a while to try that of course, but going by fruit flavour at harvest we think it's going to be an

exceptional year for this wine. We only make 100 cases of this product in the best years.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

That's like choosing a favourite child! Both.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

The birth and arrival of the newest Chalmers family member. Kim and Bart's baby Sabine – who (kindly!) arrived in the middle of vintage on 25th February.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

This year we made our Chalmers Project (R & D) range from the first grapes from vines from our latest Chalmers imported selection of new Italian varieties. Chalmers has been instrumental in the introduction, awareness and uptake of Italian varieties to Australian vineyards, wineries and wines, and we are continuously seeking new varieties we believe have a great place and future in the Australian wine industry. Think Australia's first Falanghina, Ribolla Gialla, Pecorino, Piediroso and more. Exciting times with first wines looking fantastic and very promising.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Australia's suitability and love for Italian varieties is thriving, alive and well.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

Depends on who you ask...but Jenni's never-ending supply and stash of cakes, biscuits and chocolates to keep sugar intake up and energy levels high was paramount (and delicious).

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Grace Jones – Pull up to the bumper baby.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Compact, ground-breaking, rewarding.



Australia's first Ribolla Gialla is in the house! 179 kilos from the first few mother vines. Another slightly larger parcel coming next week off the second generation vines. Exciting times



Capture the vintage in three words...

“Cool. Calm. Quality.”



Fowles Wine

Strathbogrie Ranges, Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Excellent. Very cool year – nearly every morning from February I left the house in the morning in a jumper. We even had the fire burning at home before the last of the grapes were off!

How did this year compare with other years?

I would describe this vintage as more of a 'classic' vintage. Long, even ripening without seasonal peaks (heat) or troughs (rain) which we are more used to seeing these days as the globe warms...

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

The wines from this vintage sit perfectly with our 'house' style of ripe flavours but with bracing acidity. Given the cooler year, we've had excellent acid retention. We don't harvest on numbers, we harvest on flavour, but the numbers this year are straight out of the textbook!

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

Always Riesling and Shiraz. This year 100% of our Shiraz has been wild fermented. It is unusual to have so many layers of complexity this early in the life of the wine...

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

Line call. I promise I don't say this every year(!), but this is just one of those years where we have exceptional wines across the board.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

We used a 'Selective Process' harvester for 100% of our fruit this year.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

No – this was a very manageable year. They are few and far between!

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

We had a long cold vintage, but when Spring broke out so did the snakes. We actually don't see that many snakes (despite the rumours abroad) but this year they were everywhere, including a couple of close encounters with the kids!

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Wild fermentation is not as scary as people make out!

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

Tomatoes. Like the fruit, we have had a long season. A tomato straight from the bush and warmed by the sun. Need I say more?



Kooyong

Mornington Peninsula, Australia

Bud burst commenced relatively late, in mid-September, following a wet Winter. However, this wet Winter meant the vineyards were well prepared for Spring, ensuring there was ample moisture stored in the soil for the warmer months ahead. Overall temperatures during Spring were slightly higher than average, accompanied by below average rainfall. These conditions made disease control easier to manage in comparison to previous years.

Flowering commenced mid-late November, and coincided with ideal weather conditions. Warm sunny days greeted us throughout flowering, and resulted in one of the best fruit sets in many years.

The mild to warm conditions continued throughout Summer, with only a few very hot days to disrupt what were otherwise perfect conditions for growing high quality Chardonnay and Pinot Noir. Veraison commenced in mid-January as usual. The vines progressed steadily from this point and colour slowly developed. During this time the viticultural team was busy in several blocks, carefully removing green fruit to ensure overall balance. As harvest crept closer fantastic flavours emerged, accompanied by beautiful fine tannins and crunchy acidity.

The viticultural team worked steadily and delivered outstanding fruit. The winemaking team worked incredibly hard and remained steady under the pressure of a fast-paced and overwhelmingly abundant harvest period. Without doubt, the potential is there to deliver a great Mornington Peninsula

vintage.

Will this vintage be better for whites or reds?

Good for both. The white wines are showing excellent acidity, depth and intense fruit flavours. The red wines are looking poised and elegant, with powerful aromatics and a great balance between tannin and acid. We look forward to seeing how they develop in barrel.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

Ferrous and Farrago

Tell us your most memorable moment from 2018 vintage?

Having the coffee machine back up and running after a seal went in the middle of harvest.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage?

We are all still talking to each other after working 100+ hour weeks together

The key thing you learnt after completing 2018 vintage?

Being organised is everything.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Quality and quantity.

Most memorable food moment?

“Salami, cheese and wine Sundays”





When it comes to vintage, what foods get you through the long days and nights?

“The food element of vintage is an essential part of the experience. It’s not only there to keep the energy up but is also a great morale booster, and time for everyone to get together at a time of year that can throw anything at you... and generally does.”



Mt. Pleasant

Hunter Valley, Australia

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage?

The day we had to handpick two of our iconic vineyards – Old Vine Lovedale (Semillon) and Old Hill off the Estate (Shiraz). Having such important vineyards both ready for harvest at the same time meant all our teams were needed to pitch in to successfully deliver the fruit to the winery just at the right time. From cellar staff handpicking in the vineyards to vineyard staff helping out at the winery, it was a full-on day, but everyone worked together well to get the job done. That’s the beauty of a place like Mount Pleasant: there’s so much passion for the wine and what we’re doing here that our teams go the extra mile to get the results we strive for vintage after vintage. And it makes the well-deserved beer at the end of the day all the more enjoyable!

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying and why?

A tough one to answer. All our vineyards saw a favourable season for the wines that are part of our ageing programme. We also saw some lovely fruit for the younger wines that really speak to the beauty of the flavour profile endemic to the Hunter Valley.

The Old Vine Semillon from our Lovedale vineyards is superb this vintage. With excellent canopy development throughout the season, the fruit ripened beautifully and will deliver a Lovedale with rich, intense flavours that will continue to develop and reward with age.

The Old Hill fruit had a great season for time on vine and that ultimate ripeness which has produced some beautifully expressive parcels of Shiraz. We are already anticipating the resultant wine to develop into a limited release showing excellent intensity and lovely tannin. The Rosehill vineyard has also seen some excellent, more red fruited, elegant

styles of Shiraz which will age exceptionally well.

There has been some standout fruit across our vineyards this vintage but at this early stage, it would be tough to select a favourite.

When it comes to vintage, what foods get you through the long days and nights?

The food element of vintage is an essential part of the experience. It’s not only there to keep the energy up but is also a great morale booster and time for everyone to get together at a time of year that can throw anything at you and generally does.

Coffee is always the backbone of every vintage and both morning and night shifts enjoy the morning ritual of egg and bacon rolls cooked on the BBQ. We like to source locally, where we can, and a local restaurant provides gourmet pies weekly for us to enjoy throughout the day.

The team is really close knit and we like to include as part of vintage each person taking a turn in cooking lunch or dinner for everyone else. This is always an interesting bonding experience and when things occasionally go pear-shaped, we can always outsource to some local favourites that everyone enjoys.

How do you celebrate the end of Vintage?

We celebrate our last crush by bringing the entire team to the crush pad, opening a bottle of something special from the cellars and we all enjoy a glass as the last fruit goes through. It’s an incredibly satisfying and enjoyable moment to see all the hectic activity of the last few months come together. That night, we get the team together for dinner and remember the best (and worst) bits of that vintage. Then it wouldn’t be complete without a few wine options games. We may be exhausted from vintage but we’re still a competitive group!



Howard Park

Western Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Vintage 2018 is a winemaker's vintage where fruit was picked at their choice. With beautiful clean fruit and no weather pressure to affect picking dates, we have created ripe, fine tannins and long flavours. This is certainly the best vintage in Western Australia for 20 years!

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

The Howard Park Chardonnays.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

The Chardonnay parcels coming in from the Great Southern and Margaret River. We didn't need to sort them; the fruit was perfect and pristine.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

The weather didn't dictate when we picked. It was 100% Janice's decision as the weather was perfect and she could choose based on when the fruit was ready.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

The vintage team all go out for dinner a couple of times throughout vintage. Those dinners are pretty loose, with lots of bottles opened and some bawdy singing and dancing on occasion. I think our Burgundian vintage guests were a bit surprised.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

You Ain't Seen Nothing Yet - Bachman-Turner Overdrive 1974.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Best in 20.

A note from Jeff Burch

This was a vintage for winemakers that want to push boundaries on fruit development.

The sparkling base of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were picked exactly where we wanted the flavour/acidity balance. Immediately we noticed how clean the fruit was, with very little disease, and this trend carried through this year's vintage.

Riesling from Mount Barker in Great Southern expressed clean flavours and

natural acidity.

Chardonnay is arguably one of the state's most important varieties and one that we, as a state, are globally competitive in. UK wine-writer Jancis Robinson had this to say about Margaret River wines recently - 'I spent all last week tasting 2016 Burgundies, but the more whites I tried, the more I lusted after the Western Australian alternatives I came across during a visit there last November.'

There is no doubt that Chardonnay across the whole of Southern Western Australia will be superb in 2018 and we hope that the variety will continue to challenge the Grand Cru of Burgundy.

Looking at all of the Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon parcels now that they have fermented, it reinforced the fruit quality of this vintage across the whole of WA - the flavours are powerful, rich and lasting.

Pinot Noir from the Great Southern was wonderfully clean and enjoyable to pick and work with after the challenging 2016/2017 vintage in The Great Southern. The perfume on the early ferment is encouraging so I believe this vintage will be very attractive, perfumed, Pinot Noir.

We had high quality parcels of Shiraz from Frankland Mount Barker and Leston Vineyard in Margaret River.

Cabernet was the last variety to be picked. Its thicker skin can handle possible late-vintage weather/rain events, however with the 2018 vintage we were rarely under any pressure to pick. The fruit was clean, disease was absent, the weather was benign and more importantly, the vine canopy was still in good order and functioning. The leaves of the vine are the engine of a grape vine, and drive the flavour and physiological ripening of the fruit. This is very important for ripe tannins, required with all reds but particularly Cabernet.

The final fruit to come into the winery was our 46 year-old, dry-grown Abercrombie vineyard in Mount Barker which mirrored the quality of fruit from Margaret River. The colours are as expected with plush rich fruit flavours, fine-grained tannins and will produce Cabernet that will be ripe, rich and full while young but offer age-worthy wines for the future.

There were positives across all varieties in both the Great Southern and Margaret River. This is a vintage that winemakers will talk about and will be one for consumers to look out for in the coming years as the flavours deepen and develop.

- Jeff Burch



What song sums up this year's vintage?

“Tupelo - Jason Isbell”



Stargazer

Tasmania, Australia

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Well, at this point it is still going...I don't call vintage finished until the last fruit is crushed and pressed and I've still got some late harvest Riesling for a contact client, which is coming in tomorrow (9th May). It has been a compressed, fast and furious one though, and I'm looking forward to having a bit of a break at the end of this month!

How did this year compare with other years?

A much warmer season certainly than last year, but probably on par with the 2016 vintage, although I think at this stage the cooler February that we had may be the game changer in terms of the quality of the wines. Yields were healthy this year too, so both grape growers and winemakers are happy!

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

There seems to be some lovely mid-palate weight to the wines across the board, so well balanced on the whole, and of course finishing with that trademark Tassie acidity.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

I'm really excited about my Chardonnay this year; even on the vine it had some fantastic flavour and so far, the wine (it has almost finished ferment) looks pretty awesome. I took fruit from a new grower (to me) this year in the far-flung reaches of the Upper Derwent Valley at Ouse and I'm thrilled with how it is working out so far!

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

I think whites at this stage, just with that lovely creaminess on the palate, but a lot can happen yet!

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Each night after finishing pressing and expecting to get out of the winery at a decent hour and still being there until 10pm....ugh!

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

Every time someone decided to take my iPod off the stereo system at the winery without checking and put on their own crappy music selection and I DID NOT REACT WELL!

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

It was the 14th vintage for my beautiful Chocolate Labrador, Murphy Brown!

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Surround yourself with good people who get the job done and also make you laugh (Kiwis are good for that).

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

The slow cooked lamb, feta, red onion, and kalamata olive pizza from 'Local Pizza' at Berriedale with Moo Brew Pale Ale while waiting for some Riesling to press out one night...so good. Also, the almond croissants from Pigeon Whole Bakers which got me through some early morning starts.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

I'm getting old!!!

Carrick

Central Otago, New Zealand

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Fast! So fast we started picking on 8th March and were done before April. That has never been seen before – I have been making harvest in Central Otago since 2009 and I usually start in April. The earliest I ever picked when living in Martinborough was 14th March in 2006. But it's super great, the first time I have had a life in MAY – EVER! Woohoo!

How did this year compare with other years?

Most years we have between four and six decent snow falls in the mountains around us. This year we had only a couple of dustings, and no wind in the Spring. No wind in New Zealand is weird, no way we would ever win an America's Cup sailing event without constant wind. No wind = glasshouse effect, very happy vines ticking away without a care in the world.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Aroma! Soooo much aroma. The whites are super good, I just fired off a vintage report to Mary Ann Worobiec, Senior Editor for Wine Spectator (way boring compared to this) and mentioned "Good aroma in the reds also, light Pinot Noir styles and 100% whole cluster / carbonic Pinot Noirs this year are very bright and balanced. More deeply concentrated Pinot Noirs we will have to wait and see."

Which basically translates to: yum red wines, good year for trying new things, tough year for forecasting with certainty classic styles..... just yet.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

Hard to say at this stage, currently in post-harvest depression phase, it's been all about Negroni's with the plethora of new Gins available in NZ. I have my money on the whites – Dry Riesling in barrel is the best I have seen in years.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

With the early harvest we were able for the first time pick on the Equinox, when day light and darkness is equal. I have some Riesling sitting on skins that we will "press-off" on the 23rd September (Spring Equinox), and I'm really excited about seeing the result in bottle next year.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Stick to the mantra, "don't be a dick and make delicious wine". Even when

things don't go your way, the vintage might not be what you want, the pickers don't turn up on time, the fruit is less than perfect. It does not give you the excuse to be a jerk.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

One Kiss, Calvin Harris & Dua Lipa

No one was ready for this early harvest, all us wine makers were still in holiday mode in February, we were all in denial that it was going to be a month early. As soon as that first bin of fruit hit the winery, it was on, back into it. No time for ill feelings as the excitement of a new harvest took over.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

WTF

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Took the team out for a jet boat ride.



*Most memorable food moment from the vintage?
Pie time.*

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

Had a joint dinner with fellow Central Otago winery, and a couple of extremely down in the dumps travelling cellar hands attended. Started complaining about their experiences, dinner-party chat was rapidly descending into boredom. Watch gazing, yawning, doorway standing, it was bad, real bad. Fortunately, we turned the night around with some decent bottles of wine and a couple of outfit changes.



Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

We have two Pet-Nats on the go, also bottled 200L into keg, currently at 2 bar pressure, another 2 bar to go and we have Pet-Nat on tap! My ulterior motive. Failing that it will be just Flat-Nat, or Still-nat, in which case we will call it "Crosby – Still & Nat" – Darkstar. The kids will love it.



The key thing you learnt after 2018 vintage?

“That we get better at what we do every year. There’s no such thing as a normal vintage on a small island in the Pacific”

Man O’ War

Waiheke Island, New Zealand

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

2018 has finally come to a close, the earliest harvest on record and one of the longest!

How did this year compare with other years?

Similar to the two previous years in that warm ocean temperatures have created tropical, cyclonic weather events during the harvest months.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

2018 is a very stylish vintage, with really great acidity and punchy flavours in the whites, and fruit-forward reds with plenty of structure.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

Straight away the white blends are looking great, particularly the Pinot Gris and the Gravestone Sauvignon Semillon. The reds will take a while to show their full potential, but it’s looking like a great vintage for our Bordeaux varietals, despite the challenging weather conditions.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

Pretty much equal, great looking wines across the board.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Checking the press in full kilt attire, my wife and I got married on the first day of picking.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

Other than a couple of cyclones nothing

particularly disastrous occurred – nothing that a cold beer couldn’t fix.

One fun fact to share from this year’s vintage.

We always have fun; every day in the winery is about making sure we work hard but enjoy ourselves – that’s a fact.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

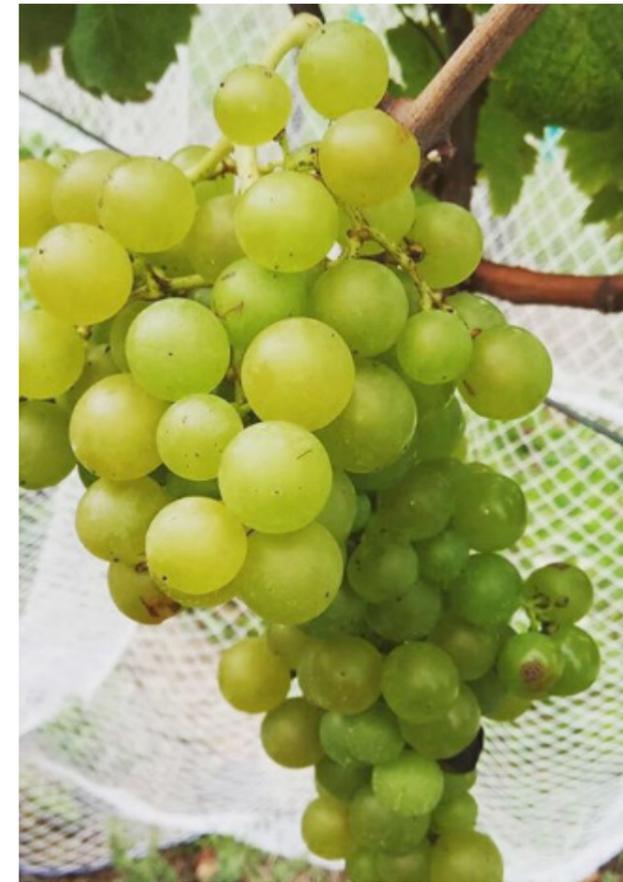
Pizza, we make lots of pizza.

What song sums up this year’s vintage?

Don’t Stop Believing, by Journey covered by Steel Panther.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Success, relief and exhausted.



Urlar Farms

Wairarapa, New Zealand

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

The 2018 vintage has come and gone like no other. The fruit has come in clean, and we are really pleased with how the wines are looking at this stage. The heat of the Summer has given a more fruit-driven style, with softer tannins, but at this stage the wines are looking pretty and aromatic.

How did this year compare with other years?

We came out of a very wet Winter with plenty of soil moisture. The Spring started with few frosts, and continued like this throughout the season. November and December were very warm, and we went from 10 days behind to two weeks in front. Flowering happened in ideal conditions. January, February and March were the wettest for a very long time; however, after the rain we returned to very warm temperatures with the summer now officially the warmest since 1943. Definitely not the norm, but we're not complaining!

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

The wines are very aromatic and quite fruit-driven at this time. Tannins are softer than normal, but at this stage we are very excited, especially for the Pinot Noir that has beautiful soft, velvety tannins. The whites generally have lifted aromatic fruit with plenty of length, and are already weighty in the palate.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

The Pinot Noir looks to be very interesting, as does the Sauvignon Blanc. It is so early to judge though, as they change so much over the next few months in tank and barrel.

The key thing you learnt after 2018 vintage?

“Every year is different, which is great”

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Julien Trimbach sweating while digging out the Pinot Noir fermenters. You can tell he is used to whites.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

Yes! The fridge plant stopped working right in the middle of vintage. Deep breaths, no panicking and praying that the fridge plant specialist could get it going, which after four hours he did!

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

The cows escaped into the vineyard and it took 15 pickers to get them back out.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

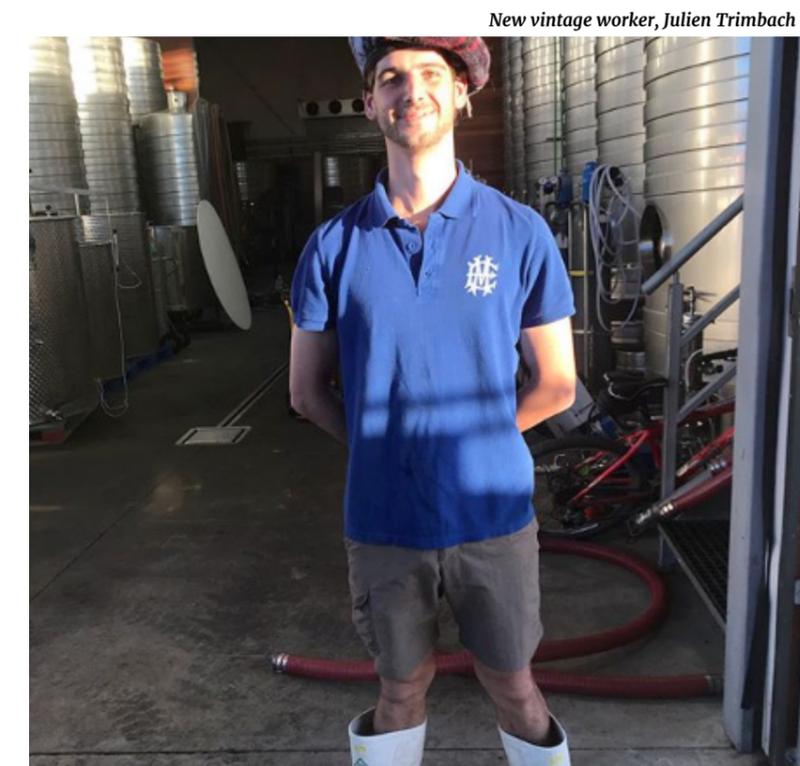
Too much to go through here. But Davina's homemade cheese muffins were loved. The wild foraged soups and salads. Mostly plantain, dandelion and chicory. YUM!

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Pink Floyd, Money.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Bloody fantastic.



New vintage worker, Julien Trimbach





Yealands Estate

Marlborough

Another vintage completed here at Yealands Estate, and another year where we continue to see an improvement in the overall quality of our wines, and gain a greater understanding of the challenging but uniquely exciting micro-climates we find here at the Seaview Vineyard in the Awarere Valley.

The growing season started warm and dry, which aided nice even flowering and ultimately balanced vines with the right amount of crop to see them through to harvest. Spring and summer were wetter than usual but warm, with spring-like growth throughout the summer, resulting in an increased focus on canopy management with extra trimming and leaf plucking required to maintain our style in the finished wines.

The warmer weather meant we started our harvest mid-March, around two weeks earlier than in previous years, with some fantastic Awarere Valley Pinot Noir, Grüner Veltliner and some earlier blocks of Pinot Gris all making it into the winery in superb condition and full of ripe varietal characters.

Whilst the region experienced unsettled weather periods over the typical harvesting window, our early start meant we were well ahead and in a great position with our team and resources to ensure our entire crop was harvested in advance of the mid-April rain.

We harvested some beautiful Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris in early April, with the Seaview Vineyard again proving to be the jewel in the crown. The

blocks were harvested full of flavour, with naturally balanced acidity and lovely weight. Once in the winery, we kept each vineyard block separate to ensure the terroir from our vineyard was given the chance to show its true potential, providing the ultimate blending options each year, allowing consistency in style and quality across all of our wines.

Now that fermentation is complete, the grading and blending process has begun, revealing some exceptional wines in tank. The highlights are Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Pinot Gris, all demonstrating great varietal expression and concentration. We are continuing to push the boundaries in the winery, and this year have fermented a number of wines in concrete eggs, producing outstanding texture and weight. These wines will be released later in the year, along with our inaugural Marlborough Chardonnay produced from twenty-two year old vines in the upper Awarere Valley, so keep an eye out for these.

We are really excited about releasing the new vintage wines this year, and believe we have something to suit everyone, and every occasion!

Cheers,

Jeff Fyfe
Chief Winemaker

Kleinood Winery

Stellenbosch, South Africa

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

The harvest was extremely long but went surprisingly well. After the gruelling, dry summer it was wonderful to see the beautiful tight bunches and small, intense berries. In fact, the vineyards showed no signs of stress; all ferments were healthy and fermented dry.

How did this year compare with other years?

We cropped at exactly the same level as 2017 and picked 700kg more. The final period of ripening was relatively cool with no heatwaves and still no rain. The wines have very fine tannins and great fruit.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

We anticipate all the wines to be very well balanced and elegant, and plan to use less new wood for the barrel maturation regime to enhance these qualities.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

It is difficult to say. The 2018 Viognier has been blended with the Roussanne and is already quite special, with lower acids than 2017, but beautiful structure. The rosé is also very special, but I am still looking forward very much to the Syrah, because of the exceptional fruit and great harvesting conditions.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

I suspect that 2018 might be especially good for the whites, but it is still too early to really make that call.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Bringing in the pea-sized Shiraz berries from block

10 – the smallest berries ever picked on Kleinood and anticipating the intensity and complexity they will bring to the Tamboerskloof Syrah 2018.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

I wasn't going to spill the beans, but this disaster came as an almighty surprise, when, after a long day in the winery, I drove the tractor and trailer filled with skins to the compost yard and promptly rolled the trailer on the compost heap. I never thought this was possible. There were no injuries except for my badly bruised ego.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

The best things happen when we least expect them, especially when nature is in charge.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

That one must never underestimate people. The effort from everybody on the farm was exceptional. They just threw themselves at the job and did what needed to be done with all the energy and enthusiasm one could hope for.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

Lamb shanks, mashed potatoes with truffle oil, fresh salads from the garden and figs from the farm with ginger infused with honey from our own hives. All leftovers after a tasting with Tim Atkin earlier in the day. It was just brilliant.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Intensity, technical, exceptional.



What song sums up this year's vintage?

**“19th Nervous Breakdown
- Rolling Stones”**



Capture the vintage in three words...

“Dry. Humble. Patience.”



Ken Forrester

Stellenbosch, South Africa

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

It was a tricky season: the drought certainly had an impact, and the overall cooler weather slowed ripening.

How did this year compare with other years?

In some respects the harvest – especially early white cultivars – was very late in comparison with previous years. One of our MCC blocks was harvested a month later. Overall the effect of the drought had a crop loss between 20% and 25% with exceptional quality.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

The season was initially characterised by low pH wine with good ageing potential. Fruit and colour intensity was typical and extracts were higher than usual.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

The FMC – which was five selections of the best ripe fruit across a one-month window.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

Both seem to look fantastic at this stage. The whites were ripe at lower balling readings and the extract and concentration of the reds were really

special.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

An incident with an off-duty health and safety officer – off the record!

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

Field blend project with four Bordeaux grapes that involved all staff members in picking, crushing and a micro-ferment (just one barrel).

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Wine grapes have the ability to survive (thrive) with less water and still produce high quality.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

Cape Wagyu burgers shared with a team of local and international rugby players.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Another one bites the dust!

Thelema

Stellenbosch, South Africa

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

2018 was a vintage of old with a later start, however there was a very even transition between the ripening of the different varieties. This allowed for ideal processing conditions at the winery for our cellar crew.

How did this year compare with other years?

Due to the drought, the harvest started about 10 days later than previous vintages. Delayed ripening caused a bit of start-stop scenario for our vineyard staff at the beginning of harvest, after which the vineyards found their rhythm and we were able to get all the fruit into the cellar at optimal ripeness levels.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Excellent phenolic ripeness was achieved this season for both white and red varieties, especially with the reds being able to spend a little more time hanging in the vineyards than usual. These ripeness levels were also reached at lower alcohol potentials, as the fruit in general was optimally ripe at lower sugar levels this vintage.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

The Chardonnays from both Thelema and Sutherland are looking extremely promising, as is the Thelema Cabernet Sauvignon and the Sutherland Pinot Noir.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

We expect great red and white wines from 2018 vintage as ripening was slow and steady. The fruit showed great concentration of flavour at the time of harvest due to smaller berries, which was a direct knock-on effect from the drought as the vineyards compensated versus the dry conditions.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Starting up a brand new press does not often happen as they cost a bit of cash these days! However, we had the privilege this season to baptise our new bigger press "Biggie", which made the world of difference to us in the cellar.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Hail caused serious damage to some staff vehicles, not surprising seeing as though the hail was the size of golf balls!

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Major Lazer & DJ Maphorisa – Particula (ft. Nasty C, Ice Prince, Patoranking & Jidenna) as it was often playing in the cellar.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Hurry up and wait...(three words).

Most memorable food moment?

“The impromptu quick braai was always welcome, along with the odd De Vrij Burger”





A crushed pomegranate to represent the start of the new harvest

Morgenster

Stellenbosch, South Africa

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

This was one of those harvests that define you. Coming out of a very dry Winter and Spring – there were record-breaking low levels of rain for a three-year running cycle – we definitely started off hesitantly. There was the positive fact that budding was slightly later than normal, maybe signalling a return to ‘normal’ more ‘predictable’ weather patterns? The positivity didn’t last long as we had a very dry January, and the sugars rose quickly. Morgenster has the capacity to extract water out of the Lourens River for irrigation, but how do you extract water from a river with no water in it? That’s where we were at one stage. But then we had a bit of grace! A nice 20mm shower in the middle of February, and that was our turning point.

The temperatures started dropping and nights were plain cold! Sugar accumulation almost stood still for a few weeks and the harvest pulled itself together. We had a great year! Fruit expression and structure are hallmarks and rarely do they go together with as much gusto as in 2018. It was a long year, the early fruit was early and the late fruit was very late, but everything was good. The patient winemakers would be the good winemakers this year. Here’s to a great 2018!

How did this year compare with other years?

A bit of a ‘back to normal’ of sorts. Fruit, was harvested later than the last three vintages, and quality was up.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Expect wines with more vigour and body. I think 2018 will be one to remember.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

I have two I am very excited about: First Morgenster Estate Reserve 2018. I have some gorgeous building blocks! Morgenster Nebbiolo 2018 is also the best I have ever seen it!

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

I think this was more a red vintage.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

For this drought-stricken vintage, it was any day that rained, especially the mid-Feb rain. It was glorious!

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

I didn’t mind at all picking in the rain.

One fun fact to share from this year’s vintage.

Semillon is extremely snotty when pressed, even just a little. Add some stalks.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

When pushed to the extreme some people buckle, and others flourish. Maybe it’s a case of not being able to control what you can’t control and just having the conviction to trust and let go.

What song sums up this year’s vintage?

Waiting - Greenday

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Ready, set, go!

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?



Martin Meinert

Devon Valley, South Africa

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

Despite the challenges of water shortages associated with a drought that has spanned from 2015 to present, we have been blessed with a truly remarkable vintage and in all likelihood, what will be declared as one of the greatest vintages following on 2009 and 2013. Drier conditions have resulted in small, compact, healthy bunches yielding incredible depth and complexity of flavours.

How did this year compare with other years?

Personally, it was a vintage where I anticipated challenges in the cellar particularly with fermentation and getting the wines to ferment to dryness, however, we have been fortunate to not have experienced one tricky ferment. Our meticulous approach to the harvesting process and individual berry sorting appears to be yielding very positive results.

On the reds, we adopted a leisurely approach to extraction as Mother Nature had taken care of all the hard work, producing tiny berries of intense concentration, affording us the opportunity to spend time around the braai. Most harvests are characterised by very little spare time as 16-hour days, seven days a week, are the norm, but 2018 was certainly an exception to that rule.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

Incredible generosity and purity of fruit on the whites, while I anticipate the reds being slower out the starting blocks, due to the tiny berries across all cultivars resulting in generous extraction and tighter wines. I believe it will be a vintage where

winemakers adopting a gentler approach to extraction will be rewarded with balanced wines of incredible longevity. Overall, I anticipate 2018 being a 95+ point vintage.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

We have started working with an old Chenin Blanc and Muscat d'Alexandrie bushvine block from the Swartland. The Chenin Blanc was fermented in a Nomblot cement egg and is already showing incredible purity of fruit and linearity – I can't wait to bottle this wine later in the year! The Muscat was harvested at 12.5% potential alcohol and fermented in seasoned large oak barrels, the intention being to include a portion of the Muscat in the Chenin Blanc blend, and at this early stage it is already showing its generous Muscat character with a deft lightness on the palate – the perfect summertime wine.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

Most certainly both red and whites. For the reds, I believe the key aspects were the timing of harvest and extraction. In the case of the former, winemakers and viticulturists are afforded a narrow window of phenolic ripeness and postponing this by even a day or two could result in the wines becoming overblown. Balance is the key to crafting great wines and a deft hand at extraction this year will most certainly reward.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Waking up at 3am to harvest Syrah from the

Hemel en Aarde valley and being greeted by the sweet smell of rain in Stellenbosch – technically it was drizzle, but when you've been without rain for months even drizzle feels like rain...

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

We nearly ran out of beer mid-harvest, but fortunately that crisis was averted with a quick trip to Stellenbosch.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

Despite the challenges of any vintage and the mechanisms we put in place to overcome them, Mother Nature makes the final call. Sometimes you need to close your eyes (I wouldn't advise this while walking down the stairs of my cellar though) and just wing it.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

I was unaware winemakers dine during harvest – I will be sure to try this next year...

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Coldplay's "Strawberry Swing" – I live by the motto 'it's such a perfect day'.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Surprising, rewarding and perseverance.



“It takes a lot of beer during harvest to make great wine”





FRAM

Citrusdal Mountain, South Africa

The 2018 harvest will be remembered in the dry land areas as a year that had very low yields. This was caused by a dry winter in 2017, that was on the back of a little below average 2016 and a very dry 2015. This resulted in the Pinotage, Cinsault, Shiraz and Dry White production all being a lot less than in normal years, but such is the life of a winemaker, or anyone else who is dependent on Mother Nature.

Often in a dry vintage you have to be concerned about the balance of the fruit, because a smaller crop not only means more concentration of all the good things in a grape, but also a great concentration of everything that might not be ripe, or overripe, or out of balance. Looking back at the finished wines now, I am very grateful that I can say that in 2018 we got a lot more of the good concentration, and not grapes that were out of balance.

In short, I am glad to report that a lot of my fears in mid-January heading into the harvest never materialised. Part of the reason would be that this year's ripening season was moderate to warm, quite normal, and not as hot as the 2016 vintage that was very early after a 2015 winter similar to 2017. We harvested the Pinotage and Cinsault during the last week of January, the Chenin Blanc in the second week of February, and the Shiraz and Chardonnay in the third week of February.

The ripeness levels at harvest were all close to the norm, with the Pinotage coming in at 14-14.4% ABV, the Cinsault at 12.6%-12.95%, the Shiraz at just similar levels around 13%, and the Chenin finishing fermentation at somewhere between 13%-13.5%. All of these wines are showing good depth of fruit volume, whilst retaining a liveliness and fresh backbone. One of the surprising aspects from the vintage is the fantastic acidity and relative low pHs that the final wines have after malolactic fermentation. Often in drier years the pH and acidity are two of the things that are out of balance and can make your life quite difficult.

Bottom line: 2018 was difficult and small, but kick ass quality. BUY IT WHEN YOU SEE IT!!

Trapiche

Mendoza, Argentina

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

The 2018 harvest was outstanding, since it rendered high quality and, fortunately, it yielded volume within the average of Argentina.

How did this year compare with other years?

Memorable. It was one of the best harvests of the 21st century – the best of the last decade.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

The descriptors are definitely elegance and concentration that capture the quality of this harvest: fresh and vivid white wines, and juicy red wines with fresh fruit, excellent tannins and fruit concentration.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

It is undoubtedly a harvest to taste Malbec from the Uco Valley.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

It was a harvest with unique characteristics for both types of wines, especially Chardonnay and Malbec.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

Early in the morning of Sunday 25th March the first frost arrived, and we managed to organise the team to harvest during the entire day and save the production without the quality being affected. It was a stressful day, but we

were able to demonstrate the value of teamwork.

Did anything disastrous/unexpected happen? If so, how did you react?

A Sunday morning in February, we found one of our llamas dead in our biodynamic vineyard that surrounds our winery. She died during the night while giving birth to her “baby Chulengo”, and we could not help her although every safe precaution was taken to monitor our pregnant animals. It was really sorrowful.

One fun fact to share from this year’s vintage.

When an intern was trying to open the sampler valve to take a sample from a wine tank, his face was literally splashed with deep-coloured Malbec.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

There is always hope to constantly improve our wines and learn something new. We never stop learning. We continued experiencing harvest dates (fruit/ root) in our biodynamic vineyard and work in white wines fermented on skins with great results.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

When chef Lucas Bustos and myself designed “Vendimia Menu” for our restaurant Espacio Trapiche to be served during harvest.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Splendid, intense, unforgettable.

What song sums up this year’s vintage?

“Bella Ciao – Modern City Ramblers”





Capture the vintage in three words...

“Excellent. Powerful. Qualitative.”

Bodega El Esteco

Salta, Argentina

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

This was a spectacular harvest in terms of quality and quantity, and our expectations were fully met. We had a cool summer that offered a slow ripening process. April was warmer and everything brought great advantages to outstanding quality. Low rainfall, less than the 200ml annual average. Stunning varietal quality across Malbec, Cabernet and Tannat, as well as white varieties like Torrontés and Chardonnay.

How did this year compare with other years?

Cafayate offers reliable geographical and climate characteristics year after year. Highlighting the difference resulting from this year is somewhat difficult, as every year is very positive. In that sense, 2018 is no exception to the average of excellent years.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

In the case of whites, their natural acidity that makes them very crisp on the palate, with the presence of floral notes this year, when compared to previous ones. The reds, on their part, offer plenty of colour and expressive character on the palate, highlighting their powerful fruit.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

The Cabernets from Chañar Punco and the Malbec and Chardonnay from Cafayate.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

This harvest offered very good results, both for whites and reds. Whites: Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Torrontés. Reds: Malbec and Cabernet.

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

The first two-thirds of the harvest were absolutely spectacular, showing good health in February, with the steady arrival of grapes at the winery until 15th March.

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

On Saturdays, we would normally share a wine and cheese platter with the team. Those days, we would outline our plan for the following week, but we would also make sure to take some time off to relax and chat about our everyday lives for a moment.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

We need to keep an eye open at all times. Some of our plots truly surprised us, with their grapes arriving 15 days earlier than expected and still yielding good results. The vineyard holds the potential for great surprises, which is why you need to scout it thoroughly every time in order to make good decisions.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

We have a small estate called La Turbina (“The Turbin”, in Spanish), at 1800 masl. Our most enjoyable culinary moment happened when some visitors from abroad came over and we prepared empanadas in a mud oven, to be followed by a slow-roasted goat and Andean papines (small potatoes), all of which was served on a grilling plank.

What song sums up this year's vintage?

You shook me all night long – AC/DC, Live at River Plate.

Viña Leyda

Leyda Valley, Chile

Overall, how has the 2018 vintage gone?

So far the results have been great. It was a good season for Leyda as there were cold days and foggy mornings during January, February and even March. The ripening process was very slow so the harvest was delayed for 10 days compared to normal seasons. Due to this, the aromatic profile is very intense in all the varieties. There was total absence of rainfall so the cluster health is great.

How did this year compare with other years?

In a way this year was very similar to 2015's harvest, as there was cold weather during January and February, and in terms of the grapes' characteristics the white varieties are herbal with citrus notes and the reds have an acidic fruit profile. A big difference from 2017 was that this March was cooler, meaning the wines will have lower alcohol, greater vibrancy and aromatic expression.

To summarise: 2013 was a very interesting harvest, with complex wines and a cold climate vintage; 2014 was warmer and wines had more black fruit profile, concentrated and big palates. On the other side, 2015 was a cold one, with herbal character, low alcohol and fresh wine; 2016 had normal weather, nice complexity and elegant wines; while 2017 was warmer and it was three weeks earlier, with creamy and round palate wines.

What can we expect from the wines as a whole?

The wines will be very expressive, fresh and vibrant on the palate, with low alcohol levels. 2018 is a great quality vintage, with lower yields as well. Not only are we getting strong character and flavours, but also good length and concentration.

Which wine are you most looking forward to trying?

I'm looking forward to tasting all of our Pinot Noirs! These are the first vintages that come as a result of the soil research we held two years ago to identify the best soils for this variety. Also, this year we tried fermentations with a higher percentage of whole clusters, so I'm excited to see the final results.

Will this vintage be better for reds or whites?

So far I would say it's a great year for Pinot Noir. It's not easy to have a vintage where you are able to get fine wines with great aromatic expression together with structured palates. I think we have everything in 2018's Pinot!

Tell us your most memorable moment from the 2018 vintage.

The most memorable moment I had during this vintage was tasting

Sauvignon Blanc grapes in El Maiten vineyard in the Leyda Valley; different clones, different exposure. I still remember the smile on my face just imagining fermenting those juices. Really great quality fruit this year!

One fun fact to share from this year's vintage.

One fun fact was when I was driving to Leyda on a Saturday morning with my oldest son – Jose Domingo, eight years – to taste Syrah berries and to organise harvest dates. All of the sudden he looked at me and asked:

"Mom why don't you plant Garnacha here?"

To which I replied: "It's an absolutely great idea!"

It's just fantastic to see that in some way and without even noticing you transmit the passion in your work to your children.

The key thing you learnt after completing the 2018 vintage.

What I've learned is that although Chile has great climate conditions that are mostly stable and with not much rain, there have been stronger variations from one harvest to another. I've seen at least five different harvest seasons' weather here. It's really challenging and exciting, because you are working with nature, so there is no recipe that you can apply exactly the same to every vintage. This fact makes you very attentive, alert, analytical and overall, very observant of every single detail. I think this is what makes our career so challenging, and so passionate. It always demands 100% of your attention.

Most memorable food moment from the vintage?

We make lovely pairings with local ingredients, like wheat stew which is almost as creamy as risotto but spicier. It's made with three different kinds of mushrooms. This dish paired with Leyda Lot 21 Pinot Noir is the best.

Another one is the fresh local strawberries grown in Leyda Valley with Cahuil sea salt. You put a little bit on top of the strawberry and pair it with our Leyda Garuma Single Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc. It enhances the acidity and minerality of the wine. Great experience!

What song sums up this year's vintage?

Any song from Coldplay. They are all inspiring, magic, very melodic, just like our grapes. I listened to their songs this whole harvest.

Capture the vintage in just three words.

Cool climate, minerality and elegance.



Most memorable food moment?

“Fresh, local strawberries grown in Leyda Valley with Cahuil sea salt.”

