

## TAPANAPPA 2016 VINTAGE REPORT.

### *“AN EXTRAORDINARY VINTAGE”.*

The final barriques of 2016 vintage wines have been filled awaiting the finish of malolactic fermentation. In our vineyards in the Piccadilly Valley, at Parawa, on the Fleurieu Peninsula and at Wrattobully it has been an abundant vintage of full flavoured ripe fruit wines, the reds displaying bright, intense colours.

2016 vintage was dry, very warm, moderate (no heatwaves), early and compressed between regions and varieties.

The tropical rain arrived at the right moment in February, after veraison and well before harvest, correcting an otherwise extremely dry “El Nino” vintage.

2016 vintage was harvested just as one of the strongest El Nino Oscillations recorded began to wane and the consequences of this event are extraordinary 7 month growing season heat summations for all of our vineyards, the highest on record by far, comparing vintages back to 1950.

Despite the outlier nature of the 2016 vintage there was an absence of extreme events and the first three months of the growing season to December were very warm, accelerating budburst, vine growth, flowering and fruit set. These unusual conditions predicated a larger than average crop and an early and compressed vintage. After December the temperatures moderated to closer to average for the critical fruit ripening months.

#### THE TIERS VINEYARD, PICCADILLY VALLEY.

The heat summation for the 2016 growing season at the Tiers Vineyard in the Piccadilly Valley was an extraordinary 1539°C days compared to the last 12 years average of 1235°C days. The 2016 heat summation is way ahead of 2010 at 1360°C days, 2007 at 1327°C days and 2013 at 1317°C days as the next bracket of warmer than average vintages.

2016 vintage was uncharted territory for me even after 47 vintages. Despite the persistent warmth there were no extreme heat events and only 13 days between October 1 and April 30 exceeded 30°C and only two of these exceeded 36°C.

We harvested Tiers on the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of March, about ten days ahead of average.

The sugar levels were very moderate at 23 to 23.5 Brix, the acids surprisingly held up at 6.5gpl (2 grams of malic) and pH's remained in control at 3.2.

2016 Tiers Chardonnay is bubbling away in barrique and promises to be of typical Tiers intensity and texture despite the atypical vintage 2016.

#### FOGGY HILL VINEYARD, PARAWA, SOUTHERN FLEURIEU.

The heat summation for Foggy Hill growing season was an extraordinary 1439°C days versus the 13 year average of 1200.6°C days. The 2016 summation easily eclipses the next warmest seasons of 2013 at 1301°C days, 2010 at 1283°C days and 2007 at 1249° C days.

As with Tiers there were no heat waves and the temperature only exceeded 30°C 11 times and only twice exceeded 36°C.

Foggy Hill was on average 3.3°C cooler than Tiers during the day and 2.7°C warmer at night reflecting its extremely maritime climate just 8 kilometers from the Great Southern Ocean.

Because of the perfect fruit set, Foggy Hill initially had a crop in excess of 10 tonnes/hectare. We cut off half the fruit just at veraison in late January and still harvested 7 tonnes/hectare of lovely coloured and flavoured fruit.

Foggy Hill was harvested in two successive weeks. The first picking was on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of March. Standing on the back of the grape trailer extracting leaves and second crop bunches as usual I was constantly tasting the harvested fruit. At the end of a long day I had decided there were too many green flavours and tannins and that the balance of the vineyard would be harvested a week later on the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of March. The intervening week was cool and overcast but the sugar went up a bit and the acid moderated.

Final analysis of Foggy Hill Pinot Noir at harvest was 24 Brix, pH 3.6 and acid of 7gpl. Foggy Hill has made lovely wine in an extraordinary vintage.

#### WHALEBONE VINEYARD, WRATTONBULLY.

With the Tapanappa winery requiring my full attention leading up to and through the 2016 vintage, I very much relied on Xavier's management of the Whalebone Vineyard to nurture this distinguished site to achieve its optimal terroir expression.

The weather stations at Whalebone tell us that the 2016 vintage there was just as extraordinary as at Tiers and Foggy Hill.

A heat summation of 1801°C days in 2016 far exceeded the 1608°C days of 2010, the 1602°C days of 2013 and the 13-year average of 1479°C days. 25 days over 30°C and 9 days over 36°C are indicative of a hot vintage in Wrattobully but still cooler than Coonawarra that recorded a heat summation of 1842°C days.

2016 Whalebone Merlot was harvested on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of March and the Whalebone Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc were harvested on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March. From across the road, the Crayeres Vineyard Shiraz was harvested on the 16<sup>th</sup> of March.

I am delighted with the colours and flavours of the 2016 Whalebone Vineyard reds in barrique.

## WHAT NEXT?

What happens next in the great weather/climate game is less uncertain than it was in 2016. El Nino is quickly breaking down to a neutral condition, a normal pattern that usually lasts one vintage but can last 3. The next vintage is likely to be hot after good winter rains but the one after that could be full-blown cool El Nino as in 2009 and 2011 following the 2006/2007 El Nino drought.

We live on the edge of the weather engines of the world, the Great Southern Ocean and the Pacific Ocean. We get an up front and personal view of the changing moods of these great bodies of water as we deal with the weather cycles they impose on us, a much more pertinent and immediate challenge for vignerons than the slower and longer term effects of climate change, as important as dealing with climate change is for our grandchildren.

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