

MOUNT EDWARD

Vintage 2007.....well in some ways this was the hardest vintage that many in the area had come across. At Mount Edward it proved somewhat of a turning point and a vindication of how we manage our winegrowing whilst at the same time reminding us all that we are farmers as well as winemakers – hence the term winegrowers.

The 2007 vintage started back in winter 2006 where we experienced one of our driest winters for some time, which also meant very little snow so grumpy winemakers as well.

This led into a cool but early spring start for the vines. Vines at this point need plenty of warmth and some moisture to start growing in a healthy manner – this was not apparent across all vineyards in the area at all.

The region then experienced both the onset of an early summer in late Nov/Dec and at the same time a couple of nasty frosts pre Christmas. Some cold weather over early December – our flowering period – before summer finally arrived for a glorious patch of weather in late January early February. Autumn approached with a reasonably settled period of ripening, an early Easter and consequently early picking across the region.

What we saw in the region as a whole were vineyards that showed growing and water stress as a result of spring weather, poor flowering and consequential bad set as a result of the cold weather around spring and December, then uneven set and ripening in the summer/autumn period which by contrast was very warm.

People tended to overcompensate for the dry weather by over watering – which in turn cooled the ground further. Uneven fruit set then made it difficult to achieve a sense of good balance and with the small berries a quick onset of harvest then ensured

So – what did we see in our own vineyards ?

Well we certainly had the same weather however over this whole time, despite the dry conditions, reduced our irrigation to a third of the previous year's addition. We did see smaller berry sizes due to the set however we did not see the same levels of stress either. Our vines coped remarkably well with the conditions and achieved good balance and even ripening as a result.

We believe that the changes we have implemented in the vineyards – now bio certified into full organic conversion – have already impacted on our vines !, we have not doubt that we are on the right track with Tim suggesting that we may be able to cut our irrigation completely on the Morrison vineyard in the next 2-3 years. This we see as important as it will encourage the vine roots deeper still, insulating them further against stress as they tap into water far below and accessing nutrients and minerals that give the fruit its own unique flavours.

Soils on the top layers – regardless of what sub region – have been borne by wind, rivers, floods etc. These all have similar qualities, so by irrigating the vines the root systems become lazy never exploring the depths, the resulting flavours then run the danger of all have similar characters.

The vintage was not without its troubles though, not to escape totally unscathed however – we did get smacked by a frost in our Pisa Terrace vineyard – a very sad event – and not one we could avoid either – when your number is up it would seem.

So – reduced crop for us 2007 – for Pinot Noir especially – however the wines we do have show excellent texture and balance – not hugely structural like 2006 but more in the direction of charm and grace, a good result as these qualities are a lost art these days.