

Marlborough Vintage Review 2011

Tessa Nicholson

The 2011 vintage was one of the earliest since the very warm 2006, yet initial estimations weren't quite so positive. Bud burst for Sauvignon Blanc was a little behind previous years, initially leading to speculation that flowering would also be slightly later. But warmer than average temperatures from November 2010 on, led directly to an increase in Growing Degree Days (GDD) which in turn saw a shortened and successful flowering period.

Rain in mid December 2010 and early January 2011 ensured the vines were set up for the warmer and drier months that followed. Crops were slightly higher than average, but given the market pressure and global economic situation, growers acted on advice and considerable crop thinning and canopy management was undertaken throughout the province. This paid off with the lower yields on the vines ripening evenly.

As the summer turned into the typical Marlborough Indian summer, the fruit was able to be harvested at lower than average sugars whilst maintaining phenolic ripeness. This led to intensely flavoured wines, with more restrained alcohol levels, particularly in terms of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

The 2011 Sauvignon Blanc was described as having ripened with very good flavours, ahead of sugars and with outstanding balance.