

Clare Valley Vintage Report 2023

Patience, crop management and keeping a watchful eye on the weather was key to success in vintage 2023.

The 2022 winter-spring period was the wettest since 2016, with close to 700mm falling in the second half of the year which, coupled with cool conditions in September and October, led to budburst being late for most varieties and slower than normal spring growth. Therefore, flowering was three weeks later than average in early December, rather than mid-November, and reminiscent of the 'old days', harvest began in early March.

The growing season was one with challenging conditions. The wetter than average spring and early summer, along with some small hail flurries, made for increased disease pressure. Cool weather conditions and solid crops slowed ripening, but minimal rain from Christmas until the end of March kept any disease at bay and led to a sound harvest of pristine, quintessential Clare Valley Riesling, showing fantastic flavour ripeness and natural acidity.

Rain in April delayed the harvest of red varieties and increased disease pressure, especially for late Botrytis infection. Management of crops was challenging in the latter part of the season with some of the heavier crops struggling to fully ripen and wineries leaving some of these hanging, rather than picking lower quality fruit.

Seasonal and market conditions have given winemakers the luxury of selecting the best parcels of red fruit which will result in some exceptional quality red wines, with Cabernet Sauvignon looking to be the standout. The long ripening period has led to complexity of flavours and has produced an elegant style of red wine for which the Clare Valley is known.

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