

VINTAGE REPORT

2022

SOUTHERN

HEMISPHERE



ALLIANCE
WINE 

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SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

AS WE ENTER A POST-PANDEMIC WORLD AND THE SECOND HALF OF THE YEAR, THE DEFINING FEATURE OF THE INDUSTRY REVOLVES AROUND INFLATION COSTS, A DRY GOODS SHORTAGE AND SIGNIFICANT PROBLEM IN THE GLOBAL SUPPLY CHAIN. COVID HEADLINES ARE REPLACED WITH A 'COST OF LIVING CRISIS' DRIVEN BY A MULTITUDE OF FACTORS WHICH WILL TAKE SOME TIME TO EASE, HOWEVER THERE ARE SOME POSITIVES TO DRAW ON.

NEW ZEALAND 2022 VOLUMES HAVE BOUNCED BACK, SOUTH AFRICA HAS GOOD AVAILABILITY, QUALITY, AND COMPETITIVE PRICING, WHILST ELSEWHERE DESPITE LOWER VOLUMES WINES ARE BEING DESCRIBED AS 'CONCENTRATED', WITH 'GREAT NATURAL ACIDITY', 'LOWER ALCOHOL' AND 'EXPRESSIVE' ... ONLY TIME WILL TELL.

OIV FIGURES PUBLISHED IN APRIL 2022 PUT GLOBAL WINE PRODUCTION AT 260 MILLION HECTOLITERS (2021 VINTAGE), IN LINE WITH 2020 AND SLIGHTLY DOWN ON THE TEN-YEAR AVERAGE, WITH SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE VOLUMES OFF-SETTING THE IMPACT OF EUROPEAN FROSTS. GLOBAL CONSUMPTION ON THE OTHER HAND SITS AT 236 MILLION HECTOLITERS, UP 0.7% FROM 2020. HALTING THREE YEARS OF DECLINE AND EVIDENCE THAT WINE WAS KEEPING US ALL SANE THROUGHOUT THE PANDEMIC..



AUSTRALIA

A smaller harvest than 2021, with both export volume and value down, due to high import tariffs imposed on bottled wine to China, freight issues and the ongoing effects of COVID. Some small growers are struggling with lack of sales to China and removal of vines and turning land over to farming are viable options to ensure economic survival. Sales of wine to Russia was also banned on 7 April. Cost of living increases, rising costs of dry goods, fuel and winery additives is putting pressure on cash-flow; with the Reserve Bank of Australia increasing interest rates for the first time in 11 years.

THISTLEDOWN WINES, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

“While Vintage 2021 will be remembered as one of the most perfect ripening seasons, Vintage 2022 is close on its heels, though the early season was very cool by South Australian standards. Remarkably, given the horrendous floods that devastated the East Coast, the 2022 season witnessed below average levels of rainfall. Indeed, to the end of May, the average rainfall in McLaren Vale should be 160mm but we’re only on 100mm so far. We desperately need some good winter rains to set the vines up for the 2023 season.

One of the worrying characteristics this season is the growing threat of hail. Frost has often been a threat, particularly in the Adelaide Hills, Barossa and Langhorne Creek but this year it wreaked havoc on more than one occasion in the Barossa and in the Riverland. Many of the vineyards that we source alternative varieties from in the Riverland were all but destroyed for this season. The frequency of these events is surely another symptom of the building climate crisis.

But that said, South Australia was largely blessed in 2022 and given the world events taking place during vintage, we were happy not to have to worry unduly about damaging weather.

Yield will be a little down on 2021 I would imagine and for our beloved Grenache, much depended on

time of pruning and flowering as to how successful this year will have been. Those that flowered early, often did so in cool, windy conditions which led to bunch “shatter” and very low yields. Those in cooler, more elevated site with later pruning, tended to do better and in some cases produced average to above average yields.

The consistently cool season (none of the usual heat spikes) meant that 2022 was a waiting game and many vineyards were picked 2 weeks later than the modern normal. Cooler conditions also maintained higher acids and lower pH levels which combined with the longer season has led to wines of vibrancy, aroma and structure. It was also noticeable this year that, given we were harvesting and fermenting in cooler temperatures, our wild ferments were much slower and many wines will



have spent more time on skins as a result.

Thankfully, the late arrival of 2 new Nico Vela concrete pyramids, coincided with a late season, otherwise they would have been a little early for 2023! They were immediately pressed in to action on our favourite batch of Grenache where we also experimented with one batch held longer on skins. With each vintage, as we get more control and precision, we increase the number of variables to keep pushing our goals of energy, texture and place”.

- Giles Cooke MW, Winemaker

MAJELLA WINES, COONAWARRA, SA

“The vintage started in March with average volumes on the whites but Shiraz looks to be a bit below average. Weather wise it’s been a good summer. Not too hot, but quite dry. Thankfully we have plenty of water if we need to use it, but that really hasn’t been the case this season. The crop has ripened on time, colours and flavours look to be as good as ever, maybe even a little better. Don’t forget we’re in Coonawarra which is really one of the great places to grow grapes. The vineyards look well! ...confidant of a great year”.

- Brian ‘Prof’ Lynn

Majella’s vintage began in the second week of March with the harvesting of our Riesling. We then began harvesting our Shiraz in the last weeks of March, moving on to harvesting the Merlot and starting on the Cabernet Sauvignon blocks in the last days of March, with the last parcel of Cabernet Sauvignon crushed in the last week of April. While our Shiraz tonnes were slightly below average, the quality is excellent and the ferments have good colour and varietal aromas. The Cabernet Sauvignon tonnes were about average and the quality of the fruit was exceptional. Looking at the young Cabernet Sauvignon wines, the colour and varietal expression have the potential to be a standout vintage for Majella.

STELLA BELLA, MARGARET RIVER, WA

“Another stellar Margaret River vintage ... ripening conditions couldn’t have been better. While the east coast was belted with rain, we had little to no rain over December, January and February. Perfect conditions to allow us to hand pick all our premium whites without any major difficulties. A winemakers dream!

Daytime max. temps were 1.5 degrees C over average for the months January to March. This provided fast ripening and a small picking window to ensure the perfect citrus flavour profile we were chasing in all white varieties. Acids definitely dropped and flavours built quickly towards mid-March. Punchy, ripe, exotic fruit with crushed citrus in Sauvignon and Semillon. Lovely pithy citrus and peach fuzz in Chardonnay which is spot on. We picked a little lower Baume than normal which after time to review was the right decision.

Reds also got their mojo going, ripening quickly. Especially Shiraz. Fortunately, things cooled off a little and some cooler conditions allowed some slower ripening for Cab to get the much loved ‘hang time’. 2022 will be an intense, ripe, plush and dense flavour profile for Cabernet and a great year to be in the cooler part of town. The mighty South! Tannins are sublime!”

- Luke Jolliffe, Chief Winemaker



NEW ZEALAND -

Bouncing back from 2021's shortage and returning to normal yields. A lack of workers is still an issue as NZ's boarders re-open. Over 96% of all vineyard area in NZ is now certified as sustainable, through the Sustainable Winegrowers New Zealand (SWNZ) programme, with 10% holding organic certifications. Price for bulk Sauvignon Blanc remains high, with shipping issues and dry goods shortages causing issues with supply.

week of Feb delivered up to 120-150mm rain, increasing berry size and hence bunch weights, with a nervous wait through to harvest 5-6 weeks later. Our 1st pick we harvested on the 17 March was our MK1 Rose and finished with hand picking off the east west rows on the home farm for the Zephyr MK111 Sauvignon on the 8 April – a very short concise vintage – some 22 days long.

Varieties that stood out were Chardonnay and Pinot Gris, as they managed to handle the weather conditions thrown at them. Late Feb we saw some humidity come into Marlborough care of a wonderful anticyclone coming down from the Pacific Islands which meant plenty



ZEPHYR, MARLBOROUGH

“With the 2021 vintage being up to and in some cases over 30% down across most varieties, it was a blessing for 2022 that we had no frost issues and good flowering. We did though have lower than average bunch numbers on the vine, which is determined in the previous growing season. The season though was challenging due to the impact of staffing due to boarder restrictions and very low unemployment rates. This coupled with inclement weather through the season kept us all on our toes especially in blocks under organic framing regimes and the proactive nature of this type of farming to combat mildews and botrytis.

There was plenty of work done around Christmas which set the season up for a good one. The 1st

of vigilance around fruit health – some blocks of Pinot Noir were challenged with some early shrivel although the later ripening clones looked fantastic! Sauvignon which is 75% + of the region saw some botrytis pressure, which combined with large berries, meant we really had our work cut out in managing intake to make sure we had clean expressive fruit into the winery.

Crops were above average, some 10% and due to the lack of fruit last year there was very little left in the winery. Quality is good but this is a vintage where better quality absolutely justifies the price, which will go up due to an increase of 15% in dry goods on top of a demand pressure.”

- Ben Glover, Winemaker

SOUTH AFRICA

Good quality across all varieties and volumes in line with the ten-year average; availability and stable bulk pricing are making South Africa an attractive option for good quality, well priced varieties. 2022 saw a prolonged picking period due to unseasonably cool weather during the growing season and a wet April. Goods are moving despite supply chain issues but the cost of dry goods into the country has risen sharply, with availability intermittent.



RAATS FAMILY WINES, STELLENBOSCH

“2022 vintage followed a very wet winter in 2021, with a cool spring which lasted until the beginning of January. The season then warmed up and we experienced a temperate warm summer with no steady temperatures in the mid 30 degrees Celsius ... harvest started late but ended the season within the normal picking dates. Volumes are normal, with good quality white wines and reds looking very good. Small price increases were inevitable”.

- Bruwer Raats, Winemaker

IONA, ELGIN

“The Iona harvest is traditionally a drawn-out affair with three different properties in the Elgin basin to pick, each characterized by different microclimates, soil types and different varieties. There is no such thing as picking whites first followed by reds. *Werner and Bobby become logistic experts and sampling is key to picking the right cultivar at the same time. To add to the adventure, the order is never guaranteed each season.

Volumes appear to be up on last year which is a relief, even though we know to expect less in a cool region like Elgin, no accountant is going to celebrate 3 and a half tons per hectare for Sauvignon Blanc, we expect more this year!! Bunch weight is also up which goes a long way to increasing tonnage. We had a very wet winter which was good for soil moisture and a wet start to the growing season in November and December. Since then, we have had the driest build up to ripening in our memory which has resulted in pristine fruit in pristine condition. I still love picking my own grapes

with the team, and it's just the most satisfying endeavor picking clean and healthy fruit without having to sort berries or bunches. The whole team seems to benefit from a wonderful sense of momentum which is lost when you must fuff around and check bunches. I'm also grateful that being in Elgin we haven't been affected unduly by early February heatwaves which were experienced in many parts of the Western Cape.

As I write, the cellar looks like spaghetti junction, pipes everywhere with different wines in tank and barrel at different stages of ferment and skin contact. I know that the pressure is on with a lot of different vineyards on the brink of being brought in but standing in the cool cellar chatting to Werner and Bobby in their level voices assures me that all is as it should be. In fact, I leave them this afternoon feeling “cautiously optimistic” as they like to say in Eastern Cape farming circles!

On a technical note, sugars seem to be slower in

picking up this year, a seasonal thing it appears but also makes sense if the vines are carrying more fruit. There appears to be concern over lower acids and higher pH than usual in the industry, however we have another reason to be grateful for Elgin's cooler climate with our grapes coming in at low pH's and perfect natural acidity. Very exciting, another vintage in the bag!" - Rozy Gunn, Owner

"We had a wonderful harvest, good production levels and excellent quality, the standout characteristic of the 2022 vintage is that the wines show elegance and restraint, but have really good fruit intensity and concentration, with lovely freshness, tension and clarity. Last week we finished blending the 11 components of our 2022 Iona Highlands Sauvignon Blanc which are now sitting on the fine lees before bottling in July. Very exciting!"

- Andrew Gunn, Owner



CHILE

Volume down by 10% against the big 2021 harvest, due to frost and drought. Rains in April replenished some of the water courses which will benefit the 2022 crop but the country is still in drought. Good quality on both white and red varieties, with wine prices stable but shortages of dry goods is acute and prices have soared.

ODFJELL, ACONCAGUA

“Organic and biodynamic viticulture across all our vineyards has made the vines more resilient to changes in climate, however 2022 vintage has been the driest on record resulting in smaller than desired volumes. Maule felt this in particular with rainfall at an all-time low and thus negatively impacted our overall yields. Temperatures also played a part with a cool spring and a surprisingly warm January. This effected the fruit set and we have seen a 20% to 30% decrease in yields. There is no doubt of global warming and its effect when looking at our harvest this year!

Fortunately the quality still looks good, with concentration and higher acidity, yet there is work to be done in the winery to manage ripeness as some blocks lacked the ideal phenolic maturity. That said, we still feel this will be a favourable vintage, one to be enjoyed and as always, remembered!”

A more detailed look at the Odfjell vineyards across the various locations:

Padre Hurtado Vineyard, Maipo, which along with the entire Central Valley of Chile had a cooler spring and lower minimum temperatures of 4°C in September yet thankfully no frosts. Fruit set and maturation were slow, but then a warmer end to the summer, with temperatures reaching 33°C in February, brought harvest dates similar to 2021. Mature tannins and concentration on Merlot which looks very promising! Yields down 24% on 2021.



Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested on two different dates in order to ensure brightness and freshness yet show maturity and structure in mouth. The first picking began on 17 March and the last on the 12 April. Carmenere harvest dates similar to 2021, with expressive fruit and varietal clarity.

San Antonio, a significantly cooler coastal region benefiting from the proximity to the Pacific Ocean, with temperatures of 8°C in spring and a maximum of 23°C in summer. However lack of rain has reduced yields, especially for Sauvignon Blanc (down 32% on 2021) but flavours are intense. The Chardonnay harvest began 8 days earlier than last year; quality is looking very good with favourable acidity and phenolic maturity.

Ribera del Río Claro Vineyard, Lontué, With low winter rainfall, we ended 2021 with a rain deficit of 43% versus the previous year. Limited water in the

Río Claro, along with a warmer spring and summer caused harvest to start 18 days early than 2021 and resulting yields were down 38%.

Fruit-set on Malbec was uneven and resulted in smaller and lower weight bunches, hence we took the decision to harvest early to prevent the berries shrivelling and to keep freshness. So far it seems to have been the right decision, with fresh acidity and brighter fruit ... a style we're trying to achieve (rather than mature style of the past).

Tres Esquinas Vineyard, Cauquenes, Maule, Similar to the rest of Chile, Maule also had a significant rain deficit. A cooler spring with one frost at the end of September yet thankfully it caused little to no damage as we did a longer pruning this year. Warmer summer than 2021 and for the first time in Odfjell's history, we started harvest the last week of February when previous years would be the first or second week of March. Yields down 29% on 2021.

Carignan showing a nice balance between acidity and structure. Given the age of the vines (approx. 100 years) we continue to see consistent levels of fruit quality even during difficult climate conditions which shows the value of old vines. Cabernet Sauvignon acids and sugars are in balance, with robust tannins and beautifully formed fruit which will benefit from barrel ageing.

- Francisca Palacios, Odfjell's new Winemaker

ARGENTINA

Good quality but volumes ended with 1.89 million metric tons picked, down from 2.25 million tons in 2021 and the long term average due to spring frosts in October, however wineries were sat on decent stock at vintage switchover. Export sales have continued to fall and the peso continues to be devalued versus sterling (ARS152.26/£ sterling as of 24 June).

VIÑA COBOS, MENDOZA

“In terms of quality, it was very good but there were challenges due to frost in March. This time there is much more of my intervention in the design of the wines than in other seasons. We worked a lot with Andrés (Vignoni), discussing decisions, a lot of work also with Paul (Hobbs), who was present for the harvest. The wines will be focused with good maturity. We were lucky

to be able to keep the Cabernets on the plant for as long as possible, in order to have good polyphenolic ripeness and good colour. We finished the harvest on April 19, which is very good for us; it’s the largest harvest ever for Viña Cobos as we now work with 64 growers taking production from 95,000 to 125,000 cases. Good strong fermentations with a lot of red and black fruit. Felino batches are very expressive, with a lot of energy, and the components for the high end lines have excellent concentration. I think 2022 is going to be a great year.”

- Diane Fornasero, Winemaker



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