

Vintage 2015

According to Tessa Nicholson from New Zealand Winegrowers Magazine,

While Marlborough basked under blue skies throughout summer, the fruit on the vines was developing into some of the best seen in a number of years. Week after week of warm, dry weather followed on from a cooler than average start to the season.

Frosts were the order of the day during the spring, but despite there being 15 in total, there were only small pockets of damage throughout the region.

It was the first day of summer, December 1 that created the biggest impact. Temperatures plummeted, impacting on those vines that were flowering at that time.

Villa Maria's Marlborough viticulturist Stuart Dudley said; "The blocks that flowered later or even earlier than that did well, however the middle flowering blocks were impacted."

Those cooler than expected temperatures carried on into the first half of December, with many Sauvignon Blanc blocks affected. The end result was variability in yields throughout Marlborough. Some were bang on average, others well up to 30 percent below – with all less than the 2014 yields.

By late December, the weather in the region hit the hot and dry buttons. Temperatures began to climb and the rain stayed away. So much so that the region was declared a drought zone in late January, having received the lowest amount of rainfall over a seven month period since records began.

Vines might like it dry, but the continued drought, which saw water rights being withdrawn for periods of time, began to impact in February, just as the fruit hit veraison. The end result was smaller berries, and while that impacts final yields, it does help produce concentrated flavours.

There were predictions that vintage would begin earlier than normal, although this didn't eventuate. With dry conditions and a lack of disease pressure, wineries were able to let their fruit hang longer. Flavour, acidity, texture and sugar levels all benefitted from the increased hang time, and the fruit that was delivered to wineries has been lauded by winemakers throughout the region.

At this stage there is no word on just what the final yield count for Marlborough is, but it is expected to be well below 2014 and below the long-term average. Sauvignon Blanc was the hardest hit, with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay also expected to be well down.

	Rain Fall 2015	Rain Fall LTA		GDD 2015	GDD LTA
Jul	10	63.1		8.2	9.2
Aug	9.6	62.5		10.8	18.9
Sep	41	50.7		63.9	56.1
Oct	22.4	56.1		93.1	103.7
Nov	16.6	47.1		148	145.1
Dec	31.8	47.6		226	216.1
Jan	4.4	48.5		271.8	252.4
Feb	15.2	44.5		208.4	225.2
Mar	37.4	43.6		209.3	197.7
Apr	52	53.7		128.4	110.9
May	20	63.7		70.8	59.1
Jun	87	59.9		19.9	19.3
Total	347.4	641		1458.6	1413.7

Precise weather data is available from <https://www.mrc.org.nz/blenheim-weather-station>

Technical Data for Vintage 2015

<Folium Vineyard 2015 Sauvignon Blanc>

Harvest date: 7th and 8th of April 2015
 Analysis: Alc. 14.3%, TA 6.8g, pH 3.04, Free SO₂ 34mg, RS <1.0g
 Production: 599 Cases

<Folium Vineyard 2015 Reserve Sauvignon Blanc>

Harvest date: 31st of March, and 1st of April, 2015
 Analysis: Alc. 13.7%, TA 8.1g, pH 2.85, Free SO₂ 44mg, RS 1.8g
 Production: 407 Cases

<Folium Vineyard 2015 Pinot Noir>

Harvest date: 20th of March, 2015
 Analysis: Alc. 13.5%, TA 4.5g, pH 3.72, Free SO₂ 44mg
 Production: 437 Cases

<Folium Vineyard 2015 Reserve Pinot Noir>

Harvest date: 17th of March, 2015
 Analysis: Alc. 13.4%, TA 5.2g, pH 3.68, Free SO₂ 30mg
 Production: 180 Cases