

Harvest report 2007

The 2007 vintage at Jordan has truly been a 'Vintage of all Seasons'. The harvest began earlier than originally anticipated after a week-long heatwave in January and then slowed down dramatically as the weather remained cool. "At Jordan we gambled that we would experience hot weather prior to harvest, and therefore deliberately kept our Sauvignon Blanc vineyard canopies more shaded than usual," explained Gary Jordan. "In addition, our ability to drip or micro-jet irrigate during the hot weather helped keep the vineyards cooler." Despite the initial heat, the fruit quality and flavours were exceptional, with yields on the white varieties better than the smaller 2006 vintage.

2006/2007 Growing Season

The vintage was preceded by a cold winter with bud-burst about 10 days later than usual. From November through to mid-January, the weather was mild, dry and initially cool, indicating a later start to the vintage. Although the rainfall of 570mm was much lower than average, the winter season was characterised by soft, soaking rain, which replenished ground water reserves, rather than resulting in heavy run-off into the Jordan dams.

In mid-January, just prior to harvest, an early un-seasonal heatwave was experienced throughout the Western Cape. Temperatures in the high 30's were recorded at Jordan, with even higher temperatures of over 43°C being reported in Somerset West and some lower-lying areas in the region. This advanced the originally anticipated starting date of the vintage to the first week of February, by approximately 10 days earlier.

Harvest activities

The first Sauvignon Blanc grapes from a younger, east-facing vineyard were brought in on Friday 26th January 2007. The following week was characterised by very long hours in the cellar as many of the Sauvignon Blanc vineyards were ready for harvesting. Quality and flavours on the Sauvignon Blanc grapes and juices were excellent and adequate nitrogen levels in the juices ensured well-controlled fermentations.

Rosé

During the second week, activity slowed down somewhat as the weather cooled and the grapes ripened slowly. This week, the first grapes for the maiden vintage Jordan Rosé were harvested. "The style of Rosé we plan to produce will be a Shiraz-based, rich, salmony pink, dry wine with a full, fruity finish," says Kathy Jordan. "We visited France last year to taste and research our ideal Rosé style and have therefore specially selected particular vineyards for this wine so as to ensure an elegant wine with a slightly lower alcohol."

36mm of soft rain fell between the 9th and 11th February, maintaining the cooler weather. Activity picked up again during the third week of the vintage as the first Merlot was harvested, as well as grapes from the older Chenin Blanc vineyards at Jordan.

The first Chardonnay vineyards were ready for harvesting towards the end of the fourth week, and within two days the Chardonnay underground cellar went from silent, dark and empty to a noisy bubbling hive of activity as the barrels were filled and fermentation began. The juice from the later-ripening Nine Yards vineyard was eventually put to barrel early in the 6th week of harvest.

Rainfall of 24mm during the first weekend in March once again brought a halt to harvesting, but with only the Noble Late Harvest Riesling for the Jordan Mellifera and the very last of the red varieties to harvest, the cooler weather was not a concern.

The last Syrah was finally harvested on the 20th March almost 8 weeks after the harvest began, with the berry-selection for the Botrytis Noble Late Riesling on the 22nd March being an appropriate end to Jordan's 15th vintage.

The 2007 vintage will stand out as a harvest of all seasons - a steady, slow-ripening vintage showing much promise and for the maiden vintage of the Jordan Rosé.

Ends.

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