



2004 VINTAGE REPORT

The past year in the Derwent Valley has seen some amazing sights on our small, family-owned vineyard just outside Granton. They began in spring 2003, with frequent downpours helping to break many local records for rainfall. It was the wettest start to spring I can ever remember. This was good for our vineyard, however, as it really saturated the subsoil to a great depth and provided the vines with a fantastic start to the season, albeit two weeks later than normal.

Budburst was delayed last year as September was cold, wet and windy, but also, strangely enough, very sunny in between showers. As it turned out, we enjoyed a fairly even bud-burst across the vineyard once sap started flowing through our vines. Good growth soon followed as we moved into the much drier months of November and December. The latter month also provided us with the warmest December we have experienced on the property since 1994.

Plenty of bright sunny days ensured excellent flowering conditions throughout the State. The resultant sets on our site gave us a good size crop with big bunches carrying about 30 percent more berries per bunch than usual. Luckily, the berries were also very small, so we were able to maintain high skin to juice ratios in our fruit as the growing and ripening seasons progressed. Even so, most blocks were bunch-thinned in mid-January, with a second thinning also required at 80 percent veraison to reduce the overall crop to an acceptable level.

January and February turned out to be cooler than expected this year, and that week of extra heat we usually get towards the end of summer never arrived. This really stretched out the ripening period well into April and May. All varieties were picked as much as a month later than usual this year, with higher acidities and lower pH levels very much in evidence in the winery.

Our rigorous crop-thinning regime really paid dividends this year. It allowed us to considerably reduce disease pressure and commence harvest earlier than many other vineyards in the State. We began picking for sparkling wine on April 13th.

Table wine harvests followed shortly afterwards, though somewhat out of their usual sequence. Our merlot was picked before the riesling this year, just a few days after pinot grigio. Last off the property – on June 7th – was our riesling. Many Tasmanian producers harvested riesling well into late June and even July.

We have made wines with good strong flavours and great balance this vintage, in spite of the cool seasons and 750mm of annual rainfall. Overall, 2004 can be summed up as a good year, providing elegant wines with some exceptional parcels of sparkling fruit and the best merlot we have yet seen.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefano Lubiana', is written in a cursive style.

October 2004