



2006 VINTAGE REPORT

Nature is full of surprises. Who could have predicted that in 2006 our pickers at Granton Vineyard would be harvesting bunches of ripe merlot around the same time as properties in Margaret River? Or that we would be bringing in sauvignon blanc before many vineyards in the Adelaide Hills?

The journey to harvest turned out to be something of a roller-coaster ride for wine producers this year, with a variety of unusual weather peaks and troughs signposting the way. Like everywhere else in Tasmania, it started with spring 2005 being warm and wet in our part of the Derwent Valley.

Despite the wet conditions, budburst came two weeks earlier than usual in September. The season's accumulated soil moisture resulted in good vine vigour and the formation of full and very powerful canopies this year. It was no surprise then that the fine and warm weather that persisted throughout November and December resulted in flowering being two weeks earlier than we normally experience. Good sets were evident throughout our region.

The new year opened to fine, sunny weather, and allowed us to experience a handful of days around 30 degrees by the end of January. Tasmania's weather during February was very odd, however. It saw a cold snap that brought snow to the Highlands; hot days that were followed by thunder; and a full week of wet weather in the west, but almost no rain at Granton.

March brought record low rainfall to many parts of southeast Tasmania. Ours was close to that of Bushy Park's 17mm, which had hop-growers there reporting it as their lowest March rainfall in 133 years. April, meanwhile, opened with a cool change and it finished much the same, during what proved to be a generally cold, wet and windy month.

All that meant little to us at Granton. We commenced harvest on February 27th – our earliest vintage - and we were all done by April 12th. First off was our Pinot Noir clone 114. An early ripener, it entered the winery at 13.3 Baume!

Vintage proceeded quickly on the way to our final pick, the Merlot. Our grapes this year were all harvested in very good condition and free of disease. Due to our move to single arm cane pruning - effectively reducing crop levels by almost 50% - our overall yield this year was about 10-15% lower than usual. Thankfully, disease pressure was fairly low, except for powdery mildew that was more evident than usual due to some overcast conditions in January and April.

In the winery, the 2006 vintage is characterised by elegant steely whites and rich, darkly coloured reds with good tannin. After the great 2005 vintage, 2006 appears to be shaping up to be just as good.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stefano Lubiana', is written over the date.

September 2006