

2005 McLaren Vale (South Australia)

2005 is the first of three high quality vintages that can be described as “very quick, very ripe and very small” although in the case of 2005 the crop was only 10 -15% smaller than anticipated.

A wet winter across the region was a great start to establishing the quality of the growing season which continued with a mild spring helping bud burst and encouraging excellent early season shoot growth.

As a consequence 2005 had larger than normal grape vine canopies which contributed much to the character of the season. McLaren Vale had a milder-than-usual summer with very few days of extreme temperatures resulting in an excellent even ripening period. After veraison the grapes developed quite quickly showing remarkable colour and concentration of flavours.

The excellent soil moisture, mild summer and large canopies all helped play a part in the faster-than-usual ripening period. Attaining sugar ripeness was not the issue, with very high Baumes being recorded before the onset of flavour ripeness.

It was a year that required constant tasting in the vineyard by David to find the ideal moment for harvest. The flavours arrived earlier than usual and vintage started 10 days before the district average.

The Songlines team used a large groups of pickers to be able to pick all grapes in a timely manner. On the busiest day out of the 15 picking days, 120 pickers were at work, making this a very busy vintage indeed!

2005 Hunter Valley (New South Wales)

The growing season for the 2005 vintage followed a very dry winter, with soil moisture levels at budburst a concern. Early spring rains proved adequate, and replenished water deficits. The major seasonal influence that followed through spring and early summer were mild, steady temperatures reminiscent of the great 2000 vintage.

In general terms, the weather pattern was one of mild to warm days with unusually cool nights punctuated by rain events that tended to accelerate vine growth and fill out the crop. The normal heat spikes that can occur for the Hunter were limited, and followed by cool to mild periods.

Yields for the 2005 vintage were about average, with the white varieties Semillon, Chardonnay and Verdelho producing excellent crops. The wines show intense varietal aromas and flavours balanced by crisp acidity.