

2006 McLaren Vale (South Australia)

In terms of overall quality the 2006 vintage was very good.

A dry winter followed by heavy rains in spring resulted in vines with healthy, balanced canopies on most soils. A mild early summer leading into a warmer period during veraison stopped vegetative growth allowing vines to channel energy into the fruit.

Many vignerons were impressed with the quality of the Shiraz (and some Cabernet) with fruit reaching flavour ripeness at a lower Baume than usual.

While hot weather caused some stress in late summer, Songlines balanced vines showed great resilience and high potential.

This season was particularly challenging with Downy Mildew primary and secondary events and weather conditions favourable to Powdery Mildew. Despite these challenges the majority of fruit was clean and disease free at harvest, contributing to the overall quality. Botrytis and other bunch rots were not a problem this vintage as no significant rainfall events occurred during the ripening period.

Growers reported a mixture of tonnages; the majority have observed crops to be 20-30% lower than in 2005, however, others have reported increased fruitfulness, fruit set and bunch weight. It appears cropping levels varied across the region and have possibly been influenced by wetter than usual soil profiles in some areas, pruning and other management practices implemented in response to the changing market demand and the usual seasonal effects.

2006 Hunter Valley (New South Wales)

A dry winter and spring with continued warmth to harvest resulted in a small crop of intensely flavoured Chardonnay grapes.

The old vines that produce Bylines Chardonnay with their extensive root systems did well in the conditions finding moisture deep in the earth and were amongst the best vines in the district.

The unusually dry season meant harvest began earlier than usual while the lower than expected yield means our Chardonnay will have plenty of fruit weight, typical of the variety and will produce its usual flavoursome style.