

TAPANAPPA

ADELAIDE HILLS, SOUTH AUSTRALIA - TAPANAPPA

2014 was a much cooler year than 2013 but because of the poor fruit set and very small crops, the fruit in all three terroirs ripened early and completely. 2014 was a very different vintage to the warm and very high quality 2013 vintage, the quality being the equal but the wines in 2014 achieve a small crop concentration and a cool vintage elegance and balance.

Tapanappa's 3 terroirs, Tiers in the Piccadilly Valley, Foggy Hill on the Fleurieu Peninsula and Whalebone at Wrattobully in the Southeast, all had well watered winters, filling the soil profile. In all 3 terroirs the same pattern emerges: A warm wet winter, a very warm beginning to spring (September 2 to 3 degrees above average which is exceptional) and rapid cooling down through October/November. The vines in all three terroirs were in a condition of hydrological luxury until after veraison and ironically that contributed to the yield detriment.

The consequences of this temperature roller coaster were an early bud burst and rapid growth of the vine shoots through flowering. The precocious varieties, Pinot Noir in particular but also Chardonnay suffered a very poor fruit set despite beginning with high flower numbers. Many bunches just disappeared from the vine and others were left with a few berries some of which had seeds and developed normally but many of which were seedless, tiny and susceptible to shrivelling. The later varieties at Wrattobully fared better although again Merlot being the most precocious yielded a small crop for the same reasons.

From this unanticipated inauspicious beginning we watched the tiny crops develop without putting any stress on the vines, which continued to luxuriate and grow vigorously well into the fruit ripening cycle. Fortunately the rest of the season proved to be very moderate and the heat summations for all three terroirs ended up at about average.

