

2014 Declaration of Vintage – Vintage Report, February 16th

This day 12 months ago I stood here and said of the 2013 vintage:

Early indicators are that crops are indeed below average in size, but the flavours and colours are above average. The grapes are still retaining good natural acidity which suggests well for balanced wines.

I predict that the 2013 vintage will be short and sharp, and one that will produce wines of typically good Barossa quality.

Well I might want to change typically good to typically great – but otherwise that wasn't a bad summation of the vintage. The annual Barossa Grounds tasting occurred a couple of weeks ago, and a number of us got to see nearly 100 Barossa shiraz components from 2013. These wines are beautiful, and will be good ambassadors for the Barossa around the world in the years to come

So what of 2014?

Another dry spring, and generally below average crop set in many varieties were indicators that we might see an early harvest (despite the late Easter). The continuing dry and hot weather has ensured this and by mid-week vintage was well under way. Most of the Barossa Valley white varieties were being harvested, as was the earlier red varieties and sites- including Shiraz. In the Eden Valley harvest has just started.

I am always amazed at how well vines stand up to the elements! Travelling around the Barossa, even on the hot days you could see most vineyards still looking deep green and fresh, despite the above average temperatures and dry conditions. This is of course also a testament to the hard and continual work of the Barossa grape growers and viticulturists.

Then of course we had some rain! In the order of 100mm (4 inches) seems to be the norm for most parts of the Barossa over the last few days. It was certainly enough to wash the dust off the leaves, and to pause the harvest for a few days, but it won't take long for the vines and vineyards to dry out enough to start picking again. It may slow down some ripening as the vines take a welcome drink, but in some cases it might also cause the vines to ripen more quickly.

Whichever it is by the end of week the Barossa vintage will be back in full swing, particularly with reds on the Barossa floor. We might even see first Riesling coming out of the Eden Valley.

And what of quality?? Well as usual there is some element of crystal ball gazing needed here, and the crystal ball has needed to be both dusted and 'chamoised', but.... I predict that the 2014 vintage will be short and sharp, and one that will produce wines of typically good Barossa quality!

Louisa Rose

Honorary Vigneron
Barons of Barossa