

Harvest Report 2014

Introduction

The 2014 vintage will be remembered for its difficult beginning due to historic frosts in the second half of September, which were considered the worst in the last 50 years. A polar event unusual this late in the season caused very frequent frosts of long duration (more than 6 hours at temperatures below -2°C), which not only affected grape production, but all types of fruit for fresh or dry consumption, with a loss of 100% in some cases. The wine grape varieties most affected were Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Noir.

The extreme cold and frosts delayed the onset of phenological stages by approximately three weeks, beginning with a late budbreak. Good temperatures throughout the entire summer mitigated the effect. The warm weather combined with the lack of water due to the drought that has affected Chile in recent years led us to harvest the grapes in a very concentrated time frame.

The wines obtained stand out for their tremendous color, concentration, freshness, typicity, and ability to express their place of origin.

- San Carlos de Cunaco Estate

Although the spring frosts in September were particularly hard in Cunaco, the only variety affected was Chardonnay, which suffered approximately 60% decrease in yields. The rest of the varieties performed normally and produced yields within the expected range. Following the frosts, the rest of the season was warm and dry. Unlike a normal year, however, cool afternoon winds began to blow in October and lowered the nighttime temperatures to 10°C . This phenomenon lasted throughout the summer and was partially responsible for the elevated acidity levels in the grapes at harvest. It bears mention that the daily temperature oscillation in March exceeded the 20°C average, and in fact reached 27.6°C on March 22. This helped accelerate the ripening of the grape skins and seeds, which in turn compensated for the early delay in the phenological stages due to the frosts.

The Sauvignon Blanc harvest began on February 20, Chardonnay on March 2, Viognier on March 11, Merlot on March 18, Malbec on March 27, and Cabernet Sauvignon on March 31. The harvest of red varieties ended on April 29.

During the first three days of May, 93 mm of rain fell at the Fundo San Carlos. The corresponding rise in humidity plus temperatures above 20°C in the days following the rain generated the ideal conditions

for *Botrytis cinerea*, the fungus responsible for noble rot in Semillón, which was picked 3 or 4 days early than normal on May 12–13, with a rot rate of approximately 98%.

Despite being highly affected by the frosts, the white varieties—Sauvignon Blanc, Viognier, and Chardonnay—stood out for their aromatic intensity, rich acidity, and good volume on the palate. With respect to the red varieties, I think it was a very good year for malbec, which produced wines with tremendous color, different aromatic ranges, good structure, freshness, and elegance. This vintage will also be remembered for the quality of the Cabernet Sauvignon. The wines are expressive, with plenty of fresh fruit and breadth, with tannins that are pronounced but also well integrated and well balanced on the palate.

• **La Capilla Estate**

Of the three vineyards, La Capilla was the most affected by the frosts. The two varieties planted there suffered major drops in yields. The Cabernet Sauvignon produced 56% less than in a normal year, and the Carmenere was 35% lower than usual.

The phenological stages were delayed by three to four weeks, although like the rest of the country, this was compensated for with the dry heat during the summer.

As in the past two years, the grapes were picked in polygons (differentiated by the different soil types within each block). The Cabernet Sauvignon began on April 8 in the sectors with shorter, shallower soils, and ended on April 25 in the deepest, latest-ripening polygons. The Carmenere was picked between April 30 and May 8. Unlike the previous year, the Cabernet Sauvignon harvest was much more concentrated in time—2.5 weeks as opposed to 5 weeks in 2013). This is explained by the vineyard's low yields, the broad daily temperature oscillation in March (which accelerated the maturation of the skins and seeds), and the warm, dry summer.

With respect to the wines, both the Cabernet and the Carmenere are very fresh and lively with good structure and typicity. They express the characteristics of the vintage and the terroir at La Capilla very well. Although the vineyard's yields were lower than normal, the wines are less concentrated than in previous vintages, and the style is more feminine but very fresh and elegant.

• **El Olivar Estate**

Overall, El Olivar was not greatly affected by the frosts because the vineyards are planted in the piedmont and on hillsides. The yields were within the expected levels.

It was a warm and dry season at El Olivar, with just 250 mm of rainfall concentrated in the months of May and June 2013. The low precipitation plus the rocky characteristics of the soil led to accelerated ripening and subsequently to harvesting approximately two weeks earlier than normal, primarily in the early-ripening varieties such as Syrah and Grenache. On the other hand, ocean breezes that lowered the evening and nighttime temperatures throughout the entire summer and fall helped preserve higher acidity levels in the grapes through harvest. The Syrah harvest for the Secreto and Single Vineyard lines began on March 14, Grenache on March 20, Malbec on March 24, Petit Verdot on April 3, Mourvèdre on April 10, and Carmenere on April 29. The harvest ended on May 7.

The Syrah, Carmenere, and Petit Verdot harvests were based on polygons to ensure the best grapes were picked at the precise moment while leaving the deeper and more vigorous sectors to produce grapes of lower concentration and character.

The qualities obtained this year show that the vineyards have now reached their natural balance. In general, I believe that this was a very good year for this property, and the wines show plenty of character and reflect the characteristics of the terroir. The Malbec is deeply colored and intense with great structure and elegance. The Petit Verdot was picked three weeks earlier than normal, partly because it ripened earlier, but also because we wanted a fresher and more mineral style, which is clearly perceived in this wine. The Syrah is also very fresh, with deep color, great structure and complexity, and tannins with character. The Carmenere is intense with tremendous volume and fat, well-rounded tannins. The Grenache has plenty of character and is intense with rich acidity. The Mourvèdre presents good volume and complexity along with good structure.

Summary of average temperatures and degree days in the Colchagua Valley.

Average Maximum T°s	Average Minimum T°s	Average T°s	Degree Days	Heat Summation	
jun-13	13,6	4,3	8,2	0,0	0,0
jul-13	13,4	4,3	8,4	0,0	0,0
ago-13	15,4	3,8	9,3	0,0	0,0
sep-13	18,6	5,1	11,3	39,3	39,3
oct-13	23,2	7,7	14,6	141,5	180,7
nov-13	27,8	8,1	17,2	214,9	395,7
dic-13	30,3	11,0	19,7	300,6	696,3
ene-14	31,0	11,9	20,7	333,0	1029,2
feb-14	30,0	10,0	18,9	248,5	1277,8
mar-14	27,7	8,4	17,0	218,1	1495,8
abr-14	21,1	5,7	12,3	69,8	1565,6
may-14	19,3	9,6	14,2	108,3	1673,9

Note: May includes only the first 15 days.

Patricio Celedón Nannig

Enólogo Jefe Viu Manent