

2009 VINTAGE HERALDS GREAT REDS FOR HAWKE'S BAY

At almost the very end of the Hawke's Bay vintage winemakers are looking more relaxed than they did a couple of months ago. Following an annual vintage survey conducted by Hawke's Bay Winegrowers Inc of their members, the 2009 vintage is looking brilliant for Hawke's Bay's red wines.

Executive Officer, Lyn Bevin said that growers and wineries all felt it had been a great season with good flowering and fruit set and an excellent ripening period. This has been the result of a hot, dry summer with most areas in the region showing between 26% and 50% of average rainfall for the months September 2008 to March 2009. The driest areas in the region during this time were Southern Hawke's Bay, the Ruataniwha Plains, the Heretaunga Plains and Tangoio (www.hbrc.govt.nz). Overall, 2009 was generally a little larger and earlier but well managed in most cases. The vintage began in the first weeks of March and the bulk of the region's harvest has finished now.

The growers and wineries themselves felt the stand out varieties would be Hawke's Bay red wines, Merlot in particular. Kate Radburnd, CJ Pask Winery said "2009 is the red wine vintage, extremely good ripeness, consistent yields and lower than usual acidities, all reflective of the long warm summer and growing season." Tony Bish of Sacred Hill said they were looking at outstanding Gimblett Gravels reds, including Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc.

Survey responses also indicated early ripening white varieties such as Gewürztraminer, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris would be very good with good brix levels, stand out flavour and acidity. "Many also said Chardonnay was looking outstanding as well" Lyn reported. Tony Bish also commented on the excellent Chardonnay fruit from their Rifleman's vineyard. And from Chris Scott of Church Road Winery "later Chardonnay was clean and ripe with good flavour and will make excellent wines."

Looking forward consumers can expect some great wines from Hawke's Bay from the 2009 vintage. One grower suggested it may even rival 1998 but we will have to wait for the wines to judge that one!

Ends.

For further information contact:

Lyn Bevin
Executive Officer
Hawke's Bay Winegrowers Inc

Ph 06 876 3418

Email lynb@winehawkesbay.co.nz

Website www.winehawkesbay.co.nz