



We are extremely fortunate to be growing grapes in Marlborough; over the past 40 years there have only been a handful of years that have been a real challenge for wine growing. This past growing season had a number of challenges. We had a cool very dry early spring and by late December many water supplies were at risk of either being cut off or simply going dry. We had good rainfall in early January which was enough to keep the river levels up and slightly recharge well levels. This was followed by regular monthly rainfalls of quite high volumes. Approaching harvest we had gone from a drought situation in December to almost too much rainfall. Marlborough's balmy weather saved us once again and the harvest period was almost rain free which came as a relief for most growers.

NIWA is predicting that we are entering a La Nina or neutral phase of the Southern Oscillation, the frequent west sector winds and dry conditions on the East coast may be replaced with increased north and east sector winds bringing above average rainfall, while the south and west may be drier. In summary, the top of the north could be wetter, the bottom of the south drier; hopefully as we are in the middle we will experience a good growing season with average rainfall.

Harvest

There were much bigger yields this vintage, yet it went like clockwork; with 9 harvesters on the go 24/7 for 4 weeks. The excellent weather combined with "state of the art" electronic systems for harvester management has certainly helped make vintage a more efficient operation.

This year we launched a new harvesting and dispatch management software called Nupoint. We now have ipad consoles that are mounted in the harvesters. These provide the driver with a wealth of information – the location of the vineyard and the vineyard boundaries, hazard or no go areas as well



Harvesting in the Waihopai.



as specifics to each harvest job such as the winery destination, sulphur additions and special instructions.

The operator can now see how much area is left to harvest on the map, the average speed is shown and the time left until the job is complete are just a few of things this amazing software provides.

Back in the office we can view real time where our harvesters are, how much they have left to do before the job is completed as well as a tonne of other useful information.

Nupoint incorporates a GPS tracking device so upon completion we see exactly what areas have been covered by our equipment.

Nupoint also provides a despatch planning tool which means that we can see at a glance the day or week schedule for all of our machines. Outside of harvest time the units can be quickly transferred to other machinery.



Harvesting Movie Clip

We often get asked what we do during harvest so this year we had a camera-man follow some of our harvesters around for a few days and nights.

We have put together a movie showing a snapshot of the harvest over one day.

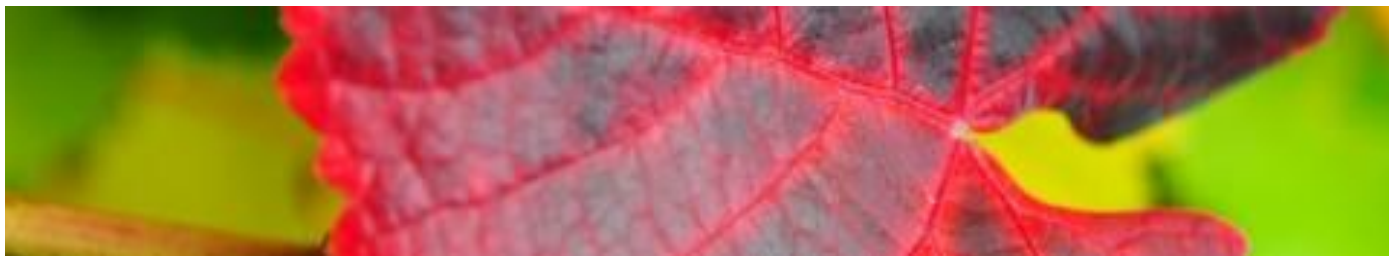
To view this movie click on the link below and feel free to share with family and friends.

<https://youtu.be/u97NGyMJcyU>



Health & Safety

You all will have heard about the changes to the Health & Safety at Work Act 2015. We are in the process of reviewing our systems. It's important that all stakeholders understand their obligations under the new Act.



Latest Botrytis Trial Results - SHAKE IT !!!

This last season Melissa has worked with Mark Allen on trialling the use of grape harvesters to gently shake vines in the early berry development stage to remove floral trash.

They conducted a number of large scale field trials using our harvesting machines and looked at the botrytis incidence on the shaken verse the unshaken control.

Bunch shaking can be done in early January and is effective once the bunches are approximately 30 grams in weight. Our trials showed no delay in ripening or stress on the vine. However, all the vineyards that were trialled had very good soil moisture and strong healthy canopies.

We gave the vines a very light shake as we were only looking to reduce botrytis (not the crop) .

We had some outstanding results with one vineyard that was in a high rainfall area having 9.9% botrytis in the unshaken and 3.6% botrytis in the shaken.

If you consistently experience problems with botrytis in your vineyard shaking may assist in reducing botrytis levels. Give us a call if you would like to discuss this technique further.



Tony & Jacqueline calibrating the sprayer.

New Staff

Jacqueline Maclaurin has joined the team as Viticulturist. Born and bred on a farm in Gisborne, Jacqueline trained at Canterbury University and the Eastern Institute of Technology and has recently been working at Wither Hills as a viticulturist.

Jacqueline has worked for 8 years in Marlborough and joins Melissa, Hamish and Katrina as a member of the technical team.



Websites

Have you visited our websites?

www.jtcviculture.co.nz and www.vintageharvesters.co.nz

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