



2008 HARVEST REPORT

With the harvest now complete, Cousiño Macul's winemaking team, led by Pascal Marty, is predicting that the vintage 2008 wines will be outstanding in quality and notable for their intense flavours and aromas, excellent concentration and full body.

The 2007-2008 season was colder and drier than previous ones throughout the country due to the presence of La Niña, which provoked a major deficit in rainfall for virtually the entire year.

In terms of temperatures it was a period of great contrasts. Daily temperatures were higher than normal until mid-April 2007, then Chile entered its coldest winter in 40 years, with a high frequency of frosty days. Major temperature variations were also recorded from early autumn to early summer 2007–2008, with abnormally elevated highs and below average lows.

Maipo Alto

The Maipo Alto sector experienced more extreme conditions than the rest of that valley. Average minimum temperatures in both winter and spring were lower, which explains the approximately 15-day delay in bud break for different varieties.

Still, there were more degree-days than in the previous season, allowing shoot growth to be maintained over time despite the delay in bud break, narrowing the time gap.

During ripening nocturnal temperatures were higher than normal, allowing the berries to build up sugar. Pascal Marty adds that "the new level of global warming shown this season caused not only much higher daytime maximum temperatures but also warmer nights, which increased the percentage of alcohol."

Recorded precipitation was also below normal this year, with rainfall at around 170 mm, which is 50% less than in a normal year. Although two precipitation events occurred during harvest time, neither affected the quality of the grapes, and in the end it was possible to harvest the reds at just the right time.

As a result of these climatic conditions, vine growth was normal, but we had smaller, lighter clusters which translated into lower yields of some varieties.

Harvest

The 2008 harvest began on February 26th with the Sauvignon Gris, followed by Sauvignon Blanc then Chardonnay. In mid-March we began to harvest the Merlot and then did the Riesling. The process lasted until the first week of May when we finally finished harvesting the Cabernet Sauvignon.

Rosario Palma, head winemaker at the Buin winery, recounts that "this year we made a great effort and hand picked all the grapes, not only the reserve grapes, which we had done in previous years. The white reserve grapes were even picked at night to take advantage of the cooler temperatures and preserve the variety's crispness and aromas. This year's harvest was also rather long and quite varied, as some varieties ripened on the same date as last year while for others we had to wait up to 10 days more to begin harvesting."

With regard to the results, Pascal Marty declares that "the whites are very fruity and have excellent varietal expression. Most outstanding are the Chardonnay and the Riesling, which are full-bodied and ripe; and already we can see that the Sauvignon Blanc –though perhaps less expressive – will be better than it was last year."

Of the reds, Rosario highlights the Cabernet Sauvignon, "for its intense colour and clean, fruit forward nose. It is flavourful in the mouth with pleasant ripe tannins. In general, the wines have very expressive aromas, are well-structured and balanced, and we therefore expect very good results from the 2008 harvest."