

## Summary of 'Stone'-Gimblett Gravels

Compared to previous years, the 2015-16 season consisted of a wet and cold spring followed by an above average warm/hot summer, and a rapid cooling off in mid-autumn. The vines were slow to wake up from their dormant period, but growth rapidly caught up in early summer. Above average temperatures in mid-summer advanced early ripening in Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc varieties. Early autumnal rain in late March however, caused heightened disease pressure in some blocks and after a brief hot spell in the first week of April, day time temperatures rapidly cooled, causing later varieties, such as Syrah to slow right down, concentrating their effort into flavour development.

The vines from which our 'Stone' Syrah is produced, are grown at our inland Gimblett vineyard. This area, located on the course of an old river bed, has a number of positive effects on vine growth. The warming effect of the old river stones that litter the surface of the 'soil' absorb and retain the sun's heat during the day, resulting in warmer vine roots during cold weather. Also, excessive rainfall during the season rapidly drains away, which leads to naturally reduced canopy growth. Finally, the vines are made to struggle during the hot summer months; encouraging flavour to be concentrated into a naturally reduced number of bunches.

Our 'Stone' Syrah is a true reflection of this special site. The 'tight', linear structure of the wine is due to the vines struggling through the season, especially towards the end of ripening. Early leaf removal around the newly formed bunches expose the berries to the intense heat and reflected light of the sun. This tends to thicken the skins of Syrah as the vine attempts to ward off the intense heat of the day. This leads to a tighter tannin structure and a wine that will benefit from time to show its true expression of the site on which it is grown.