



# DESTINY BAY

VINTAGE & CELLARING  
GUIDES



Destiny Bay Vineyards  
Waiheke Island

Hawkes Bay

Martinborough

Marlborough

Central Otago

### Temperature & Decanting

Minor temperature changes dramatically impact the flavour and aroma of wine. Our wine should be served between 15-18°C. It is better to err on the side of 'too cool' rather than 'too warm'. Additionally, the practice of uncorking, decanting and allowing the wine to breathe prior to serving is essential. We recommend allowing our wine to breathe for thirty minutes and up to a few hours. Typically, the older the wine, the less time it needs to breathe prior to serving.

### “Prime” or “Season” your Decanter/Glasses

We recommend you “Prime”, or “Season”, your wine glasses/decanter before pouring a full glass. This simple process can remove any dust, cardboard smells, or residual dishwashing detergent that could hinder/alter the aromatics of the wine. Simply pour ~1-2 teaspoons of wine into your glass/decanter and slowly roll the wine around the glass to coat the entire surface. This wine can be poured into the next glass and repeated. Discard or drink this wine and then pour as usual.

### Cellar Temperature & Storage

Wine should be stored horizontally in dark conditions of 12-15° Celsius and ~70% humidity. Temperatures above 15°C can lead to premature ageing. If you do not have a wine cellar, a low point in your home that is cool and stable in temperature is a good alternative. Never store fine wine in a rack above the refrigerator or stove, or in direct sunlight.

### Initial Ageing

Destiny Bay bottle-ages your wines prior to release to ensure they can be enjoyed when you receive them. How long to age a wine is often a matter of personal preference and many of our collectors enjoy our wines at all stages of their evolution. Typically, a bottle opened in the first few years will offer more fruit forward notes while further ageing will soften the tannins and develop more complex tertiary aromas. Our recommendation is to try one of your wines a few months after receiving it to allow it to “rest” from its journey to your cellar and assess how its evolution meets your personal preference. There is no right or wrong answer and this is part of the journey and enjoyment of cellaring a fine wine.

### Cork Closures

Our research has shown that wines show significant improvement in bottle ageing when sealed with natural cork rather than a screw-cap or a synthetic cork. We use the highest quality corks available, but problems can still arise. If one of our wines exhibits cork taint please contact us at +64 9 600-2050 or [collector@destinybay.co.nz](mailto:collector@destinybay.co.nz) to request a replacement bottle or credit and obtain information about what to do with the wine.

### Sediment/Deposits

Destiny Bay wine is minimally filtered. During cellaring and maturation of the wine, deposits and sediments will form in the bottle. These can be removed by decanting the wine prior to serving.

Below is a month-by-month detail of conditions as reported by the vineyard manager, followed by a brief summary from the winemaker.

**October:** Above normal temperatures, sunshine hours and rainfall which fostered healthy canopy development.

**November:** Very warm start triggered an early flowering followed by a colder and wetter end to the month. However, flowering was healthy and without issue.

**December:** Warm and hot with several substantial rain events leading to ~200mm of rain. Canopy growth was exceptional and the warm weather contributed to a healthy fruitset. Bunches thinned pre-Christmas.

**January:** Very hot January with a single, perfectly timed, rain event of ~90mm on the 14th of January which helped accelerate veraison and setup the vines for even and healthy ripening.

**February:** Exceptionally hot, sunny and the driest February in 4 years — one of the driest ever. Perfect conditions.

**March:** Intermittent rains early in the month, totalling ~100mm, caused some concern, but 'the die had been cast' due to an exceptional January and February. Mid-March provided excellent conditions and the first pick of the year was Merlot on the 27th.

**April:** A return to the hot and dry conditions we had seen in February made for easy picking guided only by berry development and flavours. Final pick was on the 10th with some of best quality and volume seen in the decade.

### **Winemaker's Summary**

Reminiscent of the more Mediterranean conditions experienced in 2013 and 2014, we saw a level of sunshine hours in Jan-March greater than in any prior vintage. These 'bright' conditions yielded a 'brightness' to the fruit and excellent depth of colour and concentration. Moderate temperatures in March-April allowed us to achieve peak phenolic ripeness while keeping the sugar/alcohol well-balanced. The Merlot and Malbec were particularly expressive in the berry spectrum and the Cabernet's were simply sublime with a healthy yield that has allowed a triumphant return to producing Magna Praemia and Mystae, along with our steadfast Destinae.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Below is a month-by-month detail of conditions as reported by the vineyard manager, followed by a brief summary from the winemaker.

**September:** A wet start to spring was followed with warm temperatures that led to a typical and uniform budburst.

**October:** Wet conditions continued with above average temperatures and increasing breeze as is typical for New Zealand's changeable spring weather.

**November:** A warm start brought an atypical early flowering that began on November 12th. The month was below average in rainfall and remained uneven and cooler (<50mm precipitation).

**December:** Hot and exceptionally dry (<15mm of precipitation). Early bunch thinning took place pre-Christmas and fruitset was uniform and better than most years.

**January:** A very hot month followed with above average rainfall.

**February:** Above average temperatures persisted along with above average rainfall.

**March:** A cooling off led to unusual temperature swings and rainfall which showed signs that we would be looking at a delayed harvest for Malbec and a compressed vintage picking schedule. As expected, harvest of the Malbec occurred on the 28th of March.

**April:** Matching with our expectations, we began picking all other varieties on the 4th of April and by the 11th all fruit had been harvested.

### **Winemaker's Summary**

Similar to 2016 we saw above average temperatures that aided early fruit maturation and development of more berry and floral aromatic precursors across all varieties. Similar again, above average rainfalls saw a significant reduction in yield of Cabernet Sauvignon which forced us to make the difficult decision to not produce a Magna Praemia or Mystae in 2018. The benefit of consolidating all fruit into this years releases of Destinae and Dulce Suavi allowed the team to focus on elegance and aromatic expression in the resulting wines - albeit in smaller quantities.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Below is a month-by-month detail of conditions as reported by the vineyard manager, followed by a brief summary from the winemaker.

**September:** A cool spring with temperatures below normal leading to slightly delayed budburst.

**October:** Atypically dry with <20mm of rainfall, but an increased windrun.

**November:** Above average temperatures produced good conditions for flowering and continued dry conditions with below average precipitation (<58mm)

**December:** Hot and dry with below average rainfall (25mm). Fruit thinning commenced in the middle of the month.

**January:** Hot with slightly above average rainfall (~90mm).

**February:** Above average temperatures persisted with a storm in the middle of the monthly that produced unusually high rainfall for a very short period.

**March:** Elevated temperatures and rainfall with three events delayed the Malbec harvest until April.

**April:** Increased temperatures and atypically dry for April with <15mm of rain. These favorable drying conditions allowed the entire vintage to be harvested in April in a compressed timeframe.

### Winemaker's Summary

Hot conditions in early summer established an ideal platform for fruit maturation. The impact of unseasonal rainfall in January, February and March was less than might be expected as the events were brief and intense, which lead to runoff rather than saturation. Fine, dry spells between the events allowed the ground and fruit to dry and the earlier ripening varieties benefited from increased 'hang-time'. Early fruit thinning combined with juice bleeding (*saignée*) during vintage enabled the team to build the concentration and fruit intensity for which Destiny Bay wines are known – albeit with reduced yields making this a smaller vintage overall.

Sean Spratt

Owner & Winemaker

Below is a month-by-month detail of conditions as reported by the vineyard manager, followed by a brief summary from the winemaker.

**September:** A fine spring with bud burst occurring two weeks earlier than usual.

**October:** Typically cool conditions, wind and rain (74mm)

**November:** Warm and dry (<45mm rainfall) conditions produced excellent flowering by mid-November.

**December:** A warm and dry month with only an isolated rain event mid-month produced above average fruit set which required extensive thinning.

**January:** Warm and dry with no rainfall.

**February:** Warm and dry with less than 20mm of rain (early February).

**March:** A hot and dry beginning to the month was followed by the threat of heavy rainfall from cyclone Pam. In the end, Pam only delivered a brief rain event and total precipitation was below 40mm for the month. Harvest began on the 24th of March.

**April:** Early rainfall delayed harvest a few days as we waited for the fruit and ground to dry. Picking was resumed and completed by mid-April.

### **Winemaker's Summary**

Much like the 2013 season, 2015 produced an excellent flowering. Hot and dry conditions persisted throughout the summer, interrupted by a few helpful, but moderate, rain events. Fruit development was superb and conditions allowed us to produce some of the best Cabernet we have harvested to-date. As a result the wines show dense concentration and the increased Cabernet yields enabled us to blend more Magna Praemia than normal. The vintage as a whole expresses more blue fruit characters than typical of Waiheke, but the cracking-clay soils still present the elegance and balance we have come to see here at Destiny Bay year-over-year.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

As mentioned in last year's vintage summary, we have decided to provide just the facts regarding the vintage followed by a brief summary.

**November:** Normal temperature and rainfall (75 mm).

**December:** Normal temperature and slightly above normal rainfall (92 mm).

**January:** Above normal temperature and normal rainfall (75 mm).

**February:** Above normal temperature and below normal rainfall (15 mm).

**March:** Normal temperature and normal rainfall (29 mm) despite the threat of cyclone "Lusi" destroying the vintage. Malbec picked on 13 March with brix of 24.1. Merlot and Petit Verdot picked on 25 March with brix of 24.6 and 25.0 respectively.

**April:** Normal temperature and rainfall but since harvest was completed on 3 April, weather conditions in April were moot as this made 2014 our earliest ever completed harvest.

### **Winemaker's Summary**

Much like the stunning 2013 season, 2014 had an excellent flowering, but without drought conditions. January's moderate rainfall gave the growing vines the perfect amount of water to push them quickly through veraison. Combined with dry and sunny weather in February and March, the wines from 2014 are an excellent reminder that Waiheke Island's Hauraki Gulf often is the Antipodean cousin to the Mediterranean. As such, the 2014 vintage expresses the dark berry notes you might expect from riper vintages in Spain or Southern France.

Unrelated to this year's conditions, we had significantly lowered yields as we embarked on a project to rebalance the vineyard and top-graft new Cabernet Sauvignon clones in select blocks. The result is a smaller overall vintage, but one of exceptional quality and concentration.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

This year we have decided to provide just the facts regarding the vintage followed by a brief commentary from me. Much like our wine, the facts speak for themselves.

**November:** Above normal wind and temperature and below normal rainfall (4 days - 35.5 mm).

**December:** Above normal temperature and below normal rainfall (3 days - 42 mm).

**January:** Significantly above normal temperature and well below normal rainfall (2.8mm).

**February:** Above normal temperature and below normal rainfall (15 mm).

**March:** Normal temperature and normal rainfall (21mm).

Merlot and Malbec picked on 15 March with average brix of 24.7. Petit Verdot was picked on 28 March with brix of 25.0.

**April:** Above normal temperature and below normal rainfall (negligible mm). Cabernet Sauvignon picked on 12 April with average brix of 25.2.

This season was characterised by better than average flowering, perfect ripening weather in February, unusually dry and hot weather in April allowing us to “cut and drop” the entire vintage. We set a record pick day (over 10 tonnes) with the Merlot and Malbec harvest and enjoyed one of the lowest disease pressure seasons we can recall. After completing the 2013 assemblage in November our tasting notes indicate that this vintage is characterized by fruit intensity, depth of palate, and berry spectrum flavours that will yield exceptional complexity over the life of these wines.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Making great wines is like making great art. Each year Mother Nature provides a new canvas and a constellation of challenges to inspire the Destiny Bay team. Retaining the signature qualities of complexity, balance and elegance while reflecting the unique character of each vintage, is grist for our creative expression.

The 2012 season began with below average temperature. Drier than normal conditions during spring contributed to consistent flowering and fruit set.

Summer weather presented the typical range of weather relating to rainfall and humidity but nothing outside the boundaries of what had been experienced in the past.

Then conditions in March shifted to a pattern of increased rainfall. However, our decision to drop more than the normal amount of fruit in January paid off with increased airflow through the canopy and reduced load on the vines during this fickle weather period.

And then, as is so often the case, what Mother Nature took away in the preceding months she gave back in the final rush to harvest. April was uncharacteristically warm and dry and provided us with the longest ripening period on record. Our first pick day was not until April 2nd and our last pick was on April 24th. Never before had the entire vintage concluded over a three week span so late in the season. This meant that our fruit hung on the vines longer than normal which contributed to optimum maturation of the compounds that drive the distinctive flavour, aroma and elegance of Destiny Bay Wines.

Tasting trials and critical response from *The Wine Advocate* have been very encouraging and have reassured us that 2012 will be another proud contributor to the growing collection of respected and critically acclaimed Destiny Bay Wines.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

The 2011 vintage began with higher than normal levels of rain in September. October improved dramatically, starting off cool but warming up towards the end of the month. The good weather extended into November leading to excellent flowering across all varieties.

The end of December saw intermittent heavy rain, but the sudden and short duration meant that most of the water ran off our steep slopes rather than saturate the ground. Impact on vine growth was minimal and it alleviated any concern about irrigating water stressed blocks.

January followed a normal weather pattern with hot and dry conditions with a few rain showers at the end of the month. The fact that these sporadic rain events were brief meant that there was limited water uptake through the roots and no dilution of fruit flavour and complexity. The weather pattern of warm settled conditions punctuated with brief bursts of rain continued into February and March.

Despite this unusual pattern, the early ripening varieties (Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot) were superb and reflected a level of balance, elegance and fruit depth that belied the challenging vintage conditions. The later ripening Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc required additional effort in field sorting and fruit selection which enabled us to vinify in smaller, more concentrated cabernet fermentation batches.

Even though 2011 posed challenges for our team, the superb quality of our Merlot, Malbec and Petit Verdot enabled us to focus this vintage exclusively on creating our very popular Merlot dominated Aeolus blend.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Few clues to the ultimate success of the 2010 vintage were revealed early in the season. October was a typically windy and wet month. In November the weather pattern took a strange turn. It was considerably drier than normal but much of the month was consumed with grey, cold, windy, and drizzly days. This delayed flowering by almost two weeks and contributed to an uneven fruit set in many of the blocks. December began with a continuation of the same bleak weather conditions but with little precipitation.

The middle of December brought the first real signs of summer and restored hope for a decent vintage. The pattern of settled, dry and warm weather established in late December extended into January. February and March were atypically hot and dry months with only trace amounts of rain. April showed the classic pattern of warm dry days and cooler nights that allowed our cabernet to eek out that last bit of varietal aroma and flavour before harvest.

The warm and dry weather of this amazing season, combined with the poor fruit set caused by the unusual weather in November and December, meant that the demands for fruit thinning were minimal. In addition, disease pressure was uncharacteristically low. These two factors, more than anything else, contributed to the creation of small, concentrated berries in virtually disease free bunches that simply had to be clipped from the vine and dropped gently into the small picking bins.

The condition and quality of the 2010 fruit was as good as anyone could recall on Waiheke Island. It therefore was not surprising to us when Bob Campbell M.W. tasted the finished blends in barrel during April of 2011 and pronounced them a once in a lifetime vintage.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Blustery and wet conditions in October signaled an inauspicious start to the 2009 growing season. However, weather patterns stabilized in November with slightly above average warmth and average rainfall producing normal flowering.

Warm, dry conditions in early December pointed toward another stunning year as we saw one of our best ever fruitsets. In late December and early January we engaged in aggressive fruit thinning so the vines could focus their energy into lower-yield clusters that express the varietal typicity the vineyard at Destiny Bay provides. Stable warm temperatures, light breeze, and below average rainfall settled in for January and February. However, late February saw increased cloud burst weather events and challenged the staff to dodge downpours while they kept a vigilant watch on disease pressure. This was a sound reminder of why we don't like to 'Tempt the Gods' by forecasting a "stunning" vintage until all the grapes are harvested.

The Malbec, Petit Verdot and Merlot blocks were picked in late March, though volume was down more than 40% from 2008. Fortunately, April marked a sudden return to warm, dry weather which allowed our Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc blocks to achieve peak ripeness.

The 2009 vintage produced some incredible Cabernet fruit and the Merlot and Malbec exhibited remarkable structure and mouthfeel. Though not as challenging as 2007, the 2009 vintage served to remind us how fickle the weather can be and the value of being able to rapidly adapt to changing vineyard conditions.

At the first racking of 2009 wines it became clear that the attributes we demand in our wines were present in all the varieties and we would be able to release a full compliment of blends – albeit in smaller volumes than 2008.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

Spring brings promise and optimism to the vineyard. Subtle shifts in temperature and rainfall provide early clues to a vintage's fate. Bud break and early growth in 2008 was uneventful. Mild conditions in late August and September yielded to scattered rain in October that proved only a minor inconvenience to staff as they prepared the vineyard for a new season.

By early November stable warm temperatures, light breeze, and below average rainfall set the stage for record fruit set. In December, high temperatures and dry conditions settled in, establishing a weather pattern that extended through February. A hot, dry summer was a welcome change from the inclement conditions in 2007. Mild water stress helped build fruit concentration while reducing vegetative growth and berry size. A welcome few days of rain in early March provided modest hydration to sustain vines through to harvest.

Malbec, Petit Verdot and Merlot blocks were picked in late March. Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc blocks were harvested by mid April. Warm days spent picking near perfect fruit contributed to a growing enthusiasm about the potential for this vintage. Few on Waiheke could recall a summer with better weather for growing grapes.

The 2008 vintage was extraordinary in both yield and fruit quality. In some years, all the credit goes to the staff in coping with every manner of challenge that soil, site and climate can offer. But in 2008, it was Mother Nature at her best.

The early tasting of 2008 wine has validated our optimism, but then again, we benefited from a stellar performance by our most important partner.

Sean Spratt

*Owner & Winemaker*

The 2007 growing season presented the greatest weather challenge ever faced by Destiny Bay. Two ferocious storms battered the vineyard early in the season followed by above average rainfall, wind and cool temperature during late flowering. Compromised flowering and reduced fruit set meant a smaller than desirable crop. However, the lighter load on each vine also presented an opportunity to achieve extraordinary phenolic development in support of wine density and structure.

January ushered in a period of warm, dry weather which extended through mid March. Unstable weather returned in late March with some heavy rainfall. Quick action and flexibility by the vineyard team prevented disease pressure from compromising the crop. The normal pattern of harvesting was replaced with a labour intensive regime that ensured that selected fruit was picked at peak physiological ripeness. Though time consuming and difficult, this strategy delivered intensely concentrated and ripe fruit to the winery.

Concern over the reduced yield quickly dissipated after barrel tasting revealed wine with remarkable depth and structure as well as richness, balance, opulence and complexity. Positive and enthusiastic early reviews by selected critics reinforced the prudence of investing extra effort at harvest.

The 2007 vintage extends a tradition of elegant and approachable wines from Destiny Bay and demonstrates how adapting to adverse conditions can often yield extraordinary and distinctive wines. Mother Nature may have reduced 2007 production but she could not diminish its quality.

We are immensely proud of how the 2007 wines have developed and how our team overcame so many obstacles to bring them to you.

**Sean Spratt**

*Winemaker*

The exceptionally warm spring and summer of 2006 produced growing conditions that exceeded even the standard set by 2005 – a vintage heralded by many as the best of the decade.

Calm, warm, and dry spring weather created an ideal platform for fruit set. An abundance of large bunches with evenly set berries allowed for selective crop reduction to achieve the targeted 2.3 tonnes per acre with fruit in near perfect condition.

Consistent high temperature throughout the summer months, with an occasional rain shower, supported the development of a dense tannin base, optimal fruit ripeness and balance.

Harvest concluded on April 7th under a thunderous black sky. Fruit from the final pick of the LC10 Cabernet Sauvignon arrived at the winery in immaculate condition just a few hours before the commencement of ten days of rain.

Wines begin revealing their secrets early in the wine making process. The 2006 vintage was no exception showing promise and character early during fermentation with exceptional richness and deep, dark colour. After three-and-a-half years of barrel and bottle aging, these wines are exhibiting superb balance, depth, elegance and opulence.

The 2006 Destinae, Mystae and Magna Praemia reflect the soft and subdued notes that are Destiny Bay's signature and demonstrate the vineyard's potential.

Seductive and approachable, these wines will continue to develop for decades when cellared properly.

**Sean Spratt**

*Winemaker*

The 2005 vintage was a milestone for Destiny Bay Vineyards. Mature vines and new plantings flourished in ideal weather conditions on Waiheke Island. Adding to the excitement of optimal growing conditions was the arrival of the first fruit from new Cabernet Sauvignon clones. In combination with fruit from earlier plantings, the wine-making team now had an even more expansive range of choices in assemblage that expressed the diverse varietal and micro-climate characteristics of the vineyard.

The warm and dry weather on Waiheke Island from fruit-set through harvest was considered by many to be the best grape growing conditions in over a decade. Early January brought a modest amount of rain that enhanced pre-veraison tannin development, followed by hot and sunny days for the remainder of the month. Clear skies, moderate temperatures and a very dry April enabled clusters to reach peak physiological ripeness. The extended period of fine and stable weather fulfilled a winemaker's dream to make harvest decisions without the pressure of over-ripening or inclement weather.

The soft, seductive texture and finesse of the 2005 vintage not only established a foundation for the style of Destiny Bay's cabernet blends, but also foreshadowed the depth and complexity of wines to come.

Though tempting to drink now, these wines have great potential and will reveal their full story in the years to come.

**Sean Spratt**

*Winemaker*



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