

# A look at Lourensford's wine harvest for 2019

Lourensford Estate is mid-way through their 2019 harvest and while the winemaking team wait for the remaining grapes to reach perfect ripeness over the next three weeks, Cellarmaster Hannes Nel reports back.



## 1. What have the biggest harvest challenges been thus far?

This season we have needed nerves of steel. Determining when to pick which grapes has been one of the biggest challenges of the 2019 harvest and it is something we take day-by-day.

It has been a game of hurry up and wait, as the grapes take time to ripen and come into full maturity. We need to be in the vineyards daily to look at the condition of the vines and determine optimum ripeness. Harvesting too early or too late will have a direct impact on the quality of the resulting wines.

Another challenge has been the marauding baboons in our highest lying Sauvignon blanc vineyards, which has resulted in a loss of close to 25 tonnes of grapes.

## 2. How did the climatic conditions in 2018 impact the 2019 harvest?

It has been a season like we have never had before. Non-ideal weather conditions resulted in a drop in the overall yield, with some varietals seeing a 30% drop in harvested volume. Due to a week-long heatwave in the middle of winter 2018, some of our vines started budding too early.

The cold weather that followed resulted in uneven budding and ripening. Our Sauvignon blanc and Viognier were one to two weeks early, while the Chardonnay is two weeks late.







Last month (February) we did not experience the usual heatwaves and at the beginning of the month, the higher vineyards experienced over 40mm of rain in one day. Now we are experiencing Autumn-like weather with cold nights, cooler days and more rain.

### **3. What excites you about the 2019 harvest?**

The smaller berries contribute to a more concentrated juice which will, if managed correctly, have a very positive effect on the quality of the wines they produce. We are also working on very exciting projects, innovative trials and new releases in the cellar at the moment.

### **4. Which grapes have already been harvested?**

Grapes for our Methode Cap Classique, Sauvignon blanc, Merlot and Pinot Noir have been harvested. We hope to complete the harvest of our top Chardonnay blocks, Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon by the second half of March.

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