

M. CHAPOUTIER

AUSTRALIA

> 2018 HARVEST REPORT FOR M. CHAPOUTIER AUSTRALIA

The 2018 Victoria State grape harvest looks set to produce a great vintage.

A cold snap on the night of November 5 kicked off the season and gripped Victoria State. At Heathcote vineyard damage was minimal, while frost hit our three Pyrenean vineyards. Even though we knew that it would not affect grape quality, we realized that in some areas, the yields would be lower than in previous years.

Apart from this spring frost, the subsequent weather conditions over the season were heaven-sent for the production of a great vintage, especially as regards grape ripening.

As it happens, the winter ended on a particularly rainy note, which generously replenished the soils' water stocks leading to great bud bursting and rapid growth from the start of the season. October and November were rainier than usual, which also limited water stress during flowering and more to the point during grape setting. Flowering started from 10th november on Chardonnays and then concentrated around 15th november on our Rhone grape varieties at the Domaine de Tournon and finished towards 24th november on our late-ripening Malakoff plots. Thus, the spring rains had a very salutary effect on setting that ensured the grapes were big enough to achieve full ripeness and concentrated, supple tannins.

The weather changed dramatically early in January, when Victoria State was hit by a heatwave. In these extreme conditions we were forced to adapt work on the growing vines, by focusing on desuckering. Veraison occurred while it was hot from mid-January to early February, the date varying by locality. The water stocks also made for even, fast veraison, which cleared the way for early harvests and consistent ripeness on every plot.





The harvests in the Pyrenees started on the last two days of February for Chardonnay before resuming simultaneously on 15/3 on our Shay's Flat and Landsborough vineyards. Meanwhile, the Heathcote vineyards were harvested on 7 and 8 March for Lady's Lane and from 14 to 16 March for La Pleiade. The Malakoff Syrahs were harvested from 23 March onwards. Saddleback was cut on 26/3 and L-Block, a cooler south-facing plot (equating to a north-facing plot in the Northern Hemisphere), on 9/4.

The wines, which are now aging, can be described as full-bodied. Their strength and tension are down to high concentration in tannins that are already very supple and remarkable acidity and aromatic freshness that are only found in superlative vintages.

Lady's Lane displays singular acid balance, fresh fruit aromas (currant, blackberry) and above all, velvety tannins typical of Heathcote that accompany the wine from the attack to finishing.

La Pleiade wine has a very round attack, great aromatic complexity with fruity (blackberry, blackcurrant), floral (violet) and chocolaty notes. The velvety tannins of Heathcote are always present and accompany the tasting to a long fruity finish.

Saddleback-S-block, a little closed for the time being, the wine opens up during tasting on black fruit (blackberry, blackcurrant) and spicy (pepper, liquorice) aromas. The wine is classic, supported by good acidity, tannins that are already silky and a spicy finish that is currently refining.

L-Block true to itself, expresses all the minerality of this south-facing plot of schists/ quartz. The attack is fine and elegant opening on fruity (blackberry, currant) and mineral (smoky, flint) aromas making way for a very round mid-palate supported by supple, mellow tannins. The long, rich finish is characterized by its smoky, floral aromas.

