



VINTAGE 2016 – 2ND HARVEST REPORT

The 2015–2016 season began with a normal winter in terms of precipitation, followed by a cool spring that enabled optimal budbreak and foliage development. Rainfall in October enabled us to reach late November with the correct level of moisture in the ground, which insured optimal flowering. The summer also began very cool, but the month of February was one of the hottest in recent years. March was colder, which slowed ripening by 2 or 3 weeks, although the weather conditions were favorable until April.

April presented two rains five days apart with an accumulation of 70–180 mm in the Central Valley, which had a tremendous impact, not only on the wine industry, but on the entire agri-food industry as well. Ripening did not proceed at the expected speed following the rains, and additional rainfall two weeks later in May brought even more complications for the harvest. Despite the unfavorable weather, our angels did not forget us. Our El Arcángel de Marchigüe Vineyard, is closer to the coast and therefore received 60% less rainfall than the Central Valley, which therefore allowed us to proceed with well-programmed harvests. We had to pay close attention and use intense tastings of the grapes in the field in order to harvest logically without risking quality. The May rains brought additional complications to the harvest, but at that point nearly 100% of the grapes were fermenting in our cellars.

In general terms were able to achieve our goals for grape quality in all of the varieties. The Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay were harvested at precisely the right time and achieved the freshness and aromatic expression that we want to transmit in our wines and left us very happy once again with the terroir in Leyda, Zapallar, and Casablanca. The Pinot came in healthy and approximately 10 days late. Zapallar, Leyda, Casablanca, and Colchagua Costa all showed good quality with delicious grapes harvested at the correct moment. The reds were also late, but the tannic intensity was not a problem this year, which allowed us to harvest sooner with slightly lower potential alcohol levels and very good parameters for acidity, rich aromatic intensity, and tremendous color. The Merlot was harvested on time and achieved the quality we wanted with rich ripeness, smooth tannins, and low alcohol levels. The Cabernet from the warm sectors and low-yield blocks arrived in optimal condition, as did much of the Syrah. The Carmenère was picked after the rain, which produced considerable damage, primarily in the later-ripening sectors, although Apalta is showing historic potential.

It has been a difficult year, and we will surely learn much from it, such as harvesting earlier without fear of the tannins, understanding that under some circumstances the tannins can ripen earlier, and that the natural acidity can favor the concentration and longevity of the wines. The challenge now continues in our vinification facilities.

Aurelio Montes Sr.
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