



From the Twittersphere:

#v15 TRENDING NOW

Schild Estate Wines @SchildEstate 22 Jan
Spied a few loads of grapes around the Valley today. Looks like some guys are going. Good luck all. See you on the other side #v15

Drayton's Wines @draytonswines 22 Jan
A busy first day of harvest with the last bins on their way in. More Chardonnay & some Semillon up tomorrow #v15

Grant Burge Wines @GrantBurgeWines 22 Jan
#v15 has begun! The team have been working since 2am crushing #Barossa #Chardonnay!

GO @GwynOlsen 21 Jan
I do like having a cellar hand who is also a barista. Day One of #v15 - 3 loads Chard, 1 Pinot Noir. #gameon

Andrew Hanigan @DerwentEstate 21 Jan
I spy with my little eye . . . #V15 - in between the hen and chicken.

Sally Scarborough @scarboroughwine 21 Jan
The first fruit for the 2015 vintage has just been picked. Exciting stuff. #V15

Andrew Margan @andrewmargan 20 Jan
Can machinery catch a disease? I think everything in the vineyard is broken down! #v15 #notthevintageofthecentury

James Estate Wines @jamesestate 20 Jan
Another cracking nights harvest. Great flavour, great acid, great interest. #upperhunter #hunterwine #vintage15 #v15

Bespoke Hunter @rowenahawkins 19 Jan
Excited to see so much Vintage action in the #huntervalley #v15 good luck everyone, may the weather gods be good to you

Adam Holmberg @holmberg_adam 19 Jan
Rain rain go away and come again another day, preferably in about 6 weeks #V15

Henry Crawford @Henry4PM 18 Jan
and we're away!! #v15 is officially go! Expect #randomtweet at random hours for the next 2 months!

Helen McCarthy @BarossaHM 15 Jan
Saw the first truck loaded up with 9 very full grape bins this arvo. I'm guessing 3T plus in each of those suckers #v15

Mixed messages to growers in the use of quality measures

IN MAY 2012, The Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI), The National Measurement Institute (NMI) and Wine Grape Growers of Australia (WGGGA) invited stakeholders of the grape and wine sector to participate in an online survey about the use of winegrape quality measures in the Australian industry.

The aim, according to Lawrie Stanford, WGGGA executive director, was to better understand how, what and why grape quality measures were being used.

An interpretation of the survey findings, in respect the use of such measures, separates out their use for the purpose of wine processing compared to their use for winegrape price setting.

"The interpretation provided here is WGGGA's and is based on a non-expert understanding of the measures reported – it may therefore be arguable," Stanford said. "Nevertheless, it seems apparent that there are mixed messages in the value the industry puts on objective measures, demonstrated by the way they are used for winemaking versus their use to reward the desirable characteristics winemakers seek and hence, their production."

The survey found the top six measures used for winemaking accounted for roughly two thirds of the responses on measures used for winemaking.

"It is notable that the top three measures used for winemaking were ranked lower for use in price-setting," Stanford said. "Hence, while they were the most valued for winemaking they did not seem worth rewarding to incentivise them."

Three winemaking measures, ranked

It is notable that these measures are subjective rather objective and prone to variable reporting and interpretation and are therefore prone to disputation between the buyer and seller.

fifth (yield), sixth (diseases/pests) and seventh (MOG) were ranked very high for price setting well above their value for winemaking.

"Presumably, this is because these measures are used to reject fruit – reinforcing the earlier observation that rather than being used to incentivise desirable quality attributes, the price setting measures are predominantly used to reject and discount undesirable attributes."

In contrast to the mismatches noted in the foregoing, two measures in the top four of those valued for winemaking were closely matched by the frequency in which they are used for price setting namely, taste and visual assessment.

"However, it is notable that these measures are subjective rather objective and prone to variable reporting and interpretation and are therefore prone to disputation between the buyer and seller," Stanford said.

"All in all, this analysis suggests that price signals for desirable grape attributes are far from consistent with quality objectives that are trying to be achieved in winemaking and will, at best, be confusing to the grower trying to deliver them."

Rising temperatures cause grapes to ripen early

GRAPEGROWERS in Canberra have been expecting the earliest vintage on record, according to the CSIRO.

Rising temperatures across southern parts of Australia have contributed to grapes ripening earlier, and the trend is likely to continue.

Ken Helm, Murrumbateman winemaker, said he witnessed his earliest flowering when it began back in November and attributed this to the warm weather.

"You have to go and say that we are seeing a definite increase in temperatures across the climate and that the vines are responding."

Embarking on his 39th vintage, Helm said he was concerned cool climate

winemakers would continually have to adapt to a warmer climate.

"I think that we'll be looking at some difficulties with maintaining the quality and we'll have to start thinking about switching varieties perhaps," Helm, said.

A decade ago, Dr Leanne Webb, CSIRO plant research scientist, predicted that southern Australia would begin to see grapes ripen earlier than expected.

"We've attributed at least a third of the response for driving this early ripening is to the warming and drying climate that we've been experiencing in southern Australia," Webb said. "Given that projections are that climate will be warming further, we expect that this pattern will continue."