



KING VALLEY VIGNERONS

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King Valley Regional Update

Issue 3

23 January 2006

King Valley Facts

- The 2005 vintage produced a yield on average of 11 tonnes per hectare.
- There are 24 independent wineries with cellar doors, of which 18 are open every day.
- Grapes from the King Valley find a ready market, supplying over 20 companies outside the region, including some of Australia's leading wineries, including Miranda, Mildara, BRL Hardy, Petaluma, Yalumba, Brokenwood, Yarra Ridge, De Bortoli, Orlando and Southcorp.
- The annual Shed Wine Show, held in October provides a perfect opportunity to sample the full spectrum of wines produced

Wineries from outside the King Valley interested in buying grapes can contact the following companies to arrange crushing:

Victorian Alps Winery 03 57 511922
Sam Miranda Wines 03 57 273888
King Valley Wines 03 57 298555

KVV Set to Lead Grape Research.

\$97,400 for First Year of a 3 Year Project

- A grant of \$97,400 has been approved for the first year of a three year project entitled 'Sustainable Management of Water and other Natural Resources for Improved Grape Quality'. The funds have been provided by the National Landcare Project and growers will work with the North East Catchment Management Authority, The Department of Primary Industries, The University of Melbourne, GWRDC, Rural City of Wangaratta, Goulburn Murray Water, The Centre for Continuing Education, Wangaratta and local Landcare groups.

The project is a broad reaching one with the major areas of study being:

- ❖ Understanding vineyard soil and water relationships
- ❖ Understanding water usage, timing and climate in the vineyard
- ❖ Increasing grower awareness of factors effecting fruit quality in the vineyard
- ❖ Increasing adoption of new technologies
- ❖ Improving fruit quality utilizing canopy manipulation
- ❖ Exploring options for minimal input viticulture

A Project Officer will be appointed on a part time basis to coordinate the project which will have 8 test sites, one in each of the King Valley's micro climates. Progress reports will be appear in this publication

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Invitation to Wineries Looking for Premium Grapes.

Look no further than the King Valley.

Contact Wendy on 03 57273883 or kingvalleyvignerons@bigpond.com to arrange contact with growers and a tour of the region.

Correction from Regional Update 2.

In the 'Season So Far' report, the rainfall to date should have been reported as 1,661mm.

MESSAGE FROM THE EDITOR.

- The King Valley Regional Update is published monthly and distributed to 150 wineries and all grower associations.
- We appreciate feedback.
- What other information would you like us to publish?
- We would also like to know how the season is progressing in your area.
- The recent Senate Enquiry indicated that there was poor communication within the industry. We would like to be proactive in improving this situation.

The Season So Far

Soaking rains throughout winter / early spring filled the soil profiles to capacity, and were welcomed after the relatively dry winters of the past few years. Budburst occurred in mid – late September throughout the region. Cool conditions throughout October – mid November saw slow but steady shoot growth, allowing foliage wire lifting to proceed in an orderly fashion. Persistent rains throughout this period also resulted in conditions conducive to Downy Mildew, however well timed and targeted sprays ensured that this disease was kept under control. Flowering commenced in mid November – up to one week earlier than average- and the relatively dry, warm conditions resulted in a average flowering period reducing the risk of Botrytis infection. Growers are now hoping for a relatively dry December to slow shoot growth, reduce berry size and ensure that the vines are well set up for the onset of veraison in mid January.

Unfortunately, growers hopes of a dry December were dashed when the region received 40-60mm on the 4th Decmber. This rainfall event allowed vegetative growth to continue requiring extra shoot trimming to keep canopy architecture in order. December rainfall was 76.5mm, slightly above the long term average of 68mm. This gave a total yearly rainfall of 1237mm vs. the long term average of 1083mm. December minimum temperature was 10.7, slightly below the long term average of 11.3. December maximum temperature was 28.1, which was above the long term average 26.6, and reflected the extreme heat wave on the 31st where the maximum was 39.2 for that day.

Fortunately, the very dry conditions throughout mid December to mid January, coupled with heatwaves in late December / early January saw the soil profiles dry out very quickly. This enabled deficit irrigation regimes to be carried out, resulting in reduced berry size and good cane lignification prior to the onset of veraison in mid / late January. Growers started to apply supplementary irrigation in mid January, just prior to the onset of veraison and will continue through to harvest, to ensure good leaf health and optimal ripening conditions.

Crop estimates have revealed crop levels up to 20% below average on most varieties. This will result in a regional average of 9 tonnes / hectare at harvest.

Great Wines get a Great Write-up

In an article in the Financial Review, January 13th, Tim White gave the King Valley enormous praise:

“There is a professionalism, pride and unity of purpose in the King Valley.... They have become winegrowers not grape growers”

“There’s fabulous bubbly- great whites across all mainstream varieties... a number of ‘right on the money’ dry styles of Rosé... Reds made from Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot are also moving ahead”

Obtain a copy of the article from kingvalleyvignerons@bigpond.com

New Technology to be trialled in the King Valley.

Early in January a small group of winemakers attended a workshop presented by Dr Barry McCleary from Megazyme. He spoke about their new kits and demonstrated the portable colorimeter “MegaQuant” for malic and sugar testing. This was designed specifically for those with no lab and/or spectrophotometer. The MegaQuant will be trialled by 2 wineries and results will be compared with those from a spectrophotometer.