



## **Newsletter South Africa – February 2022**

The South African wine industry is spread over a wide range of cultivation areas throughout the Western and Northern Cape, with often diverse climatic conditions. Because of this variation, the crop is estimated upwards and others downwards in the respective regions.

The harvest is estimated to be smaller in most wine grape growing regions, except for Stellenbosch, the Cape South Coast and Klein Karoo. The overall decline in the 2022 wine grape crop can be attributed to vineyards being uprooted in especially the Northern Cape, Olifants River and Robertson regions, as well as high downy mildew and powdery mildew infections in some of these regions. The ripening period was cooler than normal, but heatwaves in December and January caught some vineyards off guard, causing sunburn damage to grapes.

Other than that, wine grape producers experienced an exceptional season.

Winter conditions were excellent, characterised by mostly above-average cold units – as reflected by frequent snowfall on mountain peaks – along with higher-than-normal rainfall that supplemented groundwater levels. Due to a cool, wet spring, budding was seven to 14 days later than normal in general, but consistently good and even. The cool weather also delayed initial growth, but most vines caught up during flowering, which occurred about five days later than usual.

The harvest started about 14 days later than normal in most regions, the early cultivars are looking healthy with great potential. The longer, slower ripening period of the grapes allowed for even ripening and better aroma, fruit and flavour development. The wines are expected to have more complexity and elegance, riper tannins, and a favourable acid/sugar balance. There is excitement about the quality of the Sauvignon Blanc as the conditions to date are perfect for top-quality grapes.

As the harvest picks up pace we will have a better idea of the quality and quantities of the other varieties.

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