

KANONKOP

WINE ESTATE

Vintage Report - 2012

The yield from the Stellenbosch district was about 5% lower than in 2011, due to inclement weather during flowering and berry set (especially Cabernet Sauvignon), as well as sunburn damage in January. The overall decline in the surface area planted to grapevines, also negatively impacted the crop size.

The 2012 vintage will be remembered as being a very dry season with ideal, cool conditions during the ripening period. Water supply levels were low throughout the season, and it was the 4th driest year over the past 44 years. This meant the vines had to be irrigated at a much earlier stage than usual.

Although the season's rainfall was 200mm lower than the long term average, it was a much cooler season compared to 2011. December was, on average, 2°C cooler than the long term average. There was also a lot less wind than usual during that period. The bush vines started showing the symptoms of leafroll virus quite early, and there were a number of vines with signs of Erinoise Mite infection (possibly due to the stress of the drought).

Up to the 9th of January the season looked very promising, until the first heat wave arrived and lasted for a week, with the mercury spiking above 35°C, followed by the same conditions at the end of January and beginning of February. Grapevines that already displayed symptoms of water deficits before these hot conditions, suffered from sunburn damage. In hindsight, the first Pinotage was probably harvested a touch too early, but the sugars were fairly high at that point. After the 2nd heatwave in early February, the sugars stood still for about three weeks. The old blocks of Pinotage looked the worst it did in 10 years – the drought and leafroll virus halted the ripening process.

The harvest commenced on 7 February, and the first Pinotage grapes we received tasted extremely sweet and measured 26.5° B. The second half of the ripening period was accelerated by above average temperatures in March.

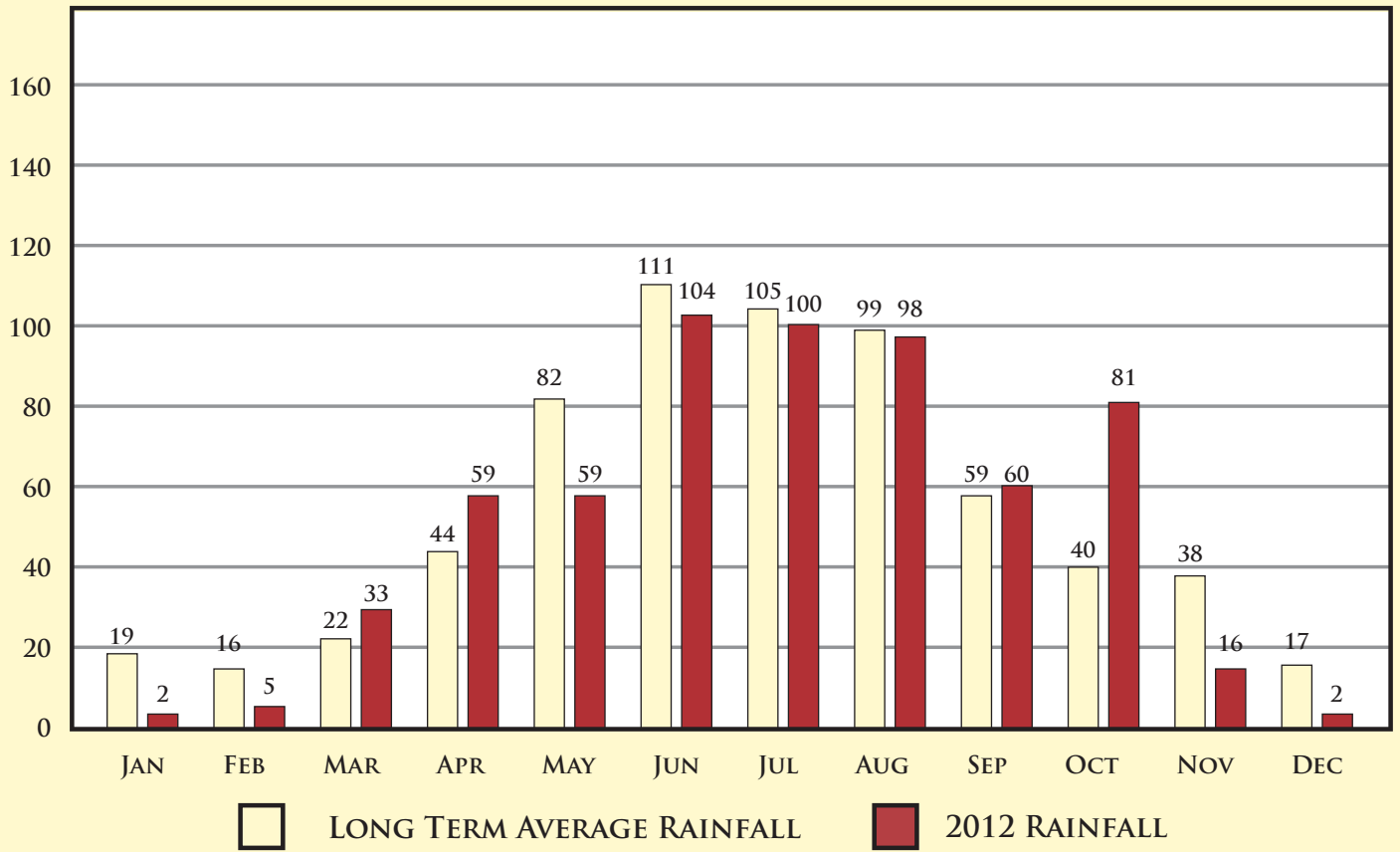
A number of yellow leaves were present in blocks B102 (Cabernet Franc), 103C and 103B. The aim was to let the grapes hang for as long as possible while the conditions of these vines are still ok. The Cabernet Sauvignon was of good quality – it ripened very slow with lots of brown pips. This allowed us to harvest the Cabernet at lower sugar levels compared to 2011.

While the unusual dry, hot January strained unirrigated vineyards, it was a very good vintage producing wines with moderate alcohol levels. Smaller berries had a positive effect on wine quality, and very good colour was achieved. Grape analyses indicate slightly lower acids and higher pH. On the whole, good sugars were easily obtained and optimal ripeness was achieved at a lower sugar content.

KANONKOP VINTAGE RATING: 4 STARS



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RAINFALL (MM): 2012 VS LONG TERM AVERAGE



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AVERAGE TEMPERATURE (°C): 2012 MIN & MAX

