VINTAGE REVIEW

Every growing season is different and mother nature can throw some curve balls at us. What happens in the vineyard is a huge determinant for wine quality. Below is a summary of the various vintage growing years using our Naramata Bench vineyard for weather statistics.

2003
Degree days: 1,769
Frost-free days: 212

One of the **longest and hottest summers** on record. With the exception of a few smoky days from the Okanagan Mountain Park fire, our vineyard reaped the benefits of an endless summer of above average temperatures. A bonafide vintage year.

2004
Degree days: 1,576
Frost-free days: 210

A **warm spring** led to accelerated development in the vineyard. **Cooler August** temperatures allowed the acids to catch up with the high sugars. After extended hang-time, the warm season finish pushed harvest numbers to our target sweet spot by mid-Oct.

2005
Degree days: 1,506
Frost-free days: 232

Crop levels were down across the valley due to a **rainy spring** that affected fruit set. However, the growing season warmed up considerably for the rest of the summer leading to a harvest of lower quantity but concentrated flavours.

2006
Degree days: 1,550
Frost-free days: 200

A bumper crop thanks to generous fruit set and cooperative weather conditions. While sometimes extra cropping can mean sacrificing quality, consistently warm weather in fact created an earlier harvest than average at optimal ripening.

2007
Degree days: 1,508
Frost-free days: 199

An **early heat spell** in late spring led to moderately high temperatures throughout the season. September arrived with rain which initially caused a bit of **hand-wringing** for us, but ultimately allowed flavours to develop as the reds hung on the vine well into October.

2008
Degree days: 1,442
Frost-free days: 187

Winter damage from a November 2007 cold snap damaged many of the red varieties, thus crop loads were way down. However, **small crops** are easier to ripen and provide greater intensity. A cool spring delayed bud break but incredibly warm September saved the season.

2009
Degree days: 1,627
Frost-free days: 189

The **shortest growing season** we've ever experienced. Budbreak was delayed by an exceptionally cool spring and an **early frost** on Oct 12th compressing the season by 4 weeks. Fortunately, solid summer heat and a remarkably warm September actually created a faster ripening cycle which challenged winemakers to balance high Brix with falling acids.

2010
Degree days: 1,429
Frost-free days: 213

One of the coolest we've experienced. A late wet spring resulted in a slow start. Warm summer temperatures got things going but ripening came to a grinding halt in September with low temperatures and uncharacteristic rainfall. Cautious **fruit thinning** helped adjust crop load and fortunately a heat wave in October put the harvest on track.

2011
Degree days: 1,384
Frost-free days: 189

A late season from beginning to end. Bud break was 3 weeks behind normal and while we did get some decent heat units in August and September, the vineyards just never caught up. Thankfully, October brought some above average temperatures allowing us to keep fruit hanging until mid-November.

2012
Degree days: 1,545
Frost-free days: 215

Considered one of the better vintages in the past 5 years, the growing season was **long and warm.** Despite a wet spring, 2012 delivered an almost flawless Okanagan summer, followed by extended fall warmth. While some vineyards had large yields this year, we managed our crop levels carefully to still stay within our target **focusing on quality, not quantity.**

2013
Degree days: 1,624
Frost-free days: 213

Again a **warm growing season**, but with **more humidity** than normal, which can create challenges in the vineyard. Fortunately after some rains in September, the weather dried up through October which allowed us to pick on schedule at optimal ripeness levels.

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2014
Degree days: 1,702
Frost-free days:

In a simple word, the 2014 growing year was **HOT**. Even with the typical June rains, the season was above average for temperatures and the early spring really created a **long growing season**. While we anticipated an early harvest, we did get a nice pause with **warm days and cool nights** typical of the Okanagan to help retain acidity in the wines.

2015
Degree days: 1,764
Frost-free days:

Starting with a particularly warm spring, 2015 became **one of the hottest on record** in the Okanagan Valley. Hot doesn't necessarily guarantee a stellar vintage as vines can shut down once temperatures go beyond 35 degrees. Overall, harvest dates were **two to three weeks early** with fabulously ripe fruit.

2016
Degree days: 1,635
Frost-free days:

Starting with the **earliest bud break** on record in the Okanagan, the spring had significant heat units which caused the vineyards to surge in growth. A more **moderate summer** helped to gain back some balance in the vines. Ripening was early but gradual as fall rains slowed down the pace at harvest. An **early frost** on October 11th created havoc for some wineries but our vineyards were unscathed.

Source: GDD and FF - Summerland Research & Development Centre, Osoyoos reference

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