

2023

Whilst dry and hot were the most common adjectives used in relation to 2022, in 2023 dry and hot can be replaced with dull and wet! These conditions are likely to be a precursor of what we may see in future years as our climate continues to get warmer and wetter with frequently changing conditions.

2023 was a real challenge for the viticultural team led by Jason Streatfield and Mark Gaskain with the weather remaining ever changeable throughout the growing season. The disease pressure remained high throughout and vigilance and quick reactions were required right up until harvest.

Spring seemed to go on for ever with little sign of summer ever arriving. It was cold and wet but again we were fortunate to escape with no frost damage despite a few nights dropping close to freezing.

The weather improved during the second half of June which meant that flowering was very good. July and August was very over cast and generally "dull". The dullness was interspersed with lots of rain and the viticultural team had to be on their guard throughout to ward off the threat of Mildew and Botrytis.

Thankfully the weather turned really nice during September which allowed the vines to finally start to accumulate some sugars. The on and off wet weather during the length of the summer resulted in larger bunch weights than in 2022.

Harvest started on Friday 6th October, a week later than 2022. We started with the young Chardonnay and Pinot Noir on Chilham Bank, which we planted in the middle of lockdown in May 2020. We were very fortunate to have dry weather right through until the last day of picking. We finished on Friday 13th October with a "blitz" using 75 pickers to get all the remaining Pinot Noir in the Reeds vineyard picked before the forecast rain arrived. Sure enough there was a huge down pour at 8 pm by which time we were all picked!

2023 had been a challenge in the vineyard but in the end Alexandre Ponnavey was very happy with the quality of the fruit.



PATRICK MCGRATH

Founder