

## South Australia vintages

3 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

**2009** A smaller vintage with another blistering heatwave to contend with. Opposite to 2008, the whites suffered most in 2009.

**2008** An extremely hot year wreaked havoc with reds, but the earlier picked whites look to be good quality, and the Barossa's oldest vines weathered the heat as they always have done.

**2007** Very early, very small harvest, shrunk by the killer combination of frost and drought. Reds tend to be concentrated. Clare Rieslings are likely to shine..

**2006** Rain, very welcome in some respects, interrupted harvest at the end of the fourth successive drought- affected growing season. Limestone Coast Cabernets look promising.

**2005** Large crop of super- ripe wines in which both reds and whites were very successful.

**2004** Record crop even though the total volume was trimmed by extreme heat just before harvest. Increasingly highly regarded reds.

**2003** Eerily similar to many European 2003s, these are potent, fast- maturing reds shaped by a drought season with, often, a hole in the middle and very dry tannins on the finish.

**2002** Poor weather at flowering reduced yields considerably and was followed by an unusually cool summer and a late harvest leading to some high- quality wines. Inland irrigated regions benefited most obviously from this prolonged growing season.

**2001** A vintage that rewarded the quality- conscious. A usefully wet start to the growing season was followed by prolonged very hot, dry weather, broken by rain just before harvest in March. Some grapes suffered sunburn but lower- yielding vineyards produced true quality.

**2000** Very challenging vintage conditions which included poor flowering, hail, exceptional heat in summer and rain during harvest. There were problems with colour stability. Small crop.

**1999** The record crop was more the result of increased plantings than any natural phenomenon. Several years of drought conditions continued until summer, which was plagued by some storms which compromised vintage health. A cooler year than 1998.

**1998** Was then a record crop from an early, frantic vintages despite drought conditions. Some fine reds.

**1997** Vintage saved by a hot April with some fine Shiraz made, eventually, which should have a long life.

**1996** A big vintage at last, with sugars boosted by a late burst of heat.

**1995** Inconveniently small crop but some good Shiraz and Rieslings, especially in Clare, where quantities were better than elsewhere

**1994** Exceptionally dry but not too hot: the resulting wines are deep and structured, especially from the Barossa Valley.

**1993** Ripening was slowed by an unusually cool and wet spell. A challenging year with the whites especially more variable than usual.

**1992** Cool temperatures at harvest ensured balanced wines, exceptional from Clare Valley.

**1991** Dry weather restricted yields, but the quality was generally fine for all varieties.

**1990** Ideal weather: enough water and moderate temperatures. An excellent year in all regions.