

JIM BARRY WINES

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Reds beat whites for the first time ever!

The 2013 vintage has seen Jim Barry Wines harvest shiraz before riesling for the first time in its 53-year history.

The family company's Managing Director, Peter Barry, said that this was a strange occurrence indeed, and the result of a very dry growing season.

The shiraz grapes were picked from one of the company's low-yielding vineyards that had retained excellent canopy cover despite the dry spell. The early ripening was the result of lower-than-average yields in this vineyard.

Peter's eldest son Tom, one of the company's winemakers, is confident that the early harvest will have absolutely no adverse effects on the quality of the wine produced from these grapes.

"As usual, we picked the fruit based on flavour and tannin structure," he said.

"The grapes in all of our vineyards have retained good natural acidity this year and we are confident that 2013 will be an excellent shiraz vintage.

"Our riesling crop is also looking fantastic thanks to good leaf coverage. Despite the heat, we have seen very little sunburn in the vineyards."

The 2013 vintage looks set to be an incredibly quick one for Jim Barry Wines, with riesling being picked in the coming days and more shiraz due early next week.

Although veraison occurred a week late for riesling, Peter estimates they are around two weeks early for harvest.

"Ripening has occurred much more quickly than usual thanks to the dry conditions," he said.

"Shiraz grapes went from 50 per cent veraison on 20 January to being ready for harvest on 8 February. For this to occur so quickly is very unusual."

The remaining shiraz is expected to take the usual five weeks to reach full ripeness.

Despite the unique year, the team is not anxious.

"Changes like this are what make vintage so exciting," Peter said.

"You think you have everything planned for the vintage and then Mother Nature throws you a curve ball. The important thing is to hit that curve ball square on!"

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