



November Newsletter – Shoot thinning.

October may have been one of the coldest in 40 or 53 or 64 years, anyway in a long time, it just didn't warm up, but on the other hand it never really froze either, so it appears we have escaped frost season totally unscathed.

There can always be a sting in spring's tail but the closer we head towards summer the less that is. So now we sit looking at a \$60,000 wind machine thinking what a waste of money, but one thing is for sure, if we didn't have a wind machine there would have been a frost.

Then there is always next year.

The shoots are now about 20cm long, most displaying two floral clusters containing next year's potential grapes, after flowering early in the New Year these will be reduced to one.

We have begun, and for the next month will continue with some of the most intensive and important hand work in the vineyard; shoot thinning which is the first step in controlling crop level.

The vines are about one metre apart meaning one metre of cane is laid down on the fruiting wire / vine.

Each metre of cane will produce about 20 shoots, almost twice what we are after so they are thinned down to about 12 shoots, each shoot eventually ripening 1 bunch averaging 100 grams each so each vine producing 1.2kg of grapes (or just over a bottle by the time it is turned into wine).

The Valli Gibbston Vineyard has been planted at 4040 vine/ha which if you do the maths on all the above comes out at almost 5t/ha., (generally considered the perfect cropping level for Pinot Noir.

The two most common planting densities in C.O. are 1666 vines /ha and 2500vines/ha.

which to produce 5t/ha must produce 3kg/vine and 2kg/vine respectively, too much fruit for one vine to fully ripen.

This was the whole principle guiding the set up of my vineyard, the extra vines and associated posts, wire etc meant initial establishment costs were much higher, but the ability to produce the very best fruit was the aim, and we now have that forever.

If the figures above are confusing, have a glass of pinot and read again, they really do make sense.

Cheers,

Grant

