



## January 2010 Newsletter

The most common Question I get asked, and it's usually by friends with a worried look and furrowed brow) is "What is this weather doing to your grapes?"

I would like to think their concern is for my mental state and the economic health of Valli Vineyards Ltd. but have a feeling more often than not they are worried about the quality of what I will be offering them to drink next year.

Regardless of the reason, that question has been asked a lot the past couple of weeks and with good cause as we have had cool, wet, windy weather for most of the past month.

The last newsletter was just before the "flowering hurdle", and in the middle of all this mediocre weather around Xmas we had a week that was warm and settled, timed perfectly as that was when flowering occurred ,so happily I can report one of the better flowerings seen in recent years, good pollination and over a very brief period meaning fruit ripeness will be uniform.

Then what of the "poor" weather since?

After flowering, the next phase is cell division, where all the grapes do is physically increase in size (it will be another couple of months before physiological changes such as colour change and sugar accumulation etc. occur).

The cooler it is, the slower cell division is, and the smaller the individual berries are; meaning a higher skin to juice ratio and less tonnage for the vine to ripen, both factors in producing Pinot Noirs of quality.

For the moment this cool weather is acceptable (except it is making fishing no fun; so had better improve soon), once again it will be Central Otago's March / April determining the quality of the vintage. Although it feels like summer has hardly started we are already dreaming of a classic long, warm, dry Central Otago autumn.

I look forward to seeing some of you down here enjoying it with a pair of grape snips in hand.

Grant Taylor

