

**Paul Miller  
& Associates**

Horticultural  
Consultants

50 Middlesex Rd  
Surrey Hills  
Victoria 3127  
Australia

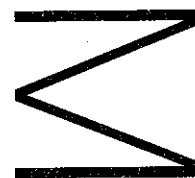
Telephone/  
Facsimile  
03 9830 0519  
Mobile  
0412 854 974  
Email  
hortempm@bigpond.com

Pomology P/L  
Registered Proprietor  
ACN 006 623 874  
ABN 28 357 993 156

**The Barossa Vines Limited (BVL) Vineyards  
Summer 2009/2010  
Viticultural Status**

**February 26 2010**

**Report for:  
Barossa Vines Ltd  
266-268 Payneham Road  
Payneham  
South Australia 5070**



This report has been prepared for the purposes of commenting on the general viticultural status of the Barossa Vines Ltd (BVL) vineyards during the later spring and summer of 2009/2010.

## 1. Late Spring and Summer 2009/2010 at BVL

The rainfall during spring and summer this season was well timed and useful during that period. The Bureau of Meteorology weather station at Rosedale recorded 181 mm from September to February compared to the long-term average of 186 mm for this period. At the Nuriootpa station the recorded rainfall for the same period 2009/2010 was 175 mm compared with a long-term average of 200 mm. January and February have been warm and much drier than average so the irrigation team at BVL has been busy during this time.

The standout features so far this season have been much hotter than average weather in November followed by warm - close to ideal - ripening conditions in January and February.

The November 2009 average maximum temperature was 5.7 degrees C above the long term average. The hot days were from the 8<sup>th</sup> to the 15<sup>th</sup> of November and then again on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>. The Nuriootpa weather station recorded 9 days over 35 degrees Centigrade during this period. The data at the Rosedale weather station is incomplete for November 2009 but there were several days over 40 degrees during this time.

Throughout the region the November 2009 weather adversely affected fruit set depending on the stage of flowering of the vines at the time. At BVL the Shiraz vines appeared to avoid any significant effects from this weather. The Cabernet Sauvignon was affected to varying degrees. Given the predominance of Shiraz at BVL overall the crop survived the hot November weather with minimal affects on fruit set.

Both weather stations reported hotter than average weather over summer. Maximum daily temperatures during Summer 2009/2010 averaged about 2 degrees over the long-term average.

The season was a good one for canopy development, good at the beginning and during spring for new vine establishment and cover crop growth, dry during the last two months that has challenged the irrigation system in parts but close to ideal for ripening and fruit development.

There have been no significant pest or disease problems at the BVL vineyards during the season to date.

The weed and sucker control has been effective over the BVL vineyards this year and so the cropping vines have been well positioned to produce high quality grapes and take maximum benefit from both rainfall and irrigation.

In the re-planted and young blocks the favourable spring weather, overall good weed control and careful attention to irrigation have resulted in good survival and establishment rates and healthy new growth.

The 2010 vintage is shaping up as a very good one for BVL and much of the Barossa. While harvest was only about half way through at the end of February the overall result appears excellent with regard to quality.

The manager reports strong interest from winemakers in the quality of these red Barossa grapes and this is at a difficult time of a well reported significant over-supply of grapes in the Australian wine industry. That quality and location have set the BVL grapes apart from many others is a positive sign for the future.

## 2. The Vineyards Set Up in 2008

Re-planting was needed in most areas on the block known as Boths as well as the first stages of the Zerk block in spring 2009. This year the success rate of the replants is high and well within industry norms. A combination of good quality planting material, excellent weed control, favourable spring weather and ongoing irrigation has resulted in good growth and vines that are now well established to be trained up to the cordon in the next season.

On some of these vineyards there will need to be mounding of the soil and further application of soil ameliorants such as mulch in preparation for the second season. In addition the manager will need to consider more frequent watering of smaller amounts of water on shallower soils after mounding to maximize the water use efficiency in these areas.

As part of the re-consideration of water supplies across the BVL vineyards the manager plans to establish more dams and this will need to happen for the 2008 vineyards as the vines grow on from the good establishment this season and need more water.

## 3. The Vineyards Set Up in 2007

There was a significant need for further re-planting last year of the 2007 vineyards that included the balance of the BVL Sturt Highway Block at Daveyston, the Eckermann Road Block at Rosedale and part of the Gomersal Road Block at Shea-oak Log. Part of the BVL Sturt Highway Block was first planted in 2006 and there was some replanting of this block as well.

A combination of good quality planting material, excellent weed control, favourable spring weather and ongoing irrigation has resulted in good growth and vines that are now well established to be trained up to the cordon in the next season. At the Sturt Highway block some of the replants made it to the cordon wire this season and that is a good outcome.

The use of vine guards, mounding of soil and changes to irrigation frequency have all contributed to a much better outcome this season than for the previous 2 seasons.

As part of the re-consideration of water supplies across the BVL vineyards the manager plans to establish more dams and this will need to happen for the Eckermanns vineyards as the vines grow on from this good establishment in 2009/2010 and need more water in future.

As previously reported the additional soil works at Sturt Highway and Eckermanns will take time – at least a few seasons. Mounding will be a periodic practice for the future of these vineyards to maximize soil available to the roots of the vines. This work will be assisted by detailed soils analyses recently undertaken across the Sturt Highway vineyard.

#### 4. The Vineyards Established in 2006

The 2006 vineyards included the first stage of Sturt Highway at the northern end of this block as well as completion of the Waltons block. These were uneven blocks following a tough start in 2006/2007 but are becoming more even and well established as the efforts to recover vine growth take effect.

The Waltons block is fast becoming an excellent even vineyard including this second stage.

The northern end of the Sturt Highway block is proving to be the most problematic part of that vineyard and will need ongoing work to maximize soil availability to the vine roots. This will be assisted by detailed soils analyses recently undertaken across the Sturt Highway vineyard.

In both cases this season excellent weed control and attention to more intensive irrigation management has improved vine growth. There is still variable vine development that can be seen across parts of the Sturt Highway block.

These blocks were yet to be harvested at the date of this report but in line with the generally good conditions for 2010 the grapes should be of a good standard.

#### 5. The Vineyards Established in 2005

The vines planted in 2005 – V block and the first stage of Waltons – have their third crop this season. In both cases these are proving to be outstanding vineyards and have performed well this season.

What is very encouraging is that these blocks are into their third crops and still the quality appears very good. Hopefully it will be possible to examine the wine outcomes from these grapes. Many vineyards suffer a reduction in quality from about the third crop until sometimes the sixth or seventh crop but this appears not to be the case here.

## 6. Established Cropping Vineyards

2010 is shaping up to be an outstanding vintage for BVL and much of the Barossa barring adverse weather before vintage is completed. On the mature cropping vineyards harvest was over 50% complete at the date of this report and grape quality so far appears to be generally excellent. There are differences emerging within and between blocks in amounts and quality of grapes. These have been foreseen and offer different grape and wine styles to wineries and winemakers within the overall Barossa style.

Water quantity and availability still need further upgrades across the BVL vineyards in some areas but in general the 2010 crop from the older BVL vineyards has been very even and well managed. Mounding was done successfully over about 80 ha before this season and will be extended on shallower soils for the future. It is also intended to increase the overall interconnected water storage capacity of the BVL vineyards.

## 7. The 2010 Harvest Progress

The 2010 harvest is going well. The excellent ripening conditions have meant that the harvest can be done over a longer period than in years when hot spells have preceded a rushed vintage. In addition as the manager in conjunction with the winemaker become more familiar with the characteristics of particular blocks the harvest can be strategically staged. The 2010 harvest at BVL was about half way through at the date of this report and appears to be progressing well.

## 8. Experience from the Warmer than Averages Recent Years

The weather data over the last 5 season shows hotter than average temperatures by at least 1 degree during critical parts of the growing season. This does not sound a lot but it is significant for winegrapes. There have also been significant extreme events such as the hot weather in late summer 2009 and the very hot period in November 2009. In addition water supplies in the Murray darling system that deliver water to the Barossa have been severely limited. This is consistent with the view of the Federal Government of the future for south east Australia.

I am happy with the evolution of canopy management at BVL in response to both the warm weather conditions but also as the manager works with its winemakers to plan the best outcomes block by block based on the grape quality and wine outcomes experienced as the vineyards mature. This cooperation is fundamental to dealing with weather trends.

If 2010 is an example then the BVL vineyards should continue to produce grapes that are typical of this premium Barossa region but it is the case that BVL needs to increase its irrigation capacity and that is planned.

The management of the BVL vineyards during the summer of the 2009/2010 season has been effective, and has seen the production of what appears to be a potentially excellent vintage from the cropping vineyards along with a substantial improvement in the outcomes from the young new vineyards.

BVL is aware of the need to improve the overall irrigation capability in its interconnected water supply system and has implemented soil management strategies that have improved the outcomes during the dry mid to late summer this season. It is intended that this effort will be continued and expanded.

Overall the 2009/2010 season has been a good one so far for BVL and much better in most aspects than the previous season.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Paul Miller". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

PAUL MILLER