

# MENGLERS HILL VINEYARDS

## BOOSTING YIELDS FROM 2 T/HA TO OVER 7 T/HA AT COST OF \$2 EXTRA PER VINE



For Menglers Hill Vineyards, taking action against Eutypa dieback in 2014 was a matter of survival for its vines and business, according to proprietor and viticulturist Karl Schiller.

“I don’t think we could have survived if we were still picking the tonnes per hectare [we were], so for me, reworking has been crucial to the survival of not only the vineyard, but also the business,” he said.

Fruit production on the 26ha property at Eden Valley was in steady decline, falling by more than a half over three seasons, from 3.5t/ha in 2012 to 1.7t/ha in 2014. This production loss confirmed the results of an assessment of the vineyards in 2012, which showed between 30 and 60% Eutypa dieback in the cordons on spur-pruned vines.

Achieving less than 2t/ha fruit production in 2014 was the impetus for launching a reworking program at Menglers Hill, which they instigated in the same year at a cost of \$2 per vine or \$3000 per hectare. It’s an investment that has reaped significant rewards in terms of production and quality, according to Karl. “In 2015 after reworking, I picked 6t/ha. In 2016, I picked 6.5t/ha and the last two years’ [production] has been over 7t/ha,” he said. “In terms of wine quality, I’ve

only had good reports. The flowering seems to be a lot more even; the fruit quality is more even, and the winery is happy with that.”

### ALL-OR-NOTHING APPROACH SAVES TIME

After originally taking an individual-vine approach to Eutypa, Karl quickly realised the inefficiencies of this method and instead treated the entire property. “When I started reworking I was doing it vine-by-vine, finding the dead cordons and trying to remove them and wrap down a new arm, but I just found it too inefficient,” he said.

“I was spending a lot of time going up and down rows, looking for the affected cordons and in the end, I decided that if I was going to do this, I was going to do it all or nothing.

“I’ve gone through and done the whole block and removed all the cordons and run new wire. This has given me a more even vineyard and it was also less time consuming overall, because I was going in for that one block of time.”

*For more information on Barossa’s focus on sustainability go to <https://www.barossawine.com/vineyards/resilience/> or contact Nicki Robins, Viticultural Development Officer, Barossa Grape & Wine Association at [nicki@barossa.com](mailto:nicki@barossa.com)*