

HEATHVALE WINES

RENEWED FOCUS ON SPRAYING TO PREVENT EUTYPA REINFECTION



which he could wrap the new wood. “Water shoots are absolute gold. You need to bring a water shoot up and train it for that first year. In the second year...we cut the old trunk off and if we were lucky, we got below the Eutypa.”

“This vine is now three years in production. We’ve got a nice, new healthy vine, the quality of the fruit is even...we get a much more open bunch...and the fruit quality is absolutely lovely. So we’re producing a wine from this that goes into our premium label.”

YIELDS RISE AFTER REWORKING

Heathvale Wines has seen a lift in yields since implementing their reworking method, with a half-tonne boost in Cabernet production in the first year. “After two years, we’re back up to 2.5t/acre, which is about where I want to be for the quality of the wine that we’re producing here,” said Trevor. Yields from Shiraz vineyards have also lifted, which Trevor partly attributes to cane pruning. “We shoot position everything here with two sets of cordon wires, so [we get] terrific fruit exposure...it seems to work really, really well with the cane pruning, more so than what it was doing with the spurs. The spur pruning was still a bit crowded, whereas the bunch structure and the canopy structure is really nice and open and what we’re after, of course, is getting that maximum light into our bunches.”

Learning from the mistakes of the past, Trevor is now zealous about spraying following pruning. He applies Tebuconazole within three to four days of pruning, which he does by hand. He uses a red die in the chemical mix for visual evidence of coverage and sometimes even includes winter oil to control scale at the same time. “The Tebuconazole is the key factor to try and cut out the reinfection [after] all our hard work,” said Trevor. “It’s pointless not looking after it once you’ve done it.”

A nonchalant attitude to pruning vines in the rain two decades ago resulted in Eutypa infection across 30% of the vineyard on one of Eden Valley’s oldest properties. “Twenty years ago, we weren’t overly fussed if it was raining,” said Heathvale Wines proprietor Trevor March. “We just needed to get the pruning done and there was certainly no aim to go out and spray after pruning, which we now do religiously with Tebuconazole to make sure we don’t get any reinfection.”

Trevor first realised the extent of Eutypa in the winery’s 10ha vineyards about 10 years ago. “While I was spraying in a fairly dry spring year, I noticed there was a much greater infection of Eutypa out here than I thought there was,” he said. “And I thought we really need to do something about this, otherwise we’re going to lose this vineyard.”

With yields declining to half a tonne per acre in the cabernet vineyards, regenerating the old vines became an urgent focus. “What I wanted to do was get rid of the old infected Eutypa wood immediately and start with some fresh canes, because...the original vine wasn’t producing anything,” said Trevor. His first move was to run another cordon wire opposite the original wire, on

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