



GUSBOURNE HARVEST REPORT 2025

A SEASON OF BALANCE AND PRECISION

After a warm, dry summer that supercharged growth, and a harvest paced evenly across September, Gusbourne's 2025 vintage has delivered beautifully ripe, clean and flavourful fruit – promising detailed, characterful wines to come.

IN THE VINEYARD

Following on from 2024 – a season marked by record rainfall and challenging disease pressure – we began vintage 2025 with a sense of cautious optimism. Budburst arrived on 4 April, right in line with expectations. "Flowering was the 5 June, which is the earliest ever," says Vineyard Manager Jon Pollard. "The next earliest we've recorded was the 8 June in 2020."

From there, the season took on a very different character from the previous year. "We had that long period of warm, hot, dry weather from May onwards with very little rain until early August," Jon explains. "These heat waves seemed to supercharge the vines, and they grew with incredible vigour." Unlike typical drought years where growth slows, the timing of the warmth coincided with the vines' push for extension growth. "The vines were nearly ahead of us with regards to their stage," he says. "It was a challenge to keep pace with growth."

This notable vine vigour meant the vineyard team were constantly on the move, from head-thinning to wire work, making sure canopies stayed open and healthy. August rain brought welcome refreshment but also reawakened some of the fungal spores lingering from 2024. Jon is candid about the challenge: "It has made the canopy look a little bit messy now," he says, "but we got through to harvest with no problem ripening fruit."

Then came September, and with it a sudden change in weather. "We had two days where we had nearly an inch of rain," Jon recalls. "A lot of that came in really heavy downpours." Thin-skinned Pinot Noir was most vulnerable, so the team worked carefully, sometimes removing individual berries from each bunch to keep quality intact. "In Pinot Noir blocks, pickers worked bare-handed so they could feel and remove any soft berries on the bunch," Jon explains. "It's a slow, meticulous process, but it protects style and purity."



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Mary Bridges,
Head Winemaker

Despite the stop-start nature of the harvest, it soon found its rhythm. From the first main pick on 9 September to gathering the final fruit on 1 October, we clocked 19 days of harvest.

Certain sites stood out for Jon. Next to the winery, the Boot Hill Chardonnay, which is destined for Guinevere, produced bunches “that looked like they should be on a brochure for table grapes,” he says. Lower Mill Hill Pinot Noir for Rosé was another highlight, arriving clean and pristine thanks to careful handwork in the vineyard.

“I’m really happy with the quality,” Jon concludes. “Yield is perhaps less than we’d ideally want – I’m a farmer after all. But the season was kind to us, and the team in the vineyard and winery is really well-gelled, which has been a pleasure to be part of.”

IN THE WINERY

With the fruit now in and the presses cleaned down, the winery is alive with fermentations and the careful monitoring of 120 individual base-wine components. Head Winemaker Mary Bridges is notably at ease and content. For her, the contrast with last year could not be greater.

“It has been so much more straightforward to achieve what we wanted this year,” she says. “The atmosphere throughout harvest has reflected this; it’s been really intense and really fun in the winery. We picked across about 18 or 19 days and the pace was really nice – busy enough, but never hectic or chaotic. It was just a joy.”

September’s cooler spell also played its part. “It stopped the urgency. Things calmed down and didn’t run away with themselves,” Mary explains. “For sparkling, you want ripeness with restraint – and that’s exactly where we ended up.” Phenolic ripeness was evident too: “We had nice brown seeds across the board,” she notes.

The fruit arriving at the winery reflected the season’s balance. “It’s all really good,” Mary says. “You can walk around and taste a Chardonnay that’s all precise, fresh grapefruit peel, and then taste a Pinot in new oak and it’s like a chocolate-coated ginger biscuit. Everything is solid across the board – characterful, ripe and distinctive.”

In total, the team crafted around 120 individual components of Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier and Chardonnay, each vinified separately to give maximum scope at blending. For Mary, this level of detail gives her perfect control. “I was looking at the tank map and thought, ‘Yes, this is where I wanted to be!’ All these small tanks, each full of something different. It’s exactly what we aim for.”

In the cellar, the team continued their gradual move towards 500-litre puncheons, favouring their elegance and integration over smaller barrels. “Every time we’ve graded our wines and we’ve had the puncheons in the mix, they always score a little bit higher – the balance of oak to acidity, the freshness, the integration. It’s a preference we as a winemaking team have.”

THE SHAPE OF THE VINTAGE

Mary sees 2025 sitting somewhere between 2016 and 2019. “The 2016 vintage gave us bold, powerful wines with freshness,” she says. “While 2019 delivered elegance with acidity. In 2025, we’re riper than 2019 but with that same elegance.

“It’s a very balanced, very solid vintage, and we don’t feel like we’re missing anything. I’m not looking around thinking, I wish that component had come in differently. It just feels good.”

After a challenging 2024, Gusbourne’s 2025 harvest has been defined by balance, precision and calm confidence. Vineyard and winery teams worked hand in hand, crafting components which will give Mary and her team extraordinary scope at blending.

Mary sums up 2025 as “solid and balanced”. “I’m content,” she says. “It just feels good.”

KEY DATES AND FIGURES

- Budburst: 4 April 2025
- Flowering: 5 June 2025
(earliest ever recorded)
- Veraison: 5 August 2025
- Harvest: 9 September to 1 October
(19 picking days)
- Components crafted: c.120 individual lots