

# WARWICK MURRAY

## 25 YEARS OF BETTER YIELD AND QUALITY AFTER EUTYPA REWORK & SOIL HEALTH EFFORT



strong canes for wrapping. New rods were then trained from the crown onto newly-installed cordon wire, and if the previous season's water shoots had the length and strength, these were also wrapped onto the wire. The final stage involved removing the crown by cutting down the trunk and finally painting it with acrylic – water-based paint – impregnated with Tebuconazole.

“Without doing this [process], the wine quality wasn't terribly good because Eutypa vines tend to be very uneven,” said Warwick. “This year, with the cane pruning, the wine was much more even and more suitable for the product. As I said, I was very disappointed with the yield [in the past]. This year, however (2018), I was more than pleased with the yields.”

We have now had another harvest which yielded above the un-reworked vines. This season we will remove any remaining crowns and prune the block to rod and spur.

### IMPROVED SOIL HEALTH SUPPORTS VINE GROWTH

A 15-day heat wave 10 years ago was the impetus for Warwick Murray to place a higher premium on soil health. “Those of you who remember 2008 will recall 15 days above 35 [degrees] in March. This vineyard fell over a cliff and there was nothing I could do but watch and cry,” he said. “Since that time, we've put huge amounts of effort into adding organic matter to the soil, mulching and not tilling in an attempt to improve our soil health to give us stronger, more resilient vines.

“This is a sandy block and when we came here, our first soil tests indicated that the soil carbon was 0.3%, which is very, very low. Our latest soil test was very close to 2% soil carbon and the vines are stronger, healthier and more resilient.”

A Barossa vineyard that consistently failed to meet production expectations has been transformed by a Eutypa reworking program.

The 22-year-old vineyard, which suffered Eutypa infection across 80% of its vines, is now producing increased yields, improved quality and is expected to be in production for another 25 years.

“I was always disappointed when sending the harvester in [to this vineyard],” said viticulturist Warwick Murray. “It would come out at about 6t/ha and I was never pleased with that. The objective here is to grow a bit more than that to suit the business model.” Channelling his frustration into a reworking program, Warwick devised a strategy to counteract Eutypa that is now reaping returns. The first step involved stringing up water shoots to help preserve them. In the following season, the majority of the cordon was then removed with hydraulic loppers, leaving the crown and some

*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)*