



2008 FROMM VINTAGE REPORT

The Growing Season

From a grapegrower perspective it has been an excellent season. Bud-burst was even, the few spring frosts were well kept under control and weather conditions during flowering were close to perfect with a generous fruit-set amongst all varieties.

Summer and early autumn were very warm with many mild nights, stimulating ripeness with good structure and moderate acidity. In addition, we had good rains at crucial times of cell division, particularly after flowering and prior veraison. As a result the bunch weights were high, the fruit very juicy but also very fragile and some of the crops were potentially massive.

What followed was a harvest which produced some excellent fruit where crop levels were sensibly managed. It also showed which vineyard areas in Marlborough coped well with the not always easy harvest conditions. It was clearly an advantage to pick Pinot Noir and Chardonnay earlier this year before the rain at the end of March. It was also an advantage to be small and committed to handpicking, enabling us to sort out any botrytis in the vineyard by our picking team, a slow but essential process this year.

All in all a very good year for us, challenging at times during harvest with a few difficult days reminiscent of the infamous 1995 vintage. To achieve such a good outcome with a fully organic spray program was both pleasing and encouraging.

The Wines

As mentioned before, picking ripe Pinot Noir and Chardonnay before the rain was key to the success with these varieties for us. Both look very good and some young Pinot Noir shows already great elegance and harmony.

Our biggest challenge was the Riesling. 2008 was not a year to make special selections such as Auslese or Beerenauslese. It was important to retain the full quality potential of this vintage for our main wines, Dry and Spätlese. Carefully picked over 4 days, the Spätlese is very classic, slightly less sweet, elegant and very low in alcohol. The Dry too looks very promising.

Syrah and Malbec really benefited from the warm summer climate with excellent structure and both fruit and tannin ripeness. Picking was quite difficult. We rejected generously, 30-50%, which left us with a modest but reasonable crop of exceptional quality. The same applied to the Late Harvest Gewürztraminer, small volume but very fine indeed.

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