



## 2016 FROMM VINTAGE REPORT

We anticipated a very dry 2015/2016 growing season and so to ensure that all available nutrients were totally accessible to each plant, due to a lack of competition, we left every second row throughout the vineyard bare after cultivating. Up to January 2016, it was in fact the driest growing season recorded in 80 years with the region expecting an early start to vintage. After some rain in January, timings were virtually returned to being in line with previous years. We began picking on March 12th with the first Clayvin Vineyard Pinot Noir fruit.

It does need to be said that the crops have potentially been very high in the region and even with serious fruit thinning, most in Marlborough, will have harvested well above average crop levels. For us, bunch weights were in some cases over 50% higher than average, which could well be one of the reasons the potentially early vintage fell back to normality. Of course maintaining a good balance in the vineyard throughout the year better prepares the plants to take on whatever conditions are thrown at them – one of the ways we do this is by being very proactive in the vineyard throughout the growing season in ensuring timely crop reduction. There was the usual shoot thinning & green harvesting to maintain a sensible crop per plant ratio, but of course bunch size is not something you can control. We did however keep a watchful eye throughout the season and reacted to the heavy bunch weights by often cutting off the shoulders of the bunches. We're very conscience that plants have memories and so it's always interesting to see the older vines that have never been allowed to crop at high levels, naturally self-regulate. We're also confident that crop thinning our younger vines with a heavy hand will ensure they don't step out of line in future years. Part in parcel with organics comes the need to ensure bunches are hanging freely with good air-flow in order to avoid rot – this year, in most cases, we restricted our plants to one bunch per shoot. On a very positively note, the continued and lingering sunshine we have been experiencing of late has allowed these larger bunches to fully ripen physiologically, and the larger crop levels have enabled us (and other quality producers) to be very selective in the vineyards – picking the best and leaving the rest.

We have had two days of threatening rain, but on both these occasions we were already right up to date with regard to the varieties we could pick. In other words with a handful of late nights we ensured we weren't caught out by these rains and the majority of our fruit was already safely indoors. The rain of April 23rd saw significant rain (roughly 60ml in our case), which ordinarily would have been a major issue, however our soil structure, which has always given us good moisture holding capacity, also allows for effective drainage which meant the rain was easily absorbed without any waterlogging. Our commitment to dry farming in most parts of our vineyard clearly must have contributed to our soil's ability to absorb this excessive moisture. We're especially excited about our later ripening varieties (i.e. Syrah and Malbec) which basked in the Indian summer sunshine that we have been gifted of late. Importantly this allowed us to pick totally on our own terms.

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