



2017 FROMM VINTAGE REPORT

It does need to be said that the 2016/2017 growing season was unspectacular, with the region experiencing above average rainfall and very few hot ('real') summer days. Surprisingly though, official statistics showed Marlborough experienced significantly above average temperatures, up until the beginning of April. At Fromm, we also had no frost issues in our vineyard or any of the vineyards from which we source, nor did we have any disease problems. In other words the vineyards were clean, healthy and in balance, thus putting the vines in good stead for what was to come.

The 2017 Marlborough vintage will no doubt be defined by the amount of rain that we experienced during harvest. There were two serious rain events, the first starting on April 4th and the second commencing April 20th. Prior to both these dates we were up to date with picking, in other words all the fruit which was sufficiently ripe enough to pick was picked. We began harvest in March 23rd, one week later than normal, but almost the entirety of our Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Riesling was safe indoors before April 4th, likewise most of our Syrah and our fruit for Rosé was picked before April 20th. Our Malbec and a small portion of our later ripening Syrah were rained on, however the vines/fruit were in good enough condition to survive the downpour and subsequently benefited from an extra 4-5 days of great, late Autumn weather. Our only casualty was our small block of Gewurztraminer which we felt was not up to our own quality standards, especially for a late harvest wine.

Although very challenging, the rain of vintage 2017 wasn't disastrous for us. No doubt the soil structure of the vineyards played a part here - our vineyards have always had good moisture holding capacity, but also allow for effective drainage. This meant the rain was easily absorbed without any waterlogging. Also, our commitment to dry farming in certain blocks of our vineyard clearly must have contributed to our soil's ability to absorb this excessive moisture.

Our crop levels were notably down this year, largely due to the extraordinary selection process that we undertook in the vineyard and winery. Both picking and processing were fastidiously slow and measured, so as to avoid unhealthy, compromised fruit finding its way into tank.

All in all this vintage was one of the most difficult and challenging to date. Having said this, the quality wineries will still make delightful wines especially if they respect the limitations of the fruit and maximise the potential of the season. In a good year everyone can and should make decent wines, however in a challenging year this is often not the case. Any extra effort and care in the vineyard and winery will be transparently evident in the wines of 2017, not just in Marlborough but across all New Zealand's wine regions.

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