



MARLBOROUGH  
NEW ZEALAND

## 2016 Marlborough Noble Riesling Tasting Notes

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### VINTAGE CONDITIONS

Marlborough, at the top of New Zealand's South Island, is one of the world's premier cool climate viticultural regions. The area has relatively young riverbed soils that are generally stony, well drained and silty, though significant variation does occur. Marlborough's growing season is generally characterised by warm, sunny days and cool nights resulting in fruit with good natural acidity and clean, fresh flavours. For the first time in its history (that we know of), the Framingham vineyard was significantly impacted by late frosts in November 2015, resulting in the loss of fruit from several sections. Heat summation data for the 2015/6 growing season shows it to be second only to 1997/8 for recent vintages. Weather was stable and relatively dry under El Niño conditions into March, though 2 significant rainfall events a week apart at the end of March meant there was a potential for increasing disease pressure later in harvest and gave the opportunity for botrytis to develop in ripe grapes. Botrytis blooms occurred in Riesling late in the season, with largely dry weather, meant that dehydration was rapid and we recorded the earliest finish to a sweet wine season we have seen.

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### HARVEST DATE

1<sup>st</sup> April – 21<sup>st</sup> April 2016

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### WINEMAKING

Frost effects meant that we were only able to leave fruit that had not been picked for other styles to develop botrytis in 2016. Botrytis is a fungus that concentrates sugars in the fruit by dehydration and imparts distinctive flavours. Only four "auslese" components were pressed in 2016. Whole bunches with varying degrees of botrytis infection (25-100%), many incorporating clean fruit as well, were hand-picked, and a sugar-rich nectar coaxed from them in the winery over a period of a few days. Resultant juices were clarified by cool settling for several days, before racking to ferment. The overall botrytis influence can be estimated at around 80%. Ferments were conducted under varying regimes, in old barriques, stainless barrels and 50L beer kegs, and were stopped when the sugar/acid/alcohol balance was judged to be about right. The appropriate components (eight in total, net brix 36.8° (162 Öchsle) were then blended, clarified and bottled under screw cap to preserve freshness, flavour and integrity.

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### ANALYSIS

*Alcohol:* 10.0% vol

*Total Acid:* 9.1 g/l

*pH:* 3.15

### COLOUR

Bright, brassy gold.

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### BOUQUET

Complex aromatics showing significant, but not complete, botrytis influence. Nice mix of red, white and yellow fruits, bush honey and pithy marmalade-like citrus, with gentle hints of "gin and tonic", smoky mineral and cream.

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### PALATE

Palate is tight, but has much richness and viscosity, with real tang and bite. The same red, yellow and white fruits show, overlying some stone-like mineral tones. Juicy acidity and a fine phenolic structure provide crucial balance and prevents any sense of cloying. The finish lingers for some time.

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### ASSESSMENT

Framingham Noble Riesling is made in somewhat small quantities. Vintage 2016 can be compared to a Beerenauslese style; a function of the relatively high botrytis levels we were presented with. The wine has a good balance of flavours (botrytis being more prominent but with some "clean" fruit notes too) which are immediately appealing; however the wine's acid structure should keep it fresh, allowing complexity to develop over the next three years or more. A versatile wine on the table, it can be drunk between courses in place of a sorbet to refresh the palate, or provide an excellent accompaniment to cheeses and rich desserts.