



MARLBOROUGH
NEW ZEALAND

2012 Marlborough Noble Riesling Tasting Notes

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. Heat summation data showed the 2011-12 growing season to be the coolest since 1996-97. Weather at flowering for was generally cool and wet, meaning generally poor fruit set and naturally low yields. The cool temperatures meant humidity was generally low, which resulted in patience being required for botrytis development, but also allowed grapes to dehydrate without botrytis infection, and it was especially pleasing to be able to harvest fruit of this kind. Select harvests were made of bunches with degrees of botrytis influence ranging from 0 to 100%.

HARVEST DATE

20th April – 28th June 2012

WINEMAKING

A significant amount of work is done in the vineyards that produce grapes for all of Framingham's Rieslings. Extensive crop thinning and leaf plucking are practised, giving low yields of grapes that have had good exposure to sunlight. Several areas of Riesling grapes were left out on each of our 3 estate Riesling blocks, after harvesting for the table wines had been completed, to allow development of botrytis; a fungus that concentrates sugars in the fruit by dehydration and imparts distinctive flavours. Whole bunches with varying degrees of botrytis infection, 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. Ferments were conducted in old barriques, stainless barrels, 50L beer kegs and 23L glass jars, being stopped when the sugar/acid/alcohol balance was judged to be about right. The appropriate components were then blended, clarified and bottled under screw cap to preserve freshness, flavour and integrity.

ANALYSIS

Alcohol: 7.5% vol

Total Acid: 9.6 g/l

pH: 3.08

COLOUR

Bright, slightly brassy gold.

BOUQUET

Complex aromatics showing significant, but not complete, botrytis influence. Nice mix of stone fruit and marmalade citrus with hints of "gin and tonic".

PALATE

Palate is tight, but has richness and a degree of delicacy. Lots of liquid marmalade type flavours, lemon citrus and apricot with hints of mango and other tropical fruits. Fresh, juicy acidity keeps it all honest and prevents any sense of cloying.

ASSESSMENT

Framingham Noble Riesling is made in extremely small quantities. The style is similar to a German Auslese "Gold Kapsule"; ideally, grapes for this wine are not 100% affected by botrytis, and have some primary Riesling notes derived from "clean" fruit to provide complexity. Vintage 2012 has a good balance of these flavours, 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.