

October 2007 Newsletter

Dear Subscriber

Muddy Notes October 2007

As I sit here below a beautiful blue sky with the early spring sun shining on my back listening to the geese and watching the pukekos forage among the vines I find it hard to believe that another season is over. Harvest completed, pruning all but over and wines in the bottle. We have had a busy year, Belinda has been to Oregon to the International Pinot Noir Celebration where our Pinot Noir was one of the representative New Zealand wines, a great honour! I have spent time in Australia speaking at some wonderful winemakers dinners. The Waipara Wine and Food Challenge is about to begin again....some wonderful wine and food combinations to try out in Christchurch over the next month. As always the success of Muddy Water is dependant on a great team and we are very fortunate to have that in Miranda, Stefan, David, Sue-Ann and Belinda. Our sincere thanks to them!



Miranda Brown. Vineyard Manager.

All the harvest gear has been put away for another season and Stefan, David and I have almost finished the pruning. This is one of my favourite times of the year in the vineyard as while we are setting the vines up for next year, it gives us a chance to catch up and to think about both the past and the coming season. The 06/07 season was good overall: we managed to sneak through spring with no frosts, despite bud burst being earlier than usual. We had excellent growth early in the season and the vines all got off to a fantastic start. Over the summer, Stefan, David and I were joined by two Lincoln students: Mike and Raj. They all did a fantastic job keeping up with the wire lifting and shoot thinning. December did bring some cold and damp weather, which is not ideal as some of our vines were still flowering and weather conditions are critical during this period. Consequently the crop loads were a little lighter than average, but on the plus side the quality of the fruit was outstanding. The 2006 autumn was one of the best on record; cool nights, warm days and minimal rainfall all of which contributed to some of the best looking (and tasting) fruit I have ever seen. This year we have continued to make the move toward becoming organic in the vineyard. We are already accredited with Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand (SWNZ) but want to take the extra step and reduce our dependence on synthetic fungicides and herbicides altogether. The aim is to improve the overall health and life of the vines and soil and allow the resultant wine to be a full expression of our unique site. The results look positive so far, our vines and soils look healthy and we all enjoy working in a chemical free vineyard.

Belinda Gould. Winemaker.

2007 was probably the easiest harvest I have ever been involved with. Good weather, beautiful clean fruit and a great team. On the down side we had smaller crops than expected. The whites were especially exciting this year – the first crop of Chardonnay from the new vineyard we planted in 2004 and the most beautiful Riesling fruit I have ever seen (the winery staff all headed out to the vineyard to help pick as well). As usual the best part was the eating and drinking – with Jane and Mike living at the vineyard the standard of harvest meals has risen exponentially and the wine quality too. Highlights were – the magnum of Champagne that Billy carried in his backpack on his bike all the way from France (some air travel included), the Tart Tartin that Sylvan brought up for one dinner, the 1989 Verve Cliquot, another of my turkey flock who gave himself for the annual end of harvest Thanksgiving, the 99 Grange, the Brew Moon Beers(!), the Brett Bros Chardonnay from Macon, Jane's Mushroom soup (if we're lucky she'll share the recipe) and the coffee always the coffee.

The 2007 Rieslings were bottled during August and a sneak preview with some scallops I caught in Golden Bay looks very promising. This winter we also bottled our first single vineyard wine. The 2006 Hare's Breath Pinot Noir is from the limestone slopes at the back of the property. North facing and planted at much greater density than our older vineyards we have high hopes for this label. We have just bottled our Pinotage, Syrah, Pinot Noir and our other new single vineyard wine – "Slowhand Pinot Noir. The Slowhand is our oldest vineyard and is the source of the Mojo Pinots we bottled in 2000 and 2004. The 2007 Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Syrah (no Pinotage from 2007 I'm sorry) have been sleeping quietly in our icy winery (about 3-4C average in winter) and will soon be coming to life with the malolactic fermentation. The Chardonnay will be bottled during Harvest in early April but the Pinots will have another winter in barrels before our September bottling rolls around – but that's more than a year away..... Another harvest more wine more food more coffee always more coffee!!!