



Fromm Winery La Strada – Vintage Report 2006

The growing season

In 2005 Marlborough experienced a mild and dry winter followed by an early budburst at the beginning of September. Spring continued to be rather warm with only one significant frost in the Southern valleys. However most growers were well prepared and no major damage occurred. The only trouble maker was the bronze beetle (also called May bug) who survived the winter in high numbers. Because we do not use insecticides in our vineyards, it caused some damage on the young shoots along the headlands.

Flowering started two to three weeks ahead of the previous year. The fruit-set varied from variety to variety. Gewürztraminer and Malbec set extremely low, whereas the Merlot needed serious fruit-thinning.

It was an ordinary summer, warm but not hot. But with the whole season being earlier, the hang time from veraison to picking was shortened by the extended daylight hours and warmer average temperatures during the ripening period.

We started picking on February 28. By the end of March we were 90% finished, avoiding the early April rain. We harvested very healthy fruit, despite the fragile look of some precious varieties. It was important to find the right balance between flavour ripeness, moderate sugar levels (equals potential alcohol) and the physiological stability and vibrancy of the fruit. The season was neither spectacular nor outstanding, yet we never harvested this early and there seemed to be no obvious reason for it.

The Wines

Overall we are very positive about the 2006 vintage. The young wines look lively and clean with sound structure. Particularly Riesling and Chardonnay have a beautiful elegance and should develop into wines of finesse and provide great pleasure. The reds are equally promising but it is too early to assess the effects of the shorter growing season on their true quality in terms of phenolic ripeness, tannin structure and longevity. By the end of summer, when the malo-lactic fermentations are completed, the real vintage characteristics will become transparent. There is no doubt about the inherent quality of the 2006 wines. Vinified in our traditional, non-interventionous way, they will have the integrity and authentic expression of this unique vintage.