

Harvest
2006



isabel estate

ISABEL Hello Everyone!



Welcome to another Isabel newsletter, packed with updates, Estate information and the odd bit of gossip!

In February, we had a fantastic time participating in the Marlborough Wine Festival, which was once again a roaring success. As usual, Robyn showed her flair for 'attention to detail' with copious amounts of stunning long stemmed red roses and petals. Absolutely gorgeous!

Next month Mike and Robyn set off for more whirl wind tours of marketing and promotional events for Isabel Estate. Their trip begins in the USA, followed by Canada and then to the UK for a special vertical tasting that is sure to please—more info to follow.

On the home front, some of the crew indulged in a '99 Pinot Noir last week and were in awe. It was still offering a generous palate of concentrated dark berries, excellent spice, and subtle smoky nuances all balanced by a velvety

In The Winery texture. If only there was more! *Cheers, Stephanie*

Patricia and her team in the winery are all go right now as harvest commenced March 14th. With intern winemakers from around the world to assist, it is a busy department. In addition to the fresh grapes arriving daily, Pati and Mike are in the midst of readying the '05 Pinot Noir and Chardonnay for bottling. The transfer from barrel to tank to bottle is a delicate task!

It has been a perfect growing season for Isabel. We have enjoyed rainfall at only the ideal times and avoided it during veraison creating beautifully ripened and concentrated clusters. Steady breezes have also been good to Marlborough allowing us to avoid the use of pesticides, moderate excessive temperatures from consistent sunshine and assist our

grapes in maintaining their acidity. We are crossing our fingers for continued warm and dry conditions in hopes of



plete ripening in all our varieties. Watching the harvested grapes come into the winery, it appears their efforts have proved victorious!

This year Pati is assisted by several international vintage interns. They hail from France, Germany, Canada, England and the United States.

Marie, plunging the cap

The first picking of Pinot Noir producing our delicious sticky again. 4 years is just too long to go with out!

With diligent canopy management from Mike Newman and his vineyard crew we were able to encourage slow and com-



we're totally screwed...



estate grown
estate bottled

isabel estate vineyard, 72 Hawkesbury Road, Renwick,
Marlborough

Phone: +64 3 5728 300 Fax: +64 3 5728 383

Email: info@isabelestate.com Website: www.isabelestate.com

In the Vineyard

This year has been one of great development. The fatherly eye of Mike Tiller has been very obvious as he and Robyn have stayed close to the homestead this growing season. Isabel's Vineyard Operations Manager, Mike Newman, assists him with the many requirements of the growing estate.



Newman is a real 'systems man' and has a strong background in horticulture making him an ideal fit with the 'green thumbed' Mr. Tiller!

Hand Harvesting Day One, March 2006!

Our two new developments are the Elevation Vineyard and the Shelby Vineyard. And, yes, the Shelby vineyard is named after Mike's 1965 Ford Mustang!

Elevation Vineyard is under constant appraisal for clonal selection for the varied soil profiles. It is an ongoing challenge that allows for endless discussion. Due to location, this is truly a new domain; specifics to follow.

Growing Season Temperature Averages in C°

Month	2005/06	04/05	03/04	02/03	01/02	Average
September	11.9	10.4	10.6	12.2	11.9	10.6
October	12.7	12.7	11.6	12.3	14.3	12.7
November	15.1	15.5	13.7	14.5	15.0	14.6
December	18.6	14.7	17.4	16.6	17.9	16.7
January	18.2	17.3	19.1	17.6	18.3	17.9
February	17.7	19.3	16.9	17.6	16.1	17.8

This year we enjoyed the first harvest from our Shelby vineyard, a newly planted extension of the original estate. I found Robyn smiling to herself as she snuck a taste of the 'fruits of her labor' and just had to inquire; "The Sauvignon Blanc has intriguing 'all spice' flavors...", she explained, "another delicious layer for our wine to offer!"

Elevation Vineyard

Ah, Elevation! It is the most stunning view of Marlborough around! At it's plateau you have an unrestricted view of the valley below. It sits at 1000 ft above sea level and is, as far as we are aware, the highest planted vineyard in Marlborough.



Elevation was planted by Isabel Estate beginning in 2003 and we expect a small first crop from the 2007 harvest. We are keen to explore the flavor profiles of the fruit when grown up there.

The Tiller's were drawn to the Elevation site for its more temperate weather and vine friendly soil. The calcareous soils offer ample nutrients to the vines and, with the aid of the gentle foothills slope, has excellent drainage, mandatory to their

View of Isabel Estate from a Tiger Moth

health. At its unique altitude, highs and lows of temperatures are softened and the stronger breezes avoided. This allows for continuous and even bud burst, cluster formation and ripening.



World Tour 2006 (well almost)

In mid April, Mike and Robyn begin their whirlwind "Around the World & Eighty Bottles" tour. This year we are participating in New Zealand wine fairs across the United States and Canada. Of course, their tour does commence slightly early to conveniently include a Jimmy Buffet concert! (Ah, cheeseburgers in paradise!)

With eight fairs in the US, plus three 'Adventures in Wine' tastings and four Canadian fairs, they will

have little down time in North America. This is then followed by three weeks in the UK where they will be showcasing ten years of Sauvignon Blanc. 1996 through 2005. It will be extremely interesting to hear the response from those tastings. Last week we previewed the '97 vintage and were infatuated immediately. It was absolutely stunning! Elegant and refined but still boasting plenty of fruit, crisp acidity and enchanting minerality on the finish. The UK is in

for a treat. This will surely indicate just how age worthy Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc can be.

In Canada, Mike & Robyn will be working hard alongside our new distributors, Calibrium International. We are excited about this opportunity to further expand our presence in this marketplace.

Visitors to the Estate

Over the past few months, we have had the pleasure of welcoming many old and new friends to the Estate.

Jean-Marie Bourgeois visited us from Sancerre for lunch on a perfect summer's day. As usual, we traded several humorous vineyard stories!

We are always happy to see our good friend and UK Importer - **Jasper Morris MW** and also had a marvellous time with our US importer **Merrick Dowson** of 'Adventures in Wine'. He 'popped over' for a couple of days from California... Guess he needed some sunshine!

Our Denmark distributor, **Poul Haller** of 'Haller Vine', also visited us. Very timely I might add, as he was able to join us at the Marlborough Wine Festival for a thorough regional tasting!

We were also honoured to receive several visits of journo's and sommeliers from around the world.

Joanne Locke MW of The UK Wine Society joined us for a tasting of Isabel's current releases and a few back vintages for comparison (and drinking pleasure). We also welcomed from the UK, **Christine**

Austin for her second tour of Isabel. Her last visit was in 2000 so we were able to show her the expanded winery and vineyards, including our dedicated Pinot Noir couviery, and the newly tiled patio for convenient sun bathing...

Jo Burzynska, of NZ, visited us on Valentines Day, and enjoyed several back vintages including our '99 and 2000 Noble Sauvage.

We also enjoyed visits from several sommeliers and restaurateurs. They hailed from Japan, Germany and across to the United States.

Lunch at Isabel with Joanne Locke of the UK Wine Society



Robyn, Mike, Abby, Jasper Morris MW & Jane
~A perfect Marlborough day~



Stephanie, Pati and Tim after Wine Fest 2006
~apparently they were parched~



Wine Festival 2006

First off, we couldn't have asked for a better day! All week the sky looked threatening, but then when Saturday morning rolled along, so did some brilliant sunshine.

We began by setting up a couple large umbrellas out front for a 'shady' option, then decorated the entire tent area with beautiful long stemmed roses and rose petals. They were gorgeous! (Many thanks to Marie Large of Large's Roses in Spring Creek!)

We offered all 5 varietals including some back vintages for the festival visitors. It was good to hear so many positive comments, particularly on the '01 Dry Riesling and '02 Chardonnay. A pleasing alternative to the famous white varietal of Marlborough!

This year we had a full crew working at the Isabel tent. The entire Tiller clan came to town. Jane, Luke, Brad and Caitlin all assisted with the festivities....at least until The Black

Seeds performance! The event was star studded in fact. Goldenhorse was also in attendance, along with several other Kiwi bands.

The 'longest hours served' award went to Stephanie's brother Tim, on holidays from Canada. I suppose pouring, (and sipping!) wine was a nice change from designing cable assemblies...

We look forward to seeing more of you out next year! February 10th, 2007.

Isabel Crew News

You will find that there are a few new faces at the winery.

Stephanie Buttjes joined the Marketing team in September of 2005 from Vancouver, Canada. After meeting the Tiller's in her homeland it was an easy decision for her to follow them back to New Zealand. Stephanie brings with her a degree in wine as well as in depth experience in hospitality industry and a great passion for



Patience Elkington
~Wine Fest 2006~

people and wine.

Patience Elkington, a Marlborough native, joined Isabel's team this past January. As a wife and mother of two boys, she has excellent 'juggling' skills which assist her in looking after reception, all front of house duties and our ever busy Vineyard Lodge!

Claire Fensom, another New Zealand native, is our latest recruit! She is a recent



Claire Fensom
~at Cellar Door~

graduate of Lincoln University in Christchurch, with a BCM including a double major in computers

and marketing. She is quickly proving a great asset! Claire assists Stephanie in the marketing department and is also one of the friendly faces to greet our Cellar Door guests.

Vintage Crew 2006



This year's intern crew for the '06 vintage is very international. From left to right in the photograph, we

have Marie from Paris, Tobias from the Mosel in Germany, and Romain from Sancerre France. Front and centre is Patricia Miranda, our extremely gifted Oneologist. Pati is from the Cachapual Valley in Chile but has now been with us for three vintages and says New Zealand is her new home. Beside Pati sits Inga from Stuttgart, Germany

with Gary of Niagara Falls, Canada just behind her. Aaron, Pati's right hand man throughout the year, rounds out the crew as the native New Zealander.

This year Pati adds to her busy schedule working along side Mike Newman in the Vineyard.

Pati and Mike N. in Block 4



Just one more opportunity to ensure quality from a young bud to delicious wine!

Last Word

Hmmm, what else?!

In the midst of all this activity we have also somehow managed to organize new merchandise. Hopefully arriving in the next month so we can all be donned in Isabel apparel! The best part is, they look sharp....(The girls sorted those purchases of course!)

Aaron, Pati's assistant, is due to become a father again! With one daughter already, he is eager to welcome a son to his family as well. We are always excited to see the Isabel family grow!

With that in mind, please be reminded that visitors are always welcome. We thoroughly enjoy sharing

wine experiences at the cellar door and we always encourage a wander through the grapevines!

Please email us, info@isabelestate.com, or call, +64.3.572.8300, prior to your arrival so we can ensure a proper reception.

We look forward to welcoming you to the Estate soon!

Cheers.

isabel estate vineyard, 72 Hawkesbury Road, Renwick, Marlborough

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