

May 2008

## 2008 Marlborough Vintage Not That Large

Matt Thomson, winemaker at St. Clair Winery, believes that the 2008 vintage in Marlborough, whilst large, is not as big as that of 2004. Obviously, overall it will be larger as the region has grown in productive area, but per ha it is smaller.

He believes that the difficulties that wineries have experienced in harvesting the crop this year are more to do with the fact that it did not look like being a large harvest until quite close to vintage. Early signs were for a small harvest and thus many wineries chose not to make the investment this year to increase their capacity. Add this to the need for a fast harvest and this is why problems arose.

Fortunately this was not the case at St. Clair and Matt states that “ harvest went very smoothly and was all but completed by Monday 21st April”. He also considers the quality of this year’s vintage will range widely with both excellent and lesser wines being made. He believes that consumers will largely get what they pay for from 2008.

His comments were made at a luncheon given at Mikano Restaurant, Auckland to launch the 2007 vintage of St Clair’s Pioneer Block range of Chardonnays and Pinot Noirs. Of particular interest was the Block 13 B&B Chardonnay which was deliberately created in a Chablis style. Needless to say this is a move away from the usual Kiwi style of chardonnay and is something that Matt believes more and more winemakers are trying.

In the opinion of this humble hack, the stars of the tasting were the Block 10 Twin Hills Chardonnay and the Block 4 Sawcut Pinot Noir and I would urge you to put some in the cellar.