

## **MEDIA RELEASE - 23 April 2007**

### **HIGH QUALITY EXPECTED FROM CHALLENGING MARTINBOROUGH VINTAGE**

Martinborough winemakers are expecting exceptional quality wines from one of the most challenging vintages in recent years.

Wines From Martinborough chairman Roger Fraser said the vintage was defined by a 'season of two halves', with November frosts and the coldest December on record being followed by a long, dry summer.

"The frosts in November and the cold, wet December severely impacted crop yields with some vineyards losing up to 90 per cent of their crop," Mr Fraser said.

Red varieties, including the region's signature variety Pinot Noir, were considerably impacted by the climatic conditions with white varieties including Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc affected to a lesser extent.

Roger Parkinson from Nga Waka vineyard said the vineyard expected to produce 150 cases of Pinot Noir from this year's vintage, down from 1,000 cases last year and against an annual average of 1,500 cases.

Mr Fraser said the timing of the frosts and cold snap during the flowering process resulted in low bunch weights and small berries.

"This was followed by one of the best, and most stable, ripening periods for the past decade," Mr Fraser said.

Dry River chief winemaker Neil McCallum said the resulting wine is expected to be very concentrated with intense colour and flavour.

"This year's vintage will be characterised by high quality fruit producing full bodied wines that have a harmonious balance of colour, intensity and structure. The wines will cellar well with good longevity."

Escarpment winemaker Larry McKenna also describes the wines from this year's vintage as 'long term wines'.

"The wines are expected to be full of character and flavour; they will be big, powerful wines without being 'overblown'. It's often said that the best wines come out of cooler districts in warmer years. This year's vintage is a good example of that."

Mr Fraser said the wine lovers with a preference for wines from the region will need to be in quick to enjoy the products of this year's vintage.

"With most vineyards losing about 50 percent of their expected crop, and the worst affected losing up to 90 per cent, people will need to get in early to purchase this year's wines," he said.

"The promise of top quality wines on the back of two excellent vintages in 2005 and 2006 is also expected to create strong demand for wine produced from the area this year."

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