

## Marlborough Vintage Review 2008

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Just after the majority of vines had completed bud burst in November 2007, a late frost hit parts of Marlborough. It was nowhere near as severe as the 2002 event, although some later varieties were slightly affected. The late frost was followed by extremely warm December 2007 / January 2008 conditions – perfect for flowering and then veraison. Fruit set was as close to perfect as it could be. The warm conditions continued, Growing Degree Days were up and the vintage came earlier than had been initially forecast. Conditions were perfect for the earlier part of vintage, but it wasn't to stay that way. For the first time in over a decade, a long spell of autumn rain hit the Marlborough province in mid April, creating a logistical nightmare for wineries who still had fruit on the vines. There was a rush to get the fruit in before disease took over, and given the larger than expected yields, it was tough finding spare tank space anywhere in the region. During and after vintage, every winery reported that berry size and juice ratios were well up on expectation and with many newly planted vineyards producing crops for the first time, there were warning signs for Marlborough for the first time.

2008 will be remembered as the year of oversupply, given the massive crops, but the quality of many of the wines was something that wasn't credited enough. Pinot Noir in particular was one to stand out, along with the aromatics of Gewurztraminer, Riesling and Pinot Gris. Sauvignon Blanc was described as being variable, with some wines displaying typically intense fruit, particularly the wines from the Awatere Valley, but in general having a shorter drinking lifespan.