

For Immediate Release  
October 29, 2008



**MARIMAR ESTATE**  
VINEYARDS & WINERY

**HARVEST 2008: A YEAR OF FIRSTS AND EXTREMES**

**Sebastopol, CA** – This was a mercurial season. After unprecedented spring frosts, we see-sawed to an intense heat wave in late August that prompted us to pick quickly and, for the first time, at night. Fortunately, these challenges were balanced by the beautiful fruit we brought in!

The Frost Season

The vintage began with the worst frost season in anybody's memory, with 20 nights at freezing temperatures after budbreak; this resulted not only in fewer grape clusters, but also smaller ones. The freezes came and went several times, first killing the primary and most fruitful buds, and sometimes also the secondary buds. When this happened, growth was centered in the lateral buds, which are even less fruitful than secondary buds and thus resulted in minimal yields.

The Summer

After a dry spring, summer alternated between hot and cool weather, and the vines grew in spurts. Then an intense and very dry heat wave, before and over Labor Day weekend, forced us to hurry up and start picking Pinot Noir in the Don Miguel Vineyard on August 30. Meanwhile, in anticipation of harvesting around September 10, I had taken off the last week of August to visit my daughter, Cristina, in Australia – so harvest started without me here. Another 'first!'

Turning a Challenge into Success: Night Harvesting

I returned on September 2 to the quickest, most compressed picking period we've ever had – 2½ straight weeks without a break. And for the first time ever, both the Pinot Noir and Chardonnay were ready to harvest! So on September 3<sup>rd</sup> we decided to pick at night – a big first! In a hurry we got probably the last two big lights in Sonoma County, found some headlights in a local store, and rented another tractor for the light. I also explained to the pickers that night picking would be better not only for the fruit but also for them, as they wouldn't melt in the heat.

So we harvested Chardonnay at 3 am and then Pinot Noir at 7 am – as soon as the workers could see, as our Pinot slopes are much steeper than the Chardonnay rows. And to comfort our pickers at that atrocious early hour, I was there with coffee and doughnuts each morning at 2:45 am . . . . In the end, it turned out our pickers were actually happier picking at night rather than in the glare of the daytime sun.

Low Yields . . . But Outstanding Fruit!

Tonnage was down last year, but 2008 is even smaller. In Pinot Noir, yields of 2.23 pounds/vine in the Don Miguel Vineyard and 2.09 pounds/vine in Doña Margarita (Sonoma Coast), will give us about 5,000 cases of Pinot Noir – down from 5,400 cases last year. Chardonnay yields were only 3.68 pounds/vine, from which we will produce some 4,900 cases – down from 5,100 cases in 2007. Total 2008 production is expected at barely 10,000 cases, or about 50% down from a 'normal' year.

All in all, the fruit was even better than last year's – which had been the best ever! There was no botrytis, no green or sunburned berries, and uniform ripening. At the time of this writing, the primary fermentations are mostly finished and the malolactics are going smoothly. Now that the drama has passed, we look forward to a beautiful vintage.

Marimar Torres  
Winegrower/Proprietor

## HIGHLIGHTS OF THE 2008 HARVEST



SHOOT DAMAGED BY FROST, WITH LATERAL BUD PUSHING



NIGHT PICKING WAS A TERRIFIC SOLUTION TO FIGHT THE INTENSE HEAT THIS YEAR



THE PINOT NOIR CLUSTERS WERE SMALL BUT BEAUTIFUL



THE CHARDONNAY SEE CLONE SHOWED RIPE APPLE FLAVORS



TEMPRANILLO AND SYRAH WERE THE LAST PICKED, AS USUAL, ON OCTOBER 8



BONITA AND CHICO FOUND THE PINOT NOIR OUTSTANDING!