

## 2011 Newsletter

It has been a busy six months for us since we purchased Stonecroft in June 2010. There was a lot to get our heads around in the first couple of months but the warm welcome we have received in Hawke's Bay which has made it much easier.

We've updated the Stonecroft label and logo, so we hope you like the new versions. Other than minor aesthetic changes like this, we are not looking to alter very much about Stonecroft. We hope to continue making wines which live up to the winery's reputation.

It was great to open up the cellar door at Labour Weekend for the summer and we have been trialing longer opening hours (Wed - Sun). We also held a Cellar Vintage Sale, which we have decided to make an annual event. Along with other boutique vineyards in Hawke's Bay, we were also pleased to be a part of the first 'Meet the Makers' event in November 2010. This is intended to be a monthly event to be held at a different winery venue each month, where you can meet the winemaker or owner of the wineries, taste wines and enjoy music and food. We are looking forward to our turn to host, which will be on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2011.

We filled in some gaps in the vineyards with some new vines this spring; Syrah, Chardonnay and Viognier. On the organic front, we had our management plan approved and passed our first audit in 2010. We are focusing on building up the soil health with compost, seaweed and other nutrients and have planted wild flowers. We look forward to being officially in conversion in the near future.

2009 was a great season in the vineyard with good flowering and fruit set and an excellent ripening period. The summer was hot and dry with lower than average rainfall during the growing season, producing fruit with lots of flavour and good brix levels. The Cabernet Sauvignon was so good that we decided to make a varietal wine from it. However, we have decided this wine is worth giving extra bottle age so we are not releasing it this February.

Although the 2010 vintage started off quite cool and wet, it improved as the summer went on and the vines enjoyed a long hot spell in March and April which ripened the fruit nicely, while retaining a good amount of acidity. We ended up with a smaller harvest than usual but rigorous thinning during the latter part of the season delivered very good quality fruit. The Cabernet was blended with Syrah to produce Stonecroft's first Rosé since 2005.

**Andria and Dermot**