

Vineyards at Domaine Georges Michel

Georges Michel: Our vineyard is 35 hectares, and it's about 60% of -- planted in Sauvignon Blanc, 25% in Chardonnay and 15% in Pinot Noir.

The soil on the Golden Mile is mainly older riverbed with layers of firm lime, loam, a bit of clay, a bit of rocks, rocky soil. So it's really a good combination for all the great variety we have chosen to plant here.

As far as the clones are concerned, for the Chardonnay and the Pinot Noir, we've been using French clones from Burgundy which is as you know a birthplace of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir; and for the Sauvignon Blanc, we have chosen a mass selection, which is what is mainly used in New Zealand.

So what is special about the Marlborough region is its microclimate and the way the hot days and the cool night combine during the ripening season. We have between February and beginning of April when we start the harvest, best -- the best combination we could dream about between hot days and cool nights, and this combination is what would be the best to develop the special flavors of tropical fruit in -- specially in the Sauvignon Blanc.

We can offer you two ranges of wine: the Golden Mile range, a very classic typical from the Marlborough region, classic style; and the Reserve, the Reserve range of wine, which are more elegant and complex.

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Ron McFarland: We are going to visit with Julie from Domaine Georges Michel, and she is going to tell us a little bit about the three Golden Mile wines, Domaine Georges Michel Pinot, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. So let's start with the Pinot Noir, okay?

Julie Yonge: This is the lighter of our two Pinot Noirs. It's goes into open fermenters for a week, and then it's raked off into two-year-old oak barrels for nine months. It's very fruit-intensive with a hint of smokiness to it. It's a light ... a fairly light Pinot Noir. It's designed pretty much as an easy drinking Pinot Noir, not necessarily as a food wine; very light ...

Ron McFarland: Pretty nose.

Julie Yonge: ... good barbecue wine, very fruity, hint of smokiness to it. When it is very hot in here, we can chill it down slightly and it handles it well.

Ron McFarland: It would certainly go well with a lot foods.

Julie Yonge: Yes.

Ron McFarland: I think you could even serve this with white fish.

Julie Yonge: You could, yeah, particularly with salmon.

Ron McFarland: Yeah, salmon and halibut or swordfish

Julie Yonge: With a slightly stronger fish, so it is ...

Ron McFarland: So that's fantastic.

Julie Yonge: ... very good.

Ron McFarland: All right. We'll try the Golden Mile Chardonnay.

Julie Yonge: The Chardonnay is a very fruit-driven in style Chardonnay. I have people saying, you know, in a blind tasting you might mistake it for a Sauvignon Blanc. You can definitely taste the Chardonnay fruit. It's very fruity on the nose, fruit salad almost; it's got a hit of spiciness to it, very well-balanced. It does go into oak after stainless fermentation. It goes into one- and two-year-old oak barrels; very, very well-balanced, well-structured; almost a Chardonnay for non-Chardonnay drinkers, actually.

Ron McFarland: I think that's just because the quality of the fruit is not being dominated by the oak
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