

food, wine & good living

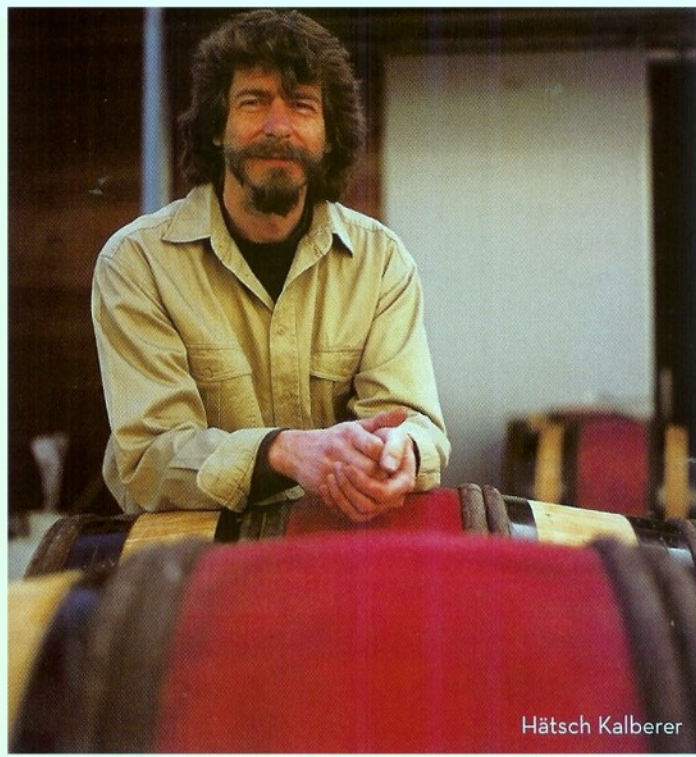
Cuisine

ISSUE 117 JULY 2006

\$8.95 INC. GST. NZ/Aust.
www.cuisine.co.nz

OFF THE PRESS

MICHAEL COOPER looks at what's happening in the wine world



Hätsch Kalberer

RED-HOT

In a region renowned principally for white wines, the Swiss-owned Fromm winery in Marlborough has focused on reds from the start. Pinot Noir has been the brightest star, but that didn't discourage winemaker Hätsch Kalberer from recently opening every vintage of his Malbec and Syrah back to 1996.

On sale now, Fromm La Strada Reserve Malbec 2004 (\$49) is a densely coloured, boldly fruity wine with rich blackcurrant and plum flavours. The 2001 and 2002 vintages are developing mellowness and harmony, but less complexity than you'd hope for from other Bordeaux varieties, such as Merlot or Cabernet Sauvignon. The 1998 is chocolatey and fresh, and the debut 1996 vintage will be long-lived, but both are excellent expressions of Malbec, rather than great reds.

The Syrahs are a different story. Dark and powerful, Fromm La Strada Reserve Syrah 2004 (\$57) offers great depth of cassis and black-pepper flavours, underpinned by firm tannins. It's a serious – and seriously good – red, and the 2003 vintage is equally promising.

The 1999 and 1998 are superb now, with a strong surge of dark fruit, plum and pepper flavours and a nutty, slightly raisined richness. The debut 1996 is still fresh, spicy and vigorous, revealing great longevity.

No one else has made consistently distinguished Syrah in the South Island, but Fromm has certainly proved the potential.