

Sue Courtney's blog of vinous ramblings

wine, food & other vinous topics from New Zealand

May 15th 2010

An email from Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach of [Blackenbrook Vineyard](#) arrived in the Inbox while we were in Christchurch. It said ... *The "Blackenbrook Open Days" at the beginning of the year were so popular, we just have to bring them back once more this season! Our winery will be open for tasting on **Easter Saturday, 3 April 2010** and again on **Easter Monday, 5 April 2010** 1pm – 5pm.*

I sent an email back. "*We will be in the area on one of those days. Would love to visit.*"

It was late on Easter Saturday when we arrived and Daniel had just pulled in. He'd been out in the vineyard checking Brix levels. The Gewurztraminer, the first off the vines this year, had been picked only two days before. The other grapes were still revelling in the early autumn sun.

Daniel showed us around the winery. It had been built in 2005 for the 2006 vintage. It is set into the hill and inside it was lovely and cool. A grape receival area was on the upper level. Small volume fermentation tanks for the Pinot Noir were on wheels so they could be rolled into a chiller room. All the grapes are whole bunch pressed and gravity is used to feed the must into tanks or barrels below. It looked like an extremely well thought out winery that Daniel could run mostly on his own with just one other person to help him in peak times. As we wandered around, we had tasted the delicious new Gewurztraminer juice from the tank - it was gorgeously sticky and sweet.

Ursula (pictured right with Daniel and their son) was looking after customers. Gewurztraminer grapes were on the table for tasting as well as the wines. The grapes were ripe and juicy with the characteristic musky spice that is the varietal signature of Gewurztraminer wine.



Blackenbrook Gewurztraminer 2008 is spicy and grapey - you can taste the flavours of the grapes while fermentation has enhanced the forward spiciness.

Blackenbrook Reserve Gewurztraminer 2008 is texturally complex and viscous. While shy on the nose and the spice is more restrained in the palate, it has great mouthfeel and weight with a honey feel to the finish.

Blackenbrook Pinot Gris 2009 is full-bodied, textural and viscous with great emphasis on the pear-like fruit. Concentrated and gently sweet it is a great follow-up to the gorgeous 2008 rendition - check out this [Wine of the Week](#) review.

Blackenbrook Riesling 2007 has lovely mouthfeel, richness and is picking up some kero notes. There's a nice touch of spicy zest to the mainly citrus fruit and pineapple fruit with a hint of ginger and it finishes dry.

Wow - three awesome aromatic styles in a row but there was more to come.

Blackenbrook Chardonnay 2008 is creamy and buttery with a touch of pineapple and tropical guava and a savoury backbone. I wrote 'Good Chard!' and noted it was rather easy drinking.

Blackenbrook Montepulciano 2008 is vivid in colour and the viscous texture is layered with tannins. A floral wine with hints of violets, briar rose hips and an earthy brambly depth, it has creamy oak with a savoury finish.

If you are ever in Nelson on one of Blackenbrook's Open Days, it really is worthwhile dropping in and buying some of these delicious wines to drink or cellar. Best way to find out when they are open, is to navigate to their [website](#) and sign up to their newsletter.