



Brent Marris

Proprietor/Chief Winemaker
Marisco Vineyards, Marlborough, NZ

Résumé

Brent inherited a solid foundation for a life devoted to winemaking and viticulture. He grew up on one of the first contract vineyards in Marlborough established by his parents in 1978. Inspired and encouraged by his father, John Marris, he graduated from Roseworthy Agricultural College (South Australia) in 1983 with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Oenology (Winemaking) thus becoming Marlborough's first locally born and raised qualified winemaker.

This was followed by ten years of making wine in several of New Zealand's most highly regarded wine regions plus, in between, extensive travels through many of the world's high profile wine regions.

He returned to his roots in Marlborough in 1994 to establish the Wither Hills brand. In a short time Wither Hills was critically acclaimed as making some of the highest quality wines of the region. In 2002 Brent sold Wither Hills to multi-national beverage company Lion Nathan, continuing on for them as MD and Chief Winemaker for a further four years.

Seeking new challenges, Brent searched the Marlborough region for the "ideal" single vineyard site to establish a new international brand. He found a near perfect location – 268ha made up of three terraces of ancient river bed on the banks of the Waihopai River, offering a diversity of terroir that winemakers only dream of. Here "The Ned" was established in 2005 from fruit grown on this wonderful site and named after the mountain looking over Marlborough wine country. The purchase was made in 2003.

His goal is to produce Sauvignon Blanc of the style that first made Marlborough internationally famous. The Ned's three wines, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir, reflect his ability to capture the intense fruit flavours and characteristics of both his property and the Marlborough region, without compromising its seasonal influence and distinctiveness.

Six years on, Marris is well advanced in building his new 6,000 tonne winery. The winery project had always been in the plan but, with changes in the industry and the success of The Ned's first releases, Marris decided to get construction underway early. Vintage 2010 saw 4,000 tonnes being processed through what has been touted as "the most technologically advanced winery" in the Southern Hemisphere.

The birth of the new winery called for a new name. Brent researched his family tree and found his name derived from William de Marisco, a descendant of King Henry 1st. “Marisco Vineyards” is the new name and he celebrates his scandalous ancestors with a new range of wines “The Kings Series” now launched world wide.

Marris has been at the forefront of New Zealand's viticulture development. He is one of New Zealand's most respected winemakers. With more than thirty years of grape growing, winemaking and marketing experience, Marris' history of crafting wines for the world's markets are testament to his passion. King Henry 1st would have been proud of him!

Some History

- 1973 Father planted first grapes in Marlborough for Montana Wines
- 1981 – 1983 Roseworthy Agricultural College Adelaide - Bachelor of Applied Science (Oenology)
- 1985 – 1997 Chief Winemaker for Delegates Wine Estate and Oyster Bay
- 1994 Founded Wither Hills Vineyards
- 2002 Sold Wither Hills to Lion Nathan Brewery but continued on as MD and Chief Winemaker until 2007
- 2003 Purchased 265 ha property on the banks of the Waihopai River in Marlborough
- 2005 Established new brand “The Ned” from fruit grown on the Waihopai River site.
- 2007 Departed Wither Hills to concentrate on new venture.
- 2008 Commenced building state of the art winery on the Waihopai River property
- 2009 Renamed property and company to “Marisco Vineyards”. Established “The Kings Series” range of wines.