



# The Frantoio Press

July 2009

## Harvest & Pressing Review

The fruit matured earlier than last year.

April started with good weather; warm and dry. We picked Frantoio and J5 first followed by Koroneiki; all to beat the birds.

Then the rain came. We could hear the birds singing while we were watching their busy coming and going.

Once it cleared the cream of the Koroneiki was gone and we concentrated on the remaining varieties.

May brought 20 days with rain fall making harvesting challenging. We found out that fully ripened Pendolino are not bird proof either! A lot of trees remained unpicked.

However, we managed to harvest all our Leccino, Picual and about half of the Pendolino.

When the frosts came in June harvest was completed. In the Bay of Plenty we were luckier than growers in the Waikato who got hit by an earlier spell of frosts destroying their crops!

Oil recovery was better than last year.

We got access to natural olive enzymes to help the break down of cell walls to promote oil release in particular green fruit.

We also used food grade talc powder to bind free water which was useful after the rain. A watery paste is a challenge to process. The use of talc makes for a better oil recovery.

Koroneiki is always the most difficult fruit to process as often the fruit has lots of fruit stalks, very often with leaves attached. Loose leaves get blown out and depending on airflow bunches are blown out or go with leaves and stalks through the mill causing blockages of pumps and for the first time the inside of the decanter! It took a few hours to unblock without the need to dismantle it.

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Leaves give oil a somewhat astringent taste; a few is ok and can actually be desirable, but too many makes it overpowering.

This year fruit was picked a lot cleaner than last year for which we are grateful. A in a few lines we noticed trampled fruit. Damaged fruit deteriorates quickly and can produce off-flavours. The ones we noticed we removed and it to the weight of leaves & twigs.

The waste separator operated for the first time the season and was a great improvement. It took away the need to keep an eye on the waste tank. Allowing surplus water to drain away means the tank can remain in its place for the season.

## Equipment

If you have still rakes and/or crates at your place, please return these. We are still missing a number.

## On Orchard

### *Pruning*

Pruning is now well on the way. There are many books available on the subject, but the basic principles are the same:

- Remove dead and broken branches
- Remove branches that grow towards the centre of the tree. Shaded branches produce small fruit that ripens slow and is low on oil.
- Remove low hanging branches – these will only drop lower during the next 12 months

- Open up the tree to allow light to reach the centre and around all branches. A bird must be able to fly through it!
- Balance the tree! Most trees are shaped by the wind. Balancing the tree reduces the risk of wind throw, in particular when the tree carries a heavy crop and foliage has thickened up.
- With picking you will have found out which are the difficult branches. Get rid of them now and have no frustrations next year.

#### Soil Test

Take a soil test now to help to determine any nutritional needs. Usually you can do a test every other year as mature groves don't seem to change significantly.

Apply fertilizer before spring so the trees have access to the nutrients when the spring flush starts and flower buds emerge. Ensure boron is part of your mix by adding Ulexite (a mixture of quick and slow release boron).

#### Spraying

If your grove is under pressure of Peacock spot a copper spray immediately after pruning will get good coverage and protect the leaves on the tree.

Usually you spray after the spring flush to ensure protection of new leaves. You can mix a foliar boron nutrient with this spray.

We are in our second conversion year to organic production and have fewer choices.

#### Harvest Statistics

Each harvest season produces a different mix of varieties, while the climatic conditions have effect on oil content.

This season has made for some interesting facts that may interest you.

#### Distribution of volume over time, proportion of leaves and oil recovery.

period	% crop 2009	% crop 2008	% oil 2009	% oil 2008
1-15 Apr	4.4	16.1	8.7	5.9
16-30 Apr	21.1	2.6	9.7	7.8
1-15 May	30.8	36.4	9.9	9.7
16-31 May	33.5	34.1	11.6	10.7
1-15 Jun	10.2	9.7	12.5	15.3
16-30 Jun	0.0	1.1	n/a	18.1

#### Proportion per variety, proportion of leaves and oil recovery

Variety	% crop 2009	% crop 2008	% oil 2009	% oil 2008
Koroneiki	24.8	47.0	9.2	10.36
Leccino	40.3	17.4	11.3	10.09
Frantoio	8.6	9.0	11.3	14.50
Picual	5.8	5.5	11.2	11.94
Pendolino	2.6	5.5	8.2	6.31
Other	17.9	15.6	10.2	9.07

Processing started on 8th April and finished 12th June.

The average oil content for the season was 10.6% (10.0%).

#### Infused Oils

This season we made for the first time some infused oils. There is steady interest for them at the markets.

We had to think about alternative ways of selling oil as the oil trade is certainly not recession proof!

#### Olives New Zealand

There is a great deal of dissatisfaction by members with the national executive. A Special General Meeting has been called.

The current committee of 8 has only 4 elected members, the other 4 are co-opted.

A letter is attached for your information.

At this stage I am not willing to renew my membership.

The "red dot" sticker you can put on your bottles as mark that the oil is ONZ certified has little market recognition. There is no return on the costs of testing and taste panel.



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