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Grigio è Gris
(Grey is Grey)

Shades of Grey – 10 Years on.....

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In 1998 we released our very first Pinot Grigio; the “standard” or “estate” Pinot Grigio and the Reserve Pinot Grigio. Initially, the two wines were bottlings of the experimental production techniques used. Both styles were fantastically received and the 1999 Reserve Pinot Grigio was awarded the first trophy ever for a Pinot Gris at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards. The Reserve was here to stay!

As you may well be aware, Pinot Grigio is the Italian name of the grape variety the French know as Pinot Gris or Tokay d'Alsace (and the Germans know as Ruländer). The only reason for using the name from day one was it continued the Italian theme suggested by the name *Bilancia*. We have always used it because of this Italian connection rather than use it as a style definition of the wine.

Over time the Grigio/Gris issue has become more complicated. It is a reflection of the development of the New Zealand and overseas wine drinking public that there is now an understanding (rightly or wrongly) within the market that **Grigio** reflects one style (Italian, leaner, tighter) while **Gris** reflects another (French, fuller, richer).

The 2008 wines to be released are the combined stylistic learnings of 10 previous vintages. After much deliberation we have made the decision to switch from the varietal name of Pinot Grigio to Pinot Gris. This will be for the wines released from the 2008 vintage; Pinot Gris and Reserve Pinot Gris, and will be a permanent change. It is not that we feel that Bilancia Pinot Gris is necessarily more French in style than Italian – *it is a New Zealand statement* – nor have we changed the way we make the wine. However, we are more than aware of the thinking in the market place. It is interesting to note in the last year or so we have probably answered more queries about the Grigio/Gris name than in the previous 10 years combined. We have actually been accused of intentionally mis-labelling the wines!

We hope that this explains the rationale behind the change. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any further queries or if more clarification is required.

Little changes: the wine remains the same. **Grigio è Gris**

Cheers

Lorraine Leheny and Warren Gibson