

Tongue in Groove North Canterbury, Cabal Vineyard Pinot Noir 2015 Tasting Notes

VINTAGE

The spring of 2014 was cool and this continued over flowering which resulted in low crop levels with small bunches and small berries. From Christmas on the season heated up with some very warm days in January and February. Ideal weather conditions prevailed until mid May and allowed us to choose the perfect time to harvest the Pinot Noir grapes. We chose to harvest early in the 4th week of March resulting in perfectly ripe grapes with good acid levels.

VINEYARD

This is the third year that we have made a single vineyard wine from Waipara; the grapes originating from Cabal Vineyard which is situated on the gentle North slopes of the Waipara Valley. The soil is a combination of clay and fragmented limestone. Various clones have been planted; grouped in rows and situated on differing slopes and aspect, thus giving us the opportunity to harvest several different parcels. Fermenting the clones separately allows the winemaker to build a wealth of information about each clone and how best to process the fruit in vintages to come. Typically in Burgundy vineyards are planted with a mixture of clones and harvested at the same time. The Burgundians however, have had centuries to learn about individual clones within their vineyards. In NZ we have only had 10-20 years and still have much to learn.

WINEMAKING

Traditional winemaking techniques were used; minimal intervention, meaning that the wines practically made themselves with a little guidance and care from the winemaker. Approximately 40% whole bunches were put on the bottom of the fermenter and the rest of the fruit was destemmed thus giving a combination of whole berries and some slightly crushed berries. Whole bunches gives structure, tannin and flavour; whole berries give abundant generous fruit and perfume; whereas crushed berries results in less aroma but deeper colour and bigger tannins. This ratio has resulted in a wine with intense perfume, deep dark fruit, firm yet silky tannins and overall is full bodied, mouth filling and well structured. All the vats had a cold soak for 5-6 days, natural indigenous yeast completed the fermentation and were plunged 2 times daily with more gentle hand plunging during the post fermentation maceration. The vats were pressed separately and the hard pressings separated. The separate batches were put into French barriques, about 25% new. All barrels completed a natural malo-lactic fermentation in the following spring/summer when temperatures warmed. Each barrel was tasted and only the best barrels were selected for the resulting blend. The wines were moved for the first time after 16 months to tank to marry together before bottling. No fining or filtration was used.

TASTING NOTES

Intense aromas abound; vibrant cherry fruit with an earthy, savoury undertone, reminiscent of being in an underground, chalk cave. This delicious herbal complexity being the result of a high percentage of whole bunches in the ferment. Generous fruit initially on the palate balances the salivating, chalky, mouth coating tannins. Good acid levels also enhance the drinkability of this Pinot and its ageability. A complex style of Pinot Noir showing the

abundant fruit of NZ combined with the robust tannins more typical of a Pinot from Burgundy. The fruit weight and structure of this wine will allow bottle development and ageing for the next 8 to 10 years.