



VINTAGE

Typically the 2012 vintage was a cooler season which resulted in longer hang-time producing ripe grapes with intense flavour development. This vintage has produced excellent wines with purity, freshness and varietal typicity which speak of a sense of place and a cool climate growing region. Using the words of the Burgundians; these are classic wines.

VINEYARD

This wine is a combination of two very different vineyards: Cabal which is on the Omihi slopes and Smith Vineyard which is on the north facing, free draining gravel terraces of the Waipara river bed. The Cabal Vineyard has clay based soils with fragmented limestone, which produces Pinots with round, generous fruit and often softer tannins. The Smith Vineyard on the gravel terraces produces big, tannic wines with lot of colour, due to the low moisture holding potential of the soil. The combination of the two produced a superior wine as the unctuous fruit of the Cabal softened and balanced the firm, tannic structure of the Smith Vineyard.

WINEMAKING

Traditional winemaking techniques were used; minimal intervention, meaning that the wines practically made themselves with a little guidance and care. Grapes sourced from the two different vineyards were made in separate batches; different techniques were used on each batch to help the grapes better express their soil origins. The fermenter with grapes from Cabal vineyard had about 20% whole bunches at the bottom, 40% whole berries and 40% crushed berries. Whole bunches gives structure, tannins and flavour; whole berries give abundant generous fruit; whereas crushed berries results in deeper colour and bigger tannins. This combination resulted in a Pinot with deep, dark fruit, firm yet silky tannins which is full bodied, mouth filling and well structured. In comparison, Smith vineyard which produces robust, tannic Pinot Noirs; only whole berries were put in the fermenter. This reduces extraction of tannin and colour but enhances the forward, juicy fruit and since Pinots from this block naturally have high colour and tannin, a more balance wine was the result. Both 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 batches were barrelled down in French oak, about 25% new barriques. All barrels completed a natural malo-lactic fermentation in the following spring/summer when temperatures warmed a little. The wines were moved for the first time after 16 months to tank to marry together before bottling. No fining was used, only a light filtration for clarity.

TASTING NOTES

This Pinot shows Waipara Valley characteristics; complex meaty flavours, generous forward fruit which persists throughout the whole palate, well structured tannins giving longevity and refreshing acidity balancing the fruit and tannin. There are wonderful hedonistic aromas of dark plummy fruit with hints of bracken and bramble, interwoven with spicy, leafy notes resulting from whole bunches in the fermentation. Generous, warm fruit abounds on the palate with an earthy, smoky complexity. Lots of fine grain tannins encase the fruit giving structure and drinkability and refreshing acidity draws out the palate again. The abundant fruit with an excellent structure will allow 8-10 years ageing.



PINOT NOIR 2012