



FELTON ROAD

2016 Felton Road Pinot Noir *Block 3*

Tasting Note

A deep, meaty nose of dark fruit, complexing hints of humus and dark rose. The palate is surprisingly more opulent than the colour might suggest. A rich entry of wild bramble that leads to an enticing chalkiness. Riding along the bottom of the palate is a seam of impressive richness: chocolate; mocha; dense with a chewy, herbal complexity. Sophisticated, sensual and unmistakably Block 3.



Introduction

Beginning with meticulous site selection and vineyard design started in 1991, Felton Road's story is one of refusal to compromise. A strict 100% estate policy with fully organic and biodynamic viticulture (Demeter certified) ensures that our fruit arrives at the winery as pure as it can be, while our entire estate comes as close to true sustainability as is possible. A commitment to hands off winemaking; gravity flow, wild yeasts, wild malo, an avoidance of fining and filtration all help preserve the wine's expression of its terroir. The result is Riesling, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir which accurately express the authenticity and complexity of our unique vineyards.

Gareth King; Viticulturist, Blair Walter; Winemaker, Nigel Greening; Proprietor.

Vineyard & Viticulture

Felton Road farms four properties totaling 32 ha in the Bannockburn sub-region of Central Otago. Block 3 is situated on a gentle north facing slope in the heart of The Elms vineyard where a deep bench of glacial soil is interspersed with calcareous seams. Meticulous summer management of a single vertical shoot positioned (VSP) canopy ensures even and early fruit maturity. Shoot thinning, shoot positioning, leaf plucking, bunch thinning and harvest are all carried out by hand to ensure optimum quality fruit. Cover crops are planted between rows to assist in vine balance and to improve soil health and general biodiversity.

Vintage

El Niño conditions provided westerlies and early warmth, which combined with high soil-moisture, pushed an early bud-burst and vibrant growth. Temperatures rose rapidly towards flowering with moisture-wicking wind conditions keeping growth in check. December brought extreme diurnal swings the likes of which we are not accustomed to seeing so early in the season; afternoon highs in the low thirties balanced by single-figures overnight. The diurnal pattern continued through January with a full 30°C swing on January 11th. Overnight temperatures then became warmer than normal with scattered rain events offering some relief for desiccated soils. Veraison was early with a rapid onset but prolonged completion. Pinot Noir skins showed impressive colour and condition by the start of March. Peak temperatures dropped away as high diurnals returned, offering a balancing tension and finesse after the welcome but unusual early season warmth. The Pinot Noir harvest was relatively early beginning on March 23rd and concluded on April 9.

Vinification

The unique gravity flow winery enabled the grapes to be gently destemmed directly into open-top fermenters without pumping, retaining approximately 25% as whole clusters. Traditional fermentation with a moderately long maceration on skins has extracted good colour and tannin with considerable depth of flavour. This wine was aged for 13 months in 35% new French oak barrels from artisan Burgundian coopers. In accordance with our non-interventionist approach to winemaking, this wine was fermented with indigenous yeast and was not fined or filtered.

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