

NICK STOCK, Tuesday, February 16, 2021

I tasted more than 450 wines from New Zealand this year and despite being unable to travel, we have covered the best producers thoroughly in this report. Of the top wines, pinot noir once again dominates both in terms of the high scores and the diverse, regional styles on offer. New Zealand pinot noir is a such an interesting category.

Certainly Felton Road's 2019 pinots are a memorable set of wines and among their best releases to date. These are so energetic and reflect the combined effect of careful and dedicated farming of site-specific characters. The Felton Road Block 5 Pinot Noir 2019 is sensational and has a fleshy and supple core of vibrant fruit with long, immaculately toned tannins. It delivers such intense flavors.

The 2020 rieslings for Felton Road also herald the arrival of a great vintage with the dry and off-dry styles all delivering vivid aromatics and fresh fruit. Stunning drinking now, they will also age very well. The early view of pinot from 2020 is that another excellent vintage is in the making but for now seek out the excellent 2019s before they disappear fast.

Score
98

FELTON ROAD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO BLOCK 5 2019
Very fragrant nose here with deeply woven complexity. Earthy nuances, bracken, leaves and spiced red cherries abound with roses and violets, as well as blueberries. The palate has long tannins that extrude deep along a central spine. Lots of blueberry and red-cherry flavors. The contained, fleshy feel of the palate is really something and this always powerful wine is in such, supple and fluid form. Drink or hold.

Score
97

FELTON ROAD RIESLING CENTRAL OTAGO BLOCK 1 2020
Aromas of white peach and nectarine are fresh and mouthwateringly pure. There's a gently stony edge below. The palate has a very astutely struck balance between acidity and sugar and delivers a long, incredibly intense, sweet lime core. Scintillatingly pure. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

Score
96

FELTON ROAD PINOT NOIR CENTRAL OTAGO CALVERT 2019
A very vibrant and ripe Calvert with attractively spicy oak integration, as well as abundant red and dark cherries. Super fragrant. The palate is so silky and plush, packed with concentrated, fresh red-cherry flavor. Blueberry finish. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

Score
94

FELTON ROAD RIESLING CENTRAL OTAGO DRY 2020
Stunningly fresh and flinty with spice and white-pepper edges to the sliced green apples, white flowers and fresh, leafy-herb notes. The palate has a very punchy, tight-wound entry and then layers out some handy fruit flesh that heads through apple and citrus to peach and nectarine. Super pure. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

Score
93

FELTON ROAD CHARDONNAY CENTRAL OTAGO BLOCK 2 2019
Rich peach and lemon-curd aromas here, with strong fruit focus, some oak spice and light nougat notes. The palate has a composed, softly fleshy and gently creamy feel with banana and vanilla-laced pear flavors. Super composed. Drink now. Screw cap.

Score
92

FELTON ROAD RIESLING CENTRAL OTAGO BANNOCKBURN 2020
There are aromas of lime pie and some light fresh herbs, as well as white peach and pastry. The palate has impressive concentration and deep-set lime and sweet-apple flavors. Very sweet on the finish. From biodynamically grown grapes. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

1 October, 2021

Felton Road Pinot Noir Central Otago Bannockburn 2019

96 Points

A rich and rather decadent nose of ripe strawberry, smoke and grilled meat follows through to a full body with layers of ripe tannins and a juicy, succulent finish. Just a hint of grilled orange to the bacon. Drink now or hold.

Felton Road Pinot Noir Central Otago Block 3 2019

95 Points

Real purity of pinot noir fruit here with strawberries, orange peel, flowers and crushed pepper on the nose. It's full-bodied, yet very tight and curated on the palate, providing fantastic length and focus. Tight at the end, but all there. Try after 2023, when it will have opened up.

Felton Road Pinot Noir Cornish Point 2020

95 Points

A fragrant nose with aromas of cranberries, wild strawberries, sour cherries, dried orange rind, dried herbs and spice box. Medium-to full-bodied with crisp acidity and fine tannins. Structured and crunchy. Lovely texture. Mineral and fleshy with a long, flavorful finish. Drink or hold.

Felton Road Pinot Noir Cornish Point 2019

95 Points

Aromas of smoke, spice, dried flowers, leather and ripe berries follow through to a full-bodied palate. Yet, the tannins are very tight and polished. Fine and poised finish. Fine-tuned pinot. Drink or hold.

30 September, 2021

Felton Road Pinot Noir Central Otago Bannockburn 2020

95 Points

A perfumed nose of strawberries, sour cherries, raspberries, violets, vanilla and baking spices. It's medium-to full-bodied with lively acidity and fine tannins. Balanced and compact with a velvety texture and a bright core of fruit on the mid-palate. Long finish. Chewy. Needs a few years to soften, but already impressive.

Felton Road Pinot Noir Central Otago Block 3 2020

97 Points

A perfumed nose of sour cherries, wild strawberries, cranberries, dried flowers, orange rind and baking spices. Medium-to full-bodied with bright acidity and fine tannins. Layered and harmonious, with a velvety texture and vibrant, lively character on the palate. Pure and flavorful, long finish. Very long. Give this three or four years to show its true greatness. Drink or hold. Screw cap.

29 September, 2021

Felton Road Chardonnay Central Otago Bannockburn 2020

94 Points

Apple-pie, crust and lemon-rind aromas follow through to a full body, layers of fruit and phenolic intensity. Hints of licorice and lemon rind. Serious complexity. Very honed texture. Drink now.

Nick Stock