

2014



Felton Road Bannockburn Central Otago Chardonnay

Forging ahead in quality, this wine is grown in three vineyards at Bannockburn (Calvert, Cornish Point and The Elms) and matured in French oak barriques (with limited use of new oak; 10 per cent in 2012). The 2011 vintage (★★★★½) has a fragrant, slightly biscuity, complex bouquet. Finely poised, it is youthful, with concentrated, citrusy flavours, good acid spine and a long finish. The 2012 (★★★★½), biodynamic-certified, was fermented with indigenous yeasts, given a full, softening malolactic fermentation, matured for a year on its full yeast lees, and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. A rich, ripe, sweet-fruited wine with vibrant, concentrated, citrusy, peachy flavours, gently seasoned with oak, it's already delicious.

Felton Road Block 2 Central Otago Chardonnay

This outstanding wine is grown in a 'special part of the Elms Vineyard in front of the winery', which has the oldest vines. In a vertical tasting of the 2007–2011 vintages, held in September 2012, the older wines were still drinking superbly – the 2007 (★★★★) is terrific now, with a real sense of drive and depth. The 2012 vintage (★★★★) was barrel-matured for 17 months, with a minor new oak influence, and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered. Bright, light lemon/green, it is very youthful and highly complex, with balanced acidity and a strong surge of rich, ripe, peachy, slightly spicy and nutty flavours. Best drinking 2015+

Felton Road Bannockburn Central Otago Pinot Noir

The Bannockburn winery's 'standard' Pinot Noir is a distinguished wine in its own right, blended from its three vineyards at Bannockburn – The Elms, Cornish Point and Calvert. Matured for 11 months in French oak casks (30 per cent new), it is fermented with indigenous yeasts and bottled without fining or filtering. Instantly attractive, the 2011 vintage (★★★★) is deep and youthful in colour. Mouthfilling (14.5 per cent alcohol) and savoury, it has concentrated cherry, plum, spice, herb and nut flavours, showing excellent complexity, and a long, finely poised finish. The 2012 (★★★★) is deeply coloured, fragrant, vibrantly fruity and supple, with youthful cherry, plum and spice flavours, showing lovely richness and harmony.

Felton Road Block 3 Central Otago Pinot Noir

Grown at Bannockburn, on a north-facing slope 270 metres above sea level, this is a majestic Central Otago wine, among the finest Pinot Noirs in the country. The mature vines are cultivated just in front of the winery, in a section of the vineyard where the clay content is relatively high, giving 'dried herbs and ripe fruit characters'. The wine is matured for about a year in Burgundy oak barrels (about 30 per cent new), and bottled without fining or filtration. The 2011 vintage (★★★★) is powerful, with deep, youthful cherry and nut flavours, complex, savoury and long. Graceful, yet full of potential, it should be at its best 2014+. The 2012 (★★★★) is boldly coloured, with a savoury, complex bouquet. Powerful and firm, with dense cherry, plum, dried-herb and spice flavours, it's still very youthful and tight-knit, but shows excellent complexity and potential. It should flourish for a decade.

Felton Road Block 5 Pinot Noir

This is winemaker Blair Walter's favourite Felton Road red. Grown in a 'special' block of The Elms Vineyard at Bannockburn, in Central Otago, it matures for a year in French oak barriques (30 per cent new), and is then held for several more months in seasoned oak casks. In a vertical tasting of the 2007–2011 vintages, held in September 2012, the 2010 vintage (★★★★) was the standout – exceptionally concentrated, yet deliciously poised and silky-textured. The 2011 (★★★★) is a 'masculine' style, powerful and firm, sweet-fruited and savoury, with deep cherry, plum and spice flavours, tight and youthful. The 2012 (★★★★) is a powerful, deeply coloured red, very sweet-fruited, with concentrated, ripe plum, cherry and spice flavours, gentle tannins, and striking richness and harmony.

Felton Road Calvert Pinot Noir

Grown in the Calvert Vineyard at Bannockburn – which neighbours and is managed by Felton Road – and matured in French oak barriques (about 30 per cent new), the 2011 vintage (★★★★) is a very savoury and complex wine, deep and youthful in colour. Full-bodied, it is ripe and silky-textured, with rich, vibrant cherry, plum, spice, dried-herb and nut flavours and a long finish. It's already delicious, but should be at its best 2014+. The 2012 (★★★★) is a star vintage. Still very youthful, it is fragrant and fleshy, powerful, concentrated and supple, with deep, ripe plum, spice and nut flavours, complex and savoury, and lovely richness, texture and harmony. Best drinking 2015+

Felton Road Cornish Point Pinot Noir

From the company-owned Cornish Point Vineyard at the eastern end of Bannockburn, 6 kilometres from the winery, this is always one of my favourite Felton Road reds. Matured in French oak barriques (about 30 per cent new), the 2011 vintage (★★★★) is sturdy (14.5 per cent alcohol) and deeply coloured, powerful and highly concentrated, with deep plum, spice and nut flavours, lively and long. It should flourish with cellaring. The 2012 vintage (★★★★) is a gorgeous red. Softly seductive, with lovely richness, it is full-bodied (14.5 per cent alcohol), with lush, ripe flavours of cherries, spices and nuts, a distinct hint of dried herbs (more so than in the Calvert 2012), and a beautifully rounded, lasting finish. Cornish Point at its greatest.

Felton Road Bannockburn Central Otago Riesling

Estate-grown on mature vines, this is a gently sweet wine with deep flavours cut with fresh acidity. It offers more drink-young appeal than its Dry Riesling stablemate, but invites long-term cellaring. Tank-fermented mostly with indigenous yeasts, it is bottled with 20 to 60 grams per litre of residual sugar. The 2013 vintage (★★★★), grown in The Elms and Calvert vineyards, is a 'Mosel' style, according to winemaker Blair Walter. Light-bodied (8.5 per cent alcohol), it has lovely intensity and vigour, with rich, citrusy, limey flavours, a hint of sherbet, plentiful sweetness (55 grams/litre of residual sugar) and a tight, lasting finish. It should blossom for a decade.

Felton Road Dry Riesling

Based on low-yielding vines in schisty soils at Bannockburn, in Central Otago, this wine is hand-picked and fermented with indigenous yeasts. Grown in The Elms and Calvert vineyards, the 2012 vintage (★★★★) is weighty and dry, with pure grapefruit, lemon and lime flavours, showing lovely vibrancy, drive and richness. Mouthfilling (12 per cent alcohol), it carries the dry style well; drink now or cellar. The 2013 was tasted very shortly after bottling (and so is not rated). Full-bodied, crisp and dry (4 grams/litre of residual sugar), it offers strong, ripe, citrusy, appley, spicy flavours, with a sense of latent power. Open 2015+

Felton Road Block 1 Central Otago Riesling

Estate-grown in The Elms Vineyard, on a 'steeper slope' which yields 'riper fruit' without noble rot, this Bannockburn wine is made in a style 'similar to a late-harvest, Mosel spätlese'. The 2012 (★★★★) is very rich, with intense, citrusy, peachy flavours and a racy, lasting finish. The 2013 vintage (★★★★) is gently sweet (65 grams/litre of residual sugar), with highly concentrated, citrusy, peachy, appley flavours, moderate acidity for Riesling and a long finish. It's already delicious but still very youthful.