



## FELTON ROAD

### 2015 Felton Road Chardonnay *Block 6*

#### *Tasting Note*

*Riper and more boldly fruited than what is typical for a Felton Road Chardonnay, but this is what is consistently delivered from the steeper and more elevated, north facing, Block 6 site. The heaviness must be taken in context, as it still possesses a subtle hand, the tight acidity and fine minerality that has become the hallmark of our Chardonnays. A fascinating contrast.*

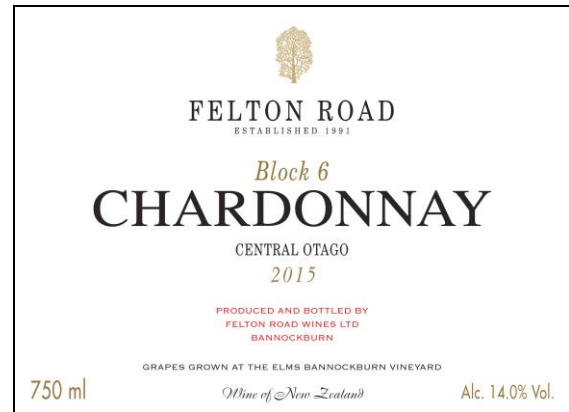
#### **Introduction**

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 6 is positioned on a north facing slope immediately south of Block 5 on The Elms vineyard and was planted in 1993. The soils are comprised of schist gravels with calcium carbonate deposits at depths of around 1.5m. Its higher elevation (282-300m) and steeper slope intercepts the sun more but also makes it more wind exposed. 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**

Cool spring conditions resulted in bud burst a little later than usual and slow early season growth. The weather finally stabilised in time for flowering in mid-December. Low rainfall assisted with soil temperatures finally increasing causing a rapid growth surge. Peak temperatures continued to be high throughout January in the build up to veraison. Bunch compositions were overall of a good size although berry numbers were down in places. Temperatures were relatively moderate through February with warmish nights but more than double the monthly rainfall. Veraison was helped by the early warmth and achieved completion quickly. Vine and leaf condition held very well with no signs of stress or early shut down. Yields were normal with harvest starting on March 27. Chardonnay and Pinot Noir were completed by April 11 after 8 consecutive days of fast picking with fine weather throughout. The last of the Riesling was picked on April 14.

#### **Vinification**

Mendoza clone Chardonnay from Block 6 was whole bunch pressed and flowed immediately (without settling) by gravity to barrel in the underground cellar. Fermentation with indigenous yeasts in French oak (10% new oak) was followed by a long and complete malolactic over the spring and summer. After 17 months in barrel the wine was racked to tank for bottling in early-August 2016. The wine was not fined or filtered.

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