



FELTON ROAD

2016 Felton Road Chardonnay *Block 2*

Tasting Note

Crushed sea shells and delicate citrus blossom lead the focussed and detailed nose. The palate follows with a salinity and minerality that is subtle, complex and intriguing. Devoid of any overt wine-making characters, the wine offers a transparency that allows its unique vineyard origin of schist gravel soils to really shine and take centre stage. Refined and poised with serious precision.

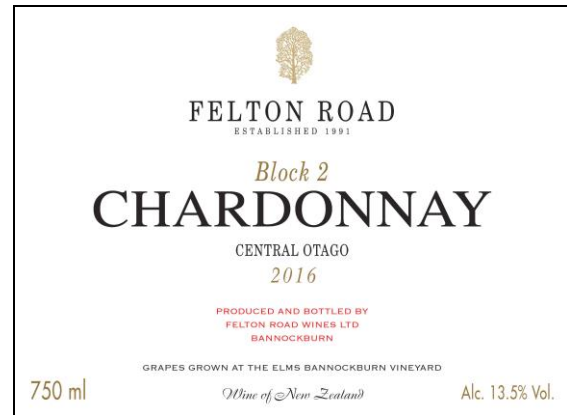
Introduction

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 2 is positioned on a gentle east facing slope immediately north of Block 3 on The Elms vineyard and was planted in 1992. 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 Nino 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

Mendoza clone Chardonnay from Block 2 was whole bunch pressed and flowed immediately (without settling) by gravity to barrel in the underground cellar. Fermentation with indigenous yeasts in French oak (no 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 late-August 2016. The wine was not fined or filtered.

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