

New Zealand's Latest Red Releases: Growing Up

New Zealand turned up late to the wine party. It was a millennium behind the Greeks and Italians. Even in the context of the New World, New Zealand gave Argentina and Chile a 250-odd-year head start. Despite being slow off the mark, it's finally rallied, picking up the pace since the turn of the century and taking its place in the leading pack. Its current crop of winemakers is writing its own history for wine at the bottom of the earth.

2022 Pinot Noir Block 3

96 Points

Drinking Window: 2024-2038

The 2022 Pinot Noir Block 3 is unadulterated and broods sexiness. It seduces you with its rich, expansive mouthfeel, untamed flavors and succulent texture, leading to a long finish. It is a wine that feels very hands-off, allowing the fruit to shine and those abundant tannins to ooze and coat the entire mouth with melted chocolate. I kept coming back to this wine over three days, and it never failed to impress. One for the shopping list.

2022 Pinot Noir Block 5

95 Points

Drinking Window: 2025-2038

The 2022 Pinot Noir Block 5 doesn't start out as impressive as usual. Compared to the 2021 vintage, it seems less intense and voluminous. Yet it proves to be an athletic, honed Pinot Noir with pure fruit and a real sense of purpose. A taut line of acidity pulses through its core, pushing it towards a firm, long finish. The vintage makes this more restrained. The 2022 has all the essence of the vines without the big shoulders this vineyard can provide. Perhaps not as impressive, but for those who like quieter styles, 2022 provides.

2022 Pinot Noir Calvert

93 Points

Drinking Window: 2025-2035

The 2022 Pinot Noir Calvert is an intriguingly fragrant wine, evoking the medicinal herbs of an Italian aperitivo alongside cherries, fruit cake and festive spices, which continue on the palate. It fills the mouth but does so without any sense of heaviness. The 2022 is a calming, relaxed wine with a tender charm and mouthcoating tannins that provide an assured structure on the finish without being assertive. The 2022 will evolve gracefully but is already a flavorful party in your mouth.

2022 Pinot Noir Cornish Point

93 Points

Drinking Window: 2024-2033

The 2022 Pinot Noir Cornish Point is an elegant, stylish wine with precision and poise. It tickles the nose with its fragrance, almost dancing up your nostrils, bringing woody green herbs to your olfactory. Christmas spices and fruit cake aromas appear alongside fresh cherries and plums. It is shy of medium-bodied and isn't showy, offering a more delicate, light-on-its-feet style than other Pinot Noirs from the Felton Road stable. The wine ends with a gentle lift, reminiscent of a conductor lifting his baton and instructing the orchestra to end the quiet final note. The finish is fragrant and pure fruited.

2022 Pinot Noir Bannockburn

91 Points

Drinking Window: 2024-2032

The 2022 Pinot Noir Bannockburn is pure, refined and lifted with a silky, smooth texture that caresses the mouth despite being shy of midweight. Sweet raspberry and cherry meet a finely tuned herby character. It's all well-judged with excellent tannin handling, leaving the mouth coated with the finest appetizing textures that'll have you licking the insides of your cheeks. This 2022 is delectable from the off and will be for the first ten years of its life.

2022 Pinot Noir MacMuir

89 Points

Drinking Window: 2025-2033

The 2022 Pinot Noir MacMuir is a little reductive from the start, which initially mutes the pure fruit, but it shakes that off to reveal a tender, mid-weight wine with round shoulders. However, the conclusion has a sense of uptightness, as if the entry is the base of a triangle and the finish is the tip, narrowing in shape - which is both the acidity and tannic tension. There is a slight hint of warmth from the alcohol (14.5%) on the finish that clips the red cherry and tea-leaf scented length. This is only the second vintage of the MacMuir, and the younger vines seem to produce more sugar at this stage compared with the older vines that make the other Pinot Noir cuvées. This is still a work in progress.