

Cornish Point Vineyard

7.6 ha



History and Location

Cornish Point is an old gold miners' settlement located adjacent to the Hartley and Reilly diggings where the first large find of gold was made in the Central Otago gold rush. It was named after the Cornish gold miners who lived there and was abandoned in the late 19th century then planted as an apricot orchard in the mid-20th century. Felton Road planted it to vines in 2000. Bordered on one side by the Clutha River and on the other by the Kawarau (now both flooded at this point to form Lake Dunstan), it is unique in being almost totally surrounded by water. The vineyard is adjacent to the entrance to the Cromwell Gorge which results in steady airstreams. This unique location, as well as the proximity to the lake; both help minimise frost.

Soils

The soils are comprised entirely of the *Manuherikia* series classified as “moderately deep fine sandy loams”. They are a low terrace soil of windblown origin (loess soils) lying on bands of terrace river gravels and older silts. The soils date from the retreat of the glaciers up the Cromwell valley over 20,000 years ago. Deeper down there is clay and significant calcium carbonate deposits agglomerating alluvial pebbles. The depth of the silt loam top soil is quite consistent across the Block at 40cm. There is a small area (Blocks 23, 24 & 25) of more shallow soils on the steeper section rising up against the rocky bluffs of the southern boundary. Although the edges of Cornish Point were eroded by sluicing or other diggings, the vineyard itself is undisturbed soils.

Planting

The vineyard is planted in 18 different clone and rootstock combinations, separated into 25 Blocks. Rows are orientated to 345 degrees so the vines receive an extra hour of morning sun and one less of the hotter afternoon sun. A row width of 2.2 m and vine spacing of 1.13 m results in 4040 vines per hectare. The vines are on three rootstocks: 101.14, Riparia Gloire and 3309 as well as eight Blocks planted to own roots. Clones of Pinot Noir are B114, B115, B667, B777, Abel, AM10/5, UCD 5, and UCD 6. 0.25 ha of B95 Chardonnay is also planted. VSP canopy management is employed using a cane pruned double Guyot. The viticulture is 100% organic and biodynamic and is fully certified by BioGro and Demeter.

Vineyard Characteristics

With the low elevation (193-202 metres) and proximity to the lake, fruit from Cornish Point is often the first pick of our harvest (although some Blocks on the heavier soils pick somewhat later). The resulting wines display dense and dark fruit, with warm and inviting textures from usually softer acidities and rounded, well-formed tannins. The bouquet is particularly intense from this vineyard: floral and deep fruit notes predominating. Flavours are always in the dark end of the spectrum, with pronounced secondary notes rather than simple primary fruit.

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Cornish Point Vineyard Layout

