



2013 Ram Paddock Red

Tasting Notes

The 2013 Ram Paddock is a cool climate classic. Lovely cassis and spice notes from the Cabernet Sauvignon are filled out with typical plum and mocha notes from the Merlot and given a flourish by the perfume of the Cabernet Franc. In the mouth the wine is medium to full bodied, silky and stylish with sweet plummy, currant like fruit, a savoury umami mid palate underscored by long fine tannins and cedary oak. A wine that will reward cellaring for the next 5-8 years.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol 13.8% Residual Sugar < 1.0 g/L pH 3.55 Acidity 5.5 g/L Total Dry Extract 29 g/l

Vineyard & Winemaking

The 2013 growing season was as close to ideal as one could wish, especially for the later bursting varieties such as the Cabernets & Merlot. We have the advantage of some lovely 25 year old vines that have their roots deep in the old "Ram Paddock" soils adjacent to the Waipara River. The vines are pruned to two shortish canes, shoot thinned early in the spring and then cluster thinned according to shoot vigour later in the season. As these varieties flower quite late in December the weather is often well settled and fruit set is more or less complete. We use deficit irrigation to regulate berry size and then exposure to sunlight to thicken the skins particularly towards veraison. Vigour is managed by sensible fertilisation so we end up by trimming the vines once to stop vegetative growth then cover the grapes with nest to keep the birds off. Sounds easy when you say that quickly but in reality there is a huge amount of fine hand work in growing these demanding varieties at a latitude this far south. Our ongoing clonal evaluations are focussed on cutting off the green tail that can particularly affect Cabernet Sauvignon ensuring that these wines show the cool side of their characters without being green or herbaceous. The beauty about 2013 was that we had plenty of heat and dry conditions at the right moments and then rain at the right time as well to ensure complete and very uniform ripening.

One of the enigmatic things about this vineyard is that it captures sufficient heat to set and then ripen such late varieties. We spend a considerable amount of time ensuring that the fruit ripens evenly so that we minimise extracting the aggressive pyrazine characters that often plague cool climate reds. The grapes were hand picked, each clone separated and harvest when ripe, de-stemmed with minimal crushing, soaked for 3-4 days then fermented relatively warm with regular pigeage in small open topped fermenters. We then match each clone & variety to individual coopers and then mature the wine in a mix of new and seasoned Bordeaux coopered barriques. Racking is kept to a minimum so that we retain as much fruit flavour as possible. After 18 months in oak the wines are then racked, blended, fined and filtered according to microbiological risk. We bottle under both cork and screw cap according to customer preference then mature the wine in our cellar prior to release.

Harvest dates: 19 April – 2 May 2013 Brix 23.8 - 25.4 Titratable Acidity 5.2 - 6.3 g/L pH 3.32 - 3.48

Awards

Decanter World Wine 2015 - **Bronze Medal**