



2014 Cabernet Franc

Tasting Notes

At first glimpse the colour is a satisfying crimson/purple colour with flashes of magenta at the rim. The nose shows classic cool climate Cabernet Franc characters of violets, plums and spice – think mace, allspice, nutmeg and anise. Behind this are lovely notes of dark chocolate, rose petal and an intriguing top note of morello cherry. In the mouth the wine is balanced and harmonious showing lovely fruit tannin integration. Subtle yet fresh French oak gives the wine a delicious liquorice like tang in the finish while there is sufficient acidity to give the wine drive and energy which lends a savoury structure rather than it being totally fruit dominant. This is going to be a popular release so please try to do it justice by enjoying it with hearty modern bistro food, it positively screams for slow braised beef cheeks served with root vegetable mash. The earthiness of the mash will allow the delicious perfume and savoury structure of the wine to shine and the sinewy tannins in the wine will combine with the meat to provide a truly sensuous umami experience.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol 13.2% Residual Sugar 1.8 g/L pH 3.55 Acidity <1 g/L

Vineyard & Winemaking

This is a truly unique wine in New Zealand. Not only is it produced from some of the oldest Cabernet Franc vines in the country but they are also some of the most southerly. This block is planted in a natural amphitheatre on the southern banks of the Waipara River on soils that mainly consist of alluvial silt loam overlying free draining gravels. The vines are grafted to a range of different rootstocks and are pruned to a simple 2 cane trellis. Our experienced vineyard team lavish the utmost care and attention to these venerable old vines, coaxing just the right amount of vigour from each plant and then balancing that with a crop load decision made on a shoot by shoot basis so that by the end of the season they practically know every bunch by name. In 2014 the sun gods blessed us with a stunning season for late ripening reds. The autumnal southerly fronts that can plague the east coast of the South Island failed to materialise which allowed these grand old vines to give up their beautifully ripened bunches in early May.

When this fruit arrived at the winery it was obvious from the start that we had something quite special. The skins were seriously dark and chewy and the pips were the colour of lightly roasted Yirgacheffe coffee beans. The bunches were gently de-stemmed without crushing and loaded directly into small open topped fermenters without pumping to minimise bruising the delicate berries. One of the real enigmas of this block is that we rarely have to make any additions to the already perfectly balanced acidity. We're not quite sure why this should be but we have to hand it to the vineyard crew who consistently deliver superlative fruit to us year after year. A soak at ambient temperature for a week was followed by a fairly quick primary fermentation during which the skins were plunged into the fermenting juice up to 3 times a day. Once the ferments were dry the tanks were sealed and the wines left to soak up the spicy skin tannins and complete malolactic fermentation for another week (what the French call malo-sur-marc). After gentle pressing and settling in tank the wines were put to barrel in mid July to slowly begin their maturation. Regular tasting and topping of the barrels ensured that the wine was kept in pristine condition until it completed its élevage in mid-winter 2015.

Harvest dates: 4 May 2014 Brix 24.5 pH 3.41 Acidity 6.5 g/L