



2014 Ram Paddock Red

Tasting Notes

At bottling it is a lovely deep purple/magenta colour. Each variety shows itself in the nose, dark chocolate/mocha and plum notes from the Merlot, smouldering tobacco, cedar and cassis from the Cabernet and violets, red-currants and graphite from the Franc. The palate is equally serious showing sturdy, structural tannins than cloak the deep, dark pastille at its core made slightly savoury by bay leaf, black olive and anise. The wine shows a typical maritime edge to it but then again so does Bordeaux, Margaret River and Coonawarra so with time we expect this wine to relax and reveal true complexity from its smoky depths. Enjoy with char grilled-eye fillet steak, lashings of mustard, roast garlic and a heady red wine jus.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol 13.8% Residual Sugar < 1.0 g/L pH 3.5 Acidity 5.5 g/L Dry Extract 29 g/L

Vineyard & Winemaking

Ram Paddock is our flagship red wine here at the Waipara West. Planted in the late 1980's it contains some of the oldest Cabernet vines in the country due to New Zealand's red wine emphasis changing swiftly to Pinot Noir through the 1990s. The team here have steadfastly stuck to their original vision to produce Cabernet based reds in a site that truly has to be seen to be believed. The block is tucked into a bend in the Waipara River that traps tremendous heat in the traditionally dry North Canterbury summer. The Waipara region in general is protected from the easterly sea breeze, in fact there is a modest föhn effect created by the coastal range warming the air as it drifts inland. So up here on the western side of the valley we enjoy the greatest benefit as we are the furthest from the coast. The 2014 season was slightly cooler and a little wetter than the preceding one but still with sufficient heat to ripen these late varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Merlot. We had a few "moments" when some unseasonal rain fell after veraison but these grand old ladies kept their cool, shook off the water and took advantage of 3 glorious weeks in late April to ripen their hand tended bunches.

It takes courage to grow these sort of wines, ripening as they do in seemingly impossible conditions. But as often happens when one is dealing with nature patience and perseverance have their reward. The rain actually freshened the canopies up allowing them to continue ripening so that by the end of the first week in May all the fruit was in and we could set about the task of crafting these beautiful bunches into something worthy. The grapes were hand sorted in the vineyard meaning only clean, ripe fruit was de-stemmed and soaked for up to a week pre-ferment. This allows the pigments to dissolve in the juice while the tannins mostly stay bound in the skins and seeds. Once alcoholic fermentation begins these tannins quickly leach out in the newly formed alcohol in what can be best described as a snowball effect, the less the sugar, the more alcohol and tannin etc. so that by then end of ferment the wine is dry and tastes something like wet concrete laced with black currants. Once the malolactic ferment was complete we pressed then settled the freshly fermented wine in tank before running off to 30% new Bordeaux coopered oak where the wine slowly matured for 15 months. During this time those tannins slowly resolved to reveal the deep dark fruit flavours that were buried in the grapes from day one.

Harvest dates: 5 - 8 May 2014 Brix 23.0 - 24.8 pH 3.51 - 3.75 Acidity 5.2 - 7.2 g/L

Awards

International Wine & Spirit Competition 2017 - **Bronze Medal**