



2017 Cabernet Franc

Tasting Notes

At bottling, it is mid to full ruby-purple in colour with magenta hues. Fresh cranberry, raspberry primary fruits offset with a faint hint of dried herbs and some serious brambly, blackberry notes underneath. The oak is very understated with hints of liquorice and char. The palate is ripe and fruit forward almost plump on entry which offers dense Damson plum, mocha and violets. The tannins are extremely fine and powdery which balance perfectly with soft, juicy acidity and generously warming alcohol. In a word plush without being cloying or overtly sweet. It will drink well over the next 3-5 years.

Wine Analysis: Alcohol 13.8% Residual Sugar: <1.0 g/L pH: 3.73 Acidity: 5.9 g/L

Vineyard & Winemaking

People are surprised that Cabernet Franc exists as far south as Waipara, but sitting as it does on the edge of the Ram Paddock block, it has found a happy place in our vignoble. It bursts slightly earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon which was a bonus in the 2017 growing season. A warm early spring got our noses in front, which as it turned out, was an advantage with what was to come later in the season. By Christmas, the summer had stalled and persistent sou'westers established as La Nina came visiting. Along with regular rainfall, we ended up with nearly double our annual average, you can imagine the time spent in the vineyard trying to control the vigour that ensued. The vineyard team thinned both leaves & bunches hard, reducing the crop load so that the vines could ripen in pretty difficult conditions. But, as in most years, our persistence paid off and we eventually harvested a small, ripe crop of Franc in mid-May.

Cabernet Franc has a bit of a reputation for being the lesser Cabernet. Rich and full in warm years such as 2016, it can tend toward anaemia in cool years. So in the cellar, we really had to work to get the balance right in this wine. Firstly we were extremely selective about what got picked, then we had to go lightly in the winery, destemming and not crushing the delicate grapes. Fermenting and handling the skins in such a way to keep the integrity of the skins & seeds. Keeping maceration temperatures low and ferment temperatures high, plunging less vigorously and then paying particular attention to balanced extraction when it came to pressing. We used less new oak in maturation then tasted and graded strictly to ensure that only the best parcels made it into the final wine.

Harvest dates: 10 May Brix: 23.5 pH: 3.3 Acidity: 7.3 g/L