

Blank Canvas

Blank Canvas 'Upton Downs' Pinot Noir 2016

TASTING NOTE Our Upton Downs Pinot Noir is a juxtaposition of perfume and structure. The elevated single vineyard on the terraces above the Awatere River gives elegance and delicacy of fruit while the 40% whole bunch fermentation and manual punch-downs delivers an impressive tannin framework and excellent length on the palate. Bright raspberry, red cherry and currant unite with graphite, forest floor and subtle smoked bacon. This is a wine that will get more intriguing and complex with cellaring, assisted by its whole bunch fermentation characters and low-toast savoury oak regime. It has years of evolution ahead of it.

VINTAGE A good flowering during spring heralded an excellent start for the 2016 vintage in Marlborough with potential for big bunch weights. It was a classic ripening period with favourable warm sunny days and maritime breezes assisting pollination. Because of the successful flowering we substantially fruit thinned our Pinot Noir to ensure balanced low yields were in place for veraison. It was a dry and relatively smooth sailing harvest with maturation occurring in an even, normal time-frame. We hand-harvested our Upton Downs Pinot Noir on the 5th April 2016.

VITICULTURE This Pinot Noir is sourced from a single vineyard located in the Awatere Valley on Upton Downs Road. The mixture of old clay soils interspersed with loamy gravel on the terraces above the Awatere River assist with ensuring naturally low vigour. Fruit thinning just prior to veraison ensured a low yield as well as small concentrated berries. The small parcel we hand-picked is 100% Clone 777, a Burgundian clone known for its perfumed aroma profile. The vineyard is cane pruned and VSP trained.

WINEMAKING We think Pinot Noir is one of Marlborough's most eminent varieties. Matt's time spent in Europe has given him the best of both worlds: he learnt from the regions with centuries of knowledge pertaining to this enigmatic, magical grape and has combined it with Marlborough's innate ability to produce blockbuster, perfumed aromatics in an elegant but serious Pinot Noir framework. The handpicked bunches were cold-soaked for 5 days before undergoing spontaneous fermentation by natural yeasts. We hand-plunged the wine during its ferment which included 40% whole clusters. The wine was pressed to French oak barriques, all of low-toast level (35% proportion new). Then Mother Nature played a role in the winemaking when a large earthquake hit the region in November taking a third of our Pinot Noir and oak barrels with it. Thus, the resulting wine has 25% new oak, and only 455 cases were produced. We bottled it without filtration on 22nd June 2017, releasing it over a year later on 14th August 2018.

TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	13 %	pH	3.56
Acidity	5.9 g/L	SO ₂	50 mg/L

ENDORSEMENTS:

18 JancisRobinson.com
93 Bob Campbell MW
4.5* Michael Cooper
4* / 18+ Raymond Chan

