

Blank Canvas

Blank Canvas 'Escaroth' Pinot Noir 2017

TASTING NOTE Escaroth is tucked away in the Southern Valley's Taylor Pass in Marlborough. It produces a bewildering fragrance of peony and violets, red cherry and pomegranate overlaid with a smoky, earthy savouriness. It is a site that truly reflects vintage variation with this inaugural release displaying the perfume and delicacy of the year, whilst retaining its innate muscular tannin structure that ensures it will age even better than Keith Richards. The low-yielding, dry-farmed site gives intensity and enables the use of a high degree of whole-bunch fermentation, adding further complexity and structure. We feel the wine is ultimately befitting of the fire-breathing dragon that guards the vineyard.

VINTAGE Summer of the 2017 vintage was relatively cool and windy, which resulted in a below average fruit set due to patchy flowering conditions. This heralded small berry numbers but January rains increased the berry size giving pretty rather than muscular wines. The initial harvest weather, in March and early April, was favourable and meant that the Pinot Noir which came in during this time was in pristine condition, avoiding the rains in later April which caused issues for some vineyards. The Escaroth Pinot Noir was hand-harvested on the 3rd April 2017.

VITICULTURE Escaroth is a unique north-facing, sloped, dry-farmed site in the middle of the Taylor Pass. Vines were planted in 2001, and rare in Marlborough, it is established without irrigation. It has the biggest diurnal range in all of Marlborough and is frequently drier than other sub-regions. The north-facing slope is therefore essential for frost protection as well as exposure for ripening. The low-vigour old clay soils are perfect for Pinot Noir. The total Pinot Noir area is just under 1 ha and is planted to Dijon clones 777 and 115. The vineyard is spur-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 50% whole clusters. The wine was pressed to French oak barriques, all of low-toast level (35% proportion new) for 12 months, with a further 3 months in tank to gently and naturally settle. We bottled the wine without any filtration on the 2nd August 2018, releasing it the 1st June 2019. **309 cases produced.**

TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	12.5 %	pH	3.59
Acidity	5.5 g/L	SO ₂	50 mg/L

