

Blank Canvas

Blank Canvas 'Upton Downs' Pinot Noir 2017

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 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 Upton Downs vineyard was hand-harvested on 11th April 2017.

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) for 12 months, with a further 3 months in tank to gently and naturally settle. We bottled the wine without filtration on 2nd August 2018, releasing it 1st June 2019. **341 cases produced.**

TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	12.5 %	pH	3.52
Acidity	5.4 g/L	SO ₂	60 mg/L

