



## A LOT TO CELEBRATE IN MARTINBOROUGH PINOT NOIR

Martinborough is a small village that has made a big impact in the world of Pinot Noir, which is the queen of the region with 527 of the 1090 hectares of grapes planted in the area, which is known as the Wairarapa (not to be confused with Waipara Valley in North Canterbury - another great Pinot Noir region). This week, Martinborough winemakers and the Wairarapa Wine Region are putting their money where their mouths are by celebrating the region's earliest Pinot pioneers and its future leaders at an event on Thursday 27 July at Union Square Bar & Bistro in Martinborough. I had the privilege of organising this event with the wine marketing team from the region and, as both a professional wine writer and a Pinot Noir devotee, it was also a privilege. As it was this month to taste four of the region's best Pinot Noirs from the minuscule volume that was 2021.

The following wines are all made by Escarpment winemaker Tim Bourne, who now waves the flag for four wines that were originally created by one of the region's earliest Pinot pioneers, Larry McKenna; the original founder of Escarpment, which he sold to Torbreck Wines in 2018.

There is precious little of these four wines to go around so if it's a long term Pinot Noir that you're after, here are four excellent reasons to dig deep.

### The new 2021 Escarpment single vineyard Pinot Noirs

The 2021 harvest was a small but high quality one, as these wines show. Shame the grapes were so tiny in this vintage but then again, that's why these wines show such concentration.



### ESCARPMENT PAHI PINOT NOIR 2021 19/20

.....  
This is the second Pahi made from a vineyard opposite Escarpment Winery on Te Muna Road and it's an exciting, lush and powerful Pinot. Grapes were hand picked and 58% whole bunch fermented with skin contact time of 25 days, which builds structure and impressive power into the wine. A mix of clones 5 and Abel with 25% new oak, which is pretty modest in New Zealand Pinot Noirs today and allows the fruit flavours, structure and power to shine.

Talk about a wine for the long haul. Buy it, keep it or drink it now but decant it and share it.  
.....



**ESCARPMENT KUPE**  
PINOT NOIR 2021

**18.5/20**

Big, dark and powerful wine made from the winery's best home block, which is called Kupe and typically has super concentrated flavours from a high portion of whole bunch fermentation; 45% in this wine, which was given 31 days of skin contact followed by ageing in 42% new oak. All of this adds up to an incredibly powerful wine. Cherry flavours are followed by gamey aromas and structure to burn. A long term wine with the X factor.

**ESCARPMENT KIWA**  
PINOT NOIR 2021

**17.5/20**

A small amount from a small site about five minutes walk from Martinborough village. This wine has a powerful structure with 43% whole bunch fermentation; on skins for 25 days. Has delicate fruit flavours and strongly structured tannins. The pretty red fruit flavours in this wine taste fresh and succulent, suggesting it has strong ageing potential for at least five to six years.

**ESCARPMENT MARTINBOROUGH**  
PINOT NOIR 2021

**18.5/20**

A keeper with dark, gamey flavours, powerful structure and noticeable tannins from small thick skinned grapes harvested in 2021. This wine is made from a blend of Escarpment's vineyards, including 61% from Te Muna with the balance from vineyards around Martinborough village. A wine for now and the long haul. Compared alongside the 2014 Escarpment Martinborough Pinot Noir, this wine has at least 10 years' ageing up its sleeve and at this price, it represents exceptional value for Pinot lovers - for drinking now and in a decade's time.

**ESCARPMENT TE REHUA**  
PINOT NOIR 2021

**17.5/20**

Te Rehua is a vineyard near to Kiwa in Martinborough village, but is a very different wine stylistically with darker fruit and bigger tannins. Grapes were given 38% whole bunch fermentation and there is a dark fruit taste to Te Rehua, which will benefit from another two to three years at least of ageing.