



A GLITTERING ARRAY OF NEW RELEASES FROM ESCARPMENT

In late February, I was fortunate to be among the first people in the world to taste the new vintage releases from Escarpment, one of New Zealand’s most famous Pinot Noir specialists, and Torbreck, the legendary Barossa Valley titan. Both of these properties are owned Pete Kight and this was the first time that I have tasted them in the same place and at the same sitting.

Over the course of a couple of hours, my palate was taken on a journey that was entirely new for me, and it ended at a destination that I had never encountered before.

Tim Bourne now makes the Escarpment wines. An experienced winemaker with a sensitive touch and a true sense of the earth beneath his vines, this collection of wines marks a turning point for this much-respected estate, and I believe that it announces its arrival on the world Pinot Noir stage.

ESCARPMENT KUPE
PINOT NOIR 2021

19.5+/20

I had to wait two hours for this wine to budge in the glass and reveal just a few chapters of its extraordinary flavour. Initially, this is a super-earthly, backward, and introverted Pinot, and if I were on a fly-by-style tasting, I would have marked it down as closed and incommunicative. It certainly needs time, but I am convinced that this is a genuine Grand Cru-level New Zealand Pinot, and I have not tasted many of these in my nearly four decades in wine. While the first taste was firm, unyielding and gruff, second and third visits revealed violets and plums, exotic hints, ravishing bitterness, and then, later, volleys of exquisite fruit and earthy. This is a desperately important wine for Escarpment, Martinborough, and New Zealand and will surely blow peoples’ minds. Just remember to be patient. (Drink 2028 – 2038)



**ESCARPMENT PAHI
PINOT NOIR 2021
19+/20**

There is a little more overt expression here, and increased fruit intensity flows in over the black core. There is a little more juiciness, too, which gives a more heightened impression of ripeness and depth, and, strangely, my mind reverts to Old World standards, and it feels like I have leapt over the village of Nuits-Saint-George to the Vosne-Romanée side where the wines are more plush, succulent and sensual. In addition to the sensational fruit, the acidity is tremendous. This is a stunningly impactful wine and one that ought to be followed very closely by global Pinot-crazies. (Drink 2025 – 2035).

E **ESCARPMENT**
MARTINBOROUGH

ESCARPMENT KIWA PINOT NOIR 2021 / 18+/20

Moving from Noir and the 'Estate' wines to the single vineyard wines is a shock. They each possess their own distinct identity, as one would hope and expect, but they are very different and demand serious attention and patience. Kiwa attacks with green crunchiness and plenty of artefacts under the classical Martinborough fruit theme. Introverted, ever so slightly self-indulgent, and ever so slightly nerdy, there is restraint here and surprisingly length. I cannot decide if I like it or if it will perform a backflip in a couple of years and come up smiling. Either way, this is a study of reluctance and reserve. Fascinating. (Drink 2025 – 2030).

ESCARPMENT TE REHUA PINOT NOIR 2021 / 18.5+/20

If Kiwa was the introverted one, then Te Rehua was the quietly powerful one. There is outstanding balance here, reminiscent of deep, stony, gravel-pit-style Pinots, like the tremendous 1er Cru Les Vaucrains, in Nuits-Saint-Georges. There is thrilling depth here with profound mineral structure and enticing back-end tannin. Stunningly bright and clean on the nose and then profoundly moving and immovable on the finish, there is great potential here. (Drink 2025 – 2032)

ESCARPMENT PINOT NOIR 2020 / 18+/20

Made from estate fruit and fruit taken from select growers, and with 3000-3500 dozen available, you must make it your mission to track this wine down. With a more direct nose and palate than Noir, this is a wine with definition, and the dunk in 30% new oak certainly straightens up the experience and lends a degree of gravitas to proceedings. Refined and complex, this is a superb Pinot and none that will evolve metronomically. (Drink 2024 – 2028)

ESCARPMENT PINOT NOIR 2021 / 18.5/20

This brilliant wine marks a turning point for the 'estate cuvée' Escarpment. This is every inch a 'gold medal' creation, and with more depth, grip, persistence and structure, this glorious 2021 vintage has not only red fruit notes but is layered with blue and black fruit, too. This is a beautiful wine with serious detail and attention-grabbing tension. What a fantastic discovery, and it is also bound to be epic value. (Drink 2025 – 2030)

ESCARPMENT CHARDONNAY 2021 / 18/20

With only one white in the Escarpment line-up, there was only one chance to show off the Chardy skills at this estate, and my goodness, it took its opportunity to shine. With more colour and perfume than expected, I was initially concerned that this would be a weightier style than I was hoping for, but the balance is tremendous, and the tension is invigorating. With 11 months in 30% new oak coupled with "lots of lees work", there is a serious depth of flavour but no excess brawn. Firm and stony under a relatively lush and expressive core, the experience is brought to a close with a pointy, almost raspy finish. (Drink now – 2025)

ESCARPMENT NOIR PINOT NOIR 2021 / 17.5/20

Noir is the forward-drinking cuvée at Escarpment, but it is not a simple glugger but a more technically challenging drink than one might expect. An expressive Pinot nose leaps from the glass, and the palate and finish are textbook with plush, black cherry fruit and spicy, green highlights that add a touch of drama and pizzazz. This is a keenly priced wine that over-delivers by a mile. (Drink now – 2025)

ESCARPMENT NOIR PINOT NOIR 2022 / 18/20

This is a very early peek at the 2022 Noir, and in theory, this wine should be edgy, raw and belligerent, but it is the complete opposite. In fact, it is the diametric opposite of the 2021, with a stunning wave of red fruit that welcomes a cherry-soaked embrace. Amaro bitterness nips at the heels of this red fruit symphony, resulting in another resounding success for Noir. (Drink now – 2026)