

MAISON NOIRE

Freisa 2021

Tasting notes

Winemaking:

The Freisa grapes, grown on the Tuki-Tuki plains near Havelock North, were harvested in mid-April with well matured fruity flavours and tannins.

The grapes were brought to the winery in small bins, destemmed into an open vat and fermented dry while using gentle extractive methods. They were pressed into seasoned puncheons, that helped smoothen the chalky tannins during the 8 months ageing while respecting the varietal characters. The barrels were racked and returned a couple of times to help with natural clarification, and then lightly fined and filtered before bottling in December 2021.

Result:

Freisa (Latin for strawberry) is an Italian grape variety from Piemonte, first documented in the middle ages. The grapes for this delectable red wine are grown in Havelock North by the Tuki Tuki river. A vibrant and savoury drop, with flavours of Pork Roast, ripe tomatoes, blueberries, prunes and figs, drizzled with cinnamon-like spices. It is coated in fresh and upfront tannins which brings depth and power. A modern, fusion take on an old variety that will match BBQs, game and Asian street food.

Optimum drinking time is 2022 - 2026.

Analysis at bottling:

pH=3.63

TA=7.99 g/l

Alc=13.20% Vol.

RS=0.24 g/l

Vintage conditions

2020/2021: One of the driest season on records... that followed another hot year the previous vintage.

Some nasty frosts caused some damages in the earliest bud bursting areas, as the season started 2-3 weeks ahead of normal due to a rather mild winter.

Early crop protection was paramount to keep the fungal pressure down, and localised bursts of rain were welcome in spring to keep the soil moisture to a decent level. Flowering was quite poor due to a wet patch at a crucial time, and summer hit early with some record breaking temperature in late November and December. Powdery mildew was again an issue in some areas, but the sun and droughty conditions got the ripening of the grapes to very high level of sweetness and very clean flavours. Harvest for still wines was the earliest over the last 2 decades, with late ripening varieties offering outstanding quality.

Reviews (extract)

Yvonne Lorkin (3.5 stars): Bright, garnet-hued, Freisa is Latin for 'strawberry' and it's a very rare little Italian grape that grows mainly in the Monferrato and Langhe areas in the Piemonte region. It dates back to the middle ages. Despite the name indicating it might be sweet, this red is dry, spicy and softy chewy, highly aromatic and savoury. It's a vigorous variety and ultra-rare in this part of the world, in fact this is the first time I've tasted a local example. The tannins are hefty and gripping, while the youthful acidity means it's very perky on the palate. I'd like to taste this wine again in a year to see how it's fleshing out.