



MĀORI POINT WINES – CENTRAL OTAGO, NEW ZEALAND

Summary

The stunning natural landscape of Central Otago – snow-capped mountains, glacier-carved valleys, crystal blue rivers – provides the geographic conditions for wines of concentration and complexity. The free-draining schist soils, the extreme diurnal temperature variation, and the ultraviolet intensity of sunlight are unique in the world of Pinot Noir. We are a two-family team of scientists devoted to the natural phenomena that create Māori Point wines. We seek to realize the potential of this place, through careful hand work viticulture, low yields, small fermentations, and natural winemaking.

Region

Central Otago lies along the mountainous spine of the Southern Alps of New Zealand. The soil is wind-blown loess over boulders left by passing glaciers, and it is exceptionally free-draining and low in organic matter. In this austere sub-alpine environment, Pinot Noir vines can usually ripen their grapes, but only *just*. Capturing the knife edge balance of transparent fruit and natural terroir is our challenge.

Vineyard, Winemaking, and Philosophy

Māori Point Vineyard takes its name from the Māori gold diggers who inhabited this area during the 1860s gold rush. The vineyard's position and aspect provide the hallmark of Central Otago Pinot Noir – purity of fruit – while also articulating non-fruit complexity amid velour-like textures. This is because Māori Point Vineyard experiences some of the most extreme weather of Central Otago during midsummer, yet the vineyard's geography allows for more gradual ripening during the critical end of the growing season. Our founders, Dr. John Harris and Dr. Marilyn Duxson, planted vines in 2002: five different clones of Pinot Noir on five different rootstocks, to explore the interactions between slight differences in soils and aspect over the fourteen planted acres.

Our winemaker Matt Evans had his first taste of Central Otago Pinot Noir in 2003. It was persuasive: eight years later, he and his wife gave up their California lives to move to New Zealand, and Matt is now one of only three American head winemakers in Central Otago. Our wines are a team effort that draws from a scientific mindset (there are three PhDs in our half kiwi, half American team of four). What we do in the vineyard and the cellar reveals a deep respect for – and desire to understand – the natural systems and cycles that create our wine.

We are certified sustainable and we follow organic principles, but more importantly, as scientists we study and nurture this ecosystem and the wine it creates, year after year. We grow native plants throughout the vineyard to provide winter shelter for indigenous yeasts. We sow aromatic plants between the vine rows to attract beneficial insects and feed the soil, and our compost creates nutrition for the vines. Honeybees and native bees buzz throughout the property. We allow the indigenous yeasts from the vineyard to perform the fermentations at our winery right next to the vines, and we do not fine or filter our Pinot Noir. We savor our deep connection to the natural phenomena that create Māori Point Wines.

Māori Point Wines – Single Vineyard, Estate Pinot Noir – Concentration and complexity, wrapped in velour.

- Central Otago, New Zealand
- Māori Point Vineyard, 5.5 hectares planted 2002, certified sustainable
- Clonal/Rootstock Selections: Abel, 10/5, 115, UCD5, 777 on 3309, Schwarzman, 101-14, Riparia Gloire, 110R
- Typical yield: < 2 tons per acre
- Winemaking: natural and low intervention. Harvest by hand, multiple small fermenters for different areas of vineyard, indigenous yeast fermentations at ambient temperatures, vertical basket press, primarily French oak barrels, 22% new, 11 months, MLF naturally in barrel, bottled unfiltered and unfiltered, vegan-friendly, minimal sulfites
- Average Pinot Noir production: 400-800 cases

Account & Buyer Fit

- In New Zealand, Māori Point wines have been successful at chef-driven restaurants such as Hillside Kitchen (Wellington), Ivy & Lola's (Queenstown), Gaslight (Dunedin). We feel a special affinity for small restaurants and cafes that focus on local seasonal produce or an eclectic menu – in other words, care and creativity without pretense.
- Kiwi wine lovers also find our Pinot Noir at premium grocery stores, New World and Mediterranean Market.
- As winemaker, Matt Evans' California wines have been on the list at State Bird Provisions, Michael Mina's RN 74, and Colicchio & Sons.
- Accounts with a strong interest in Old World wine with their firm structure, minerality and complexity will appreciate these wines.
- Pinot Lovers will appreciate the elegance, balance with the secondary and tertiary nuances from this Pinot Noir hot spot in the New World.