



New Zealand Pinot Noirs

Tuesday, January 8, 2008

Reception Wine: 6:00 PM, Formal Tasting: 6:20 PM

Toronto Board of Trade (4th Floor), 1st Cdn Place,
(Entrance off Adelaide St. between Bay & York)

Members' Fee: \$48

Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$58

Deadline for payments: January 4, 2008

Burgundy wine expert and author Clive Coates once wrote that Pinot Noir can "... seduce like the first kiss from someone you are just about to fall in love with." Well, New Zealand has obviously fallen in love with the pinot noir grape and with consuming passion. Their burgeoning reputation has benefited from significant foreign investment, clones from Burgundy, an ideal climate, and learning the lessons of others who have suffered trials and tribulations of a fickle grape that demands the highest skills from winemakers.

It is really quite difficult, even impossible, to characterize a New Zealand style of Pinot Noir because the grape responds uniquely to the local sites- and what the weather has to offer from year to year. There is an ongoing debate of where in New Zealand, with its disparate climates on two islands, the best pinot noir grown. Some Kiwi traditionalists stand firm on Martinborough, a smallish region at the southern end of the North Island, which has attracted significant interest from Burgundian producers. Others consider Marlborough and Nelson, neighbors at the northern end of the South Island, to be prime pinot country. But a growing number of pinot advocates claim that the sprawling region of Central Otago, at the southern end of the South Island, comes closest to idyllic growing conditions for New Zealand pinot noir.

The distinctive, pungent fruit flavors and dense structure that mark Marlborough Pinots can be attributed in large part to the region's steady marine influence, a plenitude of warm days and cool nights, and the alluvial loam top soils laid over gravelly sub soils in the valleys. Yet, despite proximity to the sea and rivers, moisture is precisely what the region lacks. Central Otago, the breathtakingly scenic region at the southern end of the South Island, is fast gaining a reputation in New Zealand as Pinot's promised land. Its very settled, dry weather during growing season provides for longer hang time for the grapes, and with vineyards mostly on slopes, there is less threat of frost than in Martinborough or Marlborough. Many critics believe that Martinborough delivers shades of Burgundian character in New Zealand Pinot Noir with its reserved flavours and rich textures. The Martinborough pinotphiles, on the other hand, often refer to the Otago pinots as being "cherry bombs".

The potential for NZ winemakers to produce consistently world-class Pinot Noirs is now becoming widely recognized. They tend to have the entire package -- beautiful aromatics, great fruit weight, silky tannins and crisp, juicy acids. And, of particular note and interest -- NZ Pinots offer good value for the money when compared to Burgundy. We'll sample pinots from outstanding producers from each of the 3 top areas - Martinborough, Marlborough, & Central Otago - and from two vintages -- 2003 where despite springtime frosts which cut the tonnage in half, quality remains very high and 2004 with record fruit and good quality. Our guest speaker is **Robert Ketchin**, Canadian agent for New Zealand Winegrowers. Robert is primarily responsible for the promotion of the New Zealand wine industry in Canada and is very knowledgeable and entertaining.

IMPORTANT NOTICE AND CHANGE TO OUR RESERVATION PROCESS EFFECTIVE IMMEDIATELY

To help us better manage reservations from different sources - online and by mail - we are introducing a **single online registration form** to be used by everyone, regardless of payment method. You must reserve at www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent1/ and then you'll be given the choice of paying by credit card or mailing in a cheque. Ticket sales with a credit card are guaranteed as soon as payment is processed; reservations by cheque are not final, however, until payment actually reaches us by/before the event deadline (January 4, 2008 for NZ Pinot Noirs). You will receive an email confirmation in both cases. Ticket sales will still be done on a first come/first serve basis with members getting preference only if we sell out. We encourage you to pay by credit card to guarantee your tickets, especially if it's at the last minute and/or the event is a very popular one and likely to sell out quickly. In order to obtain the discounted member's rate, your 2008 membership must be paid up before you register for the event. If you have not already done so, go to <https://www.onlineregistrations.ca/torontovintners/> to renew for 2008.

TORONTO VINTNERS CLUB INC.

THE WINES

1. **2003 Cornish Point Vineyard**, Bannockburn, Central Otago. (\$30) Notes: Cuisine, Issue 110 May 2005, Michael Cooper ***** "Outstanding, single vineyard Bannockburn wine, under same ownership as Felton Road. Deep, purple flushed hue. Classy, spicy, slightly earthy bouquet, with a lovely spread of plum and spice flavours, sweet, ripe and highly concentrated, with firm underlying tannins. Still youthful. Drink 2006."
2. **2003 Akarua**, Central Otago (\$45) Gold Medal, 2004 Air NZ Wine Wine Awards. "Tangy, lively and remarkably generous with its pure blueberry, plum and explosively spicy aromas and flavors that burst across the palate. Has tremendous character but it's not excessively weighty. Yummy stuff. Drink now through 2013. 3,000 cases made. (HS)" 92 points", The Wine Spectator, Nov. 30, 2005.
3. **2003 Voss Estate**, Martinborough (\$45). "The 2003 vintage (4 stars) was matured for a year in French oak barriques (30 percent new - a stronger new oak influence than usual). It's a graceful wine with an array of plum, cherry, herb and spice flavours, ripe and rich, a silky elegance and attractively scented bouquet. 4 stars" Michael Cooper's Buyer's Guide to New Zealand Wines 2006. "Deep, healthy crimson. Round and winning on the nose though perhaps a little bit too developed and charming at this early stage? Good tannin structure underneath." (2003) Jancis Robinson.
4. **2003 Carrick**, Central Otago (\$52). Awards: Silver, International Wine and Spirit competition 2006; Silver, International Wine Challenge 2005 (Wine Magazine); Sydney Top 100. "Good full red. Perfumed aromas of black raspberry, blackberry, nutmeg, cinnamon and earth. Concentrated, broad and densely packed, with lovely pinot tang and underlying mineral complexity. Sweet, generous, serious pinot, with solid structure and firm, ripe tannins. This is the first vintage of this wine to feature a significant percentage of the estate's new Dijon clones." (90/100 Stephen Tanzer — International Wine Cellar — Sept/Oct 2005)
5. **2003 Herzog**, Marlborough (\$55). Winemaker's notes: "A dark ruby colour, with concentrated fruit flavours of plum, blackberry and black cherry with a subtle spiciness and cedar notes. Full-bodied with an outstanding depth of fruit, this is a long lived wine."
6. **2004 Framingham**, Marlborough (\$23). Awards: Silver - International Wine and Spirit competition 2006; Silver - Air NZ Wine Awards 2005; Silver - Best in Class: IWSC 2006. Winemaker's notes: "Aromatics reminiscent of light red fruits such as cranberry and raspberry with some supporting toasty oak notes and underlying savoury characters. Concentrated palate with fine supple tannins that are immediately approachable. Juicy, sweet flavours of cranberry, raspberry and cherry contrast nicely with chary oak and savoury game and mushroom notes which provide complexity. Fine acid balance provides long soft and rounded finish."
7. **2004 Te Tera**, Martinborough Vineyard, Martinborough (\$26). "The 2004 vintage (*** 1/2) has a scented, floral bouquet leading into a supple, fruit-driven palate, fresh and sturdy, with plenty of spicy, moderately complex flavour." Michael Cooper's Buyer's Guide to New Zealand Wines 2006
8. **2004 Wither Hills**, Marlborough (\$45). Awards: Silver - International Wine and Spirit competition 2006; Bronze - Air NZ Wine Awards 2005. Winemaker's notes: "A distinctive Marlborough Pinot Noir, made with time-honoured techniques from Burgundy. Deeply flavoured ripe berries produces an enticing bouquet and opulent, mouth-filling sensation, with a lingering palate... An elegant wine that will suit medium-term cellaring."

On why he's into Pinot Noir : "...*Pinot needs constant care and attention. You know? And in fact it can only grow in these really specific, little, tucked away corners of the world. And, and only the most patient and nurturing of growers can do it, really. Only somebody who really takes the time to understand Pinot's potential can then coax it into its fullest expression....*" Miles Raymond, played by Paul Giamatti in the movie 'Sideways.'

On wine descriptors:

"If you can't describe it in words and talk about it, like 'It reminds me of gym socks or my grandmother's blackberry pie,' you can't remember it." - Karen MacNeill, Culinary Institute of America.

Source: <http://www.grape-nutz.com/gallery/quotes.html>