

WINE News

*Australia, New Zealand
and South Africa.*



APRIL 10, 2017 FEATURES

- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1 Margaret River Cab | 5 "A" is for Icon in Tasmania |
| 2 A Different Framingham | 6 Carrick in Central Otago |
| 3 Woodlands Wines | 7 Dirt Romance in South Africa |
| 4 Rosé Season! | 8 Subregional in Central Otago |

Throw Another Shrimp (or Lamb Chop) on the Braai

By Ryan Woodhouse

There are so many stunning wines in our inventory right now, we had to go for an expanded eight-page newsletter just to scratch the surface! Australian wines continue their resurgence after the United States market posted some big sales numbers last year. It seems the wines are doing the talking—people are listening and they like what's being said! Not to be outdone, New Zealand recently became the third largest exporter of wines (by value) to the US, now trailing only the juggernauts France and Italy! This positive trend reflects the continued recognition of New Zealand as a premium wine-producing nation

and the movement away from cheap bulk wines to more sophisticated bottlings. South Africa, while representing a smaller market volume than Australia or NZ, continues to amaze me (and many of our staff) with the stunning quality and unique character the wines can deliver. The highlight for me in South Africa continues to be Swartland and other west coast locales with their complex soils, abundance of old vines and current crop of talented winemakers with an ethereal touch. Read on to see what I'm talking about. Cheers!

Ryan Woodhouse is K&L's Australia, NZ and South Africa wine buyer

Power, Poise and Points—Margaret River Cab Delivers

Margaret River has been on an absolute tear lately, with great vintages coming thick and fast. The wines often strike a stylistic balance somewhere between Napa Cabernet and Bordeaux but retain their own unique markers at the same time. The fruit is typically rich and concentrated like Oakville, the tannins and poise more reminiscent of Pauillac, but the complex aromas of cedar, crushed mint and sandstone are uniquely Margaret River. The quality of these wines hasn't gone unnoticed and huge point scores are amassing! We have the best pricing around on a couple of these icons:

2013 Xanadu Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River (\$24.99)

A slightly more generous, lush style of Cabernet from Margaret River. Saturated dark fruits, black currant, ripe plum, dark chocolate, sweet oak spice and fine, broad tannins. Incredible concentration, fantastic value! 96 JH, 94 DC, 93 JS, 93 WE.

2013 Vasse Felix Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River (\$29.99)

A longtime stalwart of Aussie Cabernet and the founding winery of the Margaret River region, established in 1967, Vasse Felix has done it again with a stunning 2013 release. Black and blue fruit with lovely freshness and high-toned perfume. A powerful tannin structure and perfectly integrated oak. This will age like great Bordeaux. 95 JH, 93 JS, 93 WE.

2012 Leeuwin "Art Series" Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River (\$39.99)

An elegant and savory rendition of Margaret River Cab delivered in the manner that has sustained Leeuwin Estate's position in the very upper echelons of Aussie wine for decades. James Suckling called this exact wine the "Mouton-Rothschild of Australia." 97 JS, 96 JH.



Framingham: “Out of the Mainstream” in Marlborough

By Ryan Woodhouse

We have just received our latest allocation of Framingham wines direct from New Zealand! We (and by “we” I mean the entire K&L staff) have been eagerly awaiting these wines since mid-2016 when Framingham’s mastermind winemaker Andrew Hedley visited us with some wines that were mostly barrel and tank samples bursting with potential and seemingly endless flavors and energy. Those child prodigy wines have now been finished, bottled and are hitting our shelves—and personal wine cellars.

The Framingham wines are some of the most exciting wines coming out of NZ. Andrew’s dedication to pushing the boundaries of winemaking while retaining a distinct theme of authenticity, minerality and electrifying acidity is second to none. Andrew is widely regarded as one of the foremost Riesling producers in the southern hemisphere, and the new arrivals showcase the number of styles that he produces from this noble grape, from the remarkable, floral, textural F-Series “Old Vine” Dry Riesling to the wickedly decadent and concentrated F-Series “Troockenbeerenauslese” Riesling. This year we have expanded our offerings from Framingham to include the F-Series Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir and Gewürztraminer. All of these F-Series wines are *very* small production wines and represent Andrew’s most “alternative” or “out of the mainstream” styles. They are all truly unique and fantastically engaging wines.

2015 Framingham “F-Series” Sauvignon Blanc Marlborough

(\$19.99) Proudly presented by Andrew as the antithesis of the “typical” Marlborough-style Sauv Blanc. This Sauv Blanc comes from a particularly stony, rocky section of the estate vineyard that is farmed specifically to make this wine. Without boring you with the technical details, everything about this wine is focused on turning down the volume of the intensely aromatic, fruity, exuberant aspects of NZ Savvy and putting the focus on texture, minerality and lees-derived complexity. Lots of people attempt this style—very few succeed in creating wines as enthralling as this. **92 RC.**

2015 Framingham “F-Series” Pinot Noir Marlborough (\$24.99)

A wildly complex Pinot Noir from the heavy clay soils of the southern valleys, Marlborough’s primo subregion for the best Pinot Noir. The wine is fermented with wild yeast and spends a very extended time on skins before resting for 16 months in seasoned French oak. This wine is about layers. Aromas swing back and forth between berry fruits, crushed herbs and plowed earth. It’s lifted and spicy with lovely interplay between sweet and savory. On the palate the wine has density and power but everything is quite finely delineated by long, persistent tannins and fresh acidity. Pretty serious stuff.

2015 Framingham: “F-Series” Old Vine Riesling Marlborough

(\$19.99) In a few short years of our direct import relationship with Framingham, this wine has become a huge favorite with our staff and you’ll have to beat them to it if you’d like a few bottles! Taken from the oldest block of vines (36 years old) on the organically certified estate, these parcels of fruit are hand selected, mostly whole cluster pressed, with a smaller portion given extended skin contact. The juice is then spontaneously fermented in a combination of small stainless

steel and neutral French oak barrels. The wine gets almost a full year on its lees to enhance texture and depth. The finished wine is dry, but texturally rich and broad. Floral notes, ripe citrus, a dash of stone fruit too. Intense river stone minerals give a long, lingering impression on the palate.

2015 Framingham “F-Series” Gewürztraminer Marlborough

(\$19.99) A stunning rendition of this tremendously fickle varietal. One of Framingham’s neighbors (and fellow K&L direct import), Te Whare Ra makes one of the best and most historic Gewürz in New Zealand—there certainly seems to be something about this locale and classy Alsatian/German varietals. Capturing the haunting perfume and exotic flavors of the grape while maintaining balance and freshness is the key. This organic fruit is hand picked and given some skin contact before a wild ferment in neutral French oak. A small (12%) “vendange tardive” element is added with a dash of botrytis for another level of complexity.

2016 Framingham “Select” Riesling Marlborough

(\$19.99) Made from select fruit picked at advanced ripeness but free from botrytis to isolate the clean, juicy, bright citrus flavors. A spätlese style wine balancing beautiful ripe, sweet fruit with searing acidity and delicate mineral underpinnings. This wine is just ultimately drinkable—low alcohol, refreshing, mouthwatering deliciousness. **97 BC.**

2016 Framingham “Noble” Riesling

Marlborough (375ml \$24.99) A beerenauslese style wine. Made with meticulously hand-selected whole bunches with varying degrees of botrytis-affected berries from 25% to 100%. Many vineyard passes were made to identify bunches with the ideal combination of “clean” and botrytis-affected fruit. An unctuous wine with jasmine, honeyed yellow stone fruit, preserved lemon and plenty of complexing botrytis character. Very sweet, very concentrated but with remarkable acidity and vibrance. **97 BC.**

2016 Framingham “F-Series” Trockenbeerenauslese Riesling

Marlborough (375ml \$49.99) With total production at just a few hundred half bottles this is truly a labor of love. Specific fully botrytis-affected bunches are hand-selected in sometimes dozens of passes through the vineyard. Even individual berry selection is employed, a la d’Yquem. Fermented in small neutral oak and 50-liter beer kegs. This wine just blows me away with concentration of flavor and the interplay of intense sweetness and remarkable acidity. Every time I taste it I can’t help but think: how can something so natural contain this much intensity? One drop of this golden nectar on your tongue will pervade every facet of your palate. At a fraction of the price of many of its German cousins and no perceivable difference in quality (to me at least), this is a steal. **98 BC.**



Woodlands Wines: Margaret River, Western Australia

By Ryan Woodhouse



A new importer-direct deal brings us the magnificent wines of the Woodlands winery in the heart of Margaret River, Western Australia. The Woodlands estate was established in the early 1970s. Among the first five vineyards planted in this region, it has since become world-renowned for Bordeaux-style reds and powerful Chardonnay (among other things). Woodlands is a small boutique property that makes about 10,000 cases per year, and many wines are limited to just a few hundred cases per lot from select parcels of fruit.

Located in the famed Wilyabrup subregion (think Napa Valley's Rutherford or Oakville district) but sitting slightly higher than many surrounding areas, the vineyard site is regarded as one of the finest in the region. The vines grow in deep, loamy gravels with various slopes and aspects allowing for great diversity of character. The differentiated parcels of vines each add their own unique qualities to the finished wines.

The second generation of the Watson family has now taken the reins of the operation with Stewart and Andrew taking over in 2002–05. On the estate, each variety is planted in its particular location due to the soil composition and plot aspect. All vines are dry-grown and farmed using traditional and organic methods. All blocks are maintained by hand, including under-vine cultivating, hand weeding, cane pruning, bunch and crop thinning, leaf removal and hand picking. Quality is paramount and it shows in the wines.



2014 Woodlands “Margaret” Cabernet Sauvignon Margaret River (\$49.99) The blend is 78% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Merlot, 8% Malbec and 1% Cabernet Franc. This is one of the estate's reserve bottlings, sourced entirely from the original home block vineyard. The wine is very concentrated and structured. Deep black fruits at the core with savory tobacco and charred oak. A full-bodied wine made with longevity in mind. The moderate 13.5% alcohol is representative of the cool end to the 2014 growing season that allowed extra flavor development in the Cabernet fruit without over-ripening. Interwoven with the brooding fruit is a distinctive mineral presence from Margaret River's ancient soils. The wine is powerful but also has lovely freshness owing in large part to the site's exposed location and proximity to the rugged southern coast. All of this is well polished during 18 months in 50% new top-quality French oak. Drink 2017–2727. 600 cases total production. **95+ RP, 95 JH.**



2015 Woodlands “Wilyabrup Valley” Chardonnay Margaret River (\$24.99) A fantastically faithful rendition of majestic Margaret River Chardonnay at a very affordable price point, the Chardonnay is hand picked, delicately destemmed using a very gentle new technology and then fermented in French oak barriques, predominantly (90%) using wild yeast. Some wine was then racked to tank while the other portion rested in barrel for nine months (10% new oak). This is a bright, mineral-inflected wine with linear drive and intensity. The malo/barrel-fermented portion adds great weight and richness, but ultimately the wine is about purity and tension. The flavors are focused around orchard fruit—apricot, yellow plum, baked pear. Mouthwatering, mineral-infused acidity dances on the palate, intertwined with a lick of French oak. **94 JH, 92 JS.**





Autumn color in the southern hemisphere means it's rosé season up north at K&L Wine Merchants!

It's That Time of Year Again—Rosé Season!

By Ryan Woodhouse

My title is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. I emphatically support the consumption of pink wine whatever the time of year (or day) but we are now certainly heading into prime “rosé season” once again (oh, how time flies). The evenings are getting longer, grills and backyard smokers across the nation are awakening from their winter hibernation. After a thorough soaking this year in California the mercury is steadily rising and the urge to dine alfresco is getting stronger by the day. Thankfully a whole new herd/flock/gaggle of rosé wines have migrated to our shores for the summer. Here I'll outline a just few favorites from the southern hemisphere that are in stock and ready to quench that thirst:

2016 Waterkloof Circumstance “Cape Coral” Mourvèdre Rosé Stellenbosch (\$16.99) Perhaps an unlikely perennial favorite, but a huge wine for us at K&L. Who would have thought an old vine Mourvèdre-based rosé from South Africa would become one of our top-selling rosé wines year after year? The proof is in the pudding as they say. This stunning wine does a great impression of those famous pink wines of Bandol, often made from the same grape, at a fraction of the price. Farmed according to organic and Biodynamic certified methods, fermented with wild yeast in large neutral oak *foudre*, this is serious rosé. Its very pale hue belies the intensity of flavor, texture and minerality contained within. It is dry, refreshing and wonderfully versatile. As the saying goes in Bandol, “Mourvèdre loves an ocean view.” Well, Waterkloof estate certainly has that! K&L Staff Pick.



2016 TWR (Te Whare Ra) Pinot Noir Rosé Marlborough (\$18.99) Sure to be another winner this summer is the new Pinot Noir rosé from our friends at TWR. Once again we have purchased every case we could get our hands on of this tiny-production wine with a total of 105 cases produced! This year the wine is sourced from a single hillside block of the Rawiri vineyard in Marlborough's Omaka Valley. Saignée style, fermented all in stainless steel at cool temperatures to retain lifted floral aromatics and bright berry flavors. Some time on fine lees helps build texture and a savory complexity, while ripe, juicy acidity keeps the whole thing dancing on the palate.



2016 Mount Edward Pinot Noir Rosé Central Otago (\$16.99) This wine flew off the shelves last year and again we only have a small allocation. This single-vineyard wine is hand-picked from Mount Edward's certified organic Muirkirk Vineyard on Felton Road in Bannockburn. The fruit is whole-bunch-pressed on a gentle five-hour cycle to pick up just a light pink hue and retain elegance. The wine is then fermented with wild yeast in stainless steel at ambient temperatures. This is a strictly dry, light, refreshing style that is the perfect aperitif. Aromas of rose petals, summer berries, baking spice and bramble. The palate is juicy with racy acidity and cleansing length.



In Tasmania: The Iconic Wines of Domaine A

By Ryan Woodhouse

Domaine A in Tasmania's Coal River Valley is nothing short of a remarkable project. Pioneer/owner/winemaker Peter Althaus settled on this site after exploring the world in search of a unique location from which to produce fine wines inspired by the great properties of Bordeaux. Though Tasmania is known more prominently for its Pinot Noir and sparkling wines, Althaus saw the potential for this land to produce wines inspired by the classically styled, structured, savory wines of the Médoc. Ancient soil founded on 200-million-year-old Jurassic dolerite rock and a truly cool climate give rise to this exceptional terroir. Domaine A lies on a north-facing slope that enjoys a temperate maritime climate and extended sunlight hours over a long, cool season. The vineyard is close-planted in the European tradition with a density of 6,000 vines per hectare. Everything at Domaine A is done with an unwavering focus on quality.

Here is what Robert Parker's Wine Advocate has to say about Peter Althaus and Domaine A: "He's found a magical spot to grow Cabernet where the aspect and higher degree of natural UV light strength can slowly, perfectly ripen grapes producing wines of great elegance and finesse. I tasted his 1992 Cabernet during my visit and it is evolving beautifully with a long life still ahead. His Bordeaux blends are truly special and worth the effort to find."

Well, folks...we found them! After a few false starts we are now direct importing these cult Australian wines into the US. If you like genuinely cool climate Cabernet (think tobacco, earth, cedar, dried herbs, meaty characters, moderate alcohol, more structure, less jammy fruit...) then you need to check out these wines!

2010 Domaine A "petit a" Cabernet Sauvignon Coal Valley Tasmania (\$29.99) Essentially the second wine of the estate, hence the "petit a," this beautiful wine is composed of 60% Cabernet Sauvignon, 35% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc and 1% Malbec. Peter notes that fruit destined for this wine is grown with "identical viticultural rigor," i.e. the same meticulous work in the vineyard as the icon wines, but is crafted to be approachable a little earlier than the flagship Cabernet. The fruit is entirely hand-picked from the old estate vines (planted in 1973) and fermented in small batches. The finished wine matures for two years in seasoned French oak barriques plus another two years (or more) in bottle before deemed ready to release. Lifted aromas of ground spices, macerated forest berries, freshly picked mint, pipe tobacco and earth. The palate is medium-bodied but packed with flavor, with more dark berry fruits, some cassis and plum and five spice. Whispers of oak frame the focused torrent of fruit. The tannins are fine and well proportioned, giving fine structure and delineation. **94 JS, 94 JH, 91+ RP.**



Peter and Ruth Althaus of Domaine A.

2005 Domaine A Cabernet Sauvignon Coal Valley Tasmania (\$49.99) It was nice to be offered some "library" wine from Domaine A, and although their current release is 2008 I managed to secure some cases of 2005! This wine comes from the best parcels of fruit on the property, and is a blend of 90% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc, 4% Merlot and 2% Petit Verdot. It was matured for three years in 100% new French oak and a further two years in bottle before initial release. Old-school Cabernet flavors at their finest—savory, elegant, earthy and balanced.

94 RP: "Giving a deep garnet-purple color, this wine has a beautiful cassis and spice nose with complementary notes of pencil shavings, lavender, eucalyptus, black olives and freshly ground pepper. The palate is taut with a firm structure of high acidity and a medium to high level of fine grained tannins. There's a great concentration of fruit and savory flavors that linger in layers through the very long finish. Medium-bodied and at just 13% alcohol, this is a beautifully made, elegant style."



2013 Domaine A "Lady A" Sauvignon Blanc Coal Valley Tasmania (\$49.99) Beyond their long-lived Cabernet-based wines, Domaine A's best-known and perhaps most highly revered wine is their Lady A Sauvignon Blanc, described by renowned wine critic James Halliday as being "the finest oaked Sauvignon Blanc" he ever tasted. This wine is meticulously crafted from one block of 26-year-old vines cropped exceptionally low to concentrate flavor. The wine is fermented in 100% new French oak and spends a full year on the lees. Then, as is customary with Domaine A's wines, it rests another two years in bottle before release. Upon tasting this wine I was simply blown away by its flavors and textures. It is truly unique and special, taking inspiration from the great white wines of Pessac-Léognan (Domaine de Chevalier, Haut-Brion, Smith Haut Lafitte) but adding another layer of decadence and exotic fruit expression. My colleagues thought I had lost it when I told them I had bought some \$50 Tasmanian Sauvignon Blanc—that was until they tasted it. Even Bordeaux maestro Ralph Sands and Clyde "King of the Medoc" Beffa gave the wine their seal of approval, adding some to their own formidable cellars!





Carrick Wines in Central Otago, New Zealand

By Stefanie Juelsgaard

As Biodynamic and organic viticulture gain ground in New Zealand, Carrick Wines is helping to lead the movement. Carrick winemaker Francis Hutt champions an approach to winemaking that emphasizes crafting wines in the vineyard versus in the cellar. Hutt was well-equipped to handle the work of Biodynamically farming a vineyard, having spent a year on the viticultural side of Carrick before being named its winemaker in 2011. Even though the effort required is much higher, Carrick performs all vineyard maintenance projects by hand, such as leafing and harvesting, and farms organically and Biodynamically, as they believe this produces the finest wine and showcases the exceptional qualities of Central Otago.

Carrick's vineyards are planted on windblown loess soils, which encourages the roots to dig deep in pursuit of water and a firm grip in the ground. A less hospitable environment drives the vines to put more effort into the flavor of the grapes and the result is intensely characterized and complex fruit. Francis utilizes both wild yeast fermentation as well as natural malolactic conversion and minimizes additives, allowing for the fruit to show its own expression of terroir and sense of place. Carrick's wines are true expressions of Central Otago and are stunning examples of the excellence that can be found there.

2015 Carrick Pinot Gris Bannockburn Central Otago (\$19.99)

The bright acidity in the Pinot Gris is courtesy of the glacial soils present on the north-facing Cairnmuir terraces in Bannockburn, which are surrounded by the picturesque Lake Dunstan. The grapes are hand-picked, whole-cluster pressed and fermented in stainless steel tanks. After fermentation, a portion of the wine is moved to neutral oak barrels and left to age on the lees with occasional stirring. This creates more texture and softness in the mouthfeel and adds complexity to the wine. The fruit packs a lot of flavor and is more expressive than most other Pinot Gris I've ever seen.

2015 Carrick Riesling Bannockburn Central Otago (\$19.99)

The Riesling is grown on the east side of Cairnmuir Road, a more advantageous spot for it on the estate. It is harvested by hand and whole-cluster pressed into stainless steel tanks, where it both ferments and ages. Classic Riesling qualities shine through, but the

unique Central Otago character can also be seen here. Citrus fruits, including lemon, lime, and mandarin dominate and bring crispness and liveliness to the wine, which is balanced with but a touch of residual sugar.

2015 Carrick Sauvignon Blanc Bannockburn Central Otago (\$19.99)

This Sauvignon Blanc is more complex and fuller-bodied due to partial aging in neutral oak barrels on the lees. Passion fruit, pineapple, and a vegetal hint in the form of bell pepper are showcased here. A vibrant acidity shines in the backdrop, highlighting the fruit without overwhelming.

2014 Carrick Chardonnay Bannockburn Central Otago (\$24.99)

Chardonnay thrives in climates with large diurnal shifts and the complexity and nuances of this wine show why. The cool nights retain a nice acidity and keep the fruit from being overly flabby and ripe, while the long, sunny days develop the intricate fruit flavors. This Chardonnay is fermented and aged in French oak barriques, giving it softness, sophistication and structure.

2012 Carrick Pinot Noir Bannockburn Central Otago (\$29.99)

Blocks of the Pinot Noir vineyard are picked and fermented separately in open-top fermenters, punched down daily, and, when finished, are gravity-fed to barrel to age. Gravity feeding retains the Pinot's delicate flavors, while discouraging oxygenation. This wine is aged in French oak for 12 months, which seems to be just the right amount of time to soften and enrich the wine without overwhelming with woody tannin.





David and Nadia: Dirt Romance in South Africa

By Kirk Walker

Why South Africa? Well, why is it that we love wine? Wine is romantic. Wine is a vehicle for our imagination. Wine is a way to explore our world without travelling—or a way that we can research future travels.

South Africa has captured my imagination. Before we even start talking about wine, the natural beauty of the country is staggering. You can touch some of the oldest rocks in the world there—billions of years old! How cool is that? But I digress.

Most of South African wine country is located in a Unesco World Heritage Site, the Cape Floral region. I know that this is taking too long to get to the wine, but wait for it. We are wine people, we care about the dirt. For millions upon millions of years plants and animals unique to this remote corner of the world have made contributions to the organic material in the soils. The dirt there is so different from any other wine region in the world. Dirt romance!

Why Swartland? This is a region with old stones, not billions of years old, but older than almost all Old World wine regions. They have a mix of wine geeks' favorites rocks: shale, sandstone and granite—more dirt romance. It is a place with a long history of cultivation but a relatively young wine industry: older, sometimes forgotten, vineyards with younger, enthusiastic winemakers is a romantic combination. Some of them have come together to form the Swartland Independent producers—check out their website, more winemaking romance.

The region's Mediterranean climate is ideal for some of the most popular grapes in the world, plus some old favorites—not twentieth-century favorites but nineteenth-century favorites. Grape romance!

Every romantic element mentioned above leads up to David and Nadia Sadie: really old rocks and dirt, old grapes and young enthusiasm. Their first vintage was 2010, and the first vintage that K&L sold their wines was the 2014. These were instantly some of my favorite wines in the store. I was mesmerized. I became obsessed with these extraordinarily expressive wines.

The place to start is their **2015 David & Nadia Grenache Paardeberg Swartland (\$34.99)**.

Mostly grown on granite-based soils, this wine has something for almost everyone: ripe, pure fruit, high-toned complex aromatics, round mouthfeel, savory nuances and a fresh, lingering finish.

The **2014 David & Nadia “Elpidios” Red Blend Swartland (\$29.99)** is the red to chose if you want more substance but don't want to sacrifice complexity. This is a blend of Syrah, Carignan, Cinsaut, Grenache and Pinotage grown on granite and schist soils. It's darker and more structured but even more complex than the Grenache: more spice, more etched mineral tones and richer fruit balanced with more tannin but the same clean, long finish.

For the most adventurous there is the **2015 David & Nadia Pinotage Siebritskloof Swartland (\$24.99)**. I happen to really enjoy Pinotage. I love the dark, sappy fruit and the pungent earthiness. This is a different expression, higher toned, like all of their reds, pure, with crunchy plum fruits and just a whiff of tar. **93 DC:** “Pinotage like you've never had it before.”

Last and definitely not least is my favorite wine of their lineup, the **2014 David & Nadia “Aristargos” White Blend Swartland (\$29.99)**. This was the gateway drug to Swartland for me. A blend of Chenin Blanc, Roussanne, Clairette, Viognier and Sémillon fermented in old oak. Wow! This wine has everything: great aromatics, surprisingly rich texture, and is balanced with racy acidity and a core of almost salty minerality. The only other whites like this are similar blends from Swartland. It is the best of all the great white wine regions of the world combined into one. Needless to say I am obsessed with the white wines from the region, and all because of the Aristagos! While it is not inexpensive, I challenge anyone to find wines with the same amount of character, complexity, purity and depth (really, any characteristic that people wax about in wine) for a similar price. **91 VN.**

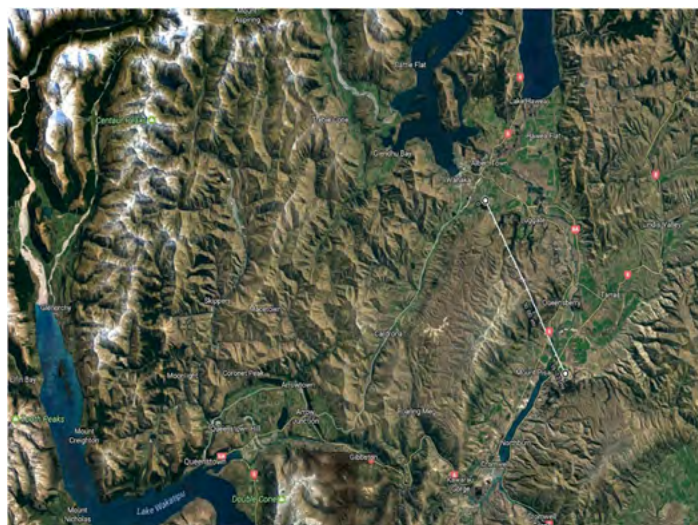


A Very Particular Sense of Place: Subregionality in Central Otago

By Ryan Woodhouse

I recently hosted an in-depth “Wines of New Zealand” seminar for our staff in Redwood City. The idea was to dig a little deeper into the intricacies of this stunning country. We isolated a few key regions (Marlborough, Hawke’s Bay and Central Otago) and then broke each one down further to look at subregionality within them. I wanted to explore the sensory nuances that changes in topography, aspect, climate, soil, etc. can have on wines even within a specific region. One of the best illustrations of this concept was the flight of Central Otago Pinot Noirs. Central Otago is a highly complex region with a multitude of these different factors or variables affecting the expression of grapes grown in a specific locale.

The most markedly different expressions of Pinot Noir came from two wines that were actually the same vintage (2015) and grown only 16 miles apart. However, as you can see in the map above, these two vineyard sites are separated by some very significant geography. The vineyard site for the **2015 Akitu “A1” Central Otago Pinot Noir (\$29.99)** is just outside the picturesque town of Wanaka. It lies on a north-facing slope in quite close proximity to the glaciated mountains of the Southern Alps. This range is known as the “main divide” separating New Zealand’s rugged, wet west coast from the arid, high desert that is Central Otago. The site is very exposed to cold air flows and prevailing bad weather coming from the west. Beyond its exposed physical location the geology here is characterized by very hard schist bedrock. Akitu’s vines sit on the lower slopes of Mount Barker. This outcrop of rock is actually a roche moutonnée, essentially a piece of particularly hard bedrock that defied glacial abrasion. In summary, Akitu’s vines are situated on hard, bony, schist soils on a cold, exposed aspect. As a result the wine is defined by elegance and compact precision. It has beautiful floral, high-toned aromatics, a finely tuned linear presentation and spicy, bramble nuances. A very seductive wine, it’s made from 70% Abel clone Pinot Noir, a Pinot clone with a heritage tracing back to Domaine de la Romanée-Conti’s “La Tâche” Vineyard. **91 RP.**



In contrast, the site for Rudi Bauer’s 2015 Quartz Reef Pinot Noir, only 16 miles southeast of Akitu, is in one of the warmest subregions of Central Otago, Bendigo. This area has long been synonymous with deep, brooding, powerful wines with considerable structure. Bendigo also faces north (the sunny aspect in the southern hemisphere) but is farther from the Southern Alps main divide. In fact, another set of mountains, the Pisa Range, runs between Akitu and Quartz Reef’s site, providing an additional layer of weather defense to Bendigo. Sitting on a steep slope on the eastern banks of Lake Dunstan, Quartz Reef’s vines also enjoy the direct heat of the afternoon sun while vineyards on the west shores are shadowed by the towering ranges. The soils here are composed of arid clay, fine sandy loams and fragmented quartz. These heavier soils lend themselves to a more generous palate weight in the resulting wines, quite different to the more compact, layered expression of Pinot grown on schist. The **2015 Quartz Reef “Bendigo Single Vineyard” Pinot Noir Central Otago (\$29.99)** is packed with dense, rich, dark fruits, perfectly judged ripeness, a broad texture and exotic spice notes. This is quite a generous wine but it has plenty of robust structure to last a decade-plus in the cellar. Farmed and made according to Demeter-certified Biodynamic protocols. **95 RP.**



K&L REDWOOD CITY

3005 El Camino Real, Redwood City, CA 94061

P (650) 364-8544 **F** (650) 364-4687

HOURS Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 9-7, Sun 10-6

LOCKERS Mon-Sat 10-6, Sun 11-5

KLWINES.COM

Toll Free (877) KLWINES (877) 559-4637

Email: Wines@KLWines.com

K&L HOLLYWOOD

1400 Vine Street, Hollywood, CA 90028

P (323) 464-WINE (9463) **F** (323) 836-0853

HOURS Mon-Thurs 11-8, Fri-Sat 10-8, Sun 11-6

K&L EVENTS & TASTINGS

We host regular evening and Saturday tastings at each K&L store as well as many special events throughout the year. For the complete calendar go to KLWines.com/Local-Events.

K&L SAN FRANCISCO

855 Harrison Street, San Francisco, CA 94107

P (415) 896-1734 **F** (415) 896-1739

HOURS Mon-Fri 10-7, Sat 9-6, Sun 11-6

We accept American Express, Discover, Visa, Mastercard and PayPal.

For Order Inquiries, Shipping Information, Local Events, Policies and Up-to-the-Minute Inventory, visit KLWines.com

🍷 FOLLOW OUR BLOGS UNCORKED AND SPIRITS JOURNAL FOR THE LATEST UPDATES FROM K&L STAFF 🍷