

SEASON SUMMARY

The 2021 growing season was characterised by unseasonably wet conditions in December and January, which naturally lowered the potential yield and provided excellent soil moisture for veraison and ripening from February onwards.

Summer arrived with a vengeance during these latter months, and the vines were well prepared for a classic period of ripening and flavour development. The warm daytime temperatures, cool nights and negligible rainfall meant we could harvest the fruit at the optimum time.

KEY VINEYARDS

Northburn sits on the steep, hilly east bank of Lake Dunstan. The vines here spread across terraces of unforgiving, rocky, glacial soils. Helped by the large diurnal shifts of warm days and cool nights, these soils produce fruit of great structure and intensity.

WINEMAKING & BLENDING

The grapes were predominantly de-stemmed into open-top fermenters, undergoing a three-day cold soak before starting fermentation. The wine was on skins for approximately 24 days, with the pressing date determined by taste. After 12 months of barrel-ageing in French oak barriques, the wine rested in stainless steel for 18 months before being bottled without fining.

Alc	pH	TA
12.98%	3.71	4.99g/l

NOSE

Initially closed on the nose, the 2021 Founders' Cellar Northburn Pinot Noir slowly unfurls in the glass to reveal dark berry fruit characters and a smoky graphite undertone that gives a sense of density and depth.



PALATE

The palate is similarly dark and brooding, slow to give up its secrets. After time in the glass, dark plum and damson notes appear, swathed in silky tannins and brightened by a characteristic Central Otago acidity. We recommend decanting ahead of serving.



Founders' Cellar

NORTHBURN PINOT NOIR
2021

SEASON SUMMARY

We hand-pick our Chardonnay and Pinot Noir at ideal ripeness, with sugar levels averaging between 18.5 and 20.5 Brix.

KEY VINEYARDS

Pelorus comes from a selection of vineyards planted on the warm stony soils close to the winery. These hold the ideal conditions for the balance of ripeness and acidity required for our signature sparkling wine.

Several different clones of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir are used in the vinification of Pelorus. All grapes are whole-bunch pressed, and the juice is settled for 48 hours before being racked from the solid lees. Fermentation takes place in stainless steel tanks, where the wine also goes through malolactic conversion. Lees are stirred post-ferment to build texture.

Blending takes place in September, with some base wine being separated to become future reserve wine. In October, a proportion of older reserve wines are added to the blend. Following blending and stabilisation, the wine is aged en tirage for a minimum of 24 months. After disgorging, a small dosage is added to the wine before the cork is inserted.

WINEMAKING & BLENDING

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Blending takes place in September, with some base wine being separated to become future reserve wine. In October, a proportion of older reserve wines are added to the blend. Following blending and stabilisation, the wine is aged

Alc
12.57%

TA
7.0g/l

NOSE: The Pelorus is crisp and balanced. The pale straw colour and aromas of ripe citrus hint at its Chardonnay origins. On the nose, a bouquet of apple and lemon complements the aromas of fresh bread, drawn from two years' bottle ageing on lees.



PALATE: The palate is toasty, creamy and complex, enhanced further by the lingering, nutty finish.



Pelorus
NV

SEASON SUMMARY

The growing season began cold and unsettled, with some sharp frosts over the flowering period. This resulted in a lower-than-average crop as summer arrived, and arrive it did.

In Marlborough, we experienced our driest 10 months since records began, with drought being declared in mid-March. The low soil moisture levels meant that the vines were almost entirely dependent on regular irrigation applications to sustain them through the summer. It was also beautifully sunny, and certainly a blessing from a disease-control point of view.

The lack of rainfall reduced the yield still further than the spring frosts, and the warm weather led to an early harvest. Fortunately, cooler nights from late February onwards, ensured that ripening slowed and acid balance was retained.

With the fruit in pristine condition, this ideal climate gave us the time to slow down our decision making as we approached harvest. Each of our blocks was able to reach its full potential before picking.

KEY VINEYARDS

Our Sauvignon Blanc comes largely from vineyards planted on the Wairau Valley floor, where the climate and free-draining gravelly soils are perfect for Sauvignon Blanc. This includes the Estate, Motukawa, Widow's Block, Red Shed, and Mustang vineyards.

WINEMAKING & BLENDING

Following the harvest, the free-run juice was cold settled, before racking and inoculation with selected yeast. Fermentation was carried out primarily in stainless steel tanks, with around 1.5% of the blend fermented at warmer temperatures in large format oak vats. A portion was also fermented using wild yeast to build texture and complexity. As usual, our Sauvignon Blanc was blended stringently to include only the best; in 2024 we tasted 81 different portions, of which 55 were selected to create the final blend.

Alc	pH	TA
13.5%	3.1	6.7g/l

NOSE

Quite restrained on the nose and less tropical than previous vintages. It unfurls in the glass to reveal profound and attractive notes of citrus, lime leaf, apricot and orange blossom.

PALATE

The palate shows mouthwatering intensity, with subtle-but-juicy passionfruit notes melding with those of citrus, white stone fruit, makrut lime, pink peppercorn, hibiscus and pink grapefruit. Throughout, there is a freshening saline edge and a fresh-squeezed lemon acidity that carries a long, concentrated and complex finish.



Sauvignon Blanc
2024

SEASON SUMMARY

The 2015 growing season had a cool, dry start. Frosts were numerous, providing continual challenges right up until flowering. The cool temperatures stuck around from mid-November to mid-December, disrupting the flowering and leading to 15% lower crops than the previous year.

But warm weather arrived in time for Christmas, with above-average temperatures in January. Low yields and the driest recorded growing season led to early ripening. These dry conditions meant we focused on efficient viticultural practices to protect the vines from severe stress. Our vineyard crews took great care with leaf removal to prevent over-exposing the ripening fruit to the hot sun.

We began hand-picking the Sauvignon Blanc used for Te Koko on March 27th and harvest finished on April 4th. The yield was slightly below average and the concentration and complexity of the fruit shone through.

KEY VINEYARDS

Te Koko comes from our oldest vines planted on the floor of the Wairau Valley. The warm, free-draining gravelly soils of the Motukawa, Widow's Block, Estate and Brook Street vineyards are ideal for Sauvignon Blanc.

WINEMAKING & BLENDING

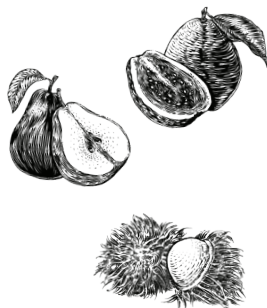
After gentle pressing and settling for 24 hours, the juice was racked directly to French oak barrels (8% new) where it underwent a slow and steady fermentation that was initiated by indigenous yeasts. The primary fermentation progressed carefully, gaining complexity over four to five months under the watchful eye of our winemaking team. The wine rested in barrel on fine lees for 15 months. Careful maturation in the cellar creates the unique texture and acid profile of Te Koko, with the resultant wine reposing a delicate balance. The barrels were tasted diligently prior to the final blending and bottling.

Alc	pH	TA
13.9%	2.98	7.9g/l

NOSE: The 2015 Te Koko Sauvignon Blanc is vibrant, rich and complex. Ripe citrus, stone fruit and gentle savoury spices greet the nose, giving way to a taut palate.



PALATE: Fresh grapefruit and white nectarine create a mouthwatering entry, while time in the glass allows these characters to meld with textures and tones of honey and beeswax. The wine finishes with notes of ripe stone fruit, savoury smoke, graphite and just a hint of summer flowers.



Te Koko
2015

SEASON SUMMARY

The 2022 growing season presented more of a challenge than the previous three. It reinforced and reminded us of the importance of our vineyard teams and the work they do to ensure the quality of our fruit.

The season began well, with water reserves replenished by extensive rain during winter. Spring was gentle, and our protection systems easily mitigated what little frost there was. Chardonnay flowered well despite some unsettled weather that seemed determined to rain on our parade.

We undertook extensive crop thinning to create optimal balance in the vines and mitigate against high disease pressure. This thinning, combined with long hours of canopy management as the season progressed, was vital to ensuring healthy fruit.

Harvest took place under excellent conditions, and we were able to pick the grapes at perfect maturity.

KEY VINEYARDS

Our Chardonnay comes from a combination of vineyards, chosen for their complementary soil types. The warm gravelly soils of the Wairau Valley and the cooler clay soils of the Southern Valleys are used in unison to provide a great balance of ripeness and elegance.

The key vineyards include Mustang, Brookby, Valhalla and Widows, with clones used across the B95, 15, 2/23, 548 and Mendoza blocks.

WINEMAKING & BLENDING

After gentle pressing, the juice was settled and racked before being transferred to French oak barriques (of which 20% were new) and new 6-kilolitre cuves. After fermentation, the wine rested in barrel for 11 months before blending. 100% of the wine underwent malolactic fermentation.

Alc	pH	TA
13.5%	3.3	6.3g/l

NOSE: Attractive on the nose, with ripe notes of Meyer lemon and white nectarine. Subtle oak is present, with aromas like the first spoon-crack of the top of a good crème brûlée: vanilla, a hint of darkness and plenty of promise.



PALATE: The palate is taut and vibrant, with mouthwatering citrus framing a core of conference pear and white nectarine. The deft oak complements the fruit concentration, creating structure and ensuring a balanced rather than overtly fruity character. Saline-fresh on the long and beguiling finish.



Chardonnay

2022

SEASON SUMMARY

The growing season began cold and unsettled, with some sharp frosts over the flowering period. This resulted in a lower-than-average crop as summer arrived, and arrive it did.

In Marlborough, we experienced our driest 10 months since records began, with drought being declared in mid-March. It was also beautifully sunny, and certainly a blessing from a disease-control point of view.

The summer of warm, dry days allowed the Gamay to ripen beautifully, and coupled up with slightly cooler nights, it meant that the carefully hand-picked fruit arrived at the winery with wonderful colour, beautiful ripe berry fruits with a touch of acidity.

KEY VINEYARDS

This Gamay was an exciting find for our teams, after we acquired a new vineyard. The vineyard is nestled in the heart of the Central Wairau region, and very close to the winery. It is a warm and dry site, creating ideal conditions to get this variety beautifully ripe.

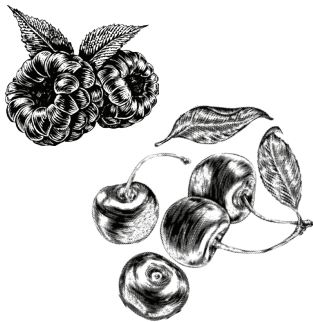
WINEMAKING & BLENDING

The fruit was hand-picked, and 50% destemmed. The destemmed fruit was fermented in open top stainless steel fermenters, with the whole clusters undergoing carbonic fermentation with a selected Gamay-yeast. The resulting wine spent 21 days on skins, before being pressed and aged in a combination of 30% stainless steel and 70% one year old oak for six months.

Alc	pH	TA
13.0%	3.64	5.51g/l

NOSE

This wine is immediately appealing and expressive, bursting with notes of ripe raspberry, cherry and a touch of spice.



PALATE

On the palate, the crunchy red berry-fruit notes remain to the fore, gently underpinned by some savoury notes, derived from the whole bunch fermentation. This is juicy, fun and dangerously drinkable. Enjoy at room temperature, or lightly chilled.



Founders' Cellar

GAMAY
2024