

MAISON NOIRE

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Cabernet Franc 2015

Vintage conditions

2014/2015:

A relatively mild winter and early spring with not much frost pressure led to a good bud burst, although the disease pressure remained high until mid summer. A wet flowering time saw a lower than average fruit set, and the disease pressure remained high although the rainfall was lower than average overall. There were a few short rain episodes in late summer and early autumn, but warm and sunny conditions dominated the maturing season. It was paramount to monitor maturity and plan harvest dates carefully and all the fruit was harvested in good condition with nice flavours before the heavy rain in late April.

Tasting notes

Aim:

My aim with this wine is to propose a high class medium bodied wine inspired by the Loire Valley style in France. It will be multi layered, elegant, complex - more like a Pinot Noir style - and round in the palate with a good ageing potential.

Technique used:

The Cabernet Franc grapes, grown on northern facing hills near Maraekakaho, were hand harvested in early April 2015 in pristine condition.

They were kept cold on skin contact with 30% whole bunch in a small stainless steel closed tank for 10 days to extract colour and fruit flavours. The tank was then warmed up, inoculated and fermented for about 14 days until dry, using plunge downs, gentle pump-overs and delestage for optimal extraction of colour, flavour and tannins.

It was kept on skins for a further 10 days before being pressed in french barrels (new and seasoned). The barrels went through malolactic fermentation before being sulphured and aged for 20 months. During this time they were racked off their lees several times to obtain a natural clarification.

After ageing, the barrels were blended and the wine was coarsely filtered without fining to retain most of the original characters prior to bottling in March 2017.

Result:

This is a very sophisticated, complex and elegant wine that reveals itself sip after sip. At first there is the sensation of bursting raspberry, soft tannins and long finish. On the second sip there is the sensation of entering the forest, with subtle notes of fungus, earthy characters, dried herbs and forest floor, followed by the complexity of a mixture of wild berries. With no sugar or copper added it is on the lower side of alcohol strength and will be able to age gracefully for many years. It will accompany beautifully most fine and gastronomical cuisine based on the finest cuts of meat. Optimum drinking time is 2019-2021; it will develop cigar box and port-like flavours past 2022.

Analysis at bottling:

pH=3.52

TA=5.93

Alc.=12.4% Vol.