

Blank Canvas

Blank Canvas 'Escaroth' Pinot Noir 2018

Escaroth Vineyard | Taylor Pass | Marlborough

TASTING NOTE The 2018 vintage is true to vineyard and vintage, producing a bewildering fragrance of peony and violets, red cherry and pomegranate overlaid with a smoky, flinty savouriness. It is a site that truly reflects vintage variation with this release displaying the perfume and delicacy of the year, whilst retaining its innate muscular tannin structure that ensures it will age even better than Keith Richards. The low-yielding, dry-farmed site gives intensity and enables the use of a high degree of whole-bunch fermentation, adding further complexity and structure.

VINTAGE. 2018 was brought in on a wave of a warm, dry summer thanks to La Nina conditions with maturity tracking 2-3 weeks ahead of normal. Late summer and into the harvest period featured significant rain events however which delayed ripening. For Pinot Noir region-wide it meant more fragrant, aromatic wines, lighter in colour but not short in structure. Sorting in the vineyard and at the winery was essential to ensure purity and finesse.

VITICULTURE Escaroth vineyard is a unique north-facing, sloped, dry-farmed site in the middle of the Taylor Pass. Vines were planted in 2001, and particularly rare for Marlborough, it is dry-farmed, without irrigation. The Taylor Pass has the biggest diurnal range in all of Marlborough and is often the driest sub-region. The north-facing slope is essential for frost protection as well as exposure for ripening. The low-vigour old clay soils are perfect for Pinot Noir. The total Pinot Noir area is just under one hectare and is planted to Dijon clones 777 and 115. The vineyard is spur-pruned and VSP trained.

WINEMAKING. We hand-harvested the Escaroth Pinot Noir on the 27th March 2018. We used a 50% whole cluster proportion in the open-tank fermenter with the balance crushed over the top. The fruit was kept cool until natural fermentation commenced after five days. The tank was hand-plunged throughout its 14-day fermentation period after which we drained and pressed the wine to barrel where it completed natural malolactic fermentation. The oak regime was 100% French oak barriques, all of low-toast level (35% new) for 12 months, with a further 3 months in tank to gently and naturally settle. We bottled the wine without filtration on the 19th June 2019. 400 cases produced.

TECHNICAL ANALYSES

Alcohol	13.3 %
pH	3.59
Acidity	5.9 g/L
Residual sugar	Nil
Total SO ₂	38 mg/L

