

## The Waipara Region

Kym Rayner:

I'd just like to tell you a little -- a little bit about the Waipara region. I bought my vineyard here in 1991 and then moved into the area, and I've lived here since 1994. And I just want to share with you some of the interesting things about the Waipara Valley. I think the key point is, it's a unique combination of diversity that involves vineyard sites on the valley floor, on river and stream terraces and on the excellent northwest-facing slopes. The valley is quite small, making a winery tour very easy, as all wineries are in close proximity.

The Waipara Valley, and in particular Torlesse Wines, is only 40 minutes from Christchurch, which is the major city in the South Island of New Zealand, and Christchurch has an international airport.

From a visitor's point of view, the Waipara Valley is less than an hour from Hanmer Springs, which is an Alpine and Thermal Resort, and it's only one-and-a-half hours from the seaside town of Kaikoura, which is flanked by mountains and famous for the whale-watch tours.

The Waipara Valley, apart from being very accessible to tourists from Christchurch, has some very interesting features that are basically unique to Waipara. The ... the diversity of sites and the unique topography are obviously key points. The valley is flanked on three sides by hills. The main feature is the protection from the cooling sea breezes that allows Waipara to stay 5c to 7c degrees warmer than sites to the south. Waipara is a cool-climate, wine-growing region with snow falling on the surrounding hills every winter. At 43 degrees south, vineyard -- vineyard sites are preferred in hotspots.

When I arrived in Waipara in 1991 and for the next seven or so years, I was privileged to make wines for some of the other wineries in the region, and that involved receiving grapes from various sites around the ... the Waipara Valley. This diversity of fruit influenced my winemaking attitude, and it involved Torlesse and the shareholders in searching out varying sites within the Waipara region to try and capture the different flavors that ... that this area can produce. And over the years, we've been fortunate to get vineyard sites that I would say epitomize the diversity of Waipara; that is, the heavy clay soils on the valley floors, the interesting and undulating terrace sites that ... that vary from the -- from the top terrace to the bottom terrace and the northwest-facing slopes with heavy clay soils, but offering the added benefit of good air drainage in the -- in the springtime, which makes them basically a frost-free site. And I will discuss each of their vineyards in more detail.

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The Rayner Vineyard  
Waipara

Kym Rayner:

The first vineyard site I'd like to talk about is my own vineyard. My wife Maggie and I bought this vineyard in 1991; but some of the vines were planted in the mid-1980s. This makes us one of the oldest vineyards in Waipara. And the other interesting aspect is that these vines are planted on their own roots, as opposed to much of the newer plantings that are on ... where the vines are grafted onto resistant rootstock. My wife Maggie and I planted the rest of vineyard, and we do all the vineyard work ourselves apart from harvesting.

The soil is heavier clay with a few stony ridges. The topography is sloping, which helps with cold air drainage, and that avoids the spring frosts.

We have the key varieties of Riesling, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, and we also have two other interesting varieties, being Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer. We harvest the Chardonnay and Riesling by machine, but handpick the other grape varieties.

We have drip irrigation on the vineyard, which is used primarily for establishment and in the hot years. The advantage of older vines and heavier soils means in most years, we do not have to irrigate the older vines.

Our vineyard is run on sustainable practices. It's in our own interests, obviously, to do this. We also drink vines from this vineyard on a regular basis. So we use the minimum number of sprays that we think is acceptable to produce grapes of superior quality.