

Waipara Fields Vineyard
Torlesse Wines

Kym Rayner:

The third vineyard site I want to talk about is what we call Waipara Fields. It's located on the northwest-facing slopes in one of the sought-after sites in Waipara. The clay loam topsoil overlays a crumbly, friable layer that has a high percentage of limestone that's eroded from the surrounding hills. This vineyard typifies the sweet soils of Waipara, the higher in pH, as opposed to the less-desirable acidic soils of some regions. This sweet soil character translates into the grapes and the resultant wine, especially Pinot Noir.

This vineyard has a number of different Pinot Noir clones planted, including the new Dijon clones. It also has Sauvignon Blanc planted on the -- on the top slope, which is a premier site.

Now, Pinot Noir wines often have flavors described as ripe berry fruit and dark chocolate. We know the soil, or terroir, has a major impact in these wine flavors. In fact, the texture and structure of any great wine are primarily a function of the vineyard sites.

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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.