

The McKenzie Vineyard  
Waipara

Kym Rayner:

The McKenzie Vineyard was the next vineyard site acquired in the early 1990s, a unique site located on the terraces of the Weka Stream. The bottom terrace is quite stony and free-draining with low water-holding capacity, making establishment difficult; but the vine roots can easily go down 3 to 4 meters after 10 years. This means, of course, that not as much irrigation is required once the vines have reached that age. This site has Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris and the Bordeaux varieties of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. It's basically a hotspot, and it does produce some quite interesting flavors.

The top terrace, which is only 30 meters distant from bottom terrace and about 3 meters or 9 feet higher, is quite different in soil type. The soil is heavier, predominantly clay lime, and is planted with Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewurztraminer.

It's interesting to note that we don't have any Pinot Noir on the lighter soil. We think Pinot Noir needs more substance, more body, in the soil type, so stony, free-draining soils aren't a site that we use for Pinot Noir.

It's also interesting to see the variation in the varieties that -- that are planted on both terraces. Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Gris are planted on both the top terrace and the bottom terrace; and of course, the other interesting contrast is to compare these same varieties planted on our other vineyard sites.

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