

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.

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