

Why Torlesse is Unique

Kym Rayner:

I'm leaning on one of the Torlesse barrels of Pinot Noir. It's one of my favorite spots in the cellar when I get to have a look at the different wines and see how they are coming along. I think one of the key features of Torlesse Wines compared to some of the other wineries in the region is that we're quite small. We do handcraft our wines, and I guess one of the ... the interesting things if you ever get the chance to come and visit our winery, we do everything at the winery; we are completely self-contained. And further to that, when you come into our cellar door and you taste our wines, you will either talk to me, the other winemaker, Paul Hewett, or my wife, Maggie. And we are all intimately involved with Torlesse Wines, so you'd be most welcome to visit.

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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.