



Sailor Seeks Horse Pinot Noir

Tasmania - Australia 2015

Gilli and Paule Liscombe's story began in 2005 when they resigned from their (unspecified) jobs in London, did a vintage in Languedoc, and then headed to Margaret River to study oenology and viticulture. While combining study and work, their goal was to learn as much as possible about Pinot noir and Chardonnay. They gained experience working in large, small, biodynamic, conventional, minimum and maximum intervention vineyards and wineries including Woodlands, Xanadu, Beaux Freres, Chehalem and Mt. Difficulty. Four years later, after experiences in the Margaret River, France, Oregon and New Zealand, they decided it was now or never to dive into their own project...

In 2010 they traveled to Huon Valley, Australia's Southernmost municipality and coolest wine region. Aside from two of the most awarded vineyards in Tasmania (Elsewhere and Home Hill), the industry had barely scratched the surface of the myriad of microclimates within the valley. They stumbled upon a dilapidated 6.5ha vineyard planted in 2005. Opportunity beckoned. It had a NE-facing slope, sheltered from the prevailing cold, and planted to six different clones of Pinot; perfect right? Not quite. Half the vines were dead, blackberries crowded around and about one hundred trees littered the vineyard. Not-so-perfect, but it was right on the edge of viticultural possibility. They found a diamond-in-the-rough (literally!) with tons of potential for beautiful expressions of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. Their risk paid off - their first release of the 2013 Sailor Seeks Horse Pinot was an instant success.

Their winemaking philosophy is pretty simple. Listen to the fruit and let it guide you. The berries are hand-picked, 95% whole berries and 5% whole bunches. They are then soaked at ambient temperature (cold in the Huon) and then let natural yeast start the fermentation process. Once the ferments are complete, Gilli and Paul taste the wine on skins until the tannin profile is right and then press to barrel. From there they inoculate for malolactic fermentation, then leave the wine unsulphured until late-spring and add sulphur dioxide. The wine is left untouched until bottling, which varies depending on how the wine looks. Stems are used as a supportive component when they are ripe and the amount varies.

Every vintage is a reflection of the growing season and 2015 was one of those unremarkable years that seem to create remarkable wines. Apart from some miserable weather in January, the remainder of the year eased into the vintage effortlessly. Yields were a little low, but the weather was fine and there were no heat spikes nor significant rain events.

Composition

100% Pinot Noir

Soil Type

Permian Mudstone

Yields

4000 vines/ha

Élevage

French Oak (20% new)

Vine Age

10 years old

Production

200 cases

Tasting Notes

“ Light, clear hue; elegance and purity are the key words, the light-bodied red fruits silently capture the mouth, drawing out the finish and aftertaste. ”

Reviews

96 points | James Halliday