

## NZ Pinots - how good?

3 Mar 2009 by Jancis Robinson

Pinot Noir Week continues. New Zealand was already showing signs of Pinotmania at the turn of the century and total plantings of Pinot Noir overtook those of Chardonnay to become the country's second most planted grape variety after Sauvignon Blanc in 2006. With its distance from the equator and naturally high acidities, New Zealand is well suited to this early ripening vine and there is hardly a New Zealand wine region that does not have its own distinctive style of Pinot Noir although the finest examples tend to come from the South Island and North Island regions south of Hawke's Bay.

While I was there recently I had the chance to catch up on how New Zealand's Pinots were evolving stylistically, notably but not exclusively with a collection of wines chosen for their superiority and served blind in regional groups just before the Central Otago Pinot Noir Celebration to us visiting wine writers. You can see my survey of New Zealand Pinot last time I was there four years ago [here](#). Many of today's NZ Pinots seem to be gaining in grace, perhaps partly as a result of increasing vine age, but I think also because of the increasing sensitivities of Kiwi winemakers, if not all Kiwi wine drinkers, to the special charms of successfully subtle and complex red burgundy. There are still some big, bold wines, some of them well made, but the proportion of NZ Pinots that have something more about them and which suggest that they may age well seems to be increasing.

### **Huia Vineyards Pinot Noir 2007 Marlborough** 16 Drink 2010-15

Fine, concentrated and savoury on the nose. Excellent balance and very bright fruit though not much real undertow. Hint of green.

### **WAIPARA**

We were told that winemakers in other regions were coming round to the Pinots of Waipara around Canterbury in the South Island because they are so interesting relative to the average New Zealand Pinot Noir.

### **Muddy Water Pinot Noir 2006 Waipara** 17.5 Drink 2010-15

Lovely zest and balance and ease. Very pure and fine tannined. Graceful.