

# LETTER SERIES PINOT NOIR 2016

## TASTING NOTES

“The warm 2016 growing season was balanced with cool nights which enabled peak flavor ripeness in the Brancott Vineyard without overly high sugars. This has enabled a superb intensity of color and flavor, and a balanced structure. A hallmark Marlborough Pinot Noir; focussed, aromatic and elegant.”

– Patrick Materman, Chief Winemaker

Named in honor of iconic vineyards, Letter Series wines are hand-crafted from grapes of the highest quality. Each wine is made in a distinctive style to enhance the flavors of the region and demonstrate the fine art of winemaking. The goal is consistent: a perfect harmony of aroma, flavor, structure and body.



### AROMA AND PALATE

This wine shows an intense purple hue, with bright blueberry and black cherry aromas, and subtle hints of liquorice and smoky oak. The palate is complex and velvety, with abundant sweet berry fruit, layered with spice and soft savoury tannins.

### FOOD MATCHING

This wine would pair well with duck and game, or a rich meat ragu. As the wine ages the earthy truffle notes that emerge will lend it well to mushroom and root vegetable dishes.

### IDEAL DRINKING WINDOW



The brightness and fleshy texture of this wine ensures it will drink superbly upon release, however careful cellaring, for up to six years, will reward with additional savory complexity.

### THE 2016 MARLBOROUGH GROWING SEASON

Growing Season Climate Data (Oct-Apr)  
(Marlborough Averages)

Growing Degree Days: 1349

Rainfall: 186 mm

Mean Max Temp: 21.8° C

Mean Min Temp: 10.9° C

Source: Niwa Clinfo database and Marlborough Research Centre online Weather data.

Similar to most of Eastern New Zealand, our Marlborough vineyards had another warmer and drier season compared to the usual. Average December and January maximums of 28.1 and 25 °C respectively assisted with ensuring crop levels were at their optimum.

Although dry, a well-timed rainfall in January allowed the vines to maintain ideal canopy health and continued fruit development. Cooler February nights ensured that acid levels helped the expression of vibrancy and full fruit flavour in the wines.

Our favourable season resulted in a Harvest period which was warmer and drier (excepting one event in March) than average. The plentiful crops provided by Mother Nature this year were brought back to moderate levels using various means.

### VINEYARD DETAILS

The fruit for this wine is largely sourced from Brancott Estate in a side valley leading off the southern Wairau valley. The main soil type in this region is based on glacial outwash, with these older soils showing high clay content relative to the younger soils on the northern side of the Wairau valley. Pinot Noir from this side of the valley are typified by their fleshy and textural nature on the palate.

Clonally, this Pinot Noir is a mix of mainly the 'Dijon' clone 777 and clone 5. These are grown on a mix of three main rootstocks; 3309, Riparia Gloire and Schwarzmann, each of these being low vigor in nature to limit crop and enhance fruit flavor intensity.

The pruning Regime is VSP with two canes laid down. The vines are from 4 to 16 years old. The fruit was harvested from 13th March to the 25th March 2015.

### WINEMAKING DETAILS

77% of the fruit was carefully handpicked off our terraced blocks at Brancott Vineyard, with the remainder 23% machine harvested off the flatter blocks. After harvesting, the grapes were de-stemmed to small open top fermenters where they were allowed to warm naturally until spontaneous fermentation.

A mixture of plunging and nitrogen rummaging was used for gentle extraction. All of the handpicked and machine picked fruit was allowed to wild ferment. Ferment temperature peaked between 28 - 32°C, ensuring good colour and tannin weight, with a post-ferment maceration period softening and integrating those tannins.

The wine was drained, with all pressings added back, then racked to barrels for malolactic fermentation to naturally soften the acidity.

### OAK REGIME

Three-year-seasoned fine-grained French oak barriques from a number of coopers were used with 30% being new, 20% one year and the remainder two and three year-old. The wine was matured for eleven months in barrel, prior to racking and blending. No fining or was used.

### WINE ANALYSIS

Alcohol 13.5%  
Residual sugar 2.4g/L  
Titrateable acidity 6.00g/L  
pH 3.54

