

Clos Marguerite



Enthusiasm and Dynamism

Experience and Tradition

Clos Marguerite blends influences from both the old and new world. The vineyard sits on a gravel terrace of the Awatere River in Marlborough and takes advantage of terroir undiscovered until recently. Free draining soils combined with a dry and sunny climate allow us to maintain low vine vigour and to reach full aromatic maturity. Viticulture practices from the old world's tradition include high density planting, Guyot pruning and a low controlled yield.

About The History

Clos Marguerite is a small family owned vineyard and is the fulfillment of a dream and the result of a long journey. The owners, Jean-Charles and Marguerite Dubois have long been driven by their wine passion.

Jean-Charles graduated from the « Institute d'oenologie de l'Université de Bordeaux » in 1989. He gained winemaking experience at several Châteaux of Bordeaux like Canon La Gaffelière, Château des Laurets, Châteaux La Freynell. In 1992 he also graduated from the University of Louvain in Belgium as « Ingénieur Agronome » specializing in soil sciences, with a particular interest in French vineyard soils. His thesis was to establish the soil map for the AOC Puissegui – St Emilion.

With a grandfather wine wholesaler in Brussels, Marguerite has been immersed in wine culture since her earliest childhood.

Soon after their marriage, Jean-Charles and Marguerite planned to create their own vineyard. To realize their dream, they looked toward the New World. After careful investigation, they chose to emigrate to New Zealand in 1996.

Right from the beginning, Jean-Charles and Marguerite were convinced of the fabulous potential of Marlborough for producing premium quality Sauvignon Blanc as well as Pinot Noir. They spent time exploring the region seeking the ideal site to establish their vineyard. They found it in the Awatere Valley, where purchased 10 acres of bare land. Patient, they decided to observe the terroir and live the climate before planting the first block in 2000.

About The Soil

The vineyard is perched on a gravel terrace, dissected by the river over geological time, above the south bank of the majestic Awatere River. The 14 meters and 700 meters long cliff along side the vineyard, offers a fantastic view of the soil profile. This has given Jean-Charles full confidence in the terroir.

Soils are typical of a river deposited sequence with free draining gravel (2-4 meters) overlaying mudstone, with the odd patch of loess material, rarely more than half a meter, in the hollows. Being the latest terrace (in geological terms) before river the bed, the soils are fairly decent, comparable to those found along Rapaura road in the Wairau Valley. (Cloudy Bay, N° 1 Estate, Domaine Georges Michel ...). Interestingly, the mudstone is not dissimilar the same famous soil types, typically the “Molasses” found in St Emilion on the slopes. Those very fine, detritic, materials are notoriously hard for the root system to penetrate, making the potential volume of soil exploitable by the vines small and limited. For the Viticulturist, this is heaven in terms of vine vigour control.

About The Climate

The climate of the Awarere Valley – very dry and sunny – completes the interest of terroir, allowing a very efficient control of vine vigour. Marlborough, in many years the sunniest region of New Zealand, is famous for its dry and sunny climate with an average rainfall of 650 mm per annum. The drought is due to the Föhn effect, where air masses lose their water excess on the west side of the range of mountains. (The Southern Alps) before flowing down into the valleys of Marlborough. Frost risk does exist, but the location of Clos Marguerite benefits from both the cold air flowing down and out of the valley, and the relative proximity to the sea, which is visible from the vineyard.

About The Vineyard

With 4,000 vines per hectare for the Pinot Noir and 3,000 for Sauvignon Blanc, Clos Marguerite is considered high density planting in the region. While the best Pinot Noir producers in New Zealand, and obviously for centuries in traditional vineyards in Europe have used this system successfully for a decade, close planting is still an unusual sight in New Zealand. The major drawback is an increase production cost, but that has not stopped Jean-Charles and Marguerite, convinced of the potential and passionate search for quality.

All the vineyard operations, including double Guyot pruning, shoot and crop thinning if necessary, contribute to maintain low yield (7 – 8 tones per hectare for Sauvignon Blanc and 5 – 6 tones per hectare for Pinot Noir) and produce grapes of the best possible quality. The first vintage of Sauvignon Blanc was 2002, while the first Pinot Noir will be harvested in 2004. The grapes are all hand harvest for the final selection.

Our Objectives

As a small producer, we intend to stay quality focused and family operated. The aim is to ensure the production of premium wine. The quality of the wine will always be paramount to us.