

Newton Johnson Domaine Pinot Noir 2010

variety : Pinot Noir | 100% Pinot Noir

winery :

winemaker : Gordon & Nadia Newton Johnson

wine of origin : Walker Bay

analysis : alc : 13.67 % vol rs : 1.9 g/l pH : 3.55 ta : 5.68 g/l

type : Red **style :** Dry **wooded**

pack : Bottle **closure :** Cork

in the vineyard : Background

This is the third vintage of Pinot Noir from the Newton Johnson property in the Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley following earlier vintages in the Hemel-en-Aarde Valley ('00 - '03) and Elgin ('04 onwards). After considerable investment and undertaking we wanted to see how these wines would articulate themselves in our soils. We set our own standards in the establishment of these vineyards with respect to the quality of vine material sourced and the prevention of infection from the notorious type-3 leafroll virus. This virus affects the vines ability for photosynthesis, deteriorating further with age, causing insufficient ripening and bad quality grapes. After 9 years of management we are proud to say that we are virus free, controlled 100% biologically, and look forward to producing wines from healthy and mature vineyards.

The emphasis of this wine lies in its fragrance, reconciling power with elegance. It shows the diversity of the grape when matched with the substance and muscle of the Pinot Noir we make from Elgin. It dispenses the notion of a varietal wine, and shows there is much more diversity to discover in our various vineyard sites and the factors that have influence.

Although our property is situated quite high up in the valley, this vintage is built from various parcels along the slope. Higher up near the winery the clay is quite shallow and the gravel fragments are larger, producing darker flavours and more backbone. Lower down the soils are deep with fine textures and various concentrations of clay, producing more red fruit and perfumed aromas.

Location and Climate

The Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley ranges in its proximity to the Atlantic Ocean from 5 to 11 km, and has an elevation of 250-350m. The soils are a mix of various concentrations of granitic sandstone and clay, quite different from the lower part of the valley. Its climate is more 'temperate' in style, where parallel mountain ranges channel the southerly maritime winds through the appellation during the summer. These winds in turn bring regular sea mists and overcast conditions to the valley and with it more even temperatures. The average mean temperature is 19.8°C and rainfall per year is approximately 750mm.

Appellation

100% Upper Hemel-en-Aarde Valley

Soils

Shale and fine fragments of quartz in organic-rich decomposed granite with layers of red clay subsoil at various depths along the slope of the property.

Aspect

North

Trellising System

7-wire Vertical Shoot Positioning (VSP) with movable wires

Pruning

Cordon and Double Guyot

Age of Vines

8 years

Vines per hectare

2,857 to 5,000

Average Yield

3 - 5 tons/ha (19 - 32 hl/ha)

Growing Season and Harvesting

Some late winter spells of warm weather induced earlier budding with some of the early varieties. Although abundant water and disease-free conditions were conducive to good growth during the Spring, the vineyards were plagued with intense South East winds that halted growth in the canopy and caused much damage. December saw much of the canopy restored and much work was needed on it in order to balance the ripening. The summer saw some dry, hot spells. All in all, the flavours from this vintage are aromatic, bright, and ripe that should drink well at an early stage.

about the harvest: All the fruit is harvested by hand and picked in to large-surface area 13kg crates.

in the cellar : The harvest is cooled down overnight to 8°C in the winery's grape refrigeration room. The bunches are sorted on a conveyor, destemmed, berry sorted by hand again, and crushed (60% - 100% whole berry). All transfers of grape must are attained with the use of gravity which preserves the integrity of the wine. Cold maceration ensues for 3 to 6 days. The primary and malolactic fermentation is 100% natural, i.e. no cultured yeast or inoculant is added. Only pigeage (punching down) is applied for extraction. After pressing the wine is racked and left to complete its malolactic fermentation and maturation in oak barriques.

Maturation

100% matured in barriques (228 litre) for 11 months imported privately from a Burgundian cooper. Tighter grain oak is preferred, with longer seasoning and deeper, slower toasting. New oak - 34%, 2nd fill - 35%, 3rd fill - 31%.

Bottled: July 2011