



Tasting Notes 2009 McCutcheon Vineyard Pinot Noir



Vintage	Ironically, for a season that will be remembered for the devastation caused by the February 2009 bushfires, it was cool weather that defined the vintage "up the hill". Budburst was excellent but in mid November, just as flowering commenced, through into December, cool wet weather meant flowering and fruit set was poor resulting in very low yields. Main Ridge was less effected by the intense heat from mid January to early February; the rolling hills tend to hide the vines from afternoon heat loads and our predominately east-west running rows were less exposed to the extreme afternoon heat which caused most damage. The end result was low yields, great balanced acidity and intense flavours.
Vineyards :: Clones	McCutcheon :: MV6 (67%) [Ridge Block], G5V15 (33%) [Lake Block]
Harvest date :: Yield	Hand picked 17 April 2009 :: 2 tonnes/ha (0.8 t/acre, ~12.0hl/ha)
Brix :: pH :: TA	22.8-23.6° (12.7-13.1° Baumé) :: 3.54-3.56 :: 7.8-9.2 g/l
Winemaking	The fruit was hand harvested and, on arrival at the winery, 100% destemmed. A 5 day pre-ferment maceration preceded a 100% wild yeast fermentation with manual plunging throughout, followed by a short post-ferment maceration (a total of 20 days on skins). Following pressing and a short settling period the wine was transferred to both new (33%) and old French oak barriques. Undergoing a natural 100% MLF with the onset of warmer temperatures in spring, the wine was then bottled unfiltered and unfiltered following a total of 14 months of oak maturation.
Winemakers	Richard McIntyre & Martin Spedding
Aging :: Oak	14 months :: 33% new French oak (medium toast Nevers & Tronçais from François Freres & Sirugue)
Malolactic	Complete
Residual sugar	Dry (0.34 g/l)
Finished pH :: TA	3.59 :: 5.7 g/l
Alcohol	13.5% (8.0 standard drinks/750ml bottle)
Production	141 cases :: bottled 27 July 2010 :: screwcap
Release date	1 June 2011

TASTING NOTES

An especially delicate vintage for the McCutcheon Pinot, which is exciting given this site's Pinot hallmarks are extreme finesse and structural rigour. The nose is austere, challenging the drinker to break into its firmly arranged collection of aromas. Some swirling yields crisp minerality, the crunchiest of red berries, nougat, dirt-covered-beetroot and - there's no other way of describing it - the smell of a sitting on a verandah covered with lush vegetation in the height of summer; only the sound of cricket on the television is capable of completing it. That the aroma is capable of being so evocative speaks to its value. The palate is slightly more yielding - only slightly - offering a soft swell of red berry fruit at its core. Around this is a cascade of complex flavours, starting with freshly grated beetroot and ending at snapped twig, taking in a good hit of minerals and spice along the way.

There's a lot to take in, to be sure, yet the wine never sacrifices its fundamentally lean, elegant profile in the service of look-at-me complexity or power. Structure is quite firm at this stage and could do with a stint in bottle to soften and release its grip on the flavours within. When this happens, history suggests the wine will shed its nervy tension and acquire a sense of luxe that will only increase its pleasures.

Food :: Temperature	Spiced venison with a truffle and wild mushroom sauce. Serve at 14-17°C.
Best drinking	2012-2020

REVIEWS

It's from a block (of MV6 clone) pinot noir planted in 1993. It was wild yeast fermented and spent 20 days on skins, before seeing 14 months in new and used French oak. This block is the highest, in altitude terms, of the pinot noir blocks accessed by Ten Minutes by Tractor. Its chief - and most important - character is its long, sinewy length. Accordingly it should take age well. It tastes, for now, of warm dried spices and slightly stewy, macerated, cherry-plummed fruit, with a clip of spicy/nutty oak adding polish. That's its shtick: class and length. Drink 2015-2019+

93+ :: Campbell Mattinson :: 8 February 2012 :: The Wine Front

There's plenty going on here: complex savoury, sappy dark-cherry and plum-scented pinot fruits, a good serve of spice and sweet herbs, a little mint and some pronounced, lifted perfume. The palate has a fine core of bright, crunch red fruits: cherries at the heart of things, plenty of sweet oak flavour, and long tannins gathering ripe through the finish.

94 :: Nick Stock :: 1 October 2011 :: Good Wine Guide 2012