

PINOT SALON

Cloudy Bay
New Zealand

August 2017



Brave. It does not necessarily mean bold or brash, and it certainly does not mean reckless and thoughtless. Brave can mean one is humble enough to admit that she or he does not know everything, or has not achieved perfection. Being brave can propel you to dream big dreams while taking small steps to get there; while listening from those who have been there; while learning from past mistakes.

This new wine forum at Cloudy Bay, called Pinot Salon, is about exploration, learning and contemplating on how to go about making outrageously good pinot noir that is uniquely Cloudy Bay. A wine that is more than technically sound and offering delicious flavours. One that exhibits all the qualities of an excellent wine, plus personality, and above all, capturing the essence of the 'sense of place'.

Hosted by the team at Cloudy Bay including Senior Winemaker Tim Heath, Estate Director Yang Shen and Viticulturist Jim White, the event included tasting and discussing twelve wines, some of the finest from around the world, and not all pinot noir. It was not just a comparative or benchmark tasting but an opportunity to search and gather inspiration.

These wines offered symphony of flavours and textures, and raised many questions including: Why do wines taste the way they do? How much whole-bunch is appropriate? Should the tannin structure be the driving force of a fine wine? Does this wine have too much new oak? Can you sense the vineyard or the region, or is the winemaker's influence greater?

As often is the case with these discussions, you end up with more questions than answers. But you do start asking more relevant questions that will ultimately guide you on the right path.

Indeed, it is this spirit of adventure, willingness to learn, adapt and improve with a strong sense of purpose that will eventually produce a wine that speaks loudly of the place, proudly of the grape, and quietly of the people who craft it.

The Wines – Bracket One

Domaine Cedric Chignard Fleurie 'Les Moriers' 2014 – Beaujolais

Classic Beaujolais but with power and oomph more akin to Burgundy. Perfumed and charming with cherries and plums as well as violets and spices. Finely textured and bright with excellent fruit purity and vibrancy. Fine, grainy tannins. Very clear for what it is.

Domaine Sylvain Cathiard Nuits-St-Georges 'Aux Thorey' Premier Cru 2013 – Burgundy

Super complex and expressive with great depth and volume of flavours. Stylish oak infusion and fine, chalky texture. Very confident and sturdy, and filled with charisma.

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2014 – Marlborough

From their southern Wairau Valley vineyards. Impeccably styled and composed. Ripe fruits with spicy, savoury nuances, complemented by silky texture and polished tannins. Inviting and satisfying. Elegant yet powerful.

Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir 2005 – Marlborough

Wonderfully matured with rich savoury, gamey flavours. Silky, flowing and seamless. Again, the tannins are fine and integrated, and the oak in perfect balance. Great drinking, certainly not over the hill.

Domaine Dujac Clos de la Roche Grand Cru 2013 – Burgundy

If Domaine Cathiard had confidence, this has swagger, in the best possible way. Herb-scented, concentrated, weighty and grippy, but not bitter. Firm, expansive and hugely complex. Clearly from a top-notch vineyard and very Dujac in personality.

The Wines – Bracket Two

Domaine Rene Rostaing Cote-Rotie 2009 – Rhone

Impressive energy and power, yet charming and comforting at the same time. Undeniably proud and generous with rich fruit and charcuterie notes. Succulent and structured and offers floral perfume as well as deep savoury notes.

Auguste Clape Cornas 2011 – Rhone

So many elements in play: gorgeous ripe fruits, silky texture, lifted florals, fleshy mouthfeel, chalky tannins, yet nothing out of place. Very proper. Engaging and compelling.

Vega Sicilia Valbuena 5º 2011 – Ribera del Duero

This is a profound, super-charged tinto fino (tempranillo). Opulent and sumptuous with loads of dark fruit, vanilla, chocolate tart and cedar notes with nuances of dried herb and warm spice. A whopper but remains graceful and sophisticated.

Cloudy Bay Te Whai Pinot Noir 2014 – Central Otago

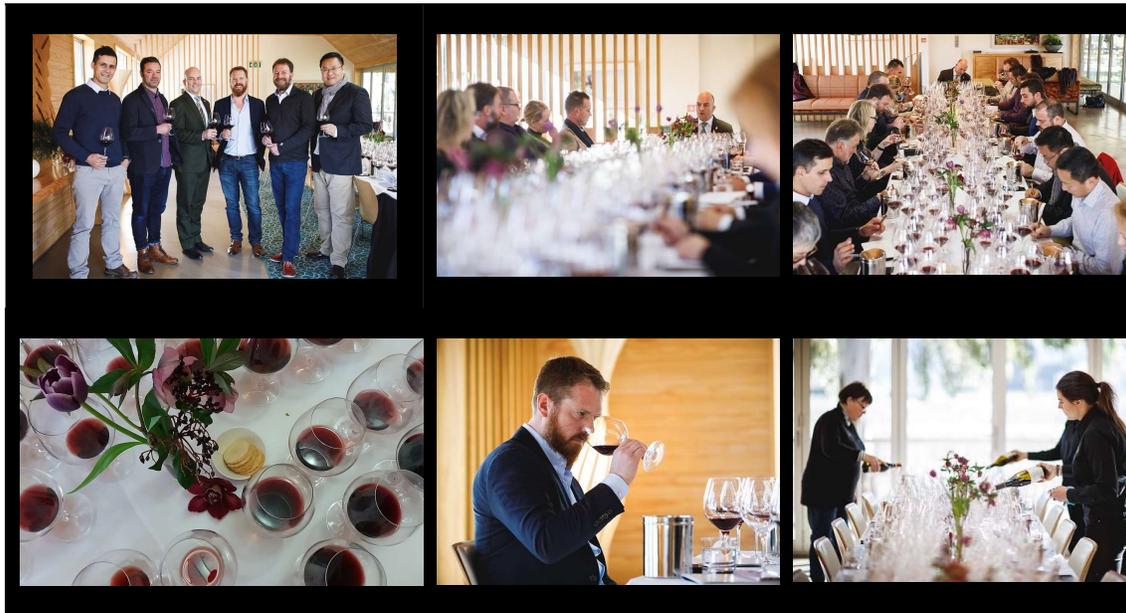
Expressing excellent precision and definition, the wine offers both sweet fruit flavours as well as seductive spicy/savoury undertones. Silky, succulent and polished. Wonderful composure and very long on the finish. A blend of grapes from Calvert and Northburn vineyards.

Cloudy Bay Te Whai Pinot Noir 2010 – Central Otago

A gratifying pinot; sweet mature berries, game, leather and floral. Concentrated but not heavy, fine texture and firm tannins with bright acidity. Wonderful line and length.

Gaja Sori San Lorenzo Langhe 2009 – Piedmont

A superstar lives up to its billing. Mature fruits, smoked game, tar and floral. Silky throughout then grippy tannins at the end prolonging the finish. Many layers of intriguing, dazzling flavours and textures. Uncompromising.



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