

# *Clos Marguerite*



## **Enthusiasm and Dynamism**

## **Experience and Tradition**

Clos Marguerite blends influences from both the old and the new world. The vineyard sits on a gravel terrace of the Awatere River in Marlborough and takes advantage of a 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. Viticultural 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 which is the fulfilment of a dream and the result of a long journey. The owners, Jean-Charles Van Hove and Marguerite Dubois have long been driven by their wine passion.

Jean-Charles graduate from the « Institut 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, Château La Freynelle. In 1992 he also graduated from the University of Louvain in Belgium as « Ingénieur Agronome », specialising in soil sciences, with a particular interest in the French vineyard soils. His thesis was to establish the soil map for the AOC Puisseguin - St Emilion.

With a grand-father 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.

Jean-Charles started his New Zealand wine experience working for Gladstone vineyard, a small vineyard in the Wairarapa. After that he joined the team of Corbans Wines, one of the biggest players in the New Zealand wine industry. The family then moved to Marlborough where they lived on Stoneleigh vineyard until 2001. At present, Jean-Charles is in charge of the development of several hundred hectares of vineyards in the Waihopai Valley, in Marlborough.

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 they bought 10 hectares of bare land in 1998. 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 high and 700 meters long cliff alongside 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 to 4 m) 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 the river bed, the soils are fairly recent, comparable to those found along Rapaura road in the Wairau valley (Stoneleigh, Cloudy Bay...). Interestingly, the mudstone is not dissimilar to some 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 heavens in term of vine vigour control.

### **About the climate;**

The climate of the Awatere Valley - very dry and very sunny - completes the interest of the terroir, allowing a very efficient control of the 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, when the 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 of the sea (visible from the vineyard).

### **About the vineyard;**

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

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

### **About the wine;**

Sauvignon Blanc 2003:

The wine shows an extraordinary palette of aromatics, from stone fruit to citrus, with the capsicum typicity of the Marlborough Sauvignon and a hint of minerals, typical of the Awatere Valley.

The harvest was done by hand, in mid April, at an optimum maturity of 13, 5° alcohol potential. Cold fermentation at 14° to 15°C captured the concentration, complexity and freshness of aromas. The wine was then left on its lees for several weeks before it was prepared for bottling in late July.

### **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 is always paramount to us.