

Next Stop: Waipara

story and photos by Allison Levine

Waipara Valley is 40 minutes north of Christchurch, the capital of New Zealand's South Island. With 80 vineyards, it is the fastest-growing wine region in New Zealand. The area consists of valley floor, hill slopes and river terraces, which include soil types that vary from gravelly deposits to limestone and clays to gravelly loams over alluvial subsoil. The soils, combined with long, hot autumns, result in uniquely rich, spicy Pinot Noirs and Rieslings, the region's specialties, as well as Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.



I visited Waipara with hosts Kathryn Ryan, Kees Zeestraten and CP Lin of **Moutford Estate**. Established in 1991, the estate was planted predominantly with Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, along with Alsatian varieties. Kees and Kathryn are hands-on owners who have learned as they go. Guiding them is winemaker CP Lin, who lost his sight due to carcinoma of the retina at the age of two. Fluent in five languages and with degrees in mathematics and wine science, he has a photographic memory and an extraordinary ability to recall wines from all over the world.



The Thomas family established the **Greystone Vineyard** (known as Grey's Peak in the U.S.) on the slopes of the Teviotdale Hills 2004, planting 40 hectares of predominantly northwesterly-facing vineyards. Fourteen thousand cases are produced, with Pinot Noir making up over 60% of the plantings, along with planted blocks of Riesling, Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and a small block of Syrah.



Assistant winemaker Sylvain Taupenas of **Muddy Water** was a sommelier in France who came to New Zealand in 2008 and was drawn to Waipara because of its Burgundian climate. Muddy Water is a direct translation from the Maori name of the place Waipara, which means mud or sediment. A family-owned organic estate with 15 hectares planted, Muddy Water produces 5,000-6,000 cases of Pinot Noir, Riesling, Chardonnay and Pinotage.



Ross Trowsdale and his wife Clare Bisso came to Waipara in 2006 from Christchurch. Always interested in making wines, Ross studied economics and marketing, followed by working harvests at Pegasus Bay, as well as in Oregon, Austria and Australia. Finding his true calling, the first vintage of **Dancing Water** was in 2008, and today they produce 3,000 cases of Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Scheurebe, as well as Pinot Gris and Riesling from purchased fruit.



Matthew Donaldson, eldest son of the Donaldson family, is the winemaker, along with his wife Lynnette Hudson, for **Pegasus Bay**. The Donaldson family were pioneers of local grape growing and winemaking in the area, beginning in the early 1970s. Today they produce 20,000 cases of Pegasus Bay and 20,000 cases of second label Main Divide from 100 certified sustainable acres.



Planted in 1993 by the Black family, **Black Estate Vineyard** consists of 8 hectares of Pinot Noir and Chardonnay. In 2007 the Naish family purchased the estate from Russell Black, and today Ron Naish and his twin daughters Joanna and Penelope, along with their husbands Alistair Blair (pictured) and Nicholas Brown, run the winery. Producing 5,000 cases, they are passionate about the area and believe that Waipara is establishing itself with textured wines. ■■