



CEDARCREEK
ESTATE WINERY

June 4, 2019

Dear «Name____»,

As I sit thinking of the wines in this shipment, there is one common thread that ties them together: the impact of our transition to growing and producing certified organic grapes and wine. We knew that converting to organic farming meant utilizing natural tools and building complex and resilient systems in the vineyards which would lead to better fruit and wine. What we didn't know however, was that this transition would result in other unplanned changes and benefits. One of the best examples I can think of involves our honey bee hives.

A couple of years ago, we introduced honey bee hives to our Home Block Vineyard. Kurt Simcic, our Viticulturist, had used them in New Zealand, and he worked with Arlo's Honey Farm to deliver 18 hives. Grape vines are self-pollinating, but bees help with the promotion of wild flowers, beneficial plants (such as crimson clover and mustard), and beneficial insects. The bees happily worked our site over the summer. I had kept bees in an amateur capacity in the past and was thrilled to now have around a million of the little ladies working for us.

But there was a side benefit that we didn't expect. As our harvest dates for Pinot Noir approached, we were hit with a lot of rain. This can be devastating in a Pinot vineyard as the delicate skins can split, resulting in infection and reduced quality. And splitting did happen across our Pinot blocks – 2 and 4 included. As Kurt and I walked the blocks to survey the damage however, I noticed something I hadn't ever seen. Our fruit was absolutely covered in honey bees - hundreds of thousands of them – and they were methodically cleaning the fruit which had split, removing the sweet grape juice from the skins. For them it was a quick sugar hit, but for us it was life-saving as it greatly reduced the chance we would have a botrytis infection and be forced to pick early. I looked to Kurt in surprise and he shrugged his shoulders and in his understated Kiwi way said, “Bees, mate... they're good like that.”

Ultimately, the bees' hard work gave us at least another 7 days on the vine without disease pressure and allowed us to wild ferment the wines without concern for fruit health. This is just one example of the multitude of changes we have seen in the vineyard since our organic transition began. With that transition complete as of harvest 2019 at CedarCreek, we will be delivering certified organic wines to you within 12 months' time. An ambitious endeavour but justified and rewarding.

2017 Platinum Block 5 Chardonnay

Organic farming has resulted in dramatic changes in the blocks I thought I had known. This is most evident in Block 5 Chardonnay. What was once a vigorous, leafy block has rapidly become more balanced. Flavour profiles have swung from steely and limey, to floral and lemony. This seems to be a result of replacing chemical fertilizers with composting. The slow release of nutrients combined with water holding capacity of compost has changed how the vines grow, slowing them down and allowing them to ripen at much lower sugars. In 2016, our Platinum Chardonnay was 14% alcohol, our 2017 is 13.2%, and our 2018 will be 12.8%. An exciting shift towards increased balance and elegance.

2018 Platinum Block 1 Pinot Noir Rosé

I believe that Rose should be elegant. Light in colour and fresh on the palate. In 2018 we harvested our Block 1 Rose in two picks, targeting mineral, zest, and citrus. The second pick was for Strawberries, something no Pinot Rose is complete without. To build further interest, we 'wild' fermented a portion in neutral oak, bringing the complexity we know 'wild' can bring.

2018 Platinum Block 9 Ehrenfelser

In 2018, we stopped purchasing Ehrenfelser fruit from growers. This meant our only fruit source was going to be our 3-acre block of Ehrenfelser from our own CedarCreek vineyards, which cut our Ehrenfelser production in half, from 556 cases in 2017 to only 269 in 2018. With that in mind, we decided to see what this grape could really do. By cropping it low and exposing the fruit, we saw complex notes of orange, flower, and honey. The product was so unique and interesting, we made it Platinum.

2018 Platinum Border Vista Sauvignon Blanc

With CedarCreek's focus on aromatic whites, a Platinum Sauvignon Blanc was only a matter of time. This wine's firm acidity drives gooseberry 'wild' ferment notes across the palate, leading to a wine that's fresh, creamy, and unique. We also used 1500L oak foudre and concrete egg to build roundness and richness in support of the aromatics.

I hope you enjoy our new Platinum releases and look forward to hearing your feedback on the wines.

Cheers,



Taylor Whelan
Winemaker

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P.S. Please let me know if you will be in the area this summer. Our new restaurant, Home Block at CedarCreek, is now open and I'd love to show you around and taste some more wines with you.