



PINOT NOIR

BALNARRING
MORNINGTON
PENINSULA

INFORMATION BULLETIN ON HURLEY VINEYARD

HISTORIC HURLEY FARM

Hurley Vineyard is an historic farm. Its wattle and daub (wood and mud) cottage was built by hand from bush materials in about 1876 by William and Joanna Hurley, who were Irish pioneers. The original name of the cottage was “Hazelgrove”. Derelict when we bought the property in 1998, we gradually restored it to its former state. The restoration is finished and this charming cottage is now part of our own home. Thus we chose the name Hurley Vineyard. In the late 1800’s, it was a general store and the first Balnarring Post Office, as well as the home of the 12 Hurley children. The last surviving, Aunt Mag, was born in the cottage in 1880 and sadly passed away in 1984 aged 104, having lived in the cottage for over 100 years.

Originally 100 acres (Hurley Vineyard comprises the best of it - the 20 acre homestead block), the Hurley farm was famous from the start for the extremely high quality of its agricultural produce. It was reputed to be the finest orchard in the district, a big statement in this once orchard-rich area. The natural advantages of the property were very accurately described in this article in the *Mornington Standard* on 6 September 1902:

“About half a mile distant from Mr Buckley’s situated on the top of a hill is Mr Hurley’s homestead. Unlike his neighbour, Mr Hurley pays more attention to fruit growing than dairying, having an orchard of about 15 acres in full bearing. Being situated on the side of a hill it is naturally well drained, and as the aspect faces north-east it gets the full benefit of the early morning sun – a most important consideration in fruit growing in a cool, moist district – and it is immune from damage by strong winds owing to the protective character of the surrounding country.”

OUR VINEYARD

In 1998 we established our 9 acre pinot noir vineyard on the 20 acre property. Hurley Vineyard was officially opened in a welcome-to-country ceremony performed in 2003 by descendants of the traditional owners of the Mornington Peninsula, the Boonewrung Aboriginal Elders. Our core value is respect for tradition, country and community.

We carefully selected the cool-climate, maritime region of the Mornington Peninsula, and our particular site in Balnarring, to make pinot noir. Hurley Vineyard wraps around the north-eastern crest of a little volcanic hill, so it receives abundant sunshine and free-moving air, yet is well-protected from strong winds by the 100 year old pine trees and surrounding topography. The hill is capped by stony, red-brown earth. This soil type – “Older volcanic” – is quick to warm and slow to cool, and retains moisture and drains freely. Climatically, the Peninsula is internationally recognised to be very well-suited to the production of pinot noir, and the sub-region in which Balnarring is situated perhaps particularly so. Within the Mornington Peninsula, our site is somewhat unusual: it has a low altitude but southerly latitude, it receives reasonable spring and summer rainfall and it has ironstone-based soil.

Hurley Vineyard Pinot Noir is made out of respect for *terroir*. We have divided the 9 acres or so presently under vine into three smaller vineyards, based on aspect (there is no difference in the soil type). This allows us to appreciate the specific expression of these *climats* more fully. These individual *climats* are:

Lodestone: this is the north-facing vineyard. It puts its whole face to the warmest sun. It contains the Burgundian clones 114, 115 and 777, as well as MV6 (see below). Lodestone is magnetite, an iron mineral abundant in our vineyards, and also “a thing that is a focus of attention or attraction” (OED). This name keeps us focused on the soil.

Hommage: this is the north-east facing vineyard. Also warm, but a sheltered little vineyard of c. 2 acres, almost all of clone G5V15 from donated cuttings. Hommage is a tribute to the winemaking families who have gone before.

Garamond: this is the east-facing vineyard. It is temperate and peaceful – a little cooler and more sheltered. It is entirely of clone MV6, which historians tell us comes from 18th century Burgundian stock brought to Australia by the early European settlers. Claude Garamond (deceased c.1561) was a Renaissance French typographer, a devoted artisan whose elegant font appears on our label and stationary.

OUR VITICULTURE

Precision viticulture is fundamental to making fine pinot noir. We see ourselves as vigneron, or winegrowers, so that our focus is on revealing the best from our vineyards by playing close attention to viticultural detail and respecting the environment.

We are committed to a number of viticultural principles: non-irrigation, low vineyard yields (1-2 tonnes per acre), low vine yields (1-2 kg per vine), respect for fruit character that is expressive of the *terroir* of a vineyard and the individual *climats* within a vineyard, organic viticulture, and the maintenance of open vine canopies by consistent work on the vines throughout the season (including shoot and bunch thinning and leaf plucking as appropriate). These principles reflect our respect for the great winemaking traditions of Burgundy, as adapted to our conditions in the New World, and our commitment to respecting the environment. Hurley Vineyard is organic in transition.

OUR WINEMAKING

The wine is made by Kevin Bell. Kevin's winemaking philosophy is based on fundamental respect for *terroir*. By reference to the artisanal tradition, he explains this philosophy as a search for purity and truth:

“The artisans crafted items of particular function and intrinsic beauty, using natural materials and traditional methods. The function of wine is to bring joy to the world. The intrinsic beauty of pinot noir is the pure expression of the true character of its growing space and time. My natural materials are the fruits, yeasts and bacteria of the grapevine of one such space, Hurley Vineyard. My methods are those traditionally employed by generations of winemakers. My philosophy, therefore, is to bring joy to the world by making pinot noir with gentility and respect, pinot noir that expresses the same pure truth as the peal of a bell.”

The grapes at Hurley Vineyard are hand-picked by the Friends of Hurley Vineyard. The fruit from each vineyard is made separately, but in the same way. The fruit is cooled overnight and then destemmed but not crushed into open-topped vats. The intact berries are cold-soaked gently in their own juice (importantly at this stage, in the absence of alcohol) for up to 5 days before fermentation begins. Fermentation is by the action of indigenous yeast, during which the must is plunged by hand twice daily. After fermentation ends, the wine is macerated (this time in the presence of alcohol) on skins for up to 7 days, after which the must is basket pressed. Total vat time is 18-21 days.

The wine is then elevated in French oak barrels (made from wood seasoned in the open air in Burgundy for three years) from the forests of Tronçais and Allier for about 18 months. About one-third of the barrels used are new, with an increasing proportion being three-year air dried. The wine undergoes malolactic fermentation in barrel. The wine is raked as little and as gently as possible, usually only once before bottling, for the lees contact promotes roundness and richness in the wine. It is bottled without filtration, but sometimes with egg-white fining. The bottles are sealed with a Diam cork closure. Each vintage, the wine spends about 12 months in bottle prior to release.

OUR WINES

Hurley Vineyard Pinot Noir is produced in single vineyard wines when this best expresses *terroir* in the given vintage. That is so with the 2009 vintage, for which our releases are:

- Hurley Vineyard Pinot Noir 2009 “Lodestone” (50 cases made) (\$50 per bottle)
- Hurley Vineyard Pinot Noir 2009 “Homage” (150 cases made) (\$50 per bottle)
- Hurley Vineyard Pinot Noir 2009 “Garamond” (150 cases made) (\$60 per bottle)

CONTACTING US

You can contact us as follows:

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Hurley Vineyard is a cellar door/mailling list retail and wholesale business. We accept orders by email, telephone or fax. Hurley Vineyard offers a cellar door facility that is open to the public on the first full weekend of each month and otherwise by appointment.

HURLEY VINEYARD
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