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Equinox: The winds of change in the Waipara Valley

Waipara Hills have recently released their inaugural flagship Pinot Noir, the limited release **2009 Waipara Hills Equinox Pinot Noir**, one of three wines in the newly packaged 'Equinox' range.

The Waipara Hills vineyards are located in the Waipara Valley, 60 kilometres north of Christchurch on New Zealand's South Island. The region comprises approximately 1,200 hectares of vines and is one of the most visually stunning and fastest growing regions in the country.

The Waipara Hills wines, including the new Equinox Pinot Noir, are 100 percent sustainable, in keeping with the 'New Zealand Wine Sustainability Policy' which was formulated in 2007.

The program ensures that each participating winery must adhere to a strict set of guidelines to ensure that their vineyard, bottling hall and brand owner is accredited.

"The grapes for the Equinox Pinot Noir come from 'The Mound' vineyard," explained winemaker Simon McGeorge. "This vineyard consistently produces fantastic flavour, colour and tannin structure and is now at an age where we are seeing greater depth and complexity in its wines."

"The vintage was earlier than normal due to a warmer summer, however the stable, cooler autumn allowed the flavours and tannins to ripen more slowly which is evident in the finished wine."

The Pinot Noir was hand picked with a component whole bunch fermented. After three to four weeks on skins, the wine was pressed to a combination of new (30 percent) and older French oak barrels for 12 months maturation prior to bottling.

The Waipara Hills Equinox wines are named after the north westerly Equinox winds that characterise the Waipara plains. The strong winds have a marked influence on the terroir of the region, manipulating temperatures and marking the start of spring and autumn.

Awards: Pure Gold Medal, Air New Zealand Wine Awards 2010
Gold Medal, Wrest Point Royal Hobart Wine Show 2010

Pricing and Distribution: Waipara Hills wines are distributed by Fesq & Company and retail for **\$28-30.00**. Further information on Waipara Hills can be found at www.waiparahills.co.nz.

To taste the Waipara Hills range of wines, we invite you to join us at 'NZ in a Glass' in Sydney on 24 February. More information can be found at www.nzwine.com/events/

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Further information on the NZ Wine Sustainability Policy please visit <http://wineinf.nzwine.com/sustainability.asp>