

Twelfth Night: New Zealand Wine with Massachusetts Roots

If you wanted to build a successful winery, and could build it anywhere in the world, which region would you choose and why?

That's the decision Boston-based Vela Wines principals Max Risman, Arie Dahan, and Beth Ann Dahan were faced with a few years ago as they scoured the globe for a location. They eventually decided on New Zealand. On the twelfth day of a visit to the Central Otago region they found their mark and that night as they looked up at the stars the Twelfth Night name was born.



They now produce Pinot Noir, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand under the Twelfth Night label, with distribution occurring mostly in Massachusetts at this point. All things considered they felt Central Otago was the best place to start a winery. After meeting with Max and hearing about the region I'm inclined to think they knew what they were doing.

While I was taking WSET courses one of my absolute favorite wines we tasted was a Central Otago Pinot Noir. For me, it's most closely aligned with Oregon Pinot Noir in style, but falls more towards California in the flavor spectrum than most Oregon Pinots. That being the case, New Zealand Pinot Noir can be a real source of value.

Especially these wines from Twelfth Night which land at appealing price points and present a compelling quality:price ratio values.

I received a couple bottles to get to know them better. Here are my tasting notes...

2012 Twelfth Night Central Otago Pinot Noir

1,000 Cases Produced

14% Alcohol

\$22 Retail

Rated 89 points by Wine Spectator

Medium bodied visually with vibrant ruby shades. Baked cranberries, citrus peel, and distinctive white pepper aromatics. These notes convey on the palate with just a tiny hint of effervescence on the palate that distracts a bit from an otherwise outstanding wine.

88/100 WWP: Very Good

2013 Twelfth Night Central Otago Riesling

400 Cases Produced

12.2 % Alcohol

\$18

Rated 87 points by Wine Spectator

Light golden with grey tinges visually. Classic Riesling markings on the nose with appealing citrus notes. Lively on

the palate and finishes clean. Free of off notes. Nice stuff.

86/100 WWP: Very Good

Get to know Vela wines better if you're attending the Boston Wine Expo this weekend. Their winemaker will be on hand describing how [Central Otago is the Burgundy of the Southern Hemisphere](#). I hear they'll be offering some tasty discount codes as well.

Definitely check for their wines at retail especially if you're in the Boston area. Here are [some listings on Wine-Searcher](#).

On the web: <http://velawines.com>

On Twitter: [@VelaWines](#)