



Raymond Chan Wine Reviews

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Te Awanga Estate 'Trademark' Hawke's Bay Syrah 2015

Establishing his own business twelve years ago, Rod McDonald has had at his heart to make great Hawke's Bay Syrah and Chardonnay that could stand among the world's best. He has slowly but steadily worked towards his dream, and along the way created several brands that have enabled growth and support for his ambition to make the best wines he can. Several months ago, he shifted the emphasis of his company away from 'Rod McDonald' the person to 'Te Awanga Estate' the place, as provenance of the fruit is everything. Under the 'Te Awanga Estate' umbrella are his various and unique brands, such as 'Mister', 'One Off', 'Te Awanga Estate' (of course), his flagship 'Quarter Acre' label, and his icon 'Trademark' Chardonnay and Syrah wines. To acknowledge this change, I now label my reviews for the 'Trademark' wines under 'Te Awanga Estate', rather than 'Rod McDonald'. www.teawangaestate.co.nz

In August 2014, Rod released his first 'Trademark' Syrah, from the 2011 vintage (click here to see my report on the launch and here for my review). The wine was and is a superb one, and I've rated it 19.5/20. The 2011 vintage was followed by a 2013, also rated 19.5/20 (click here to see my review), and now the 2015 vintage is just being released. There were 150 dozen made. There will be a 2016 'Trademark' Syrah, of which the quantity has been increased to 250 dozen, and it is scheduled for release in February next year (and from thereon, every release will be in February for consistency), but there will be no 2017. It looks very likely there will be a 2018 'Trademark' Syrah.

The sister wine to this is the 'Trademark' Chardonnay, the first release being the 2015 vintage (click here to see my review). It matches the Syrah in quality. And there was a small production of only 35 cases of the 2017 'Trademark' Chardonnay, but there will be greater quantities of the 2018 bottling. The increased production of all of the 'Te Awanga Estate' wines coincides with the continued growth of Rod's business. Rod reports that approx. 60% of his production is exported, to the U.K. and Europe, the U.S., South East Asia and Australia, and to China, the latter market rapidly growing in demand for the wines, and which could take all his production! Here, I review the 2015 Te Awanga Estate 'Trademark' Hawke's Bay Syrah.

Te Awanga Estate 'Trademark' Hawke's Bay Syrah 2015 ★★★★★

Dark, deep, black-hued purple-ruby colour, a little lighter on the edge. The nose is softly voluminous with well-concentrated and refined, taut aromas of ripe black berried fruits with nuances of black plums and hints of dark raspberries, unfolding some liquorice and spice, and complexing mineral detail. Some game notes emerge with aeration. Medium-bodied, the palate is elegant in presentation but shows intense and firmly-packed flavours of ripe blackberry fruit along with an amalgam of black plums, liquorice, spices and earthy, mineral complexities. The flavours are beautifully refined in expression and supported by considerable extraction, the tannins very fine-grained and flowery. This has concentration and linearity, the acidity integrated, and the wine flows with positive drive to a long and sustained finish of black fruits, with dark floral elements unfolding. This is a refined and concentrated black-fruited Syrah with liquorice, spices and minerals on a well-structured, fine-grained palate with length. Match with roasted game meats and semi-hard cheeses over the next 10+ years. 100% Syrah, hand-picked fruit from two sites, one in Bridge Pa on red metal soils and a north-facing limestone hillside, fully destemmed but with no crushing, leaving whole berries, given 5-10 days cold soak and indigenous yeast fermented to

13.0% alc., the wine spending 21-28 days on skins and 20 months in 65% new French oak
barriques. A selection of the best barrels. 150 dozen made. 19.5/20 Nov 2018 RRP \$90.00