

FROM THE CELLAR... MOUTERE HILLS



YOU HAVE TO VISIT OUR WINERY BECAUSE...

“We don’t sell through stores and we don’t export. We’re a boutique winery with lots of variety.”

Fiona, Cellar Door Hostess,
Moutere Hills

FIRST IMPRESSIONS

March 14, 2019

When we first approached Moutere Hills, we had to admit we felt a little confused. We had never seen such tall vines before. Only later did we come to learn we had driven past a crop of hops (a common error, apparently)!

Anyway, the estate’s main building sits among verdant trees and bushes, and it offers a spectacular vineyard view out the back. The surrounding vegetation reminded us of being in a tropical forest, a stark and welcomed contrast to most of the other wineries we had visited during our time in New Zealand.



THE LAY OF THE LAND

Moutere Hills, a family-owned boutique winery, is situated a short distance from Nelson, a small city on the north end of New Zealand’s south island. Rusty Rayne and Lisa Goodson run the operation, putting passion and dedication into everything they do.

The first Moutere Hills vines date back to 1993. Since then, the estate has grown (as have the vines), with new plantings taking root in 2013. All hasn’t been smooth sailing, however. In 2006, the original winery perished in a major fire. With plenty of resolve and fortitude, a new winery and cellar door came into existence.

New Zealand artist, Sandy Rogers, created the gorgeous border on the Moutere Hills label (see middle picture on the left). She derived inspiration from the Maori tradition of Kowhaiwhai, a form of ornamental art using elaborate scroll patterns.

Moutere Hills produces somewhere in the neighbourhood of 30,000 bottles annually, the equivalent of 2,500 cases, a relatively small production. Saying that, the estate takes great pride in producing a range of wines, many of which sell out year after year.

Forsters restaurants shares a space with the Moutere Hills cellar door. Head chef, Alistair Forster, an award-winning New Zealand



A closer view of Moutere Hills’s gorgeous, carved wood statue (top), part of a frosted glass door (middle), and a view from the outstanding Forsters restaurant (bottom)

Lamb and Beef Ambassador, has a reputation for serving up some delicious, mouth-watering dishes. He runs the restaurant with his wife, Fiona (pictured below), who helps run the cellar door.



Some of the wines available for purchase at the Moutere Hills Cellar Door

WINEMAKING PHILOSOPHY

Moutere Hills strives to produce honest wines with as little intervention as possible. This translates into organic practice and the absence of several processes or techniques, such as the use of sulfides and mineral filtering. The winemaking team prides itself on making French-style wines, albeit with a New Zealand twist, such as their red blend comprised of Merlot, Syrah, and Cabernet Sauvignon.

“The vines are on Moutere clay gravels, which give the wines a lovely fruit density, minerality and fine tannin.” – Moutere Hills

ONE-ON-ONE WITH FIONA FORSTER, CELLAR DOOR HOSTESS, MOUTERE HILLS, AND CO-OWNER, FORSTERS RESTAURANT.

Q: What do you like most about wine?

A: Doing wine tastings, everyone has a different opinion. There’s no right or wrong. There’s a scientific basis, but it’s also based on personal taste.

Q: What’s your ultimate favourite wine and why?

A: A winery in Christchurch, Black Estate. They have a beautiful Chardonnay.

Q: What’s the best part of your job?

A: Talking to people and serving my husband’s food. I’m quite proud of him.

Q: What’s the worst part of your job?

A: Creating the staffing roster for the week. It can be a challenge to find and keep good staff.

Q: Tell us one thing about you or your winery nobody else knows.

A: The grapes are looked after by the owner himself. It’s his passion.

THE TASTING...

What’s better than one friendly hostess? Three friendly hostesses! That’s exactly what we experienced during our tasting at Moutere Hills. We began with the 2018 Moutere Hills Pinot Rosé (price: \$25 NZD) and ended with the 2016 Rumer, a blend of 40% Merlot, 40% Syrah, and 20% Cabernet Sauvignon (price: \$55 NZD)

In between, we tasted the:

- 2017 Moutere Hills Chenin Blanc (price: \$35 NZD)
- 2017 Moutere Hills Viognier (price: \$44 NZD)
- 2017 Moutere Hills Pinot Noir Rosé (price: \$35 NZD)



Our Moutere Hills hostess trio, Stéphanie, Fiona, and Sarah.

Of all the wines we sampled, the 2016 Rumer emerged as our favourite. In the nose, we enjoyed a complex bouquet of mulberries, dark cherries, leather, and mahogany wood. This full-bodied red blend, with medium acidity and medium, round tannins served up dark plums, blueberry jam, black tea leaves, earth, and graphite. The finish, an enduring affair that petered out slowly, offered more dark fruit and graphite. We could easily see this wine pairing beautifully with grilled steak, hearty pasta dishes, such as meat lasagna or sausage penne, and an array of aged cheeses. Although you could certainly enjoy this red blend now, it would very likely benefit from additional time in the cellar.

FINAL NOTES

True to its vision, Moutere Hills offered an honest, authentic experience in a quaint, down-to-earth setting. To boot, the winery shares a stunning space with Forsters restaurant, making it an ideal location to pair its many offerings with some exceptional plates. We particularly appreciated the warm hospitality, as well as the inherent respect for the rich Maori culture

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