

# CHARD FARM - RABBIT RANCH

## Central Otago, New Zealand



**Rob Hay**

Rob Hay and Gerda Schumann own Chard Farm. Motueka-born Rob studied winemaking in Germany for 3 years in the early eighties before returning to New Zealand in 1985 to work for Babich wines in Auckland. In 1987 he headed south to establish the Chard Farm vineyard.

When Rob returned to New Zealand in 1985, he was searching for the “terroir” that best emulated the cool continental climate and soils of some of the greatest wine producing areas of the world — most notably the Burgundy and Alsace regions of France. That search led to Central Otago. His long term goal is to craft the finest classic cool climate varietal wines of Pinot Noir, Riesling, Pinot Gris and Chardonnay.

The winery was constructed in 1993 and has the capacity to process around 250 tons of grapes annually with emphasis on whole bunch pressing. Rob keeps yields low (1.5 tons per acre) in the vineyards and tries to crush as many whole clusters as possible. The fruit for this wine undergoes a cold soak for one week before fermentation, with approximately 20% of the wine fermented from whole clusters. The wine is lightly pressed and then is aged in 30% new oak (mostly French) and is fined with egg whites prior to bottling.

The viticultural team and Chard Farm vineyard consultancy service is led by Rob Hay, with Michelle Crawford as Vineyard Manager, and John Wallace as winemaker. Gerda is actively involved in the administration of the business.

**The History** - The famous Central Otago Dunstan gold rush of 1862 lured Richard Chard from Dorset, England out to New Zealand. He arrived at the age of 14 and worked in the Dunstan and Gibbston areas for several years before settling at the Morven Ferry end of the old coach road to Queenstown, a place that is now well known in the area



as “Chard Farm.” Chard started with a one-acre strip but slowly the farm grew to its current size of 50 acres as small plots nearby were taken over. The beautifully situated farm and the qualities of its relatively frost free slopes and free draining soils were recognized early in the development of the Gibbston Valley and Wakatipu areas.

Richard died in 1905 and Chard Farm basically “stood still” for the next 50 years as his son Fred steadfastly refused to keep up with modern technology — “horse” power was the only power on Chard Farm.

Chard Farm then spent a brief period as a stonefruit orchard in the early eighties before Rob Hay came to the Central Otago area to establish a commercial vineyard.



# Chard Farm Pinot Noir 2006 CENTRAL OTAGO



### Winemakers Comments:

2006 was a great vintage for Pinot Noir in Central Otago. There were no significant cold events throughout the growing season. The ripening period was warm and we harvested a wonderful crop of consistently ripe fruit very early in mid March. This wine is grown in our Cromwell vineyards at Lowburn and Parkburn, and displays the wonderful dark spice notes and fine integrated tannins for which this distinct district of Central Otago is becoming renowned.

### Wine Description:

Fragrant aromas of red berry and plum fruit with licorice and dark spice notes. The fruit displays good weight and texture on the palate. The velvety tannins are well integrated with the fruit and give good structure and definition to the long finish of this beautiful wine.

### The 2006 Harvest:

**Dates:** 18<sup>th</sup> March - 15<sup>th</sup> April 2006.

**Brix** 24.1 – 25.2, **pH** 3.39 – 3.42, **TA** 7.5 – 9.2

**In Bottle:** pH – 3.58, **TA** – 5., **Alc.** – 13.5%





RABBIT RANCH



CENTRAL OTAGO  
WINE OF NEW ZEALAND



## Rabbit Ranch Pinot Noir 2007 CENTRAL OTAGO

The Central Otago High Country of New Zealand is over-run with rabbits. Sheep and rabbits coexisted on the land for some time but the sheep couldn't keep up with the nocturnal activity of the rabbits. In the end they were hopelessly outnumbered and driven off the land- they were last seen heading north. The owner of the Rabbit Ranch, Mr. McGregor, tried unsuccessfully to reduce the rabbit population by selling rabbit pies. Eventually he decided to plant some vines and make a decent Pinot Noir to go with all the rabbit pie he was eating.

### Rabbit Ranch Pinot Noir 2007 Mr. MacGregor's Notes:

"A bright-eyed red with hints of briar patch with a whiff of gun smoke"  
This 2007 Rabbit Ranch is a classic Central Otago Pinot Noir, vibrant and fruity with a soft tail. Awarded: **98/100 Rabbit Parker**

Rabbit Ranch is a collaborative venture, formed by a group of vineyards that were all individually once part of a Central Otago sheep station. Banding together to form Rabbit Ranch, they have enlisted the help of Chard Farm as a production partner, and secured the services of John Wallace, Chard Farm's Winemaker, and Pinot Noir producer of many years.

The Vineyards of Rabbit Ranch are located in the Cromwell Basin, predominately in the Lowburn area. They are all on light, stony soils, on areas that were once part of the glacial riverbed that flowed through the Cromwell area.

Medium depth cherry red with a crimson-purple glow. Savoury smelling with the sweetness of oak and cherry fruit pushing through. There's a feral complexity to the flavor with that typical Central Otago herbaceousness. Smooth and velvety, almost creamy, with a nice bite to the finish and a sweet fruited smoky aftertaste.



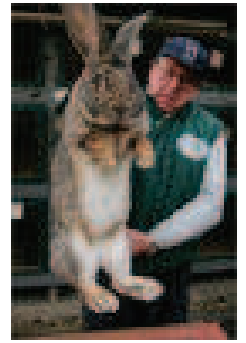
*Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.*  
Purveyors of Fine Wines & Spirits, New York, NY  
[www.DreyfusAshby.com](http://www.DreyfusAshby.com)



RABBIT RANCH



CENTRAL OTAGO  
WINE OF NEW ZEALAND



## Rabbit Ranch Sauvignon Blanc 2007

### Mr. MacGregor's Comments:

Rabbits that once overran my run holdings in the South Island have now been replaced with grapevines. In the North of the South we have replaced the endemic population of rabbits with the new epidemic in the region – Sauvignon Blanc. The fruit from these vines forms the backbone of this wine. We also have some Sauvignon Blanc planted at the original homestead in the South of the South, and this parcel of grapes has made a wild and feral impact on the wine. Although my neighbours Mr. and Mrs. C Cocky believe that 2007 was a better year for milk than wine, frankly they don't know their udders from a crusher! 2007 has been a fantastic grape harvest with loads of very ripe, tasty fruit. Perfect!

### What to expect:

As soon as you lift the glass this wine will literally leap into your senses like the startled rabbit it is. It is bounding with fresh fruit aromas and flavours of passionfruit and grapefruit with vegetable garden flavours of capsicum, tomato and green beans. This wine is a veritable smorgasbord of tastes. - 5 stars *Jancis Rabbitson*.



Imported by  
**Dreyfus, Ashby & Co.**  
[www.DreyfusAshby.com](http://www.DreyfusAshby.com)