



## Premium US Restaurant Group Selects Pinot Noir from Central Otago

**CROMWELL, Central Otago, New Zealand, 16 December, 2011.** Fox Restaurant Concepts, a boutique restaurant group with 31 outlets across the United States, has released a premium Central Otago Pinot Noir as part of their specially-commissioned wine program and chosen Misha's Vineyard as their first New Zealand partner.

The restaurant group's unique wine program, driven by Regan Jasper, Fox Restaurant Concepts Sommelier, has worked closely with selected winemakers from leading wineries over the past eight years to craft a Pinot Noir specifically and exclusively for Fox Restaurant Concepts. The launch of Misha's Vineyard *Fox Block Eight* represents the first time there has been a partnership with a winery from outside the United States.

"I choose Pinot Noir as our custom wine because it's my personal favourite and it's the most universal wine. The Pinot's I blend have bright fruit and are high in acidity, so they are easy to drink alone, and they also pair well with food" said Jasper. Jasper flew to Central Otago in March 2011 to work alongside Misha's Vineyard winemaker Olly Masters on a blend of Pinot Noir that was destined to be *Fox Block Eight*.

"Working with Regan to have a New Zealand Pinot Noir featured as part of his Fox Block program has been a very rewarding project but it's particularly exciting for us as it's also our first foray in the US market which is predicted to be the market with the biggest potential for premium New Zealand Pinot Noir" said Misha Wilkinson, co-owner of Misha's Vineyard along with her husband Andy.

The fact that the Misha's Vineyard Pinot Noir is the eighth in the series of Fox Block wines is very auspicious given the connection the vineyard has with Chinese gold-mining and the number eight which is a particularly lucky number in Chinese culture. "Our spectacular lakefront location marks the site where many Cantonese discovered gold in the 1880s and we have an uncanny recurrence of the number 8 on the vineyard" explains Wilkinson. Misha's Vineyard is located on State Highway 8, on land that was originally known as Sheep Run 238 and the direction of the vineyard rows are at 288 degrees on the compass.

"We also have 8 clones of Pinot Noir on the vineyard, our first commercial vintage was in 2008 and we have 8 wines in our range. And as luck would have it, the Pinot Noir for this Fox Block wine just happened to be blended on the 8th March so of course it was destined to be *Fox Block Eight* added Wilkinson.

The Fox Block wine program began modestly, producing just 140 cases in its launch year, but has grown to 2,200 cases for *Fox Block Eight*. Each year Jasper chooses a different winery to work with selecting them according to a set of criteria which requires the vineyard to own all of its own vineyard land and to be producing Pinot Noir at a very premium level. Jasper admits that it is getting more challenging to find the right wineries to enter into this sort of partnership. Prior to working with Misha's Vineyard, Jasper worked with wineries from Oregon and California including Patricia Green, ZD Winery, Davis Bynum and Calera.



Misha's Vineyard *Fox Block Eight* has just been launched and is now available at four outlets and by the beginning of next year it will be rolled out across all Fox Restaurant Concept establishments in the United States.

"It's been a great partnership with the Fox Restaurant Concept team so far and we hope this auspicious wine brings us continuing success in the US market" says Wilkinson.

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\* **Editors Note:** *A range of high resolution photos of Misha's Vineyard "Fox Block Eight" bottles and labels are available on request.*

**About Misha's Vineyard Wines Limited** [www.mishasvineyard.com](http://www.mishasvineyard.com)

Misha's Vineyard is located on one of the most spectacular sites in New Zealand at the edge of Lake Dunstan in the Bendigo sub-region of Central Otago. The sun drenched north-west facing terraces of the 57 hectare (140 acres) estate provide the optimal conditions for producing world-class Pinot Noir and a range of aromatic white varieties. The 'no compromise' philosophy behind Misha's Vineyard wines required an exacting sustainable viticulture regime, hand-picking of the estate-grown fruit and considerate as well as minimalist winemaking methodologies. Under internationally renowned winemaker Olly Masters, the highly anticipated range of Misha's Vineyard wines won critical acclaim from their launch in 2008 and in 2010 they were named one of **New Zealand's Top 20 Producers** by (UK) Decanter magazine.

**About Fox Restaurant Concepts** [www.foxrc.com](http://www.foxrc.com)

Fox Restaurant Concepts (FRC) is the privately held parent company of a collection of unique concepts in Arizona, California, Colorado, Texas and Kansas. Founder Sam Fox began with a single restaurant, Wildflower in 1998, and today heads a dynamic, growing restaurant group now encompassing 12 concepts across 31 restaurants with more than 1,900 employees. The concepts range from upscale casual and fast casual, to mixed food service and retail operations. Led by creative visionary CEO, Sam Fox, FRC will continue to create, develop and build successful and innovative new and existing concepts in high-traffic centers in key markets. FRC is committed to supporting its communities and donates hundreds of thousands of dollars annually to various non-profit entities through donations, fundraisers, community partnerships, and special events.