

CHAMISAL

VINEYARDS

FINTAN DU FRESNE • GENERAL MANAGER & WINEMAKER

From an early age, Fintan “Fin” du Fresne watched some of the finest Pinot Noir in the world show up on his doorstep in the form of media samples. As the son of prominent New Zealand wine journalist Karl du Fresne, Fin grew up with wine integrated into his life. Originally from the southern end of New Zealand’s North Island, Fin graduated from Victoria University of Wellington at the age of twenty with a degree in geology. Most graduates of the program headed straight to work on an oil rig, but Fin was not interested in that life. He was interested in learning more about and exploring the relationship between land and how it affected grape growing, essentially the concept of how geology affected terroir, so he changed tracks and obtained a post-graduate degree in Viticulture and Enology at Lincoln University in Canterbury.

Upon completion of his viticulture and enology degree, Fin worked as a viticulturist at Martinborough Vineyards, one of New Zealand’s pioneering Pinot Noir producers. During his

stint there, Fin spent four months in the U.S. working the 2001 harvest at Calera Wine Company in California’s Central Coast with legendary Pinot Noir winemaker Josh Jensen and his assistant Terry Culton. Jensen’s dedication to Burgundian varietals and his deep knowledge of soil types shaped Fin’s love for the Central Coast and his purist ideals about winemaking. After two years with Martinborough, Fin spent a few years learning about wine in Europe; his background in geology allowed him to keep a flat in London, spend six months a year working on oil rigs in Denmark and Scotland, and spend the other six months visiting prominent wine regions including Burgundy, the Rhone Valley, and Tuscany.

On his way back to New Zealand in 2003, Fin was invited to work harvest at Adelaida Cellars in Paso Robles, where he met his future wife, Erin. Fin was then named assistant winemaker at Adelaida. Since New Zealand harvest is during the opposite season, Fin returned home to work two more harvests (Matahiwi Estate in Wairarapa and Ngatarawa Winery – known as Glazebrook in the U.S. – in Hawkes Bay), and, back in the States, took on consulting projects with various Paso Robles area wineries. In 2006, Fin joined Chamisal Vineyards, a premier Pinot Noir and Chardonnay winery in the Edna Valley of San Luis Obispo County, as winemaker.

When he is not finessing the wines of Chamisal Vineyards, Fin enjoys snowboarding, mountain biking, scuba diving, and spending time with his family. Fin and his wife Erin have two young children, Liam and Elish. Their dog Meg is a winery mascot, who is often found napping around the winery, keeping a close eye on things.

