



## VINTNER VIXEN

### REMIX CHATS TO RACHAEL CARTER OF SOHO WINES ABOUT FASHION STYLE IN THE WORLD OF WINE

**Where did your desire to start Soho Wines come from and how did you manage to pull it off?** I owned a wine screwcap company which was very successful but totally not me at all. I noticed how many brands came across my desk that were all the same or failed. Plus I like the idea of having three winemakers from three different wine regions rather than just one winemaker and one region. I saw a great opportunity for a unique brand; I had access to the best winemakers in the country and my father owns vineyards on Waiheke Island and in Marlborough. The concept was to create a wine company that was sexy, fun, quality focused and reflected the social network associated with wine. I sold my company in July 2008 and pitched my concept to my three favourite winemakers, who signed up immediately. My cousin Rebecca Fitzgibbon (Soho's graphic artist) and I then got to work on the packaging. From there I hired my fantastic team that cover admin, sales and marketing.

**We love that you list fashion designers like Tom Ford and the late Alexander McQueen as inspirations for Soho Wine. How do you apply that 'fashion' edge to your wine?**

Each Soho wine has its own distinctive style and personality. With this in mind it was important to give each wine a unique name and story, e.g. McQueen Pinot Noir (Alexander), Valentino Syrah, Stella Sav Blanc (McCartney) and Westwood Rose (Vivienne) to name a few. Each wine varietal reflects the designer, their personality and style. Some of the most desirable commodities are packaged in beautiful stylish simplistic packaging; I believe wine should be no different. For me there is no one better in the fashion industry than Tom Ford, who inspired the Soho packaging and marketing which is contemporary, stylish and a little risqué.

**Is the 'fashion industry' your target market?** It's a pretty big part of it and for sure we would love to be the wine of choice at Fashion Weeks around the world but I guess fashion is more of the 'inspiration' behind the brand. Soho's actual market is so widespread; from fine dining restaurants to one of my faves, the Ponsonby Bowling Club, I guess the old boys in their whites are pretty stylish though (smiles).

**You currently have nine wines in your stable, are there any more in the works?** I'd like to work with a French Champagne house and create a Champagne for Soho as well as add a Riesling to our portfolio. Soho Beer Co has a nice ring to it too...

**Tell us a little about each of your three wine makers.** Grant Taylor (Central

Otago) is the 'godfather' of New Zealand Pinot Noir. He has won best Pinot Noir at the London International Wine Challenge not once but twice – a feat achieved by no other winemaker. Grant also won best Pinot Noir in New Zealand for our Soho McQueen in the 2010 Cuisine magazine wine awards. Grant describes this year's McQueen as immediately loveable, he'd like to roll in it like a dog does when it finds something that really excites it. Dave Clouston (Marlborough) is our golden boy, he wins a lot of gold medals and has golden hair and eyebrows. His wines are so uniquely clean, pure and consistent with a strong focus on balance, length and texture. Pete Turner (Waiheke Island) from his time in France has definitely given our portfolio a French flair. Pete's wines are super elegant and always interesting. I have to say they are often favourites amongst the wine industry trade and wine writers.

**You currently export to Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong, California, New York and Fiji. Fiji is an interesting choice... Fiji is because I love the place and people, and it's where I go to relax. I know the other markets probably seem more in keeping with Soho's branding but basically any country that understands our brand and wants to import Soho is totally cool by me.**

**Are you a red or a white kind of girl and do you have a personal favourite from the Soho Wines collection?** I love both but I'm definitely more partial to white. My personal fave is the Soho Carter Chardonnay 2010. It's a subtle Burgundian style with superb balance and delicious flavours, plus it's named after my favourite four-legged boy, my Dalmatian dog Maximus Carter.

**What are your plans for the future of Soho Wines?** Short term plan is find a distributor in London, with wines named Westwood, Stella, McQueen and Jagger we are ready to roll. I have the most amazing staff that have taken Soho from strength to strength so I would like to think we have got lots of exciting growth and good times in our future. Soho's vision is to be one of the most powerful (but understated) wine brands in the world.

**Aside from wine what are your passions?** Food, films, music, fashion, yoga, beer, watching Entourage, hanging out with my family and friends and of course my three M's... my baby girl Maren, my spotty dog Maxi and my bf Matt.