

Media Release

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### Tool frontman heads down under to Pinot Noir NZ 2017

Lead singer and lyricist for alternative metal and art-rock acts Tool, Puscifer and A Perfect Circle, and winemaker, America's Maynard James Keenan (MJK) is heading to Pinot Noir NZ 2017.

Perhaps best known as a Grammy award-winning vocalist, Keenan is the man behind Caduceus Cellars and Merkin Vineyards in Northern Arizona, where he now lives.

Keenan says for him this visit to New Zealand, the first in a wine capacity, is as much about education as sharing his own journey.

"A major drawcard for visiting Pinot Noir NZ 2017 is hearing and learning about how New Zealand winemakers use Pinot Noir to express their own individual sites, styles and persona."

"I feel like there is a huge range of expression in New Zealand Pinot Noir, compared to Pinot Noir in other countries," he said.

Keenan is intrigued to see how a relatively young New Zealand wine industry is able to move collectively to produce and promote a first-class, world-renowned product.

A vibrant injection into an already stellar line up, Keenan joins keynote speakers Jancis Robinson OBE MW and Ken Ohashi MW at the Pinot 2017 celebration.

Pinot Noir NZ chairman Ben Glover said; "Adding the artistic talents of MJK, who is initially from another expressive medium, to our event is a real point of difference and allows to really challenge our boundaries."

"We're keen to explore how personal experiences add richness to the industry's evolution, which MJK's story of music and wine emulates," Mr Glover said.

As the biggest event of its kind on the planet, Pinot Noir NZ 2017 runs for three days from 31 January 2017 on the Wellington waterfront. Attendees will be immersed in an aspirational and thought-provoking 3-day programme, which explores and embraces New Zealand Pinot Noir, its people and its underlying sense of place.

Held every four years, 117 producers from New Zealand's diverse Pinot Noir producing regions will come together to showcase over 300 wines, attracting some of the greatest international minds on the subject of Pinot Noir. It will provide an unparalleled insight into the New Zealand wine scene.

Registrations for Pinot Noir NZ 2017 open on 1 March 2016, and are limited. They can be booked via the website [www.pinotnz.co.nz](http://www.pinotnz.co.nz)

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## Biography

**Maynard James Keenan** (born **James Herbert Keenan**; April 17, 1964),<sup>[4]</sup> often referred to by his initials **MJK**, is an American musician, record producer, winemaker, and actor, best known as the vocalist for Grammy Award-winning American [progressive metal](#) band [Tool](#).

Keenan is originally from [Ohio](#), but spent his high school and college years in [Michigan](#). After serving in the [United States Army](#) in the early 1980s, he attended [Kendall College of Art and Design](#) in [Grand Rapids](#). He moved to Los Angeles, California in 1988 to pursue a career in interior design and set construction. Shortly thereafter, he formed the band Tool with [Adam Jones](#).

Keenan is also the lead singer of [A Perfect Circle](#). In 2003, he created [Puscifer](#) as a side project and has subsequently released three studio albums. Since rising to fame, Keenan has been noted as being a recluse; however, he does emerge to support charitable causes.

In addition to his music career, he has performed improvisational sketch comedy and ventured into acting. He currently owns Merkin Vineyards and the associated winery, [Caduceus Cellars](#), and also partly owns Stronghold Vineyards, all of which are located in [Arizona](#), where he lives. Among other business ventures, he is a partner in the Los Angeles restaurant Cobras & Matadors, and also owns an [organic produce market](#) in [Cornville, Arizona](#), which features a food court and a tasting room for his wines.