

## Media Release

10 August 2009

### **ENTRIES OPEN FOR 2009 AIR NEW ZEALAND WINE AWARDS**

- *Air New Zealand Wine Awards now carbon neutral*
- *Entries to be managed 100% online*

Entries are now open for the 2009 Air New Zealand Wine Awards, which is now carbon neutral following its achievement of carboNZero<sup>Cert™</sup> certification this year.

Chris Yorke, global marketing director for New Zealand Winegrowers, said a number of changes have been made to the Awards this year, further enhancing its focus on sustainability.

“We’ve had a sustainable focus for the past three years, with the inclusion of pure bronze, pure silver, pure gold and pure elite gold medals for sustainable wines and the Bell Gully Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy,” Mr Yorke said.

“But for the first time this year the entire Awards programme has achieved carboNZero certification. This means we have measured and reduced the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the event, and offset the remaining unavoidable emissions by purchasing verified carbon credits from credible New Zealand projects.

“Changes include the online management of all entries to reduce paper, recycling of all the wine bottles and cardboard boxes, and encouraging wineries to use cardboard rather than polystyrene packaging,” Mr Yorke said.

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards, the country’s most prestigious wine competition, are run by New Zealand’s grapegrowing and winemaking industry body New Zealand Winegrowers, with support from naming-rights sponsor Air New Zealand.

“The competition has been around for close to 30 years now, and has long been regarded as the official competition of the New Zealand wine industry.

“New Zealand wines are internationally renowned for their high quality, and with the Awards becoming totally carbon neutral, we hope New Zealand wineries will become increasingly well-known for their attention to sustainability,” Mr Yorke said.

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards is an independent competition and has a rigorous judging process undertaken by a panel consisting of experienced judges from New Zealand and around the world.

This year's awards have attracted some of the world's top judges including the president of the International Wine and Food Society and Master of Wine (MW), John Avery, and CH'NG Poh Tiong, publisher of *The Wine Review*, the oldest and most established wine publication in South-East Asia, Hong Kong and China. The other overseas judges are Australians Huon Hooke, a leading wine writer, and Geoff Merrill, owner of Geoff Merrill Wines.

"We're very pleased to have such an experienced and well-respected line-up of international judges on the panel this year," Mr Yorke said.

The top awards up for grabs are the Air New Zealand Champion Wine of the Show Trophy and the Bell Gully Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy. Trophies and medals are also awarded for each wine varietal, with pure medals awarded to sustainable wines.

In the 2008 Air New Zealand Wine Awards, 367 bronze, 220 silver, 56 gold and 28 elite gold medals were awarded. In addition, 32 pure bronze, 19 pure silver, four pure gold and three pure elite gold medals were awarded.

Entries for the awards close on 18 September with judging taking place at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland from 2-4 November.

This year's Air New Zealand Wine Awards gala dinner will be held in Christchurch on Saturday November 21.

For further information visit [www.airnzwineawards.co.nz](http://www.airnzwineawards.co.nz)

**ENDS**

### **Judges biographies**

#### ***CH'NG Poh Tiong***

- Publisher of *The Wine Review*, the oldest and most established wine publication in South-East Asia, Hong Kong and China

- Publisher of the world's first *Guide to Bordeaux in Chinese* and the annual *Asian Sommelier Guide*
- Regional chairman (Middle East, Far East & Asia) for *Decanter* magazine's World Wine Awards
- Founder of Sommelier Seminars and Sommeliers of Asia, and organised the first ever sommelier seminar in China in 2004
- Founder of the International Congress of Chinese Cuisine & Wine (ICCCW) and held the first ICCCW in Beijing in 2008

### ***John Avery MW***

- Chairman of Avery's Wine Merchants in the United Kingdom
- Honorary president of the International Wine and Food Society
- Was chief judge at the New Zealand Wine Show in 1978
- Was the first retailer in the United Kingdom to import New Zealand wines in the early 1970s, and the first to import a comprehensive range, from seven wineries, in 1979
- Has been involved in the United Kingdom wine trade for over 40 years and judged at major wine competitions around the world

### ***Huon Hooke***

- Leading wine writer based in Sydney
- Has been writing on wine for 26 years
- Has published 17 books and co-authored the annual *Penguin Good Australian Wine Guide* for 14 years
- In 2008 he was named Australia's Wine Communicator of the Year
- Has been a wine show judge for 22 years and judges about 10 competitions in Australia and overseas

### ***Geoff Merrill***

- Owner and co-founder of Geoff Merrill Wines in Australia
- Formerly senior winemaker at Chateau Reynella where he began to produce wines under his own "Geoff Merrill" label
- Has worked as consultant winemaker in Italy to UK supermarket Sainsbury
- Since 1980 Geoff Merrill Wines have won 27 trophies, 143 gold, 373 silver and 1181 bronze medals

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