



MEDIA RELEASE
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2009 AIR NEW ZEALAND WINE AWARDS TO BE HELD IN SOUTH ISLAND

New Zealand Winegrowers today announced that the 2009 Air New Zealand Wine Awards gala dinner will be held in Christchurch on Saturday 21 November.

Steve Smith, Chair of Judges for the Air New Zealand Wine Awards, said the South Island wine growing regions play a significant role in New Zealand's growing reputation as a producer of quality wine.

"We're delighted Christchurch will provide the backdrop on behalf of these regions for this year's Air New Zealand Wine Awards."

He said last year's Air New Zealand Wine Awards attracted a record number of entries.

"The competition is one of New Zealand's most internationally-respected and longest-running award programmes and we're anticipating strong entry numbers for 2009," Mr Smith said.

Organised by New Zealand Winegrowers, the Air New Zealand Wine Awards attracted 1,750 entries in 2008.

Air New Zealand Deputy Chief Executive Norm Thompson said the airline was proud to continue its long-standing association with the wine industry through the Air New Zealand Wine Awards.

"We're really pleased to this year have the awards back in Christchurch, the gateway to the South Island and the city that our customers use to connect to a number of thriving wine regions. We look forward to another great crop of entries from talented winegrowers and winemakers throughout the country."

The Awards gala dinner will be held at the Christchurch Convention Centre.

2009 Air New Zealand Wine Awards key dates

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards gala dinner will be held at the Christchurch Convention Centre on **Saturday, 21 November**.

Judging will take place at the ASB Showgrounds in Auckland from **Monday 2 to Wednesday 4 November**.

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For further information please visit www.airnzwineawards.co.nz or contact:

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ABOUT THE AIR NEW ZEALAND WINE AWARDS

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards is the premier wine competition in New Zealand recognising excellence in winemaking. The competition is owned and organised by New Zealand Winegrowers, the national organisation for the country's 1,300 grape growers and winemakers.

In 2008, more than 1,750 wines were judged by 26 local and international judges to identify medal and trophy winners for each of the varietal categories.

Every year kiwi wine lovers eagerly await the results of the Air New Zealand Wine Awards to help them with their selection of quality New Zealand wine.

The competition has been running for close to 30 years and Air New Zealand has been the naming rights sponsor for the majority of the competition's history.

Following the judging a gala dinner is held to announce and celebrate the Elite Gold medal winning wines and the Trophy winning wines, and to acknowledge the talents of our winemakers.