

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand's top-quality wines recognised with announcement of Air New Zealand Wine Awards medal winners

- *Pinot Noir awarded most gold medals for the first time*
- *14 varietals awarded gold medals - diversity and quality of New Zealand wine demonstrated*
- *Riesling awarded 11 gold medals*

Pinot Noir has been awarded 21 gold medals at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards – the most gold medals awarded to a single varietal this year.

A total of 91 gold medals have been awarded across 14 different wine varietals, with the quality of this year's Pinot Noir lineup a highlight for the judging panel.

Riesling also impressed the judging panel, and a record 11 gold medals were awarded to wines of this varietal.

Organised by New Zealand Winegrowers, the 2008 Air New Zealand Wine Awards attracted a record 1,751 entries from New Zealand's 10 winegrowing regions. In addition to the 91 gold medals awarded, the 26-strong expert judging panel chaired by Steve Smith, Master of Wine (MW), awarded 239 silver medals and 399 bronze medals.

In the Sustainable category, introduced last year, a total of seven pure gold medals were awarded, all of which will now also vie for the prestigious Bell Gully Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy. Nineteen pure silver and 32 pure bronze medals were also awarded in the Sustainable category.

Of the seven pure gold medals, five were awarded to wines from the Hawkes Bay region.

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards trophies, including the overall Air New Zealand Champion Wine of the Show Trophy, the Bell Gully Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy and the elite gold medal winners, will be announced at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards gala dinner in Wellington on Saturday 22 November.

New Zealand Winegrowers' global marketing director, Chris Yorke, said the number of varietals achieving gold medals this year demonstrates that New Zealand winemakers are increasingly producing world-class wines across an exciting and diverse range of varietals.

"It's exciting to see Pinot Noir awarded a record number of gold medals this year, and aromatic varietals such as Riesling and Gewurztraminer continuing to perform strongly."

"The Air New Zealand Wine Awards celebrates winemaking excellence in New Zealand, and the high number of gold medals awarded to wines from all around the country this year reflects that."

International judge, Nick Stock, who also judged the competition in 2004, said he was impressed by the high standard of the entries this year.

“New Zealand excels at delivering wines that are direct and appealing. I’ve seen a huge increase in the quality of Syrah since 2004, however the line-up of Pinot Noir across a range of regions was a highlight for me.

Chair of judges, Steve Smith, MW, said that the Pinot Noir category was the highlight of the awards with 21 gold medals.

“Represented by two exceptional vintages in 2006 and 2007, the Pinot Noir entered this year was impressive. With gold medals awarded to wines from the Auckland, Wellington/Wairarapa, Marlborough and Otago regions, we are beginning to see great regional and sub-regional expression, and a real willingness from winemakers to stretch the winemaking boundaries,” Mr Smith said.

Sauvignon Blanc also performed strongly, picking up 13 gold medals.

“Marlborough continued to dominate the Sauvignon Blanc varietal, and the 10 gold medals awarded to 2008 Marlborough are as good as ever. It’s also pleasing to see two wines from Nelson and one wine from Waipara achieving gold medal status.”

Other highlights

Syrah, Riesling and Chardonnay were standout varieties, with 8, 11 and 15 gold medals respectively.

Syrah

Mr Smith said the eight gold medals awarded to Syrah is an impressive result, and the breadth of quality is also showing with a high number of silver and bronze medal wines.

“If the last two shows are an indication, Syrah is about to become a key feature of New Zealand’s prestige red wine offering, alongside Pinot Noir.”

Riesling

Mr Smith said this varietal shows remarkable regional diversity, with gold medals awarded across five regions.

“This is a spectacular result, particularly for the 2006 and 2007 vintages, which were awarded seven gold medals. The winning wines show the enormous potential Riesling has when made from carefully-selected vineyards with sensitive winemaking and a very clear definition of style.”

Chardonnay

“These are serious world-class wines, and in a variety with so much diversity in expression, the judges have awarded gold medals across a number of styles. This variety also demonstrates regional diversity, with four regions awarded gold medals.”

Air New Zealand Wine Awards dinner and results

The full medal results from the 2008 Air New Zealand Wine Awards are available from today at www.airnzwineawards.co.nz and www.wineshow.co.nz.

The trophy results will be available from midnight on Saturday 22 November 2008.

New Zealand Winegrowers and Air New Zealand will host 800 guests in Wellington at a black-tie gala dinner where guests will taste the trophy wines accompanied by a six course menu designed by Air New Zealand's team of Consultant Chefs including Rex Morgan from Citron Restaurant in Wellington; Peter Gordon from The Providores and Tapa Room in London and dine by Peter Gordon and Bellota in Auckland; Geoff Scott from Vinnies Restaurant in Auckland; and Shannon Wrightson, Former Executive Chef at the Fairmont Waterfront Hotel in Vancouver, Canada.

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Editors note:

Gold Medal Winning Wines by Varietal

Variety	Gold
Sauvignon Blanc	13
Chardonnay	15
Sparkling	1
Pinot Noir	21
Gewurztraminer	4
Pinot Gris	6
Riesling	11
Medium Sweet or Sweet Wine Trophy	3
Syrah	8
Cabernet Sauvignon and Blends based on Merlot and/or Cabernet Sauvignon	5
Other Red Varieties	1
Other White Varieties & Rosé	3
Total	91

Gold Medal Wines by Region

Regional Breakdown	Gold
Auckland	2
Canterbury	3
Gisborne	5

Hawkes Bay	26
Marlborough	29
Nelson	5
Northland	0
Otago	17
Waikato/BOP	0
Wellington/Wairarapa	4
Total	91

Gold Medal Winning Wines

The below gold medal-winning wines will compete for the following Air New Zealand Wine Awards trophies.

Pure gold medal winners will also compete for the Bell Gully Champion Sustainable Wine Trophy.

All trophy winners and elite gold medal winners will be announced at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards dinner on Saturday 22 November 2008.

O-I New Zealand Champion Chardonnay Trophy

Pure Gold

Kemblefield The Reserve Chardonnay 2007

Gold

Beach House Chardonnay 2007

Brunton Road Chardonnay 2007

Clearview Reserve Chardonnay 2007

Coopers Creek Swamp Reserve Chardonnay 2007

Corbans Private Bin Hawkes Bay Chardonnay 2006

Montana Ormond 'O' Gisborne Chardonnay 2006

Montana Terroir Series Stuart Block Chardonnay 2006

Sacred Hill Wine Thief Series Chardonnay 2007

Vidal Reserve Hawkes Bay Chardonnay 2007

Villa Maria Estate Reserve Barrique Fermented Chardonnay 2007

Villa Maria Estate Single Vineyard Ihumatao Chardonnay 2007

Villa Maria Estate Single Vineyard Keltern Chardonnay 2007

Guala Closures New Zealand Champion Sauvignon Blanc Trophy

Gold

Boundary Vineyards Rapaura Road Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Drylands Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Eradus Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Forrest Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2007

Goldwater Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Huntaway Reserve Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Lake Chalice The Raptor Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Saint Clair Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Spinyback Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Tohu Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Waimea Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Waipara Hills Southern Cross Selection Waipara Sauvignon Blanc 2008

JF Hillebrand New Zealand Ltd Champion Pinot Noir Trophy

Gold

Brennan Pinot Noir 2007

Burnt Spur Martinborough Pinot Noir 2007
Hinton Estate Vineyard Pinot Noir 2007
Judge Rock Pinot Noir 2007
Margrain Home Block Pinot Noir 2007
Mount Dottrel Pinot Noir 2006
Nevis Bluff Pinot Noir 2006
Peregrine Pinot Noir 2007
Rockburn Pinot Noir 2007
Sallys Pinch Pinot Noir 2007
Tarras Vineyards The Canyon Pinot Noir 2007
Villa Maria Estate Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Pinot Noir 2007

Nissan New Zealand Ltd Champion Sparkling Wine Trophy

Gold

Daniel Le Brun Blanc de Blanc 2000

BDO Spicers Champion Other White Styles & Rosé Trophy

Gold

Elephant Hill Rosé 2008
Villa Maria Estate Cellar Selection Viognier 2007
Villa Maria Estate Single Vineyard Omahu Gravels Viognier 2007

Business World Travel Champion Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot/Cabernet Blend Trophy

Pure Gold

C J Pask Declaration Cabernet Merlot Malbec 2006

Gold

Church Road Cuve Series Cabernet Sauvignon 2005
Selaks The Favourite Merlot Cabernet 2007

Fruited Supplies Champion Syrah Trophy

Pure Gold

C J Pask Declaration Syrah 2007
Crossroads Winery Elms Vineyard Hawkes Bay Reserve Syrah 2007
Mission Estate Reserve Syrah 2007

Gold

Church Road Reserve Syrah 2007
Vidal Reserve Syrah 2006

HortResearch Champion Riesling Trophy

Gold

Forrest The Doctors' Riesling 2008
Haymaker Waipara Riesling 2008
Morton Estate White Label Marlborough Riesling 2006
Nga Waka Three Paddles Martinborough Riesling 2008
Sanctuary Riesling 2004
Spinyback Riesling 2007
Waimea Dry Riesling 2006

The Huka Retreats Champion Pinot Gris Trophy

Pure Gold

Palliser Estate Pinot Gris 2007

Gold

Clayridge Pinot Gris 2008
Lamont Pinot Gris 2008
Montana Reserve Hawkes Bay Pinot Gris 2008
Mt Rosa Pinot Gris 2007

Shingle Peak Reserve Pinot Gris 2008

Label and Litho Champion Gewurztraminer Trophy

Gold

Hunter's Gewurztraminer 2008

Montana Patutahi 'P' Gewurztraminer 2007

Saint Clair Pioneer Block 12 Lone Gum Gewurztraminer 2007

New Holland Agriculture Champion Merlot Trophy

No Gold Medals awarded in this category

Newstalk ZB Champion Other Red Styles Trophy

Gold

Trinity Hill Gimblett Gravels Hawkes Bay Tempranillo 2007

Wineworks Champion Medium Sweet or Sweet Wine Trophy

Pure Gold

Seifried Estate Winemakers Collection Sweet Agnes Riesling Ice Wine 2008

Gold

Forrest The Doctors' Noble Chenin Blanc 2008

Hunter's Hukapapa Dessert Riesling 2007

The **New World Champion Open White Wine Trophy** and **Fairfax Media Champion Open Red Wine Trophy** will be awarded to the top wine in their classes with stock levels declared in excess of 22,500 litres.

The below wines entered into the exhibition category will vie for the following exhibition trophies. The exhibition category is for wines with a minimum of 450 litres.

Corbans Viticulture Champion Exhibition White or Sparkling Wine Trophy

Allan Scott THE MOORLANDS Marlborough Riesling 2006

Desert Heart Riesling 2007

Greystone Waipara Riesling 2007

Hawkesbridge Sophie's Vineyard Marlborough Chardonnay 2007

Hunter's Riesling 2006

Misha's Vineyard "The Gallery" Gewurztraminer 2008

The Loop Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2008

Villa Maria Estate Reserve Hawkes Bay Chardonnay 2006

Kapiti Champion Exhibition Red Wine Trophy

Bannock Brae Estate Barrel Selection Pinot Noir 2006

Cable Bay Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2007

Clearview Old Olive Block 2006

Esk Valley Reserve Syrah 2006

Leaning Rock Pinot Noir 2006

Lowburn Ferry Pinot Noir 2006

Mission Estate Jewelstone Cabernet Sauvignon Cabernet Franc Petit Verdot 2007

Nautilus Four Barriques Pinot Noir 2007

Saint Clair Omaka Reserve Pinot Noir 2007

Villa Maria Estate Cellar Selection Syrah 2006

Villa Maria Estate Reserve Pinot Noir 2006

Villa Maria Estate Reserve Syrah 2006

Villa Maria Estate Single Vineyard Seddon Pinot Noir 2006

West Brook Waimauku Pinot Noir 2007

