

MEDIA RELEASE

21 August 2008

MAJOR WINE INDUSTRY CONFERENCE OPENS WITH FOCUS ON GROWING AND SELLING QUALITY

Delegates at the major annual wine industry conference in Christchurch today are being encouraged to focus on continuing to grow and sell quality wines as New Zealand's exports increase in value and volume.

Chairman of New Zealand Winegrowers, Stuart Smith opened the 14th annual Romeo Bragato conference today outlining some of the responsibilities and challenges that come with the increasing importance of the industry to New Zealand.

Minister for Economic Development Pete Hodgson and National Party Leader John Key also addressed the delegates.

Romeo Bragato 2008, a three day conference which runs from 21-23 August in Christchurch at the Christchurch Convention Centre, is New Zealand's major conference for the grape and wine industry, and named after one of the pioneers of the New Zealand wine industry.

The conference, themed *Growing and selling quality*, will see world-renowned Professor of Viticulture Andy Reynolds, of the Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute at Brock University in Canada, give the Bragato address then will look at viticultural practices in cooler regions and how this influences grape and wine flavour.

Other speakers at the three-day conference include:

- Hong Kong-based wine expert Simon Tam, owner of the Hong Kong International Wine Centre, who will give the Rabobank keynote address, "Marketing New Zealand Wines into Asia"
- DIVA New Zealand chief executive, Carl Robinson who will host a forum outlining success and challenges in North Asia's wine markets, and how New Zealand exporters can develop a positioning and strategy to suit this market.
- Erica Crawford of Constellation Wines New Zealand, who will discuss driving up value of New Zealand wines
- CSIRO Plant Industry Australia's Peter Clingeffer who will discuss how to grow grapes to meet wineries specifications

- Carmo Vasconcelos, senior scientist with HortResearch's Marlborough Wine Centre, joins colleagues Marc Greven and Rob Agnew to present a selection of New Zealand research into the wine industry, including a case study of Pinot Noir, and research into portable non-destructive technology for quality grape growing.

The esteemed Romeo Bragato Wine Awards, Young Viticulturist of the Year and winner of the Silver Secateur Award will be announced at a gala dinner on Saturday, 21 August.

For more information on events and key note speakers including times visit www.bragato.org.nz.

Editors' notes

The Romeo Bragato conference is named after a man who arrived on New Zealand shores on February 19, 1895. Fresh from Italy with his Diploma in Viticulture and Oenology in hand, the then New Zealand Government escorted Romeo Bragato from one end of the country to the other to visit and advise on our local vineyards.

Regrettably his work was not acted on and lay forgotten for over 60 years. Dusted off by a few pioneers in the 1970s and early 1980s, many of the recommendations of Romeo Bragato form the basis of modern New Zealand viticulture practices.

For further information and copies of speechnotes please contact:

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