

MEDIA RELEASE
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**MAJOR WINE CONFERENCE TO FOCUS
ON THE FUTURE OF THE INDUSTRY**

New Zealand's grape growing and wine industry's position in the global wine industry will be top of the agenda when the 15th Romeo Bragato conference opens later this month, with the theme: *Where do we go from here?*

The annual Romeo Bragato conference is New Zealand's major technical conference for the grape growing and wine industry, and is named after one of the pioneers of the New Zealand industry. The conference's Rabobank Address, delivered by Ben Russell, general manager of Rabobank's Rural Banking team, will focus on the global wine business and where it's heading in the current economic times.

New Zealand Winegrowers science and innovations manager Philip Manson said in this uncertain economy, the industry needs to continue to focus on delivering quality, and on commissioning industry research to support this.

"The New Zealand wine industry has long been renowned for its quality and commitment to continuous improvement. "Romeo Bragato provides a key opportunity for the industry to gather and share ideas to help maintain this focus," Philip says.

The conference's key Bragato Address "Past, present and future – impacts of research and technology on quality wine production" will be delivered by Professor Sakkie Pretorius, Managing Director of The Australian Wine Research Institute. Professor Pretorius believes that research inspired by an understanding of the fundamentals and considerations of future use promises to be the most powerful driver of the industry's technological progress.

"New Zealand Winegrowers is dedicated to supporting and driving research into the industry, so it's fantastic to have Sakkie here to share his thoughts on research and its impact on the industry," Philip said.

Also on the speaking panel is Mission Estate Winery CEO Peter Holley, who will discuss the control and elimination of Type 3 leaf roll virus. Peter will be supported

by Professor Gerhard Pietersen of Citrus Research International at the University of Pretoria in South Africa, and Geoff Thorpe, of Riversun Nursery Ltd. In Gisborne.

Other key speakers include Andrew Barber of The Agribusiness Group who will present the BEST tool for reducing energy use for wineries. Also in this session Stuart Dykes of Corban's Hawke's Bay Winery and Peter Mann of Yealands Estate Wines will share how they have reduced energy use for their wineries.

Tony Profitt of Precision Viticulture, Australia, on discuss the value of mapping for Australian vineyards; and Kim Thorp of advertising agency Assignment Group, will report on the evolution of food and wine tourism in Hawke's Bay since 1990.

The conference programme also features New Zealand's only awards for the grapegrower - the Romeo Bragato Wine Awards, the Young Viticulturalist of the Year and the Silver Secateurs awards.

The esteemed Romeo Bragato Wine Awards will be announced at the gala dinner on Saturday 22 August, followed by the announcement of the Young Viticulturist of the Year and the winner of the Silver Secateur Award on day 23 August.

This year the Romeo Bragato conference will be held at the Pettigrew-Green Arena in Napier from 20-22 August.

Further information is available at 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.

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