

MEDIA RELEASE

NEW ZEALAND CLEANS UP IN TRI NATIONS WINE CHALLENGE

As the All Blacks battled our tri-nations rivals on the rugby fields, New Zealand wines have outshone Australian and South African wines at the annual Tri Nations Wine Challenge in Sydney.

New Zealand has been named the top country overall, winning eight trophies, 11 double gold medals and 10 gold medals in the competition, which compares the best wines from New Zealand, Australia and South Africa.

This year New Zealand wines took home the White Wine of Show trophy, as well as the Sparkling, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Bordeaux Blends and Dessert Wines trophies.

New Zealand's representative on the judging panel and Master of Wine (MW) Bob Campbell, said winning the Challenge is a significant achievement for New Zealand as the competition has been dominated by Australian wines each year since its beginnings seven years ago.

"The quality of New Zealand wines entered this year really demonstrates the ongoing evolution of wine quality in New Zealand," Mr Campbell said.

"The results reflect the continuing strength of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc in spite of a challenging 2008 vintage, and the quality of our Pinot Noir, Syrah and Merlot. The excellent red wine vintage experienced in Hawke's Bay and Central Otago in 2007 are also evident in this year's results."

Bob said it's particularly significant that a New Zealand wine has again won the Shiraz/Syrah category, which it has won more often than Australia despite Shiraz/Syrah being Australia's signature varietal wine.

"Australia has around 45,000 hectares of Shiraz/Syrah planted, compared with around 500 hectares planted in New Zealand, so it's great that we can compete with Australia in this category," Mr Campbell said.

Wines entered in the Tri Nations Wine Challenge were picked by a selector from each country as one of their top wines for each class. Wineries were then invited to send samples to Sydney to be blind tasted by an panel of respected wine judges from New Zealand, South Africa and Australia.

Alongside Bob Campbell on this year's judging panel was Michael Fridjhon, South Africa's most respected wine judge, commentator and liquor industry strategist, and Huon Hooke, one of Australia's most respected wine writers with over 20 years experience.

New Zealand Winegrowers global marketing director, Chris Yorke said it's great to see New Zealand coming out on top of the Tri Nations Wine Challenge for the first time this year.

“The results of this year’s competition show that New Zealand wines are continuing to develop in terms of quality and are beginning to perform exceptionally across a wide range of varietal wines.”

A full list of trophy, double gold and gold medal winning wines is attached. For further information visit <http://www.trinationswine.com/>

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