

AIR NEW ZEALAND 
WINE AWARDS



MEDIA RELEASE

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For immediate release

Judging starts next week for 30th Air New Zealand Wine Awards

Judging for the country's premier wine competition kicks off on Monday in Auckland, signalling the beginning of an intense three days of selecting New Zealand's top drops for 2016.

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards is widely considered to be the country's most prestigious wine competition, which recognises excellence in winemaking. 2016 marks the 30th anniversary of the partnership between New Zealand Winegrowers and naming rights sponsor Air New Zealand.

Twenty-six judges, including American wine writer and educator Michael Franz, and Australian wine writer Ralph Kyte-Powell, will taste 1,402 wines over the three days, and select the stand out wines in each of the 15 classes.

Following the trend of recent years, Pinot Noir has received the most entries with 267 (19%) followed by Sauvignon Blanc with 241 (17%), Chardonnay with 175 (12%) and Pinot Gris with 167 (12%). Rosé has jumped ahead of Syrah and Riesling with 100 entries (7%) this year, reflecting the surge in popularity of this variety in New Zealand and globally.

New Zealand Winegrowers' CEO, Philip Gregan, says excitement for this year's competition is building. "The Air New Zealand Wine Awards is eagerly anticipated by the New Zealand wine industry as it provides great exposure for the medal winning wines and the category as a whole," says Mr Gregan.

The gold medal winning wines will be announced on Wednesday 26 October, and the elite gold and trophy winning wines will be announced on Saturday 12 November at a black tie dinner on Auckland's waterfront.

The Air New Zealand Wine Awards is owned and organised by New Zealand Winegrowers, the national organisation for the country's 1,600 grape growers and winemakers.

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Editors' notes:

For more information visit www.airnzwineawards.co.nz

On Tuesday 18 October, Michael Brajkovich, Michael Franz and Ralph Kyte-Powell will be available for interviews. Filming and photography are also permitted while the judging is taking place.

What: 2016 Air New Zealand Wine Awards judging

Where: Mt Smart Stadium, Auckland

On street parking and access via Beasley Ave (Gate C); judging is in East Lounge

When: Tuesday 18 October 2016

Time: 8.30am-12.30pm

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