“New Zealand is the most exciting place in the southern hemisphere for sustainability. The NZ wine industry has all the building blocks in place – knowledge, organisation, communication, enthusiasm, talent and terroir (and brand) and it is fantastic to see wineries and growers collaborating together for the common good.”

Monty Waldin, Chateaumonty.com
Welcome to the first Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand Report.

Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand is widely recognised as a world leading sustainability programme. It was one of the first sustainability programmes established in the international wine sector. In 2016, 98% of New Zealand’s vineyard producing area was Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand certified – unmatched by any voluntary scheme around the world.

Not only did the 2016 season see the largest number of member audits since the inception of the programme, the advent of online scorecard submissions enhanced the ability to gather more comprehensive data to improve the quality of reporting. This increased level of detailed data collection has enabled the generation of in-season benchmarking reports for Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand members and the production of this Report.

The information over the next few pages illustrates some of the key achievements of Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand members in the 2016 growing season. It shows that New Zealand wineries and growers continue to produce premium wine whilst employing environmentally responsible and economically viable processes in vineyards and wineries.

Central to our sustainability policy is a commitment to keep improving as new research is undertaken and new technologies are developed. As such, an extensive review of the Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand programme is underway. Results from the review will inform programme development and ensure the New Zealand wine industry continues to be recognised as a world leader in sustainability.
“From north to south, and from the bottom up, New Zealand’s winegrowers are committed to the future of their land and country, and are producing wines which reflect the breath taking beauty that surrounds them, in every glass. Those winegrowers are first class pioneers of environmental, economic, and social sustainability, and should be the envy of the rest of the wine world…”

DANIEL HONAN, WWW.WINEIDEALIST.COM
98% of New Zealand’s vineyard area sustainable winegrowing New Zealand certified

The data in this report was collected from 1,918 vineyards and 254 wineries (Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand membership in October 2016).

35,558Ha certified as sustainable
What does “sustainable” mean for New Zealand wine?

To New Zealand wineries and grape growers, sustainability means delivering excellent wine to consumers in a way that enables the natural environment, the businesses and the communities involved, to thrive.

Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand is based on continuous improvement and adherence to standards and guidelines issued by OIV (International Organisation of Vine and Wine).

Key areas of focus:
Biodiversity

The value of enhancing biodiversity in the vineyard isn’t just social and environmental. It also offers clear economic advantages such as biological control of pests, diseases and weeds, and improving soil quality — resulting in better crops without the ongoing expense of manual methods.

2,500ha
WAS SET ASIDE FOR
BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION,
RESTORATION OR ENHANCEMENT
BY VINEYARDS AND WINERIES.

The same area as:

3,030
FOOTBALL
PITCHES

or

2,976
RUGBY
PITCHES

or

4,725
AMERICAN
FOOTBALL
FIELDS
A SAFE HAVEN FOR NATIVE FALCONS

The New Zealand falcon (Karearea) is rarer than a kiwi and is New Zealand’s most endangered bird of prey. These natural predators are an excellent resource in the vineyard, deterring other birds from damaging grape crops.

Wineries in Marlborough and Wairarapa have supported the threatened species in their vineyards in an effort to restore the bird’s population.

GREENING WAIPARA

Wineries in Waipara Valley participate in Greening Waipara - a biodiversity improvement programme. The programme focuses on planting and maintaining native species in and around vineyards which in turn improves habitats for beneficial insects.

The native plantings in the Greening Waipara project have been shown to enhance:

+ biological control of pests and diseases
+ weed suppression
+ biodiversity
+ soil fertility

TUI TO TOWN

The ‘Tui to Town’ project aims to help restore some of Marlborough’s past natural environment to support the native bird population on the Wairau Plains.

The project brings council, community and the private sector together to increase the size of the natural tui habitat on public and private land.
“The world of wine, as we know and enjoy it, is similarly much more than farming, and it demands a multi-faceted approach in order to be sustainable too. This is a formidable task!

However, Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand makes this challenge feasible.”

Sandra Taylor, US wine blogger
Reduce, reuse and recycle are the watchwords in Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand vineyards and wineries.

Many by-products are now routinely diverted from the waste stream and turned to beneficial use. All farm production generates waste, and wine is no different. But the bulk of the waste from vineyard and winery operations: vine prunings, grape stalks and marc (skins and seeds) is valued by the New Zealand viticulturist for what it is: an asset.

92,033 m³

OF BY-PRODUCT WAS
DIVERTED
FROM LANDFILL BY
VINEYARDS AND WINERIES

The same volume would fill:

x 36

OLYMPIC SWIMMING POOLS
Water

Water is of critical importance to New Zealand’s vineyards for irrigation and frost protection. Although New Zealand has over 50 major rivers, 770 lakes and abundant rainfall, it is vital that wine businesses optimise water use and protect the purity of waterways to ensure our supply remains clean and sustainable in the future.

98% OF VINEYARDS USED MONITORING TECHNIQUES IN THE VINEYARD TO OPTIMISE WATER APPLICATIONS

Based on 1240 vineyards

96% OF WINERIES MEASURED AND RECORDED WATER USE

Based on 169 wineries
99% of wineries optimised water conservation and limited volumes to the waste system.

Based on 169 wineries.
New Zealand wine producers take their responsibility to contribute to their communities seriously. Employers and employees in the industry also have responsibilities to support each other to deliver positive financial, social and ecological outcomes.

Education and training on actions that reduce costs and wastage and increase efficiency and good environmental outcomes is highly regarded by the New Zealand wine industry. This enthusiasm expands the boundaries of sustainable thinking and behaviour.

85% OF VINEYARD PERSONNEL ATTENDED COURSES, EVENTS OR UNDERWENT INDUSTRY TRAINING

99% OF WINERY PERSONNEL ATTENDED COURSES, EVENTS OR UNDERWENT INDUSTRY TRAINING
New Zealand is in the fortunate position of drawing most of its electricity from renewable sources; primarily hydro-electric energy although wind and geothermal generation is increasing. Even so, the rising cost of electricity coupled with the high energy demands of wine production has seen the industry focus on energy as a major sustainability factor.

As well as being of broad environmental benefit, the energy-saving initiatives rolling out throughout New Zealand’s vineyards and wineries are reducing their annual running costs.

Energy

99% of wineries measure and monitor energy use (electricity and fuel)

Based on 164 wineries
Key to the profitability and sustainability of a vineyard is the health of its vines, so managing or eliminating the impacts of pests and disease is essential.

Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand members prefer an integrated approach to pest and disease control: one that begins with an understanding of the ecology of the vineyard and translates to reduced intervention and more a sustainable industry. This ensures their impact can be managed cost-effectively and with the lowest possible impact on people, property and the environment.

This approach has seen agrichemical use decline. Since 2001 Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand members have reduced insecticide applications on vineyards by over 50%.

Looking to the future, a range of vineyard pests and diseases are being researched by the sector, and future control strategies are being developed to ensure that chemical use continues to decline.

99% OF VINEYARDS USED NON-CHEMICAL CULTURAL CONTROLS AS PART OF THEIR PEST AND DISEASE STRATEGY

Based on 1554 vineyards
Maintaining great soil isn’t just about making great grapes, it’s also about protecting the wellbeing of the whole environment. New Zealand viticulturists lead the way in employing practices that preserve and enhance the soil in their vineyards.

83% OVER 83% OF VINEYARDS RETAIN PERMANENT INTER-ROW VEGETATION THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Based on 1554 vineyards
Monitor, measure, reduce... Repeat.

Talk is not enough. Members are independently audited. They are measured on every aspect of growing, winemaking, packaging... in fact anything which makes a difference for the better of us all.

No matter how great our progress there is only one response: