



Judging kicks off for the inaugural New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards

Judging for the inaugural New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards kicks off today at Alexandra Park in Auckland. The New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards is the official national wine competition of the New Zealand wine industry, replacing the Air New Zealand Wine Awards and the Bragato Wine Awards, two of the industry's major wine competitions.

Highly regarded Hawke's Bay winemaker and Chair of the New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards, Warren Gibson says the new competition is an exciting opportunity to revamp the New Zealand wine awards scene.

"This is a refreshed competition based on an entirely new concept. We are focusing on things that are important to our industry, by introducing new awards such as Best Single Vineyard and Best Organic wines, and Best Wine of Provenance. There is also a focus on regionality, with wines in some categories being separated out by region so we are judging like vs like. This is a revamped industry awards that is looking toward the future," said Mr Gibson.

As another first, the New Zealand Young Winemaker of the Year 2018 Greg Lane will also be joining the judging team as an Associate Judge. Originally based in Adelaide, Greg jumped back across the ditch to Marlborough in 2017 to work with Foley Family Wines and is currently the Brand Winemaker at Grove Mill. "It's a great opportunity and I'm excited to be part of the new format of the New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards. It's a forward-thinking competition and I'm expecting it to be a great week at the judging," said Mr Lane.

There were over 1300 entries into the awards, with Pinot Noir being the leading variety with 237 entries, followed by Sauvignon Blanc and Chardonnay.

Mr Gibson is joined by Marlborough winemaker Ben Glover as Deputy Chair, while international judges this year are PJ Charteris from Australia and Jamie Goode from the UK. Judging of the wines will take place from Tuesday 2 to Friday 5 October.

Eight major trophies will be announced at the New Zealand Wine Awards dinner - New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Champion, Best Single Vineyard White Wine, Best Single Vineyard Red Wine, Best Open White Wine, Best Open Red Wine, Best Organic White Wine, Best Organic Red Wine and Best Wine of Provenance.

The New Zealand Wine Awards dinner will be held on Saturday 3 November at TSB Arena in Wellington. The evening will recognise the New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards winners, as well as other industry achievements including Young Viticulturist of the Year, Young Winemaker of the Year and the New Zealand Winegrowers Fellows for 2018.

More information on New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards can be found at www.nzwine.com/events

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[Photos: Warren Gibson, Chair of the New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards and Greg Lane, 2018 Young Winemaker of the Year and New Zealand Wine of the Year™ Awards Associate Judge]

On Wednesday 3 October, Judges will be available for interviews. Filming and photography are also permitted while the judging is taking place.

What: New Zealand Wine of the Year™ judging

Where: Alexandra Park, Auckland

Time: 9am-12pm