

Wine column April 2007

Wine from New-Zealand

This country's major wine stars are Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir.

European settlers planted the first wine here in the early 1800's, but it was only in the late 20th century that New-Zealand attracted producing distinctive, high quality wines that an international admiration.

New-Zealand is the most southerly, and also the coolest wine region, which is ideal for Sauvignon Blanc.

In the central Otago region, Pinot Noir is fetching high prices and high praise.

There are 3 main growing regions in New-Zealand: Marlborough, Hawke's Bay and Gisborne with over 300 wineries, many of them successful and some regarded boutique wineries.

North Island:

- * **Matakana:** north of Auckland, with a handful of small boutique wineries, great for Pinot Gris.
- * **Auckland:** this area is cool, producing aromatic Sauvignon Blanc; Shiraz is also creeping here making peppery style wine.
- * **Waiheke Island:** the same top winery producing Chardonnay, Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon.
- * **Gisborne:** this is a Chardonnay territory.
- * **Hawke's Bay:** Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and increasingly Shiraz are planted here. Sauvignon Blanc has a fatter, fleshier feel here than the more classic area like Marlborough, and Chardonnay's lack the richness of Gisborne.
- * **Martinborough** sits at the southern end of the North Island near Wellington. In this region, fantastic Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir are made here.

South Island:

- * Marlborough is on the northern part of the south island, this is where the Sauvignon Blanc floods from!! The first wines (of the modern era) were planted in 1973 and later has become the iconic Sauvignon Blanc area due to its different micro climates, demonstrating tropical fruit flavours, gooseberry-like and retaining a zippy acidity.
- * Canterbury and Waipara is a cooler and dryer area situated on the eastern side of the Island, the main grape here is Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.
- * Central Otago is the world most southerly grapevines. This is where Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Riesling are a real delight.

My wine selection:

* Saint-Clair Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2006 sales@hallgarten.co.uk	£6.95
* Gewurztraminer Reserve, Ormond, Gisborne Info.chippenham@berkmann.co.uk	£14.50
* Cloudy Bay Pinot Noir, Marlborough 2005 forburys@btconnect.com	£14.95

Xavier Le-Bellego
Forbury's restaurant