

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Zealand wines prove world-beaters once again at major international wine competition

New Zealand wines have beaten contenders from across the world to win both the Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir Trophies for the fourth year running at the UK-based International Wine and Spirit Competition (IWSC).

The Competition - one of the world's most highly regarded and longest running – awarded the IWSC Trophy for Sauvignon Blanc to the Villa Maria Cellar Selection Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2009 and the Bouchard Finlayson Trophy for Pinot Noir to Mount Dottrel Central Otago Pinot Noir 2007.

“When it comes to absolute quality and class, New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc, and more recently some of its Pinot Noirs, can upstage the best in the world,” commented IWSC chair judge and British wine industry veteran, Luciana Lynch.

“We are obviously delighted to receive this award,” said Villa Maria Group Winemaker, Alastair Maling MW. “Sauvignon Blanc is New Zealand's most important export variety and to have this recognition supports the hard work that has gone into the vineyard and winemaking by both teams.”

At Mitre Rocks, the makers of Mount Dottrel, Roy McCallum said he was “surprised and delighted” by the award for the estate's third vintage. Giving credit to its winemaker, Carol Bunn and viticulturalist, James Dicey, he added: “We have long held that Central Otago is the place to grow wine, which has been confirmed by winning such an important trophy.”

As well as hitting these highs, New Zealand also put in a stellar performance overall. It netted a record number of silver medals, while 83% of the country's entries won awards, compared with the IWSC's overall average of 75% of entrants getting gongs this year.

“New Zealand continues to perform extremely well at the IWSC,” said IWSC Competition Director, Frances Horder. “The results indicate that the increased entries from the country to the Competition that we've been seeing every year are being matched by their rising quality.”

New Zealand-based wine critic, Jo Burzynska, who was part of the panels judging the IWSC's New Zealand classes this year said that she was impressed by the standard of the 2009 vintage. “I tasted some wonderfully fresh and vibrant wines, which promise well for the quality of the vintage,” she noted. “The 2007 Pinots also really shone.”

Scooping more than half of the Gold Medals awarded to New Zealand this year, Pinot Noirs from the 2007 vintage were some of the strongest performers. “New Zealand Pinot Noir is coming of age and it's this fabulous 2007 vintage that's been chosen to showcase the country's offering at the international Pinot Noir 2010 conference to be held in Wellington next February,” said Chris Yorke, Global Marketing Director at New Zealand Winegrowers.

Celebrating its 40th anniversary this year, the International Wine and Spirit Competition is one of the premier competitions of its kind in the world and aims to promote the quality

and excellence of the world's best wines, spirits and liqueurs. A full list of results is available at www.iwsc.net