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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooling Capacity:</th>
<th>748kW at 6°C Leaving Temp</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Temperature Range:</td>
<td>-11.7°C to 15°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Maximum ambient temp:</td>
<td>40°C</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weight approx:</td>
<td>8000kg</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Height:</td>
<td>2.6 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Width:</td>
<td>2.43 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Length:</td>
<td>6.05 metres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make:</td>
<td>York</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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The Southern Pinot Noir Workshop held in Hanmer is a must go-to event for most Pinot producers. Annabelle Latz attended the event this year and discovered there is a reason it is so popular.
**Battlefield Tactics:**

**Clean Out Pockets of Resistance**

with HML 32 armour plate for grapes

---

**AFTER HARVEST: Eradicate Powdery Mildew in the Canopy**

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- It will provide vines the best possible start as they begin to regenerate nutritional reserves in readiness for next season.
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*www.henrymanufacturing.co.nz/latestnews/farmlandspresentation*
Time To Consult

The summer of 2015 will go down in memory as one of the best ever, for those on holiday at least. Day after day of clear, blue skies, with little to no rain. But for those making their living off the land, it has been a hard few months. Actually more than a few months, given Federated Farmers say the period between July 2014 and end of January 2015 were the driest in Marlborough in 85 years! Is this as bad as the drought of 1997/98, or 2001? Many say no – but for those dealing with a lack of water currently, stories of previous drought stricken years are very little comfort.

It also has to be remembered, that in both those previous situations, Marlborough didn’t have anywhere near as many vines in the ground as it does now. These days there are more than five times the plantings there were in 2001 – 22,907 hectares versus 4,561 in 2001. That’s a lot more vines requiring water in a long, dry summer.

With creeks, rivers and aquifers drying up, water consents have been withdrawn. The Southern Valley’s Irrigation scheme was not immune to the dry – with the scheme shut off on a number of occasions in February, affecting hundreds of hectares of vines.

Given the lack of other water sources in that area, there were major concerns on the impact the dry was having on the fruit development. Tankers carrying water became a common sight, as growers strived to keep the vines healthy as the countdown to harvest began.

For those who had the foresight to put in water storage, the costs involved have surely paid off. Even those who have established storage aimed mostly at frost protection have been able to utilise the source for irrigation, giving them a week or two of extra moisture when it was needed most.

But for the others – it has been a hard slog, as they waited for the rain that never came.

Given climate change is likely to see even more extreme weather events in the future, including droughts such as the current one, the time has come to consider how to future proof the region’s wine industry. While grapes do like dry conditions, they still require water at critical times such as veraison. And if Mother Nature won’t supply it, there has to be some kind of fall back.

Maybe now is the time to consider a community water storage facility. Andrew Curtis, CEO of Irrigation NZ believes so. He says in our lead story this month, that while it was considered back when the Southern Valley’s Irrigation Scheme was first mooted, the likely cost put people off.

But what is the financial cost if those growers can’t harvest their fruit, or are paid less because of the impact of water stress? Is the status quo financially viable, in the long term?

When vintage ends and the winter sets in, let’s not forget the impact of the most recent drought – let’s not wait until another one sets in. Let’s start considering the options for the future.
February 2015 was dry and sunny with warm days and cool nights.

**Temperature**

It may come as a surprise that the mean temperature for February of 17.4°C, was 0.3°C below the long-term average temperature, given that there were quite a number of hot days during February. The mean maximum temperature for February was 23.5°C, 0.4°C above the long-term average (Table 2). Twelve days recorded a maximum temperature of 25.0°C or greater. The hottest daily maximum of 29.6°C was recorded on the last day of February, Saturday 28th. The second and third weeks of February were quite a bit cooler than the first and fourth weeks (Table 2). The mean minimum temperature for February was 11.3°C, 1.0°C below the long-term average. There were 12 days during February when the overnight minimum temperature was lower than 10.0°C, bearing in mind that the average minimum for February is 12.3°C. There were reports of frost fans operating that morning further west on the Wairau plains.

**Summer temperatures**

Blenheim only recorded one day over 30.0°C this summer; 30.8°C on 11 January 2015. There was also only one day the previous summer when the temperature reached exactly 30.0°C, on 21 February 2014. However, the difference between this summer and the last is that in 2013-2014 there were only 22 days out of 90 total days (Dec, Jan, Feb) when the daily maximum was 25.0°C or greater. This summer, 2014-2015, there were 36 days out of 90 when the daily maximum temperature was 25.0°C or greater (an additional 14 days above 25.0°C compared to the previous summer).

Table 2 indicates that the mean temperature for summer (2014-2015) was 17.8°C, only 0.1°C above the mean temperature for the previous summer (2013-2014). However, the mean maximum temperature over summer

---

**Table 1: Blenheim Weather Data – February 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GDD’s for:</th>
<th>February 2015</th>
<th>February 2015 compared to LTA</th>
<th>February LTA</th>
<th>Period of LTA</th>
<th>February 2014</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Month - Max/Min¹</td>
<td>208.4</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>221.5 (1996-2014)</td>
<td>213.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month – Mean²</td>
<td>200.1</td>
<td>94%</td>
<td>213.7 (1996-2014)</td>
<td>207.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Growing Degree Days</td>
<td>1029.3</td>
<td>102%</td>
<td>1011.1 (1996-2014)</td>
<td>1120.3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1077.0</td>
<td>103%</td>
<td>1042.9 (1996-2014)</td>
<td>1139.5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹GDD’s Max/Min are calculated from absolute daily maximum and minimum temperatures  
²GDD’s Mean are calculated from average hourly temperatures

---

**Table 2: Weekly temperatures during February 2015**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>February 2015</th>
<th>Mean °C</th>
<th>Mean Maximum</th>
<th>Mean Minimum</th>
<th>Daily Range</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1st to 7th</td>
<td>18.7</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>13.4</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8th to 15th</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>10.1</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16th to 21st</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>13.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22nd to 28th</td>
<td>17.9</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Month Mean</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>11.3</td>
<td>12.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long-term average</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>12.3</td>
<td>10.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
was 0.5°C above average, whereas the previous summer the mean maximum was only 0.2°C above average.

Growing Degree-Days
The growing degree-day line for 2014-2015 (green) in Figure 1 indicates how the GDDs dropped quite sharply in the middle of February. This line is generated from the daily maximum and minimum temperatures so it is a true reflection of the daily mean temperatures and not just what we experienced during the daytime with a number of hot days. The cooler nights do not seem to have slowed down the ripening of grapes this season.

Table 3: Monthly temperatures over the summer of 2013-14 compared to 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>22.2</td>
<td>12.9</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>18.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>24.3</td>
<td>12.0</td>
<td>13.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.4</td>
<td>23.1</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>12.2</td>
<td>11.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mean LTA = LTA</td>
<td>17.7</td>
<td>17.3</td>
<td>22.9</td>
<td>23.3</td>
<td>12.4</td>
<td>12.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4: Sunshine hours over the summer of 2013-14 compared to 2014-15

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2013-2014 mm</th>
<th>% of LTA</th>
<th>2014-2015 mm</th>
<th>% of LTA</th>
<th>Long-term Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>233.9</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>222.6</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>245.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>261.2</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>297.0</td>
<td>114%</td>
<td>261.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>241.4</td>
<td>107%</td>
<td>264.4</td>
<td>117%</td>
<td>226.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total hours &amp; % of LTA</td>
<td>736.5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>784.0</td>
<td>107%</td>
<td>733.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1: Normalized Growing degree days for Blenheim: days above (+) or below (-) the long-term average for the period 1 September to 30 April

Sunshine
February 2015 recorded 264.4 hours sunshine or 117% of the long-term average. Sunshine hours in December 2014 were lower than average and markedly lower than in January and February 2015 (Table 4). January 2015 recorded 74.4 hours more sunshine than December 2014 (an additional 2.4 hours of sunshine per day). Total sunshine hours for the three months of summer (2014-2015) were well average. This summer recorded an additional 47.5 hours sunshine compared to the previous year (2013-2014).

Rainfall and the current drought
February 2014 recorded only 15.2 mm rain or 35% of the long-term average. For the sixth consecutive year Blenheim has recorded lower than average February rainfall (2010-2015). February rainfall totals have been almost the same in 2013, 2014 and 2015 (18.6, 18.0 and 15.2 mm respectively). With eight consecutive dry months a number of rainfall records have been established. The rainfall total for the eight month period July 2014 to February 2015 (Table 5) was 151.0 mm and only 36% of the long-term average for this period. This is the lowest rainfall total on record for these eight months for the 86 years 1930-2015. This total of 151 mm is 73.8 mm less than the 2nd lowest total on record (224.8 mm) for the same eight month period, recorded in 1933-1934. 151 mm is only 39% of the 386.2 mm total that was recorded in the same period last season (2013-2014).

The rainfall total for the five months October 2014 to February 2015 was 90.4 mm; the lowest total on record and 37% of the long-term average of 245.1 mm.

Blenheim was fortunate to receive high rainfall in both April and June 2014 (149.8 mm and 98.3 mm respectively), although the April rain did cause a lot of grief in the latter period of the 2014 harvest. These two months of high rainfall boosted the soil moisture substantially prior to the onset of the consecutive dry months. Without these two months of high rainfall, the impact of the current drought would have hit quite a lot earlier.

Wind Run
Average daily wind run for February 2015 was 223.2 km. This is well below the long-term average (1996-2014) of 254.6 km; a relatively calm February.
Evapotranspiration
Potential evapotranspiration (ET) of 117.1 mm was higher than the February long-term average of 109.4 mm. Although wind-run, one of the main drivers of evapotranspiration was lower than average, the higher ET was due to warm days, lower than normal relative humidity associated with lower rainfall and well above average radiation with high sunshine hours. Potential evapotranspiration for the three months December 2014 to February 2015 was 387.5 mm. In contrast the rainfall for those three months was 51.4 mm, i.e. Potential evapotranspiration exceeded rainfall by 336.1 mm.

Summary of summer
Warmer daytime temperatures, higher sunshine hours and much lower rainfall over this summer (2014-2015) compared to last summer (2013-2014) are what made it more enjoyable for those on holiday and wanting to enjoy the outdoors. Not so enjoyable for those in the rural industries having to cope with the lack of rainfall.

Rob Agnew
Plant & Food Research / Marlborough Research Centre

Table 5: Rainfall for the eight months July to February for 2013-2014 and 2014-2015

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>2013-2014 mm</th>
<th>% of LTA</th>
<th>2014-2015 mm</th>
<th>% of LTA</th>
<th>Long-term Average</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>July</td>
<td>34.8</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>63.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August</td>
<td>65.4</td>
<td>104%</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>62.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September</td>
<td>67.2</td>
<td>131%</td>
<td>41.0</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>51.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
<td>56.0</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>57.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>November</td>
<td>48.8</td>
<td>103%</td>
<td>16.6</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>47.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>December</td>
<td>16.8</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>31.8</td>
<td>66%</td>
<td>48.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>January</td>
<td>79.2</td>
<td>163%</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>48.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>February</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15.2</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>43.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>386.2 mm</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>151.0 mm</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>422.8 mm</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
From The Board

Rhyan Wardman

Vintage 2015 – Shaping up well in more ways than one…
As the saying goes – the small vintages get smaller, while the large ones get larger. Anecdotally, Marlborough yields seem to be tracking somewhere between 5–10% below the long-term average, contributed to by a broad, sub-regional yield variation, and further complicated by potential bunch weight variation from differing berry sizes. Yield determination is challenging this year, as it is most years, but getting a steer on where we might land is important information to relay to our markets.

Following on from the large 2014 vintage, it is somewhat ideal that we are faced with a reduced yield. Indeed, if it comes to pass, our supply demand disequilibrium will more quickly correct over the course of the year and we may find ourselves in a supply constrained position going into 2016. The latest export figures from NZ Winegrowers show healthy volume growth of 11% from 2014. Of our top three markets, United Kingdom and United States, are performing well at 20% and 17% respectively while Australia is essentially holding and remains an important market nevertheless with a projected 52.39m litres sold over the year (MAT December; NZ Winegrowers Export Report).

Despite the large 2014 vintage, this volume growth has not come at any considerable impact to our value growth. The MAT December average price, across both bottled-at-market and bottled-at-source wines, have declined slightly by between 2%-2.5%. This is a testament to the strength of Brand Marlborough and New Zealand overall in times of surplus. The potential tonnage variation in Marlborough between 2014 and 2015 could be a reduction of 40%. This is remarkable as it is challenging - from grower to producer, marketing and sales. Continuity of supply and quality are essential for sustainable growth and this variation highlights the dynamic state of our industry. We have some hurdles ahead, from water supply - with the East Coast of the South Island now declared a drought zone - to some powdery mildew incidence calling to question some of our traditional model assumptions, through to maturity assessments made more difficult by block and bunch variation. All of these will make the logistics of harvest that much more challenging. But, I suspect many in our industry would shrug and say “what’s new?” and look to learn and improve out of it.

Indeed, the Marlborough wine industry is good at seeing the opportunities behind the challenges and I certainly feel there is much to be positive about going forward.

Foremost of these is quality. Granted, there is much to be done before the grapes are safely tucked away in tank, and far for me to jinx anything but, with continued hot, dry weather and reduced yields, the Marlborough quality has every opportunity to be raised to the levels required for a renewed push of our premium argument. The markets should be getting the message that Brand Marlborough is worth investing in, from consumer through to grower.

This stance is timely as we disseminate sales feedback from the markets over the crucial Christmas period. This was most acutely apparent in our largest export market, the United Kingdom, where many retailer sales’ targets weren’t realised. In reference to the off-trade, the Big Four retailers are now adjusting their sales strategies and internal structures to better compete with the relatively new, agile discounters. Promotional mechanics such as deep discounting are being eschewed for more transparent ‘every-day’ pricing. Coupled with sku- or line-rationalisation, with a recent Off Licence News report stating that Tesco is looking to reduce their range by a third with Morrisons following suit and reducing their wine range by 10%, means there are some challenging times ahead.

This shift in the way wine is promoted and sold has far-reaching implications to wine companies and grape growers alike. However, this change does present opportunities for Brand Marlborough. Our Marlborough wines remain a key category driver for many export markets, both in the on- and off-trade. A reduced V15 yield and a marked increase in quality sets the proposition that a higher price point, albeit possibly resulting in lower volume sales, returns a higher margin to both parties. Absolute return may well remain suppressed for a time, adding pressure to the supply chain but, very importantly, our brand equity should improve.

Building brand equity in Marlborough is essential. The last five years have been challenging for many, but there’s a prevailing feeling that we may now be over the worst of it. We have expanded our markets, mitigated our risks, and are that little bit wiser as we face 2015 and beyond. I am looking forward to what this year brings.
The Need For Water Storage

TESSA NICHOLSON

If any year has proved that water storage is necessary for grape growers in Marlborough, 2015’s summer is it.

According to a Federated Farmers update, Blenheim has had its lowest rainfall in 85 years over the July 2014 – January 2015 period and nine of the 16 consent areas in Marlborough have had their right to irrigate suspended. (As at Feb 16.)

“Wine likes dry weather but this is pushing things a little too far,” says IrrigationNZ CEO, Andrew Curtis. In rural Marlborough, irrigation water use by vineyards and farms is controlled by resource consents which are often withdrawn in the course of a dry summer – but this year it is earlier than usual.

A consent holder must stop taking water when flows or levels fall below a specified point to protect the environment, the stream life or downstream users.

“This year has been a bit of a wake-up call for the (wine) industry – that maybe some sort of community water storage is essential,” Andrew says. “It is a high value crop and the criticalness of having water at the right time for grapes, means you may need to design for a much higher reliability than had been previously thought.”

Having a community storage resource could take pressure off those not involved in the scheme, he says.

“That’s the beauty of water storage, it sometimes allows you to create agreements with a whole lot of users, where maybe some people continue on the river, while others go to storage. It doesn’t have to be something that is designed for everybody to take out of. It can be designed so a few people take out, which takes pressure of the river, giving another week or so for others to irrigate.”

That is something that Wither Hills was involved in, early on in the summer drought. Craig Leov, Wairau Valley Vineyard Manager for the company says they were drawing from Doctor’s Creek, as were a number of private growers in the area.

“Our water flow rate in the creek is very minimal,” he says. So to help try and lift the flow, Wither Hills made the decision not to irrigate their Taylor Pass vineyard over the weekends.

“That brings the cumecs up enough so the other vineyards can irrigate for a few days each week.”

But a community storage scheme is looking like being the long-term answer, Andrew believes.

Ivan Sutherland from Dog Point Vineyard was involved in establishing the Southern Valley Irrigation Scheme which irrigates 4500ha and says that when it was being developed a water storage option was proposed but it was...
perceived for many as too expensive. “At the time it would have prevented people coming on board to the scheme, but if we had that storage now, the scheme wouldn’t have been briefly shut off in January this year and the smaller vineyards which don’t have their own wells or dams wouldn’t be facing the concerns they are now.”

While many larger vineyards do have private storage in the form of ponds or dams, Andrew says there will be plenty more who will be considering storage for the future.

**So what does creating private water storage involve?**

Andrew says a grower needs to work out how much water is going to be needed.

“The first thing is to size it correctly. You need analysis on the catchment you are in, from a flow perspective. How often does that flow go off?”

Next, you need to understand what you need from a demand perspective. How many hectares have you got and what are the requirements of the vines? That will allow you to size the dam (storage) and the ultimate size will be based on risk.”

Getting expert opinions in the form of consultation is essential in this initial phase. You also need to be sure that you will be able to take water for storage, so check out with the local council about their regulations in your area. “The other one is, you have to make sure you have somewhere to put storage,” says Andrew. “Obviously the cheapest option is the one where you are in a valley where you can easily put a dam across. But if you are going to build a bird nest or a dam with four walls on the sides, on the flat, that turns out to be very expensive.”

When it comes down to actually building it, there are construction pitfalls to be aware of. “Dam consents are required if it is four metres from toe to crest, or 20,000 metres cubed. Usually most of the ponds (you see on properties) don’t trigger that. Most tend to be much smaller.”

But Andrew warns the Dam Safety Legislation has stringent requirements, more stringent than consents. It can be you don’t require a consent to build a storage facility, but you still have to notify the local council that you have done so. “Then they will make an assessment about the safety risk of it. So make sure you get a reputable firm who knows how to design it.”

While he says creating your own private storage area is a good option, it doesn’t mean that community storage should be ignored. “The big question is; community storage versus everybody doing it on their own, on their farms. Generally in the wine industry they have all tended to do it by themselves, because the price as such meant they could afford that option. But it is fair to say that a small on-farm dam is a lot more expensive than a regional piece of infrastructure.”

---

*The image shows a vineyard with a dam in the foreground.*
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In the 12 months to the end of January, 22 properties with vineyards were sold in Marlborough. Compare that with 2009 when only a handful of properties sold in a nine-month period. The upward movement which began after the small 2012 vintage, has continued — growing even stronger last year. The big driver is still Sauvignon Blanc, with buyers set on obtaining productive vineyards, preferably without a contract for fruit, Dave Stark, property valuer for Alexander Hayward Ltd says. “They are looking for vineyards without contracts generally, or with short term contracts. There are various wine companies out there looking for productive vineyards that provide instant production to shore up supply. That has been the case for the past 18 months. While there is a mix of wineries and growers looking, it is the wineries who are driving it.”

Bayleys Real Estate agent Tim Crawford concurs, saying it is the medium to large wine companies who are constantly looking to increase their supply base. “There has also been strong demand for larger tracts of bare land for vineyard development, so now we are seeing large new vineyards sprouting up in locations we would not have previously expected.” Sauvignon Blanc still reigns supreme Dave says, although there are a number looking to expand their Pinot Noir production. However that is more site dependent than the demand for Sauvignon. Initially it was thought the larger 2014 vintage may stymie the on-going value of Marlborough’s vineyards, but Dave says that hasn’t been the case. “Since then we have had a few frost events and an average flowering, plus a few issues hanging over from last year’s big vintage. So crop levels are back a bit this year, which is obviously going to level things out. And that is good for the industry. If we had had another big vintage, there was a concern there would be a fallout and that would impact on the values. But it doesn’t appear to have happened.”

The value of properties is also continuing to rise, although not yet to the levels of 2007, which saw productive vineyard land in the well established areas selling for up to $250,000 per planted hectare. “We have seen some upward movement in values in the last 12 months,” Dave says. “And that is following on from the increases we were seeing previously.” The better known areas with heavier soils, such as Rapaura, Spring Creek and lower Wairau, have seen the strongest sales. It isn’t easy to determine a Marlborough average Dave says, given the huge variance throughout the region.

Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is leading the way in exports, and is the driving force behind Marlborough vineyard sales.
“We are running from $100,000 to $200,000 per planted hectare, throughout Marlborough. The high was peaking at around $250,000 in 2007/08 and that dropped to about $125,000 to $140,000 in 2011/12, which was the bottom.

“There is a strong correlation between the average grape price and the price paid per hectare of productive land. When the average price for fruit was around the $1200 a tonne, that was when the land value dropped. Now with prices averaging around $1600 a tonne, land values are rising. I imagine the values and prices will stay similar in the near future.”

Tim says leasing is now becoming an attractive option for wine companies.

“A number of older vineyard owners are keen to scale down their activity in the vineyard, but wish to remain living on the property. Even smaller vineyards can be attractive lease options for a wine company if they have other operations nearby. There are also investment companies purchasing vineyards for the purpose of leasing them back to wine companies, which enables the companies to expand without the same need for capital.’

There appears to be less interest in the more “fringe” regions of the province, according to Dave.

“We are seeing more (development) up the Wairau Valley, but it is not expanding further up, it is more infill planting and that is being driven largely by the bigger wine companies. There is a bit of infill planting happening in Rapaura as well, and of course there is replanting taking place.”

If Sauvignon Blanc is a driver, along with contract free vineyards – water availability appears to have reared its head, with many potential buyers listing it as criteria.

“This is the year that has highlighted water and it is very much at the front of people’s minds,” Dave says. “What is the water supply and what options do we have re storage? These are the questions people are asking and they are doing a lot more research.”

He says those wanting to sell are also considering their options regarding water. They want to know the costs of establishing a water storage source and whether or not that will increase the value of their property.

“We are saying if you can future proof your property from water cut offs and have a guaranteed supply to your vines, that will show up in the value of the property. Purchasers will definitely be looking for that from here on in.”

Tim agrees saying water supply for irrigation is the main limiting factor in possible sales, with developers being more concerned about on-going supply than they are about soil type or spring temperatures.

The 22 properties that have sold in the last 12 months vary in size with the smallest being just 4ha of producing vines, the largest being 90. Lifestyle property sales are also on the rise, according to Tim, which he puts down to the increase in confidence in the New Zealand wine industry.

“We are seeing more people buying vineyards as a lifestyle option, which means there is also now a demand for vineyards with houses and for vineyards with grape supply contracts. Some of these buyers are local but many are coming from other parts of New Zealand and a few from overseas.”

A few years back there was increased demand from Asia, but both Dave and Tim say that appears to have abated somewhat – with the international interest being fuelled by the larger wine companies, whose head offices are based overseas, rather than international investors.

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Méthode Marlborough Matching

TESSA NICHOLSON

“I drink it when I’m happy and when I’m sad. Sometimes, I drink it when I’m alone. When I have company I consider it obligatory. I trifle with it if I’m not hungry and drink it if I am; Otherwise I never touch it - unless I’m thirsty.” Madame Bollinger.

The only add on to this famous quote could be, “I drink it with everything.” Which is something the Méthode Marlborough group were able to prove at a recent inaugural dinner. Held at Twelve Trees Restaurant, chef Matt Gibson was given the task of matching 10 Marlborough Méthodes with any dishes he deemed suitable. The menu he arrived at was inspiring. From the obvious matching of oysters and bubbles, Matt outdid himself by matching two wines with a steak tartare, and another two with pork belly – something most diners would not have thought could possibly work. But work it did. Méthode Marlborough spokesperson Nicola Clark said the aim was to show just how versatile sparkling wines can be. Too often she said people consider them only suitable for aperitifs, or for celebratory occasions. Proving those people wrong was as easy as handing the wines to Matt the chef. “We dropped off our wines we wanted to showcase, and he tasted them all and decided on the menu. We had no input what-so-ever in terms of the matchings. There were some pretty risky matches, things I would never have thought of ordering, but they all worked really well.” Matt said when the wines arrived, he separated them into styles, prior to tasting them and working out which wines worked best together. Then with five lots of two, he was able to work on matching the wines with each of the five courses he planned. “I was pushing the boundaries, and probably tried up to 300 combinations of different foods with the wines before coming up with the menu.” There were obviously a wide range of foods he threw out immediately. Anything that was herbaceous such as fennel bulb or sour mustard was excluded. Then anything with sugar was out. “Then it was a matter of researching on the internet and seeing what others had done, and putting my take on it.” The dish he was most proud of on the night in terms of match was the Tio Point oysters with Japanese mayo, mild kimichi and pickled ginger, followed quickly by the steak tartare. “I think having it in the raw state, no caramelisation on the outside, removed the sweetness, which makes it a lot more subtle.” “For a balanced menu of five courses with bubbles you can’t just have seafood, you need to have some meat. And it worked really well I think. I was proud of the way it matched the wines.” The success of the inaugural dinner will ensure it is repeated again in the future. ©
Believed to be the only shop of its kind in the northern hemisphere, The New Zealand Cellar came into existence just eight months ago. Already it has 192 wines from 78 producers, and is loved by wineries and consumers alike. When you meet Mel in person, it’s easy to see why her new business has become so successful. She oozes enthusiasm for this country’s wines and the sheer determination to bring the best of our best to the public’s attention is obvious. It has been an interesting road from school to successful business owner, she admits.

Leaving school at the age of 16, she was employed as a chef at the George Hotel, by Hamish Brown, (later to be her husband). Hamish was already well known for his culinary skills in this country, having been the youngest ever person in New Zealand to achieve executive chef status.

“I was the very first person he employed when he took over as executive chef at the George Hotel.”

After a five-year apprenticeship, the world was calling her, and she took off to London, aged 21.

“I started cooking for Peter Gordon at Providores, but I developed this weird skin reaction to the water, which meant being in the kitchen wasn’t working for me. I was about 22 and my husband was already very famous as a chef in New Zealand and I was like; ‘I can never compete with that, so I am going to do my own thing.’ So I promptly started working front of house at Providores. Before long I was running the floor and loving it.”

While Mel had always liked wine, she knew very little about it at this stage, but the love affair was about to begin. She began the WSET (Wine and Spirits Education Trust) studies, quickly passed the intermediate and advanced stages and was about to do her diploma. Then a little piece of luck came her way.

“One of the owners (of Providores) Jeremy Leeming came back to New Zealand and they needed someone to replace him as the wine buyer.”

Mel took on the job, and within a year she had convinced owner Peter Gordon to move to a 100 percent New Zealand still wine list. That move means Providores has the largest selection of premium New Zealand wines of any restaurant in Europe.

Many would see her decision to focus solely on this country’s wines, as a patriotic move, and while she agrees, she also says it was the stories of our wines that fired her enthusiasm. “I began to develop all these great relationships with all these wonderful producers from New Zealand, and I fell in love with the stories about the wines, the people, the soil and the integrity that was really obvious.”

But there was one major problem that kept raising its head. And that was approaching her, asking where they could purchase one of the wines they had tried at the restaurant, to drink at home. While she would always pass on distributor details, Mel was well aware that they had no ability to sell direct to a consumer and many of the wines on Providores’ wine list were unavailable elsewhere. The gem of an idea was taking hold. Then attending a presentation of 10 years of Rippon Wines with Nick Mills, set the idea into motion.

“It was one of the pivotal moments in how this idea was conceived. He was talking to this large group of journalists and he said; ‘My wine ticks all your boxes, you say it’s amazing, you say it’s the right balance, it has the right characters and my story is amazing, and the picture of my vineyards are amazing. But if you are not going to buy my wines, I am not going to survive.’

“I thought, gosh, I have to start selling more Rippon wine. His story really touched me, almost to the point I was welling up. I knew I loved all these producers, I loved their stories and I wanted to contribute to the greater good of the premium New Zealand wine industry. But the only way to do that was to create a platform that highlights and showcases the very best and sell those New Zealand wines.”

The New Zealand Cellar on-line store idea was born. That was 18 months...
ago, and last August Mel opened her business, which in just a few short months has become a roaring success. Her line-up of producers includes more than 20 from Marlborough, many of them small players, with reputations of high quality. That is the entire goal she says — to showcase the best of the best, not necessarily the biggest or the showiest. Some of the smallest producers have had difficulties making their mark in the massive UK market, which is where The New Zealand Cellar makes a huge difference. “New wineries and producers looking to get into the UK market find it extremely difficult. Yes it is well established, but it needs a lot of nourishment to succeed. If you don’t have a big budget to provide the support to your distributor, you have to work very hard. That fact has sparked another facet to my business, which is starting to import directly from New Zealand. My aim is to create a small niche portfolio that will ultimately have the exclusive rights to some wines and producers. Quantities aren’t going to be massive, but it will give smaller producers the opportunity to get into the market and have a presence.” The key though, is the wines have to be premium, in the £10 plus range — and Mel is not afraid to say no this wine doesn’t meet the requirements. “I do say no, if I don’t believe in the wines that have been presented to me. I am not a pushover and I am not going to list everything just so I can say I have the largest selection. This has to be about the best quality and the best wines.” Given research has recently shown New Zealand is now second only to France for premium wine sales in the UK, Mel has certainly hit on a winning formula. As for her client base, it is not just New Zealanders wanting a taste of home who are clicking on to her website. “The stats we have so far show the average consumer is older generation with disposable income and British. They are people who have travelled to New Zealand, fallen in love with the stories, the landscape and the people and made strong connections. They have the disposable income to spend £40 or £50 on a bottle of Chardonnay, and are happy to do so.” A strong focus on customer service means each bottle is individually wrapped before being sent out, and is accompanied by detailed tasting notes. “It is really personalised.” While The New Zealand Cellar is currently only on-line, prior to Christmas Mel organised a pop-up store in South London, featuring a wide range of the wines available on-line. In just a few short hours, she sold more than £13,000 of New Zealand’s premium wines, which must have brought smiles to the faces of producers. And there is no stopping her, as a store is planned for the near future, where once again, only New Zealand wines will feature. ☞
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The annual four-day workshop is based on the Steamboat Pinot Noir Conference at the North Umpqua River in Southern Oregon. First held 25-years ago, the workshop began at Lake Rotoiti in Nelson Lakes, and then shifted to Akaroa in Bank’s Peninsula, before arriving at its current regular spot of Hanmer Springs in North Canterbury. Just one year has been missed along the way. Organiser Belinda Gould attended her first workshop in Akaroa in 1994, when she was assistant winemaker at Waipara Springs North Canterbury. Now brewer at Brew Moon in North Canterbury, she says the growth in Pinot Noir in New Zealand has seen winemakers and viticulturists producing some excellent examples.

“We are doing better and better I think. You don’t often get a bad Pinot Noir in New Zealand these days.” The ability to produce wines that age well is prevalent now too, illustrated in the tastings of six year-old wines. “We want to look at how they are going, the older wine tasting can be crash hot.”

Each day of the workshop consisted of various formal and informal tastings; Burgundy, previous vintages, 2009, experimental wines, and tasting other international wines which participants may have brought along.

Pinot Noir is a winemakers and growers grape, not a numbers grape, and this has long been realised amongst those producing the variety in New Zealand. Vine age is a topic that regularly comes up at the workshops each year, an area of complexity for the grower and the winemaker.

This year’s workshop saw a new experimental section introduced; where wines were put into the flights which had undergone winemaking experiments such as whole bunch or wild fermentation. “We ask why is wine doing what it does, and what is that person who brought it along, trying to achieve?” Blind tastings like this are a big draw card to the workshop for people in the industry Belinda says; the fact that it’s a technical tasting workshop, rather than a beauty contest.

“It’s a great leveller. You can be critical of a wine, and people can ask; ‘why are we seeing that, and what could they have done differently?’” And regional flights provide opportunity to see how the variety differs between regions, and how it is stacked up against its counterparts.

Belinda believes regionality is starting to show all over New Zealand, especially with varieties like Pinot and Riesling, which show their soils more than other wines.

Dr David Jordan, from Vine to Wine to Market, was guest speaker at this year’s workshop, his expertise proving a highlight for all those involved.

He attended the very first workshop 25 years ago, and Belinda said having a leading viticulturist on board for the workshop was huge, as he encouraged participants to look at vine management...
and the relationship between the vineyard and the finished product. Considered one of Australasia’s leading viticulturists, Dr. Jordan is based in New Zealand and has been in the grape and wine industry for 31 years, consulting with leading wine producers in both New Zealand and Australia.

Initially as a Viticultural Scientist, he then established his consultancy business Vine to Wine to Market in 1994. Dr. Jordan has adopted the viticultural philosophy that successful grape growing is a blend of modern technology and traditional approaches, “art and science” to create the desired grape from optimised balanced vine growth, ripeness, flavour intensity and textural qualities.

Speaking at the workshop about the Myths, Beliefs and Facts of grape growing practices, the partnership between the grower and winemaker was discussed at length. “The essence of my presentation was to challenge the thinking about vineyard management that is adopted, and ensure that our practices continue to evolve and incorporate the appropriate new technology as it becomes available,” he said.

His presentation looked at 10 areas of vineyard management for Pinot Noir, and dividing the reasons or basis for industry practices into Myth, Belief, and Fact. He commented how many of the adopted practices are based on following other practitioners, or copying those in traditional industries like Burgundy without questioning or evaluating their merit. “Pretty much on the basis of ‘if they do it must be right’,” he said.

The classic example is irrigation, which Burgundy does not use, and the myth that dry-land farmed vines make better wine than those irrigated, thus irrigation should either not be used or cease after veraison.

Dr. Jordan’s presentation also included yield management, lateral shoots, vine balance, eucalyptus taint, bio versus conventional production systems, variability within a bunch, drivers for berry set, vine nutrition, and vine age. “One of the hallmarks of our industry is the early adoption of new technology, and we need to maintain this attitude,” he said.

Sarah Inkersell from Pacific Rim Oenology Services Ltd attended the workshop, and with the laboratory tools available to carry out analysis on wines on site, it added huge value to the workshop.

Belinda said the feedback from attendees of the workshop is hugely positive, and the proof of this is the large number who return every year. Participants wanted to express their gratefulness for the knowledge they gained and can share with the industry, and collectively thanked OI Glass NZ for its sponsorship.

"Next month, participants at the workshop explain what they get out of attending such an event."
In the report senior analyst Marc Soccio says wine suppliers and retailers have sensed a growing appetite for wines beyond the mainstream, which in turn has led to global wine companies investing more behind premium wine strategies.

There are a number of reasons premium wine interest is on the rise, not the least that newer generations of consumers are influencing wine sales.

“These consumers have a higher level of awareness of wine and wine quality than any generation before them,” he says.

Mixed with that, is the increased warnings of high alcohol consumption, he says, that means younger consumers are choosing to drink less, and choosing instead to spend more on wine than their parent’s generation.

“More consumers are becoming increasingly adventurous and they are less likely to blindly follow the norms of the past when forming their preferences and purchasing decisions.” And that is where Marlborough is making an impression Marc says.

“This is giving rise to some great wine stories, such as the uptake of Prosecco and Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, which have duly presented major threats to some very well established wine styles and industries.”

However, while many seek to create an impact in the premium or top end of the market, he warns it can be a complicated and disjointed process. Mainly because despite the demand growing for premium wines, there’s relatively less volume demanded at higher prices and more brands and producers fighting over that top end shelf space.

“What makes it even more challenging for suppliers focused on this part of the market is that the high volume off-premise channel – particularly the major grocer retail chain – is growing more and more influential in determining which products find their way to consumers. On a producer level, those with the necessary scale and brand recognition to be effective in the grocery retail channel are often best placed to capitalise on the pockets of ‘premiumisation’ appearing in world markets.”

There is some hope for the future though as Marc says new on-line and on-premise formats continue to emerge and explore the common ground they have with independent premium wine suppliers, who have a “distinct story to tell and a style to sell”.  

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**Premium Battle**

TESSA NICHOLSON

The battle could be on in the near future to capture the premium end of the wine market, according to a recent Rabobank report, *Premium Wine*.

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You can lead a horse to water, but in Ashley Holland’s case, it was a horse that led her to wine.

The Two Rivers production winemaker grew up in Oklahoma, hell bent on specialising in Veterinary Science. Given how she was a top equestrian (hunters and jumpers) the horsey side of vet practice made total sense to her. However Ashley discovered in her third year of studies that her heart or at least her stomach wasn’t quite cut out for such a career.

“We had a school outing to the local pig farm, where we had to cut needle teeth, castrate the pigs and ear tag them. I was definitely biting my bottom lip, thinking, ‘what am I doing?’ I drove home and thought, this isn’t for me. Plus my horse Dutch had a bad accident that required multiple surgeries and some very tough life or death choices for him along the way. I decided I was a little too emotional for it. Either that, or I would end up with a bunch of sick horses, three legged dogs and blind cats. I just knew that I was too much of a bleeding heart.”

She decided instead of becoming a vet she would work towards pharmaceutical sales, if she could just gain some experience.

As part of the Oklahoma State equestrian team, Ashley had extended her 18 months until graduation to two years, allowing her plenty of time to take part in the show season. But recognising that she might become bored with no study, her coach suggested she take some extra classes to fill in the time.

“So I looked at things like flower arranging and rock climbing. But then I found another course called International Beverage Education – which is basically wine tasting. I thought this is going to be great. It’s a Thursday evening, I’ll have my wine and then go and enjoy drinks at the pub with my friends.

“I really liked it and I had a bit of a knack for it. I would say what I could taste and the teacher would look at the official tasting notes and tell me I had pretty much given a verbatim comment. It did help build my confidence.”

One of the guest speakers during
the course was a sales representative from E&J Gallo who explained how Gallo employs a young sales force and is renowned for their training programmes.

“I thought this could be it – this is where I could get that sales experience I would need to sell animal pharmaceuticals.”

Hence her applying for a job with the renowned firm, and getting it.

“I was telling my Mom that I was probably going to be packing boxes of wine, which isn’t exactly what I wanted to be doing. But luckily it wasn’t that. I was given my own territory, calling on mostly retail shops.”

She was soon promoted to the role of Gallo’s rep at Daveco – the world’s biggest liquor store, but before long long she was looking to develop her skills further. When she suggested to her manager that maybe she could start calling on restaurants and concentrate on wine education, she ended up receiving a call from Head Office, asking if she could be on a flight to California the next day.

“I said, great, but what for? They told me they had a role called wine ambassador, with only six positions within the company. If I got it, I would be the face/ liaison between the vineyard manager, the winemaker, the trade and the public. So I would be out in the vineyard talking about viticulture, I would be in the winery, I would dine with these people and show them around, drink wine with them during the day and teach wine education.

“I was like, absolutely I will be on that plane tomorrow.”

Ashley became one of the six ambassadors for the company, based in California.

“I learned so much it was like going back to school to study viticulture and oenology. To have access to that calibre of winemaking and access to the Gallo family who are still very much involved, was an amazing experience.”

She even decided to try her hand at winemaking albeit on a small scale.

“I thought if I had studied the science of animals and how to go about saving them, surely I could ferment some grape juice.”

With a small parcel of Merlot and Zinfandel, which she hand picked, and a friend’s garage to make the wine, Ashley realised that she had found her life’s calling.

“As I was pressing off those lots with this little hand crank basket press, I had an epiphany. This is the science I loved in animal science and it’s not an animal on my operating table, it’s just fermented grape juice.”

After sharing her desires with her manager, Ashley was offered a chance to work a vintage in Coonawarra, for one of Gallo’s sister wineries.

“... here in Marlborough there is so much potential, especially for Pinot Noir, that I am excited about. It’s just like seeing that diamond in the rough horse and taking them to the next level.”

After vintage it was back to California where she took on a more senior hospitality position. It was here she met with Whitehaven’s winemaker Sam Smail. Ashley was responsible for looking after Sam for a day, a day in which during general conversation she mentioned how she loved Pinot Noir, and how she had just completed her first ever vintage in Australia.

“He didn’t say anything that day. But a week later he sent me an email and asked if I wanted to come out to New Zealand to do a vintage and work on Pinot Noir. This was 2011 and very unplanned. I came over, did a six week stint at Whitehaven and then my plan got a little bit more out of control, as I met my fiancée at Whitehaven.”

Once vintage was over, it was a long-distance relationship for the next 12 months, given Ashley was still contracted to E&J Gallo. She decided though to undertake her Masters at Roseworthy in Australia, and got accepted for the course. In 2012 she worked a vintage at Cloudy Bay, and then discovered her funding for the Masters had fallen through.

“It was a bit of a ‘whoa’ moment, what’s happening? I decided to sit on it for a couple of months.”

She had a job to go to back in California, where she would be helping to establish Naked Wines – but it was hiking in the Wither Hills, on a stunning morning that convinced her that she should just stay put here in Marlborough.

“I was looking out over Cloudy Bay from the top of the Wither Hills and my gut said, you need to stay.”

Within a few weeks she had met Dave Clouston (Two Rivers owner) and she was helping him send out samples of wines.

“We started talking and he told me he was going to advertise for an assistant winemaker in January of 2013. He said if I was interested, we should talk more.”

Which is what they did and the long and the short of it is, Ashley is now production winemaker at Two Rivers – a job which she believes is a nice fit for her. But with no horses – as yet – and home still being in America, she does feel a little torn at times.

“When I go home to California it’s really nice to be there, but I find myself not quite as excited by the wines. Whereas here in Marlborough there is so much potential, especially for Pinot Noir, that I am excited about. It’s just like seeing that diamond in the rough horse and taking them to the next level. I hope to be part of the next industry evolution in New Zealand and I believe it is here in Marlborough with Pinot Noir.”

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Master of Wine Jane Skilton is New Zealand’s lead provider of WSET courses, which have grown exponentially in popularity in this country. The original aim was to provide members of the trade with knowledge about the wines, beers and spirits that consumers would be purchasing.

“When WSET was founded the idea was you were always in the trade and your employer would send you along to gain knowledge. Almost like an apprenticeship. There were lectures and tastings. But then in the late 80s the WSET began getting requests from members of the public wanting to do the courses as well. So it has moved from purely trade to trade and consumers. And in the last 15 years all the courses have been registered with the UK Qualifications Authority.”

When Jane started undertaking WSET there were just three levels, with the third one being the diploma. But with more consumers taking part, there was a need to provide an additional level – the introduction course.

Level one is run over one day, and until recently Jane didn’t teach it. She felt that most people in New Zealand knew enough about the basics of wine, that it wasn’t necessary. That was until someone pointed out to her, they didn’t feel confident to begin straight off with level two.

“The first level is very New Zealand focused. This is what Sauvignon is like.” She likes to show those taking part just why it is some wines cost more than others, even though they are the same variety.

“Chardonnay is an easy one. If you pay $10, this is what you get. If you pay $40 for this barrique fermented wine, this is what you get. That shows you how quality changes and why there are cost differences. You might not like the more expensive one, and I would say absolutely, that is your choice, but you now know why people pay more money for what they are getting.

“I have been really surprised at how popular this course is. I thought it would be too simple, but I underestimated the popularity.”

Level 2 is taught over 11 theory sessions with 42 wines tasted. Students gain a good basic knowledge of the world of wines and spirits.

Level three takes five days and there is a large component of tasting involved in this section.

Level four, or diploma takes two years and is very involved.

Level one cannot be undertaken on-line, although two and three can – if you are motivated enough.

“There is no tasting component in the exam for level two, which means people in remote places can do the course on-line. They get exactly the same textbooks as everybody else and probably need to log in every day. You do need to be motivated. You do have to come and sit the exam in person, that part cannot be achieved on-line.

“Level three, is a bit of a sticky one. Some people do do it on-line, but you really need to have tasted plenty of wine. It would work if you have a group of motivated people doing it together, purchasing the wines and tasting a wide variety.”

When it comes to the diploma, you need to attend all the tastings in person, but can study the theory on-line.

All the theoretical material is prepared in the UK, and all exams are marked there as well.

With so many consumers now taking part in at least levels one and two, what about winemakers? Jane says it is not necessarily aimed at them, although it can be beneficial.

“It is probably focused more at people in distribution and selling. But often winemakers enjoy studying it because they say they can become inward focused and see only their products or New Zealand and Australian. The courses do give a base grounding on wines of the world and if they travel overseas to do a vintage, they have tried a selection of wines and know where things are. So they have a base grounding before they head away.”

For more information on WSET courses, visit the website: www.nzsws.co.nz
That is the belief of Penny Jones, manager and winemaker at Bay of Fires in Tasmania. In early December she visited our South Island shores, tasting Pinot Noir in Marlborough, North Canterbury and Central Otago, under the guidance of Marlborough-based winemakers Ben Glover and Cleighten Cornelius and Waipara-based winemaker Simon McGeorge. Penny is based in Tasmania’s north east, 40 minutes north of Launceston in the Piper’s River sub region, traditionally known for its sparkling wine. With an annual crush of less than 1000 Tonnes, it takes in fruit from all over Tasmania. Penny said much like New Zealand, Tasmania is very sub regionally diverse. Because consistency of the wine is important year to year, representation of each region varies, depending on weather patterns. “Aromatically it’s very pretty,” said Penny, reflecting on her Pinot Noir back home compared to what she was tasting in the South Island. “Chinese five spice is often used to describe it... We like a little bit of funk, like lifted sulphides; just a touch.” Penny said the sub regional diversity of the South Island Pinot Noir was a feature that continued to provide interest. “I didn’t expect there to be so many pockets. And the hard work that each winemaker carries out to produce the best wine in their particular region was something that came through clearly.” She noted the bolder tannin-styled Pinots of Otago a contrast to the fresher brighter more primary styled Pinots from Waipara and Marlborough. “This has been awesome, to look at all the Pinots from all the different regions.” Tasmania is known to have a similar climate to New Zealand, although the Marlborough wind was something new the Tasmanian winemaker had to get used to. She said discussing the wines with Ben, Cleighten and Simon was a great learning tool. “It was fantastic to be able to sit in with these guys, using different language and descriptions for the same wine.” Pinot Noir clones used here is an area Penny is keen to learn more about and see more of, and hopes that in the future she can return the exceptional hospitality she experienced. “And the local beers are great!”
The Count Down to Sauvignon 2016

TESSA NICHOLSON

There are less than 11 months to go until New Zealand hosts the International Sauvignon Blanc Celebration, here in Marlborough.

It is an event that has been a long time coming, and something that many in this region have been keen to see get off the ground. Now with a committee in full flight, plans are starting to emerge on just what format the two and a half day celebration will take.

The dates have been set for February 1 to 3, 2016. With international speakers, guests and media expected, the celebration will pick up on the winning formula that has been proven with past Pinot Noir events.

All seminars will be held in the one region, Marlborough, with the opportunity for all Sauvignon Blanc producers in New Zealand and around the world to be involved in the event.

NZW CEO Philip Gregan says it is important to acknowledge, that while Marlborough has made its name with Sauvignon, there are many other regions producing the variety.

“Sauvignon Blanc is a pure expression of terroir and New Zealand has set the international benchmark for the wine style,” he says. “The Sauvignon Blanc Celebration is an opportunity for the world of wine to come together in New Zealand – to learn about, discuss and taste some of the world’s leading examples.”

While the final programme has yet to be confirmed, some of the ideas being touted for the celebration give an indication of how international it will be.

Where the variety has come from and where it is going in the future will make up one of the many sessions planned over the two and a half days. As will the global diversity of the style – how terroir impacts on the flavours and aromas. This is likely to be followed by an international tasting, pitting New Zealand versions against others from the likes of Australia, America, Europe and South Africa. The compatibility of the variety alongside a range of differing foods will provide those attending a chance to see the true versatility of Sauvignon Blanc. Which is one area that becomes all the more important in the marketing of the variety as food and wine matching has taken on more significance in recent years.

New Zealand has for a number of years led the way scientifically when it comes to investigating Sauvignon Blanc flavour compounds and that science will be explained in detail. In amongst all of the sessions, there will be plenty of opportunity for tasting a vast array of New Zealand Sauvignons and socialising. A garden party is arranged for the first night, and a Gala Dinner is planned for the final evening. “The celebration will feature guests and speakers from an array of sectors including science, entertainment, hospitality, journalism and also fellow Sauvignon Blanc producers from around the world,” Committee Chair Patrick Materman says, “It will provide guests with a compelling range of perspectives and opinions about Sauvignon Blanc.” Registrations for attendees open this month and wineries have already begun to register their interest in taking part in the event.
Bird Scaring Regulations

It’s that time of the year again where bird scaring becomes the norm. The following details cover all the regulations regarding bird scaring, provided by the Marlborough District Council.

Audible Bird Scaring Devices

No Category A audible bird scaring device

- Shall be operated between 7.00pm and 6.30am prior to the introduction of daylight saving and 8.00pm and 7.00am during daylight saving months.
  - Shall be operated within 800 metres of a rest home, public or private hospital.
  - Shall be operated within 160 metres of the boundary or notional boundary of the nearest residential dwelling (excluding a residential dwelling on the same property as the audible bird scaring device.
  - Shall be operated within 100 metres of a public road.
  - May emit a sound at a level greater than 65 dBA weighted sound exposure level measured at or within the boundary or notional boundary of the nearest residential dwelling (excluding a residential dwelling on the same property as the audible bird scaring device.)
  - Shall be set to operate at any greater frequency than 12 times in any period of one hour, that is 12 single discharges or four groups of three discharges.

- Shall be set at a greater density than one device per five hectares of land in any single land holding except that in the case of a single land holding of less than five hectares in area, one device shall be permitted, and
- Shall be operated unless a legible notice is fixed to the road frontage of the property on which it is being used, giving the name and telephone number of the person responsible for its operation.

Category B Devices

No Category B audible bird-scaring device

- Shall be operated between 7.00pm and 6.30am prior to the introduction of daylight saving and 8.00pm and 7.00am during daylight saving months.
  - Shall be operated within 160 metres of the boundary or notional boundary of the nearest residential dwelling (excluding a residential dwelling on the same property as the audible bird-scaring device.)
  - Shall be operated within 800 metres of any rest home, public or private hospital.
  - Shall be operated for any continuous period exceeding two seconds or at a frequency greater than 10 minutes in any hour in the case of air horns, sirens or any amplified signal.
  - May emit a sound at a level greater than 65 dBA weighted sound exposure level measured at or within the boundary of notional boundary of the nearest residential dwelling (excluding a residential dwelling on the same property as the audible bird-scaring device.)

Definitions:

Audible bird scaring device means any device that generates audible sounds waves used for scaring of birds.

Category A: Percussive or explosive devices (but excluding firearms as defined by the arms act 1983 or any act amending or replacing that act.)

For the purposes of this plan percussive or explosive device shall mean any device that is used to scare or disturb birds by generating a shock wave from percussion or an explosion thereby emitting noise.

Category B. Other devices (but excluding firearms), which generate noise that is used to scare or disturb birds.
Key Points

- MAT December 2014 export value is $1.352 billion, up 8% on the previous year.
- MAT December 2014 exports are 195.2 m. litres, up 11% on the previous year; packaged exports are +4% for the period and other exports are up 28%.
- Average value MAT December 2014 is $6.97 per litre down 2.5% on the previous year; packaged export value is $8.22 per litre down 2% on the previous year.
- YTD December 2014 exports are 110.7 m. litres, up 7% (7.4 m. litres) on the previous year. Based on adjusted WECS data, exports are 114.5 m litres up 11% (11.0 m. litres).
- December 2014 exports were 18.2 m. litres up 40% (5.2 m. litres) on December 2013.

Export Value per Litre

- All wines
  - December 2014 average value was $6.64 per litre, down $0.55 per litre on December 2013.
  - YTD December 2014 average value is $6.75 per litre.
  - MAT December 2014 average price is $6.97 per litre, down 2.5% or $0.18 per litre on MAT December 2013.

- Packaged wines
  - Excluding unpackaged wine from the data, the December 2014 average value was $8.26 per litre, down $0.20 per litre on December 2013.
  - YTD December 2014 the average price is $8.17 per litre.
  - MAT December 2014 the average price is $8.22 per litre, down $0.16 per litre (2%) on MAT December 2013.

- MAT December 2014 prices are up 5% to the UK, but are down 5% to Australia & USA, and 7% to Canada.

Total Export Volume & Value

- MAT December 2014 total value of exports is $1.352 billion, up 8% on the previous year.
- YTD December 2014 total value of exports is $754.1 million, up 2% on the previous year.
- Total value of December 2014 exports was $112.3 m. up 2% on December 2013.
- MAT December 2014 exports are 195.2 m. litres, up 11% (19.2 m. litres) on the previous year. Based on adjusted WECS data, exports are 198.8 m litres up 13% (22.7 m. litres).

Export Volume by Country of Destination

- In December, for the major markets, exports were up 74% to the UK, 45% to the USA and 39% to Australia. Canada was up 6% for the month, while performance of other markets was mixed, with the best performers being Ireland & Denmark.
- YTD December 2014 growth is led by the USA +17% with UK +14% but Australia is down 2%. Shipments to Canada are +11% on last year. Netherlands & Denmark are the other best performers.
- MAT December 2014 growth is led by the UK +20% and the USA +17%, but Australia is -1%. Canada shipments are +12% for the year and have exceeded 1 million cases (9 million litres) for the 1st time. Performance of other tracked markets is mixed with Denmark the strongest performer +39%.

Exports by Variety/Style

- In December 2014 Sauvignon Blanc exports were 16.1m. litres, up 45% from the previous year, accounting for 88.4% of export volume. Of the Sauvignon Blanc exported in December, 15.4 m litres was from Vintage 2014.
- Performance of other styles was generally positive in December with Cabernet & blends, Riesling and Pinot Gris the best performers.
- YTD December 2014 Sauvignon Blanc exports are 97.0 m. litres up 8% on the previous year. Performance of other styles is mixed with Pinot Gris the strongest performer.
- MAT December 2014, Sauvignon Blanc shipments are 167.9 m. litres up 12% from the previous year. Performance of other styles is mixed with Pinot Gris +31% the strongest performer.
- Production of Sauvignon Blanc in 2014 is estimated to have been 231.1 m. litres, 36% up on the previous year. Shipments of vintage 2014 Sauvignon Blanc since release are 95.4m. litres or 41.3% of estimated production – this is a lower share than at the same time after vintages 2010 - 2013. ©
Top Tweets

The best from the last month.

NZ YOUNG WINEMAKER @NZYoungWinemaker Feb 10
Check out the latest #NZWine mag for blurbs on upcoming competitions! #nzwine @winemarlborough @HawkesBayNZ @Cereswines

Adam Balasoglou @FrommWinery Jan 28
“@jamiegoode @ErikaSzymanski chard can be very good but Pinot & saw better in Marlborough” just love that you’re talking bout @winemarlborough

CellarHand @CellarHand Jan 26
They know #gooddirt when they see it. RT @winematcher: Counting worms with @TeWhareRaWines #nzwine @winemarlborough

Jack Glover @Jackoglover Feb 5
Cruising thru some @winemarlborough vino with @MusketRoom at the @MudHouseWine #woolshed #winetangi

Wairau River Wine NZ @Wairauriver Feb 4
New releases. Reserve Syrah & Albariño a 1st for us - great diversity in Marlborough. #nzwine @winemarlborough

CellarHand @CellarHand Jan 26
They know #gooddirt when they see it. RT @winematcher: Counting worms with @TeWhareRaWines #nzwine @winemarlborough

Toi Toi Wines @toitoiwines Feb 16
A big thank you @MarlboroughFest The #marlwinefest was a fantastic event. What a great day! :D

Marcus Pickens @MarcusPickens3 Feb 4
@NZFireService are doing a great job of battling back fire and smoke @winemarlborough great work by the pros.

The Black Seeds @TheBlackSeeds Feb 14
Thankyou Marlborough you were awesome. pic. twitter.com/hoGXfOhEfu

Winery Tanks and Equipment for Sale

White Wine Tanks:
10,000 litres to 600 litres

Red Wine fermentation tanks:
5,000 litres to 1,500 litres

Dairy vats:
2,200 litres to 750 litres

Siprem PA50 8 tonne air-bag Press
CMMC Delta E12 Destemmer-crusher
Barrel racks
Mitsubishi 3 tonne Forklift, rotator

Location: Christchurch

Contact: Helen Whelan
0276356117
kaituna.valley@xtra.co.nz

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Wine Happenings

A monthly list of events within the New Zealand wine industry.

To have your event included in next month’s calendar please email details to tessa.nicholson@me.com

MARCH
7 Wairarapa Wines Harvest Festival 2015 – Gladstone Vineyard – Wairarapa
12-16 Waiheke Vintage Festival – Waiheke Island
14: West Coast Wild Foods Festival – Hokitika
15-17 New Zealand Stand at ProWein – Dusseldorf – Germany
21 Gibbston Wine and Food Festival 2015 – Queenstown
22 Waipara Valley Wine and Food Festival – Glenmark Domain – Waipara
22-25 International Food and Drink Event 2015 – London

MAY
1-3 The Food Show Christchurch – CBS Arena
28: New Zealand Wine Fair Hong Kong

JULY
8-10 Organic/Biodynamic Wine and Viticulture Conference – Blenheim
30-Aug 2 The Food Show Auckland – ASB Showgrounds

AUGUST
26-28 Romeo Bragato Conference 2015 - Hastings

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News From Home and Away

Organic and Biodynamic Winegrowing Conference
The Romeo Bragato Conference may not be in Marlborough in 2015 – but the Organic and Biodynamic Conference will be. The two and a half day conference will take place from Wednesday July 8 through until Friday 10th. With a myriad of organic experts, the conference will provide insight into organic wine production from the vine to the bottle. Organisers say this is not just aimed at those who are already producing organic wines – but will also provide an opportunity for those considering conversion, to learn more about techniques and methods, while dispelling the myths.

Registrations are now open for those wishing to attend. Visit www.organicwineconference.com

Easter Show 2015 Gold Medals
A fine haul for Marlborough in the recent Easter Show Wine Awards. Gold medals went to the following wines.

Chardonnay
Lawson's Dry Hills Reserve 2013, Nautilus Estate 2013, Saint Clair Omaka Reserve 2013, Villa Maria Reserve 2013, Whitehaven Marlborough 2013

Gewurztraminer
Giesen The Brothers 2014, Johanneshof Cellars 2013, Lawson's Dry Hills 2013,

Sauvignon Blanc
Big Bunch 2014, Dashwood 2014, Giesen The Fuder Matthews Lane 2012,
Haha Marlborough 2014, Lawson’s Dry Hills 2014, Marua Marlborough 2014,
Saint Clair Marlborough Premium 2014, Saint Clair Pioneer Block 1 Foundation 2014, Saint Clair Pioneer Block 3 43 Degrees 2014,
Satellite 2014, Spy Valley Area H 2013, Starborough Family Estate 2014,
Stoneleigh Latitude 2014, W5 2014,
Zephyr 2014

Riesling

Pinot Gris

Other Specialised White Varieties
Saint Clair Marlborough Premium Gruner Veltliner 2012

Sweet Wine
Brancott Estate Letter Series B Late Harvest Sauvignon Blanc 2013

Pinot Noir
Framingham 2013, Giesen Single Vineyard Selection Ridge Block 2013
Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon 2012, Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass 2012

Sparkling
Daniel Le Brun Methode Traditionnelle Non Vintage Brut, Hunter’s MiruMiru Reserve 2010

Pinot Noir 2017
Pinot Noir New Zealand - described as ‘the best Pinot Noir event on the planet’, will be returning to the Wellington waterfront in 2017 for 3 days, commencing on the 31st January. If you’ve been involved before, you’ll know that Pinot Noir NZ 2017 will be, without question, the place to be in the wine world at that time. At the 2013 event 110 producers from around the country came together to showcase over 300 wines.

With an exciting new programme revealing the land, people and culture, attendees can expect to be educated, stimulated and connected to what makes our Pinot Noir unique. The Pinot Noir NZ 2017 Board is headed by Chair Ben Glover who describes his board members as ‘a superbly reprobate team’. They’ll be working to create an event which attracts some of the greatest international minds on the subject of Pinot Noir, and a thought-provoking 3 day programme.

“Pinot Noir NZ 2017 will continue to redefine the concept of New Zealand Pinot Noir. We’re looking to illuminate the path that leads to Pinot Noir greatness, and put fire into peoples’ bellies. We look forward to welcoming visionaries, thinkers, industry leaders and lovers of Pinot to be part of this exciting event with us.”

To be kept informed about the event and registration details, subscribe to the Pinot Noir NZ 2017 newsletter: http://www.pinotnz.co.nz or you can follow @PinotNoirNZ on Twitter, pinotnoirnz on Instagram or Pinot NZ on Facebook.

CLASSIFIEDS
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