



M E Q

Stone Creek in the running for 'Best Sauvignon In The World' trophy



A clear favourite with international and local wine enthusiasts, Morton Estate's 2002 Stone Creek Sauvignon Blanc has been nominated for two prestigious trophies at the 2003 London International Wine Challenge.

The wine is nominated for the Best Sauvignon Blanc Trophy and Great Value White Wine of the Year Award. It has already won a Gold Medal at the competition. It is extremely rare for a New Zealand wine to be nominated for two trophies at the competition, reputed as the most comprehensive and respected international wine challenge in the world.

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Fiona MacDiarmid, Morton Estate's Marketing Director, says the wine has received tremendous recognition this year. "Having one wine nominated for both trophies at the Wine Challenge has exceeded our expectations. This indicates that the wine is appreciated by the international wine enthusiasts as well as those here in New Zealand," she says.

The wine picked up a string of accolades including a Blue-Gold Medal at the 2003



Sydney International Wine Top 100 Competition, which matches great dishes with great wines. As well as being awarded four stars in January's Cuisine Magazine, the Stone Creek Sauvignon Blanc has been selected as a wine for Air New Zealand's Business Class.

Created in 1983, the International Wine Challenge has 550 professional judges and is entered by over 9000 wine producers, shippers, agents, independent retailers, retail chains, supermarkets and wholesalers from 36 countries worldwide.

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NEWS & VIEWS

HOT NEW WINES FOR WINTER

The cold season is here and we offer you three new wines to warm your winter evenings. There is a wine for every occasion: the 1997 Black Label Hawkes Bay Methode Traditionnelle is ideal for celebrations, the 1999 Black Label Hawkes Bay Pinot Noir is great to enjoy by the fire, and the 2002 Boar's Leap Unoaked Chardonnay is a refreshing aperitif to share with friends and family.



Black Label Hawkes Bay Methode Traditionnelle 1997

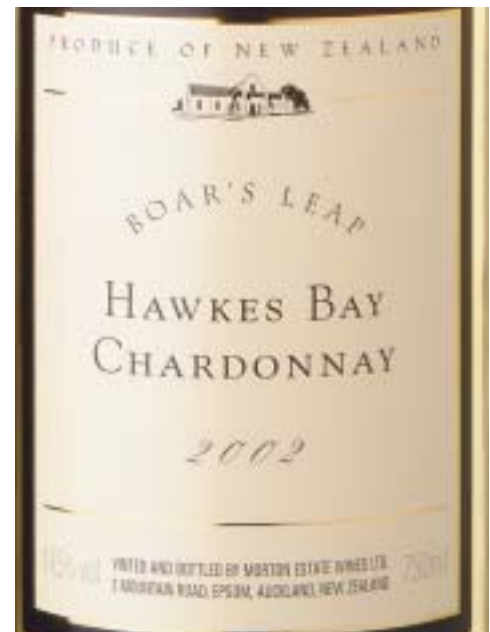
The 1997 Morton Estate Black Label Methode Traditionnelle is a blend that is predominantly pinot; adding texture, length of flavour and a lovely golden colour to the wine. The five years ageing on lees in the bottle have imparted a delightful yeasty complexity to the wine which harmonises with the delicate, underlying fruit characters. The incredibly fine bead lifts the wine's aromatic qualities and provides the senses with a memorable experience. A delicious aperitif that will also make a great must-have for any celebration.

Black Label Hawkes Bay Pinot Noir 1999

The Black Label Pinot Noir fruit has a nose of black cherries and strawberries coupled by oaky flavours. These are complemented by a palate that is soft with a ripe tannin structure. Best matched with lamb or game dishes. Cellar the wine for up to seven years to develop further complexities.

Boar's Leap Unoaked Chardonnay 2002

This wine was made from some of the very best fruit from our Hawke's Bay vineyards that consistently enjoy near-perfect conditions for chardonnay ripening. No barrel fermentation or oak maturation took place. The Boar's Leap Unoaked Chardonnay is full of intense aromas and flavour. Best matched with your finest seafood or poultry dish, or you can chill the wine and share it with good friends as an aperitif. Refreshing and undeniably Hawke's Bay in origin, drink the wine within three years for peak fruit characters.





STONE CREEK: UNIQUE QUALITIES BRING AWARD-WINNING NEW WORLD WINES

Morton Estate's Stone Creek Vineyard is situated in Marlborough – the region that put New Zealand on the international winemaking map with its strong, herbaceous sauvignon blancs. Stone Creek, now considered to be in the 'dress-circle' of Marlborough vineyards on Rapaura Road, is producing wines that are increasingly popular in New Zealand and overseas.

Paul McIntyre, Stone Creek's Vineyard Manager, describes the property as "a 100-acre plot of land that is exposed to pretty harsh conditions". However, the combination of light and porous river-alluvial soil, long cool nights and low autumn rainfall provide the best of growing conditions for some of the country's top sauvignon blanc and riesling wines. Morton Estate winemaker, Chris Archer, says Stone Creek's 'New World' style, which tends towards tropical hints of peach and passionfruit, is in vogue with New Zealanders' fast-evolving tastebuds.

Once owned by French wine company, Louis Fontaine et Fils Limited, Stone Creek was acquired by Morton Estate. The vines were badly virused and the vineyard underwent an extensive replanting

programme that has recently been completed. The vineyard, which sits on the shingle plains next to the Wairau River, now grows sauvignon blanc, riesling and pinot noir grapes.

The exceptional fruit quality of the new plantings has been evident in Stone Creek's sauvignon blanc and riesling wines.

This year, Stone Creek's Sauvignon Blanc won a Blue-Gold Medal at the 2003 Sydney International Wine Challenge, a Gold Medal at the 2003 London International Wine Challenge and four stars from Cuisine Magazine's wine judges. The Stone Creek Riesling collected Gold Medals at the 2002 Liquorland Top 100 and the 2002 Air New Zealand Wine Awards.

Air New Zealand thought the 2002 Stone Creek Sauvignon Blanc was so good that in May, the wine was selected for the enjoyment of its Business Class travellers. If Morton Estate's Riverview Vineyard is the crown jewel in Hawke's Bay, then Stone Creek is certainly the Marlborough equivalent.

The Miracle and Mystery of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc

By Brian Farmer, Cellar Door Manager/Wine Education Executive

There is little doubt that New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc has triggered a revolution in the world of wine. By overturning the way this grape was understood before the first commercial Marlborough vintage in the late 1970s, New Zealand has created a new benchmark style hitherto unknown.

In France, sauvignon blanc is at home in the Loire Valley (Sancerre, and Pouilly Fume); and for a completely different wine, it grows abundantly in Bordeaux. Here, with its cousin semillon, it is responsible for distinctively dry steely, some would say, gravely wines; and enigmatically it also produces the divinely sweet nectar of the gods in neighbouring Sauternes and Barsac. But these wines, whilst their greatness is beyond question, do not exhibit the pungency, and unique tongue-tingling tanginess epitomised by Marlborough sauvignon blanc. So what is it that creates Marlborough's unique claim to sauvignon blanc fame?

There is no single exhaustive answer, but the almost unpronounceable word methoxypyrazine is often identified. No, it is not a swear word. Nor is it either contagious or addictive, but methoxypyrazine is the secret to Marlborough's unique, even exclusive claim to worldwide superiority in sauvignon blanc.

Put quite simply methoxypyrazine is a compound of flavours that gives Marlborough sauvignon blanc its distinctive gooseberry/grassy green, even red currant character that leaps so convincingly out of every glass. And the origin of this unique compound of flavours?

Coupled with the characteristic stony, porous soils of Marlborough, the later ripening of the fruit in Marlborough's cool climate, and ultimately the skilled judgement of the winemaker to harvest at the optimum level of sugar/acid balance - therein lies some of the answer.

To put it another way: it is the variability of ripeness in the fruit that the grower can control, encourage and even create in Marlborough sauvignon blanc. Few grape types allow such flexibility, let alone tolerate such human intervention. So the adage that great wine is made in the vineyard is no empty phrase or exaggeration. Marlborough sauvignon blanc embodies this.

Oh, just one last thought: methoxypyrazine or not, the world cannot get enough of Marlborough sauvignon blanc



Tarantino, Jagger,
Streisand,
Nicholson, Morton.

Just a few of the
famous who chill at
the Savoy.



No matter how hot you are, fans are not allowed inside. And that's what makes the Savoy such a cool place to hang in London.

Public faces can retreat to private surroundings, where the only autographs given are at the bottom of bar bills. (A quick inspection of which will often, not surprisingly, reveal Morton Estate.)

Perhaps this is due to the 1997 London International Wine Challenge, where our Morton Estate 1995 Black Label was judged Best Chardonnay in the World.

It did, after all, create for us a rather large and devoted group of followers. Though it seems some of them are now managing to slip past the doorman.



Winewriter's & Winemaker's choice

Guest Writer: Robyn Martin



Robyn Martin

A VERSATILE LITTLE NUMBER

By Robyn Martin

There are some things you can take too seriously in life and the over-enthusiastic tasting of wine is one of them. After all, how many average wine-drinking punters do you know who swirl, sniff and analyse?

That gives an entré for my "wine tasting" focus. When I put my strong Roman nose into a wine glass after doing the Pilates wrist swirling exercise, my focus is not on the inherent characteristics of the wine, but rather on how those delicious smells and flavours will be enhanced by the perfect food match.

Morton Estate's 2000 White Label Hawkes Bay Chardonnay had a smooth malolactic nose with lightly caramelised lemon drizzled pears lurking in the background. The nose changed as the wine opened revealing a fruit salad bowl nose and palate of citrus, honeydew melon and apple with the odd winter nell pear chopped through.

So what would I serve this excellent example of a lighter style chardonnay with? Perhaps a lemon chicken, pork with caramelised pears or Thai flavoured dishes would be my pick.

We share the "wine-tasting" duties at our dinner table and the consensus was that there were sauvignon blanc characteristics in this wine as it opened up. That makes it a good choice in those situations where you only want to serve one white wine and you know you have both sav blanc and chardonnay drinkers... a versatile little number at a good price!



DELICATE AND JUST RIGHT FOR CELEBRATING

By our Hawke's Bay Winemaker Evan Ward

Traditionally, single vintage sparkling wines are only made in the Champagne region of France when conditions produce fruit of sufficient quality. Morton Estate has followed this philosophy with its 1997 Black Label Methode Traditionnelle. Vintage methode may not be produced every year, waiting instead for premium conditions.

At Morton Estate, our vintage sparkling wines rely on very high fruit quality – a minimum ageing of 5 years on yeast lees in the bottle. The complexity achieved by back blending, as is the case with non-vintage wines, is not an element of this style. The 1997 Morton Estate Black Label Methode Traditionnelle is a blend that is predominantly pinot, which adds texture, length of flavour and a lovely golden colour to the wine.

Each variety of wine imparts its own character: 12% chardonnay for an element of finesse, 52% pinot meunier for complexity and development, and 36% pinot noir for palate weight and fuller flavours. Prolonged ageing on lees in the bottle – achieved using temperature-controlled storage technology – has imparted a delightful yeasty complexity to the wine which sits in harmony with the delicate, underlying fruit characters. The presence of a fine persistent bead lifts the aromatic qualities of the wine and provides the senses with a memorable experience. It is perfect as an aperitif or accompaniment to any celebration.



Evan Ward