



New Zealand Wineries Exporting to the World

Case studies and resources

Compiled by Graeme Siddle, Head of Library & Information Services, New Zealand School of Export, 2009.

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Case study 1: Muddy Water Winery

Hand-crafted, authentic wines

12 Sep 2005

Muddy Water, a small vineyard in the beautiful Waipara Valley in North Canterbury, is focused on producing handcrafted wines that enhance food rather than dominate it, explains winemaker Belinda Gould.



“Our wines appeal to people who aren’t looking for showy wines, they are authentic, not over the top, reflecting our vineyards. It’s a very hands on operation - you won’t find heaps of pumps. We try to do everything with minimal handling and as carefully as we can. We pay a lot of attention to detail, such as sorting every cluster of grapes by hand and hand harvesting.”

Producing just 5000 cases annually, that attention to detail and the ability to be so hands on is Muddy Water’s point of difference over much larger wineries, says Belinda.

She says it was this opportunity to be so involved in the making of the wine – rather than sitting behind a desk – that motivated her to become the Muddy Water winemaker in 2000. That and the fact she is a ‘native’ of Waipara in North Canterbury.

Belinda’s resume includes two years as a guest student at the Geisenheim viticulture school in Germany and three years as winemaker at Calera Wine Co, one of California’s leading Pinot producers. A family decision that Waipara was the place to live coincided with a job offer as winemaker/viticulturist for Muddy Water when the winery was built in 2000.

Muddy Water is a direct translation from the Maori place name – wai (water) para (sediment, mud) and is the dream of owners Michael and Jane East who purchased the property in 1993.

“Just as our name reflects the place, our wines reflect our vineyards,” says Belinda. “Our vineyards are situated on sunny slopes above the Waipara Valley. Protected from cool sea breezes by a range of coastal hills, the Waipara area has a climate distinct from the rest of the Canterbury. Cold, frosty winters, warm dry summers and dry sunny autumns provide intensely flavoured ripe grapes.

“Our soils are loam over calcareous clay on limestone bedrock, ideal for growing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, mirroring the Burgundian soils that are the natural home of these great varieties.”

Muddy Water grows Pinot Noir, Pinotage, Syrah, Riesling and Chardonnay. About half its annual production is exported to the UK, USA, Germany, Ireland, Singapore, Australia and Hong Kong. Demand is growing, says Belinda.

“There are plans to increase production by planting the entire property, although this increase will be carefully controlled so we don’t stretch ourselves in either production or sales.”

Company Profile

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Contact

Name: Mr Michael East

Position: General Manager

Company overview

Situated in the Waipara area of North Canterbury, New Zealand, Muddy Water is a direct translation from the Maori place name - wai (water) para (sediment, mud). Just as our name reflects the place, our wines reflect our vineyards. Our vineyards are situated on sunny slopes above the Waipara Valley in North Canterbury, on the South Island of New Zealand. Protected from cool sea breezes by a range of coastal hills, the Waipara area has a climate distinct from the rest of Canterbury. Cold, frosty winters, warm dry summers and dry sunny autumns provide intensely flavoured ripe grapes. Our soils are loam over calcareous clay on limestone bedrock, ideal for growing Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, mirroring the Burgundian soils that are the natural home of these great varieties. We grow Pinot Noir, Pinotage, Syrah, Riesling and Chardonnay

Products/Services

Wine, red, Pinot Noir

Wine, red, Syrah/Shiraz

Wine, white, Chardonnay

Wine, white, Riesling

Source:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/Stories/SuccessContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=14396> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

Morrison, P. & Bourne, R. (2001/2002 Summer) Waipara Hills 'up and running'; four vineyards and an olive grove. *New Zealand grape grower*, 21-27.

Case study 2: Sileni Estates Vineyard

Wine going down well overseas

Wine from a major vineyard in Hawke's Bay looks likely to be quaffed in many more countries following a big marketing push overseas, assisted by New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE).

Sileni Estates is a large vineyard and winery development near Hastings, this country's oldest established vineyard area. The first vintage was in 1998 and since then their wines have won worldwide acclaim.

General Manager Sales and Marketing Pip Austin says the company is branching out, using a NZTE grant to help develop markets in the United States, Western and Eastern Europe, as well as North Asia.

"The grant is helping us with our development in a number of ways, including in-market visits, participating in international wine fairs, development of marketing materials and in establishing distribution in the US, European and Asian markets," she says. "It's been very useful and has also been a real encouragement for us."

Sileni Estates boasts a state of the art winery designed to crush more than 2500 tonnes of grapes. It was established in late 1997, following investment by ex adis International publishing magnate Graeme Avery and Chief Winemaker Grant Edmonds. Their vision was for Sileni to become an export-oriented producer committed to crafting world-class fine wines, says Austin.

That vision's well on its way. At current capacity, Sileni's vineyards and fruit sourced from contract growers yield around 200,000 cases, with just 10 percent destined for the local market.

"We think there's plenty of room for continued growth," says Austin. "If you look at the US as being 50 markets in one, even if each took only 1000 cases, that's 50,000 cases."

Sileni's winemaking focus is on producing premium white and red wines based on the classic grape varieties including Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Semillon, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Syrah.

In Sileni's short history they have stacked up an impressive collection of international awards including their triple trophy win for Best Value White Wine, Best International Sauvignon Blanc and Best New Zealand White Wine at the prestigious International Wine Challenge in London in 2005. Since then, Sileni has gone on to win a raft of international medals and trophies in major wine competitions in the US, UK, Europe, Asia, Australia and New Zealand.

"There was enough faith in our continued international award successes that we recently gained distribution with both Thresher and Tesco in the UK and Australian-wide distribution with the Woolworth / Dan Murphy's group," says Austin. "Now it's a question of capitalising on that success and extending further."

Sileni's winery also provides a first-class tourist destination for food and wine aficionados, with an award-winning Restaurant, Culinary School, and Gourmet Cellar Store featuring an extensive range of local and imported food and wine products and Sileni is now home to The Village Press, New Zealand's largest producers of cold pressed extra virgin olive oil.

Originally published on the NZTE website 9 January 2008.

Company Profile

Contact details

Sileni Estates

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Contact

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Company Overview

Sileni Estates was born from a long standing interest in wine by Graeme Avery, a pharmaceutical scientist and former owner of medical publishing company Adis International. In late 1997, along with financial director Chris Cowper and winemaker Grant Edmonds, he established Sileni as an export oriented producer, committed to crafting world-class fine wines.

The winery is named after the Sileni who featured in Roman mythology alongside Bacchus, the God of Wine. They celebrated good wine, good food and good company.

The vineyards and winery are based near Hastings, Hawke's Bay, on the east coast of the North Island of New Zealand. It has a southern latitude of 39° and a climate similar to that of some of the great wine regions of the world.

Sileni Estates also source grapes from the well known wine producing area of Marlborough, including Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir.

Sources:

<http://www.nzte.govt.nz/features-commentary/Success-stories/Pages/Wine-going-down-well-overseas.aspx> Retrieved on May 4, 2009

<http://www.sileni.co.nz/sileni-estates.asp> Retrieved 9 February 2010

Case study 3: Saint Clair Estate

Family business builds global brand

12 Sep 2005

After just 11 years in the wine business, former grape growers Neal and Judy Ibbotson have established Saint Clair Estate Wines as a multi-million dollar award-winning wine company, winning accolades from consumers and critics around the world.



The Marlborough winery was established in 1994 when the couple decided to take advantage of the flourishing success of Marlborough wines. The family-run business has gone from strength to strength, increasing wine production to 150,000 cases last year with strong forward growth projections, particularly for its award winning Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. In 2003, Saint Clair Estate won the coveted Silverado Trophy for the best Sauvignon Blanc at the International Wine & Spirit Competition in London. In September 2004, it was awarded the trophy for the top Sauvignon Blanc at the Decanter Wine Show and also the prestigious International Wine Challenge, both in London.

Director Neal Ibbotson says the continued high growth in sales will see the company build its own, 'state of the art' 3000 tonne winery at Riverlands Estate in Blenheim, to be in production for the 2006 vintage.

The company is aiming to increase annual production to 200,000 cases, with more than 60% of sales forecast to be Sauvignon Blanc and the balance Riesling, Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Merlot, and Pinot Gris.

A strong quality philosophy permeates everything Saint Clair does. This has included developing a unique wine quality measurement system where before it blends the wines they are all assessed by taste and marked for quality. This has enabled Saint Clair to benchmark, identify and target the best areas for growing grapes and then to establish vineyards or contract growers to grow fruit for the company in these areas.

"We also use that wine quality measurement as a payment incentive for our growers", explains Mr Ibbotson. "It's a system that has resulted in a significant improvement in the quality and consistency of our wines. All varieties have won gold medals, with the exception of our Pinot Noir which has achieved silver medal status.

"We have targeted the quality end of the market, following the successful strategy of other Marlborough wine companies. We've also chosen to sell through distributors

who in turn sell to fine wine retail outlets and restaurants. We have recently gained listings for three of our wines in the most expensive hotel in the world, The Emirates Palace in Abu Dhabi.”

Saint Clair now exports to over 35 countries throughout Europe, the United Kingdom, Ireland, North America, South East Asia and the Pacific Basin.

Company Profile

Saint Clair Estate Wines

Contact details



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Contact

Name: Mr Neal Ibbotson

Position: Managing Director

Company overview

Saint Clair Estate Wines is New Zealand family owned and operated and has produced top quality wine since 1994. Established in 1978 the vineyards were one of the first private plantings in the Marlborough Valley. Grapes were initially sold to other producers. Now exported to over 20 countries.

Products/Services

Wine, white, Sauvignon Blanc

Wines, dessert

Wines, red

Wines, table

Wines, white

Source:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/Stories/SuccessContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=14397> Retrieved on May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

Smith, C. (2008, July 26). Potential and constraints in wine sector. *Otago Daily Times*, p.26. Retrieved 1 February, 2010 from <http://www.odt.co.nz/news/business/15020/potential-and-constraints-indian-wine-sector>

Case study 4: Felton Road Winery

A small winery with a big reputation

12 Sep 2005

Felton Road, a small artisan Central Otago winery, is generating rave reviews from international wine writers and has fine wine importers knocking at its door – but instead of pursuing significant growth its strategy is to cap production.



This 12-person business started exporting in 1997. Its first Pinot Noir won the acclaim of Robert Parker, one of the world's most influential wine critics - invaluable publicity for a company whose goal is to make wines of groundbreaking quality that command a worldwide reputation.

Winemaker and General Manager Blair Walter says Felton Road is a small but profitable producer of just 10,000 cases of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling, with plans to cap production at 12,000 cases in the next two years. He says quality, not volume or revenue is the driving force behind the business – which is owned by self-proclaimed English "Pinot Noir addict" Nigel Greening.

"Everything we do is driven by our brand strategy to achieve desirability, visible presence and limited availability everywhere in the world that fine wines are collected and consumed. If that succeeds, the business succeeds," says Mr Walter.

He says Felton Road wines are highly desirable. "We have people all over the world wanting our wine – with demand exceeding supply. We don't spend anything on advertising but we are constantly appearing in articles in magazines and newspapers around the world, talking about the quality of our wine.

"We need to keep that momentum going to keep our name in front - attending tastings, promotional events, visiting our global markets, being listed in the best restaurants and at fine wine auctions and served at exclusive charity dinners.

"We believe we can achieve everything we want through getting two things right. The first is always the quality of our wines, which needs to increase unremittingly against a backdrop of global oversupply and heavy corporate competition. The second is to be a small family business with the global reach and distribution sophistication of a multi-national company."

Mr Walter says Felton Road doesn't aim to be different, rather to be welcomed into an exclusive club of highly desired world class fine wines. In particular with Pinot

Noir, which is notoriously unreliable, the winery presents its vintage as representing reliability and good value for money against its peers.

Felton Road exports to markets all over the world and is working to extend its geographical coverage further. Major markets are the UK, USA and Australia.

Distributors are considered critical and the company makes clever use of wine writers and leading sommeliers to help select suitable people. The winery invests heavily in people and facilities to ensure the continual quality of its wine. In the past two years it's spent about \$2 million expanding and equipping the winery, on new planting programmes, vineyard equipment and the conversion to the use of organic and biodynamic processes in the vineyard.

Image: Winemaker Blair Walter

Company Profile

Contact details



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Contact

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Position: Winemaker

Company overview

Felton Road in Bannockburn, Central Otago, in the south of the South Island of New Zealand, has planted some of the World's southernmost vineyards. The expression, growing on the edge, has real meaning in Central Otago, with the lowest rainfall and lowest winter temperatures of any agricultural region in New Zealand. From their first vintage in 1997, Felton Road wines flew straight to the top of everyone's score sheet, with praise such as Stunning Debut, Best New Winery, and Pinot Noir of the Year. Winemaker Blair Walter attributes the high quality to the Central Otago distinct soil and climate, the north-facing hillside vineyard, and meticulous care of the vines, not mentioning his skill and wide experience as winemaker.

Products/Services

Wine, red, Pinot Noir

Wine, white, Chardonnay

Wine, white, Riesling

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/ExporterProfile/6863/Felton-Road-Wines-Ltd.aspx> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/Stories/SuccessContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=14393> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

Greening, N. (2008, December). No going back for organic winery. *Primary industry management*, 39-40.

Case study 5: Te Awa Winery

Classically balanced wines

12 Sep 2005

Te Awa Winery is a special place. The full Maori name given to the site is 'Te Awa o te atua' which means 'River of God', a reference to the subterranean streams over which it is sited and from which the wines draw their subtle characteristics, explains General Manager Simon Ward.



"As a single estate winery we cherish the unique terroir of our vineyard. Our philosophy is to express this terroir in balanced wines, reflecting the grapes from which they are made."

Te Awa was established in 1992 in the Hawke's Bay, one of New Zealand's leading wine regions, with the express interest of growing premium grapes and making fine wine, especially the Bordeaux varieties.

"Before coming to Te Awa, our winemaker Jenny Dobson was one of the very few female wine makers in Bordeaux," says Mr Ward. "She was the 'maitre di chais' at Chateau Senerjac and has brought many of the same practices she was using in France and applied them to what we are doing at Te Awa. Her strength is producing beautifully complex and balanced wines."

Te Awa was bought several years ago by Julian Robertson, an American with a passion for New Zealand, including its wines. Under his proprietorship the winery has created stylish new labels and simplified brand names.

"We've recognised a need to meet the changing market expectations so have simplified our portfolio by re-focusing our range of wines and re-packaging to differentiate our brands," says Mr Ward. "Our wines are now offered as the flagship brand 'Te Awa' and the everyday drinking brand, 'Longlands' by Te Awa"

Te Awa's wine current range includes Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Merlot, Syrah and Pinotage. Of the 25,000 cases produced annually, about 50% are currently exported, with this figure likely to increase. Major markets are the USA, Canada and the UK, with niche markets throughout Asia also identified as offering big potential for growth.

Mr Ward says that as a founding member of the Gimblett Gravels Wine Growing District, Te Awa Winery is at the forefront in developing a definitive and complete process to protect a unique winegrowing area here in Hawke's Bay. The idea

combines the French concept of terroir with modern day thinking to define, protect and market wine.

“The Te Awa vineyard comprises just 43 hectares. Much of the skill - all of the quality of our wine - comes from a deep understanding of the rich diversity of soils that permeate through this small area. The diversity allows us to make a selection of supreme quality wines - rich in character, complexity, and, above all, sheer enjoyment.”

Company Profile

Te Awa Winery

Contact details



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Contact

Name: Mr Ant McKenzie

Position: General Manager

Company overview

Te Awa Winery is a special place. The full Maori name given to the site is Te Awa o te atua which means River of God, a reference to the subterranean streams over

which it is sited and from which the wines draw their subtle characteristics. As a single estate winery we cherish the unique terroir of our vineyard. Our philosophy is to express this terroir in balanced wines, reflecting the grapes from which they are made. Te Awa wines are the absolute expression of our single estate vineyard. In-depth knowledge and understanding of our vineyard coupled with attention to detail throughout the grape growing and winemaking leads to balanced wines with poise, great complexity of flavour and intensity of structure. Our Te Awa wines are only released after careful cellaring and offer immediate enjoyment, yet are structured to deliver further rewards.

Products/Services

Wines, red

Wines, table

Wines, white

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/401/Te-Awa-Farm-Winery.aspx> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/Stories/SuccessContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=14394> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Case study 6: Palliser Estate Wines

Award winning Wairarapa winery has a strong entrepreneurial attitude

12 Sep 2005

Palliser Estate Wines of Martinborough, a small, profitable winery whose foreign exchange earning vision is to “follow the money” was New Zealand’s Food and Beverage Exporter of the Year in 2004.



This award winning Wairarapa winery has a strong entrepreneurial attitude and a commitment to being a world-class company. An export-focused business with high yield per volume, Palliser is a progressive company, leading the industry on issues such as screwcap closures of wine bottles and marketing initiatives like the new Family of 12, a cross-regional marketing group representing a dozen premium New Zealand wineries.

Palliser started producing and exporting wines in 1989. It sold 50,000 cases of wine in 2003, growing annual turnover to \$6 million – about 50% generated from exports to 18 markets. Managing Director Richard Riddiford says Palliser’s foreign exchange earning vision is to “follow the money”.

“We aim for customers with high discretionary income, and find them through top restaurants and hotels, upmarket wine retailers, prestigious airlines and high profile events like Wimbledon. Palliser gives marketing priority to associations with other top-level brands, for example the Raffles Hotel wine list in Singapore and Harrods of London.

“Targeting such discerning customers means our product must be outstanding. It’s our key differentiator.” Palliser has an excellent track record in winning gold medals and international trophies - 62 in the last decade.”

Where possible, Palliser appoints wine companies such as Bollinger in France, Gaja in Italy, Barossa Weinhandels in Switzerland and Yalumba Wine’s distribution subsidiary Negociants in the USA, Australia and New Zealand as its distributors, rather than wine merchants. Mr Riddiford says they have a better understanding of all aspects of the wine business and to have an iconic company like Bollinger representing you in arguably the toughest wine market in the world is “priceless brand enhancement”.

Palliser's point of difference and its critical success factors are driven compulsively by a 'continuous quality improvement' philosophy. It was the first New Zealand winery to achieve ISO 9002 quality accreditation and the first winery worldwide to achieve ISO 14001 environmental accreditation. At consumer level, Palliser was an innovator in adopting screwcap closures of wine bottles to protect the quality and integrity of its brand.

Company Profile

Palliser Estate Wines of Martinborough

Contact details



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Contact

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Position: Managing Director

Company overview

Palliser Estate is well established as a leading winery in the ultra premium grape-growing region of Martinborough. We believe our environment is our greatest asset and we endeavour to produce our wines in the most sustainable ways possible. The first wines were produced in 1989 with the ongoing philosophy being to produce wines of quality, distinction and style. The success of this quality philosophy is

reflected in the numerous medals and trophies that we have won both nationally and internationally since that first vintage. Palliser Estate offers premium wines under the Palliser Estate and Pencarrow labels. The Estate range of wines has a well-established reputation both within the New Zealand and international markets. The Pencarrow range offers quality, varietal wines with immediate appeal.

Products/Services

Wine, red, Pinot Noir

Wine, sparkling, champagne method

Wine, white, Chardonnay

Wine, white, Pinot Gris

Wine, white, Riesling

Wine, white, Sauvignon Blanc

Wines, red

Wines, table

Wines, white

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/206/Palliser-Estate-Wines-of.aspx?buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/MNZ/Stories/default.aspx?SectionID=14389&pg=6> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

(2004, Spring) Palliser takes top award: judges value export leadership. *New Zealand grape grower*, 48-52.

Case study 7: Nobilo Wine Group

Tradition meets the modern age at Nobilo

9 Nov 2006

Steeped in history, Nobilo Wine Group is the owner of some of New Zealand's most respected pioneering wine brands, and is also a business success story with annual turnover of more than \$130 million.



A producer, exporter and importer of wines, Nobilo Wine Group has been following an ambitious growth strategy in recent years, with mergers, acquisitions, extensive new grape plantings and market development. Employing more than 200 staff at locations throughout New Zealand, it's New Zealand's second biggest wine company and second largest wine exporter, with international sales accounting for 75% of its New Zealand wine production.

Marketing Manager Peter McDonald says strong export results are being achieved without any compromise in quality, people, facilities and product, and with growth in the premium and super-premium wine segments.

Nobilo Wine Group was a pioneer of the New Zealand wine industry, founded by the Nobilo family who emigrated from Croatia in the early 1940s. The late 1990s marked the beginning of big changes for the company, starting with the acquisition of Selaks, another successful New Zealand wine company, and a listing on the New Zealand Stock Exchange. Within two years Nobilo Wine Group had been bought by the Hardy Wine Company, Australia's second largest wine producer, which in 2003 merged with Constellation Brand Inc of the USA, to form the largest wine business in the world.

Its sale to Hardy and later Constellation delivered not only new and extensive distribution networks for Nobilo wines, says Mr McDonald, but also the resources to embark on a multi-million dollar growth plan of extensive new plantings, new brands, new varieties and market expansion.

Nobilo Wine Group exports a number of key brands to UK/Europe, USA, Canada, Australia and Asia, including House of Nobilo Regional Collection, Nobilo Icon, White Cloud, Selaks and Drylands.

In addition to its heritage brands, which continue to perform strongly, it has introduced a number of new brands at the premium and ultra premium ends of the international market, such as Selaks The Favourite. Earlier this year its parent company Constellation purchased Vincor, one of North America's largest wine

producers, which has brought Kim Crawford Wines, another New Zealand success story, into the company.

Nobilo Wine Group is taking its wines up the value chain, and Mr McDonald says this includes investing in the production of premium varietals, especially sauvignon blanc, pinot noir, chardonnay and merlot.

“We now have over 1,500 hectares of owned vineyards in Marlborough and Hawke’s Bay. At least a third of this has been planted out over the last 18 months, including new varietals such as pinot gris, viognier and syrah which will flesh out our brand offering.”

Mr McDonald says one of Nobilo Wine Group’s key strengths is its extensive network of distribution world-wide, both through its parent company and through long-established relationships.

“We’ve also invested in the right varietals, in the right percentage weighting to meet international demand. Both of these factors give us a distinct competitive advantage and will help achieve our aim of becoming the number one supplier of New Zealand wines to the world.”

Company profile

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Company overview

Nobilo Wine Group part of the BRL Hardy Group. We take Quality NZ wines to the world under our Nobilo/Drylands and Selaks labels. We also import and distribute wines to the NZ market. Nobilo Wine Group are NZ's Second largest wine group.

Products/Services Spec Sheet

Wines, table

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/72/House-of-Nobilo.aspx?buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Stories/successContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=16189&buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2007

Other Information Sources:

Dobson, D. (2007, August/September). Nobilo: grapes and wine flow through his blood; Vinoptima –not bad for boy from Huapai. *New Zealand grape grower*, 6-7.

Case study 8: Tohu Wines

New Zealand's first indigenous winery

3 Aug 2007

Tohu Wines, New Zealand's first indigenous wine company, produces fine wine for export markets all over the world.



OUR GIFT FROM THE LAND
Nga hua a te whenua

This successful and growing winery was established in 1998 by three entrepreneurial Māori groups wanting a business venture that would enable them to export their culture to the world. They saw wine as the ideal vehicle to achieve their commercial and cultural aims, says Tohu Wines Chief Executive James Wheeler.

The three groups – Wi Pere Trust, Wakatu Incorporation and Ngāti Rarua Atiawa Iwi Trust – have 3,000 shareholders between them and own land in New Zealand's top wine growing regions.

Tohu Wines is currently producing Chardonnay, Unoaked Chardonnay and Reserve Chardonnay from its Gisborne vineyards, and Pinot Noir, Sauvignon Blanc, Unoaked Chardonnay and Riesling from its Marlborough vineyards. Tohu has also established a new 11-hectare vineyard on the Moutere Hills near Nelson that is producing Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir. A further 12 hectares will be added to the new production area in 2007/2008.

"Our winemaker is Simon Waghorn, one of New Zealand's finest winemakers, and Dr David Jordan, our consultant viticulturalist, is a leader in his field, ensuring our wines are of the highest quality," says Mr Wheeler.

"Our wines must have a point of difference; we don't want them to be the same as the ones produced down the road.

"Our main point of difference, however, is being Māori, and that is something we have got that no other New Zealand winery has got. Global markets are fascinated by our authentic Māori history. They are intrigued to learn about a successful indigenous company and it makes their experience of our product unique."

The Māori aspect is communicated in all the company's marketing and branding – from talking about it at wine shows and to journalists, to advertisements in United States and United Kingdom wine magazines. There is also the striking Tohu label, which features a section of a painting by Māori artist Sandy Adsett.

Tohu Wines produced 3,000 cases of wine from its first harvest in 1998. By 2007, its tenth vintage, production had increased to 60,000 cases, 80 percent of which is exported. By 2012 Mr Wheeler predicts Tohu will be producing 140,000 cases a year.

Tohu Wines has a staff of 20 and is now exporting to 20 countries with major markets in the USA, Canada, the UK, Europe, and Asia.

James Wheeler travels up to four months of the year opening up new markets and meeting with distributors, importers, clients, and potential clients.

Tohu Wines has won medals at international and New Zealand wine awards for virtually every wine it has produced.

It consistently achieves accreditation from Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand for its vineyard management and wine making practices. James Wheeler says this is in line with the company's fundamental commitment to sustainability and its policy of being kaitiaki, or guardians of the land.

By New Zealand Trade and Enterprise

[Company profile](#)

Tohu Wines

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Contact

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Position: National Sales Manager

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Company overview

Tohu Wines is the first Maori owned wine company to export wine. We produce and export the following wines: Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough Pinot Noir, Gisborne Chardonnay and Gisborne Reserve Chardonnay. We also sell on the domestic market.

Products/Services

Wine, red, Pinot Noir

Wine, white, Chardonnay

Wines, red

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/257/Tohu-Wines.aspx?buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Stories/successContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=17601&buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

(2001, November). Maori wine exporter's pinot noir hits the spot overseas. *Te Karere Maori*, 201.

(2001/2002, December/January). Wine'ing success. *Tu mai*, 6.

Northcott, R. (2003, June/July). Tohu Wines Maori marketing success. *Trademark*, 24-25.

Singleton, A. (2003, July). Taking Europe by storm. *New Zealand business*, 12-13.

Case study 9: Gibbston Valley Wines

Central Otago wine pioneer builds its export base

15 Jun 2007

Gibbston Valley Wines is developing a broad export base for its award-winning wines, building off a 20-year track record as a producer of some of New Zealand's finest cool climate wines.



The company was the first commercial wine producer in the Central Otago region and today bottles 20,000 cases of wine a year, 70 percent of which is Pinot Noir. Gibbston Valley's Blanc de Pinot Noir – a rose wine made from 100 percent Pinot Noir grapes - has gained almost cult status, and regularly sells out over the hot summer months. Other varieties made at Gibbston Valley's premises, 25 minutes by road from Queenstown, include Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc.

Gibbston Valley's export strategy is to sell small volumes into top end outlets in more than 15 countries, ensuring sales are not reliant on one export market. Around five percent of production is currently sent offshore but Sales and Marketing Manager, Claudio Heye, expects export volumes to grow in the next few years.

"Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States are the major markets for New Zealand wine producers so it's very challenging for a small winery like ours to gain traction there. We aim to sell small amounts of wine for the fine dining markets in a range of outlets around the world."

As well as the big three export destinations, Gibbston Valley Wines markets also include China, Hong Kong, Malaysia, and the Virgin Islands, where its produce can be found in five star hotels, fine wine shops, and top restaurants.

Pioneer

winery

Gibbston Valley Wines was founded by Alan Brady who pioneered grape planting in Central Otago in the early 1980s, releasing the first commercial vintage in 1987. Since then Central Otago has become the southernmost commercial wine growing region in the world, winning international recognition particularly for the Pinot Noir variety.

In addition to a track record of 21 vintages, Gibbston Valley Wines has also built a reputation for providing a total food and wine experience, and is now New Zealand's most visited winery.

An on-site restaurant showcases fresh produce from the Central Otago region, and the winery is home to New Zealand's largest underground Wine Cave. Escorted tours and tastings are offered in the Cave, where barrels of the current vintage are slowly maturing.

The Cave is also frequently used for corporate functions and weddings.

"The Wine Cave is an important part of our international branding," says Mr Heye. "Overseas visitors who see our wines on the shelf when they get back home remember their tour of the Wine Cave, and that helps build loyalty and a customer base offshore."

Marketing its difference

Mr Heye says ensuring Gibbston Valley Wines markets its points of difference is essential in an increasingly competitive wine market.

"We have been able to leverage off Central Otago's growing reputation as a wine-producing region, but it's also meant there are now over 100 Central Otago labels all vying for the top spot. We are working all the time to differentiate our offering.

"The competitiveness in the local market is also a driver for us to grow exports over the next few years."

Like most New Zealand wineries, Gibbston Valley Wines is committed to protecting environmental standards and maintaining New Zealand's clean, green image, and its vineyards are accredited under Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand.

It has also worked closely with New Zealand Trade and Enterprise (NZTE) offshore offices to facilitate visits to export markets, attend trade shows, and find potential agents and importers in those countries. For example, NZTE recently hosted a visit to New Zealand by some executives from the Shangri-La hotel group and, as a result, Gibbston Valley wines are now being considered for the Shangri-La Kuala Lumpur hotel. This builds on the company's previous success in having its wines available at the Shangri-La hotels in Shanghai and Beijing.

NZTE's client manager for Gibbston Valley Wines, Alan Richardson, praised the company's strategy of increasing its exports to non-traditional markets as a way of expanding business and spreading risk. "Apart from the benefits to the company, this strategy again makes Gibbston Valley Wines a New Zealand pioneer. Twenty years ago it was where to grow the grapes, now it's the search for new markets to buy the wine."

Gibbston Valley Wines has won over 220 national and international wine awards in the last 20 years with one of its biggest successes coming in 2001, when it won the trophy for best Reserve Pinot Noir at the London International Wine Challenge, the biggest wine competition in the world.

By New Zealand Trade and Enterprise

Company Profile

Gibbston Valley Wines Ltd

Contact details

The logo for Gibbston Valley Wines, featuring the words "Gibbston Valley" in a stylized, handwritten-style font. The logo is positioned above a horizontal line.

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Contact

Company overview

Gibbston Valley is a 20 minute drive (1 km from the AJ Hackett Bungy Bridge) from Queenstown, through some of New Zealand's most beautiful mountain country. In just ten years this assertive winery has established itself as one of New Zealand's leading small producers. Situated in the scenic Kawarau Gorge, historically famous as a lucrative gold mining area. Gibbston Valley has found new riches in the form of wine.

Products/Services

Wines, red

Wines, table

Wines, white

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/160/Gibbston-Valley-Wines-Ltd.aspx?buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Stories/successContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=17281&buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Case study 10: Villa Maria Estate

Villa Maria Estate – an industry leader

12 Oct 2007

If George Fistonich had followed Croatian tradition, he would have become a carpenter. Luckily, he chose to work with grapes, not wood. The rest is history – the success story of New Zealand's most awarded wines from Villa Maria Estate.



As the second son of Croatian immigrants, the young George Fistonich was expected to learn a trade. He duly became a carpenter, but in 1961 he also leased a plot in his parents' Auckland vineyard. So began a love affair with wine, and the establishment of Villa Maria Estate.

Fistonich's award winning success started with his very first vintage when he won prizes in the 1962 Royal Easter Show.

Today, Villa Maria is still a New Zealand, family-owned winery and a consistently strong performer at both national and international wine competitions.

In the last 18 years, five of Villa Maria's senior winemakers, including Fistonich, have received a Winemaker of the Year Award with some, like current Group Winemaker Alastair Maling MW (Master of Wine), receiving it more than once. Maling's most recent achievement was being awarded the White Winemaker of the Year trophy at one of the world's most highly regarded wine competitions, the 2007 International Wine Challenge in London.

For the past four years, Villa Maria has won the Champion Chardonnay, Champion Merlot, Champion Pinot Noir, Champion Gewurztraminer, Champion Riesling and Champion Other Red Varieties (Malbec) trophies at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards, in addition to 46 gold medals. The winery also won the Anglo Overseas Trophy for New Zealand Wine Producer of the Year in 2006 at the prestigious International Wine and Spirit Competition in London.

Villa Maria now sells its wines in more than 40 countries, with 80 percent of exports going to the United Kingdom, United States and Australia and export sales growing at more than 15 percent a year.

Villa Maria has vineyards and sources grapes from some of the best sites in leading grape growing regions in New Zealand – Marlborough and Waipara in the South Island and Hawke's Bay, Gisborne and Auckland in the North Island. Villa Maria was

a pioneer in employing viticulturists, recognising the part viticulture plays in quality control in the wines.

The secret behind the Villa Maria success story is his team's absolute commitment to creating the best wines possible, says Fistonich.

"Our talented winemakers have an unrelenting passion to produce quality wines. That passion begins in the vineyard. Astute site selection is followed by superior vineyard management. A focus on continually improving the vineyards is an important factor in quality winemaking."

Another crucial factor in the Villa Maria international success formula is follow-up service.

When you are geographically isolated from your main export markets, your clients must be confident about who they are dealing with," Fistonich says.

"We have appointed full-time sales managers to the USA and Canada and Australia and Asia. We have had a full-time European sales manager since 1998. We supplement this with regular trade visits and promotions by our management and winemakers."

Willingness to try new ideas and methods – a well-known Kiwi trait – has also paid off for Villa Maria.

Villa Maria started producing wine with screwcaps from its 2000 vintage and, since the 2003 vintage, the company has used screwcaps on all its wine and is recognised as a global innovator in the method. This decision has been vindicated many times over, by way of accolades and prizes.

In 2006, for example, the US Restaurant Wine Magazine said: "The average quality of the wines, regardless of type or price, and compared with its peers, is extraordinarily high – and consistently so. In fact, we believe that as Villa Maria has grown, and in part because of its full conversion in 2003 to all screw cap closures, that its wines are actually improving, and improving at a pace, and in character, at least as accomplished as the wines of its direct competitors, if not several steps, or kilometers, ahead."

Villa Maria's determination to combine the best of old-world winemaking with the advances of new technology is also reflected in the company's wineries, which feature state-of-the-art winemaking equipment and processes.

Company Profile

Villa Maria Estate Ltd

Contact details



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Email: enquiries@villamaria.co.nz

Contact

Name: Mr Kim Calvert

Position: National Sales Manager

Company overview

Villa Maria Estate is New Zealand's most awarded wine company at both national and international wine competitions. It specialises in premium wines produced from Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Riesling, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Malbec.

Products/Services Spec Sheet

Wines, red

Wines, table

Wines, white

Sources:

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/ExporterProfile/66/Villa-Maria-Estate-Ltd.aspx> Retrieved May 4, 2009

<http://www.marketnewzealand.com/mnz/Stories/successContent.aspx?SectionID=14389&ContentID=14395&buyer=true> Retrieved May 4, 2009

Other Information Sources:

(2010, January 22). Villa Maria signs large export deal in the US. Retrieved 1 February 2010, from <http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1001/S00326.htm>

(2010, January 23). Villa Maria signs deal to expand its sales in US market. *The Dominion Post*, p.C3.

Hembry, O. (2009, June 16) Roll out the barrels. *The New Zealand Herald*, p.B1.

Export Library & Information Service

Resources

The following resources are available from ELIS – the library and information service of the New Zealand School of Export.

1. **Information Files:** each file contains a variety of information such as: newspaper clippings, magazine articles and can be photocopied and sent on application. Email: library@export.ac.nz

Files are available for:

Alana Estate

Alexander Vineyard, Martinborough

Babich Wines

Delegat's Group

Kennedy Point Vineyard

Kim Crawford Wines

Montana Wines Ltd

Mud House Wines

Sileni Estate

Villa Maria Estate

Yealands Estate Winery

Export products: Wine

2. **Books:** can be borrowed by enrolled exporters and alumni of the School. The tables of contents and selected chapters can be copied and sent on application. Email: library@export.ac.nz

- *Coopers Creek and the New Zealand **wine** industry* by Heather Wilson

- *Tumatanui: the experience of the first indigenous **wine** company to export high quality **wine** from New Zealand* (a bicultural research project)

3. Selected Digital Resources:

Beal, T. and M. Rod (2009) **Riding social change: The New Zealand experience in the evolving wine markets of Japan and Singapore.**

See:

http://www.vuw.ac.nz/~caplabtb/wine_project_site/Beal_Rod_Wine_Reportb.pdf

(Note this report has an excellent Bibliography about the New Zealand wine industry)

Dunleavy, T. **Onward to \$1.5 billion in exports by 2014?** New Zealand winegrower, Oct/Nov 2009; v.13 n.2:p.12-16

See:

http://ndhadeliver.natlib.govt.nz//view/action/ieViewer.do?dps_pid=IE1373083&dps_dvs=1265667400401~785&dps_pid=IE1373083

(2009) **New Zealand-Hong Kong Wine Arrangement Signed** (28 October)

See:

<http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/WO0910/S00380.htm>

New Zealand winegrower magazine has many of its articles digitised and they can be searched on Index New Zealand <http://www.natlib.govt.nz/catalogues/innz>

A search on a service such as Scoop will retrieve many articles about the New Zealand wine industry www.scoop.co.nz

Index to Export Destinations for Wines

Note: this information is based on those companies mentioned in this collection of case studies, and on New Zealand School of Export resources. For assistance with volumes exported use the Statistics New Zealand website: www.stats.govt.nz

Australia	Alana Estate, Felton Road, Gibbston, Muddy Water, Nobile, Villa Maria
Canada	Delegat's, Nobile, Te Awa, Tohu
China	Babich, Delegat's, Gibbston, Mud House
Cook Islands	Delegat's
Fiji	Delegat's
Germany	Muddy Water
Hong Kong	Delegat's, Gibbston, Muddy Water
India	Saint Clair
Ireland	Muddy Water, Saint Clair
Kazakhstan	Alexander
Korea	Delegat's
Malaysia	Gibbston
North America	Saint Clair
S.E. Asia	Saint Clair
Singapore	Delegat's, Muddy Water
United Arab Emirates	Delegat's
United Kingdom	Alana Estate, Delegat's, Felton Road, Gibbston, Kennedy Point, Kim Crawford, Muddy Water, Nobile, Sileni, Te Awa, Tohu, Villa Maria,
United States	Felton Road, Gibbston, Kennedy Point, Muddy Water, Nobile, Saint Clair, Sileni, Te Awa, Tohu, Villa Maria
Vietnam	Delegat's
Virgin Islands	Gibbston