

Wines of New Zealand – Presented January 12, 2022 in person and over zoom

Presenter was Maureen Janke. She joined the club in 2010/11 and got involved pretty much right away by fund raising for the Holiday Party. She has held board positions as Director and in 2016/17 was the club president.

In 2016 Larry and I traveled to New Zealand specifically to experience their wines. We did just that, but we experienced a lot more than wine.



The history of New Zealand wines appears to be very short when you see that wine made from European grape varieties have only been available at least widely since the 1980s. In the 1990s the country's Sauvignon Blancs and Pinot Noirs made a significant presence in the international world. But that doesn't really tell the story of New Zealand wines.

Samuel Marsden was an Anglican missionary and in 1819 it is recorded that he made the first planting of grapevines at the Bay of Islands.

Winemaking met with many challenges during the 19th century and adversities from phylloxera aphid, powdery mildew and prohibitionists who wanted the wine industry to fail.

The 1920 and 30s showed some growth. Then during World War II, the wine industry expanded greatly. During the 1950s and '60s legislative changes allowed more winemakers to sell to retail outlets and restaurants.

Then in the 1960s and '70s American and Australian companies began investing in the wine industry. By the 1970s overall improvements in wine quality and heavy emphasis on the production of light, fruity, slightly sweet white wines emerged.

New Zealand wineries originally intended to be small domestic businesses. But in 1985 the government lifted many regulations and began allowing Australian wineries to contest the New Zealand market, putting them on equal footing by 1990.

During this time both within the US and New Zealand the challenges with corks promoted the exploration of different bottling systems and from 2001 to '03 a movement was made to change to screw-tops, improving the ability to contain the delicate flavors in the wines. Many of the small wineries either moved into coop status for bottling or used businesses that bottled and labeled wines as a commercial business for the wineries. Now many of the wineries have adopted screw-tops for their wines.

Once a country intending to make wine for local consumption, New Zealand's wine export is a \$2 billion business and have expanded to nearly 700 wineries throughout the country.

The tasting begins on the North Island – from Hawkes Bay.

The First wine in the tasting is from McBride Sisters Collections – Black Girl Magic Wines – Sparkling Brut

Purchased at Discount Liquors in Eagan for \$21.99 – also available at Total Wines and many other locations.

This is a blend of predominately Chenin Blanc and Chardonnay. It is aromatic and refreshing with a balance of fruit and delicate tart bubbles. See if you can taste pineapple, melon and floral aromas on the nose with ripe pear, crisp apple and white peach in the palate.

The story behind the McBride Sisters is unique to say the least. The two girls, born by different mothers, but had the same father. The girls spent the first part of their lives thinking they were their father's only daughter. Their father, Kelly McBride was absent from much of their lives and after his passing an aunt told the family that Kelly McBride's last wish was that the girls be connected. Robin McBride is the older of the 2 living in California and Andrea was living in New Zealand. In 1999 at the age of 16 Robin learned of her little sister who was living in New Zealand being raised worlds apart. Andrea had lost her mother to breast cancer at the age of 6 and was being raised in foster care.

Over the coming years the girls spent much of their time together and joined forces to create the McBride Sisters Collection in 2010.

This wine is from grapes grown in Hawkes Bay – enjoy this as we learn more about the wineries approach to sustainability.

Their Story - <https://www.mcbridesisters.com/Sisters-Story>

Travel to New Zealand and it is obvious that caring for the environment is important. The vineyards and wineries are no exception to this philosophy – here are some ways they take that commitment and put into practice -

Water management – monitoring rainfall and soil moisture, minimize water use in the winery through high pressure nozzles and reusing water whenever possible.

Soil management– there are many soil types, from heavy, water-retaining clay loams, to dry stony riverbeds, and fertile flood plains. All of these different soil types require their own management to assist the vineyards in producing superior fruit.

Climate control – It is widely seen in New Zealand that many of the winery buildings have installed solar panels to provide the energy needed to operate the building. Building designs and material selections maximize the natural lighting and reduce heat build-up to maintain even temperatures year-round. Heat recovery systems and variable speed pumps to minimize the energy required to pump wine and water.

Waste management – much of the waste from the vineyard comes from vine pruning, skins and seeds. To minimize waste these are mulched and or composted and applied back on to the vineyards and gardens as nutrients.

Many of the vineyards are also organic growers and use livestock to assist in fertilizing and keeping weeds down on the properties.

A growing interest for winery by-products is the processing of grape seeds to extract antioxidants for use in health and cosmetic products.

Pest/disease control – 99% of vineyards in New Zealand use non-chemical cultural controls as part of their pest and disease strategy.

People – the success on the wine industry in New Zealand depends strongly on the commitment and passion of the employees behind them. The wineries must adhere to government regulations to show responsibility to the employees and the local communities; financially, socially and ecologically.

Organic grape growers pay close attention to soil biology, structure, and nutrient levels to enhance the fertility and life-supporting properties of their soils.

Maintaining and building organic matter and humus in the soil is a key focus for organic grape growers, including feeding and sustaining the communities of soil microorganisms that vines to access nutrients.

Many organic growers make and apply compost made from materials sourced on their properties. Planting of cover crops between the vine rows is another important organic practice, it opens up the soil structure and increases organic matter and fertility.

Mineral and liquid fertilizers may be applied, but all inputs must be certified organic and come from natural sources, such as rock dusts and seaweeds.

Many organic growers use compost 'teas' full of microorganisms to enhance soil and plant health.

By choosing to cultivate or mow under vines to manage weeds, rather than using herbicides, organic growers provide a hospitable environment for earthworms and other soil life to flourish.

Biodynamic growers add specialized preparations, made from plants, minerals and manures, to composts, which are spread on vineyards to further encourage soil and plant health.

All organic vineyards are audited every year to ensure that standards are met.

The next wine in the tasting is from Marlborough

FRAMINGHAM WINERY – MARLBOROUGH

2020 Sauvignon Blanc - Total Wine \$15.99 – 91 pts by Wine Enthusiast in 2021

Framingham's philosophy is – 'We make wine by our own rules – Big believers in doing what you love. So, when it comes to making wine, we just make wine that we ourselves want to drink.'

That ends in aromatic styled wines with balance, texture and complexity.

The small batches from different parts of the vineyard build depth of flavor.

Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc accounts for 86% of the countries wine export -

New Zealand's largest Sauvignon Blanc region has low rainfall and consistently high sunshine hours, large daytime temperature shifts during the ripening period which helps build flavor and lock them in. There are more herbaceous and mineral styles from the Awatere Valley and the riper, tropical, more pungent style from the main Wairau Valley.

[Sauvignon Blanc](#)

Pungently aromatic, vividly pure fruit, herbaceous and exotically tropical, plus mineral depths, Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is an international brand in its own right.

New Zealand has a natural beauty and the care they have for the environment is part of that. From the shorelines and the mountain ranges, from the cities and the parks. The people of New Zealand live what they preach – the environment matters. It just naturally follows that the wine regions have the same commitments to the environment through sustainability.

New Zealand's natural environment is perfect for wine making. The country's wine regions extend from subtropical Northland to Central Otago in the South Island, home of the world's most southerly vineyards. As a relatively small island country, no New Zealand vineyard is more than 120 kilometers (75 miles) from the ocean. These positions allow for a cooling effect from the night's sea breezes. Central Otago receives about 1,950 hours of sunshine annually, with varying amounts of rainfall. The Auckland area is warmer and more humid, naturally, with over 2,050 hours of sunshine and 1,240mm (49in) of rainfall per year. Nelson and Marlborough (at the north of the South Island), benefit from a whopping 2,405 hours of sunshine and about 800mm (31in) of rainfall, with gravel and clays helping the soil to retain water. Auckland's volcanic location, by contrast, has resulted in sandstone, clay, mudstone and wind-blown silt. Many of New Zealand's soils were left when ancient glaciers receded.

With such diverse regions, many New Zealand wines are as specific as those from other wine regions. Though constant cold weather can at times make for unsuccessful vintages, New Zealand's geography allows for superb flavors, each defined by their unique microsystems.

The population of New Zealand is about 4 million people – there are about 27 million sheep!

200,000 people live in Wellington

1 million people live in Auckland

300,000 live in Christchurch

That leaves 2.5 million to live in the rest of the country

Next in the line-up – are 2 wines from Yealands Estates

Peter Yealands Marlborough

Pinot Gris \$13.31

- Pinot Gris
 - Bouquet - Brimming with ripe yellow stone fruit, pear and candied citrus.
 - Palate - The palate is generous and layered, perfectly balanced with a refreshing finish.

Pinot Gris wines fall into the style of an aromatic wine. Along with Riesling and gewürztraminer these wines reflect the region's natural acidity and flavors that are unique to Marlborough.

The majority of the vineyards are located on the east coast of both main islands and benefit from being in the “rain shadow” of mountains. When sunshine is added to the mix, it’s no wonder grapes thrive in New Zealand.



The next wine we’ll be tasting is another Yealand Wine – again from Marlborough

Pinot Noir \$18.81 both from Big Discount Liquor in Eagan

- Pinot Noir
 - Bouquet - Lifted notes of cherries and ripe berries with toasty aromas and savory spice.
 - Palate - The juicy, red fruit flavors lead into a supple palate, with soft tannins.

Pinot Noir grapes have been refined in the region for some time now. The vineyards are experimenting with clones and site location to get the best display of dark cherry and plums with a red-fruited spicy background with fine tannins.

New Zealand Wines

Tonnage Per Region % OF TOTAL HARVEST (Statistics collated from 2021 Vintage Survey)

MARLBOROUGH 75.2% 269,521

HAWKE’S BAY 11.5% 41,153

GISBORNE 4.9% 17,450

CENTRAL OTAGO 2.9% 10,324

BAY OF PLENTY & OHAU 132 NELSON 2.2% 7,804

NORTH CANTERBURY 2.0% 7,291

WAIRARAPA 0.9% 3,131

AUCKLAND 0.3% 1,239

We'll be ending our tasting where we started. The last wine in the tasting is from Hawkes Bay -

**Oyster Bay Winery – Hawkes Bay – Kiwi owned and operated
Merlot – Black Diamond Wines in Eagan \$14.99**

This wine has bright cherry aromas and rich plum with subtle spice and a soft lingering texture. 2018 Vintage. Recently awarded 91 points at the International Wine Challenge. Received a Gold at the Sydney 2020 International Competition and ranked in the Top 100 Wines from Wine Enthusiast in 2020

The temperate, warmer climate of Hawke's Bay produces a riper, rounder style with lower acidity and rich tropical flavors. However, given the diversity of sites and soil types in the region some areas produce Sauvignon Blanc with higher acidity and crispness.

New Zealand produces only about 1% of the world's wine

The wines available in the United States from New Zealand don't fully represent the wines made in country. Like other wine regions, many wineries produce small batches and exporting through a distributor is costly. Twenty percent of the wine is consumed locally, but of the wine that is exported – 33% comes to the US, 24% goes to the UK, 19% goes to Australia, 11% to Continental Europe, 7% ships to Canada and the last 7% goes to other countries throughout the world at less than 1% per country.

The wines from New Zealand are amazing. The people are warm friendly and welcoming, the natural wonders are breathtaking, the history and cultural experiences inspiring.

If you love wine, are enticed to travel, enjoy new experiences – GO! Travel to New Zealand – you'll be glad you did – and oh! Stay, stay as long as you can and do as much as you have time to do.

More Fun Facts Below:

Additional Fun Facts about New Zealand:

Here are some common “Kiwi words” or phrases you may encounter on your travels:

- **Kia Ora**= Māori word for “welcome”
- **Togs**= swim suit
- **Chilly Bin**= cooler
- **Sweet as**= “that’s cool”
- **Dairy**= local convenience store
- **Tramping**= long-distance hiking; usually when you spend the night at mountain huts
- **Jandals**= flip flop sandals (the name comes from combining Japanese + sandals)
- **Wop-wops**= in the middle of nowhere (aka “We’re driving through the wop-wops now!”). Can also be shortened to just “wops”.
- **Fizzy drink**= soda

You are also not supposed to bring “dirty” shoes and camping gear into the country.

There are even signs posted informing you that dirty shoes are not allowed in the country. (We didn’t see anyone reprimanded for this, though they did ask us if we had “previously worn our shoes”.) And at some trailheads, there are cleaning stations for hikers to clean their shoes before entering.

Why all the strict rules?

It might seem a bit over the top, but New Zealand is an island nation with a fragile environment. There are many endemic plants that can be easily harmed when non-native species are introduced.

You’ve been warned. And now that you know the reason behind it all, please respect the rules.

New Zealand is a new country

It was only 700-ish years ago that the Māori people came from the Polynesian islands to settle this remote land in the South Pacific.

So the history of this country is actually relatively short compared to many other parts of the world.

Māori culture

You'll see Māori words and bits of culture all throughout the country, however, the Māori people were not always celebrated this way.

Like many other parts of the world, when white settlers entered the picture, they attempted to subdue the indigenous people already living there.

The Māori language, *te reo Māori*, was banned for a time, and their culture and religion suppressed.

Today, there is a focus on reviving the cultural identity, and there is a movement of young Māori people learning the language and getting traditional tattoos to celebrate their roots. However, only 24% of Māori people can speak *te reo* today, making it considered by many an "endangered language".

And similar to the indigenous peoples of the United States, Māori people face higher rates of socioeconomic issues like unemployment, health problems and imprisonment.

Learning about the Māori culture is not just an interesting addition to your trip to New Zealand. It is a way to support the resurgence of a group of people who have been quieted, and a way to ensure they have a voice and a space to protect their customs.

Mammals

Any mammals you see on your travels were introduced by settlers.

This has taken a toll on the natural environment, as many of the native birds have become threatened by creatures like possums, rats and stoats (a type of weasel).

When you're on hikes, you may notice small traps on the side of the trail, or pellets on the ground. These are 2 of the ways conservationists are trying to combat the issue.

Scared of snakes? We have good news for you: There are NO snakes in New Zealand. Notta one!

Ferns are a national symbol, and you'll see them all over: on the New Zealand passport, the tourism board's logo, souvenir keychains and shot glasses, the All Blacks uniforms, and on many-a-tattooed bicep...

So what's the significance of the fern?

Well, for one, there are nearly 200 different types of ferns in New Zealand. But the one that you see in all the symbols is the Silver Fern.

The underside of the fronds is white, and the Māori used them for navigation at night: They would lay them on a trail, white-side up, which would reflect the moonlight and light the path for those behind them.

New Zealand is the first place in the world to see sunrise

New Zealand sees the sun first each morning. If you want to see the world's first sunrise, head to the small city of Gisborne on the North Island's East Cape.

Earthquakes

Because of its location on two major tectonic plates, New Zealand experiences many earthquakes.

It's estimated that there are more than 15,000 earthquakes in New Zealand each year. However, only 100 – 150 of them are big enough for people to feel.

The last major earthquake was in November, 2016 on the South Island in the seaside town of Kaikoura. The quake measured 7.8 on the Richter scale, and destroyed many roads and buildings. Rebuilding cost a reported \$1.8 billion

Volcanoes

In the Auckland area alone, there are 50 volcanic cones, most of which are extinct.