



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SUBJECT: Results Published from NZ Wine Rater's tasting of Sauvignon Blanc Nov 2021
DATE: 10th December

The most striking feature of the 2021 Sauvignon vintage is no doubt the exceptionally small harvest, some 19% and several million cases short of the preceding year. New Zealand is the world's second largest producer of Sauvignon Blanc after France, and Sauvignon accounts for 85% of our export volume so there are going to be global consequences for supply.

Severe spring frosts following an earlier-than-normal budburst had a major impact, then poor weather over a prolonged flowering period and near drought conditions over summer further reduced yields.

The Covid pandemic has also impacted the vintage from a financial perspective. With borders closed it was hard to find staff for both the vineyards and winery and labour costs have increased. Global supply chain issues have put pressure on dry goods prices for glass, cartons and labels and in some cases transport costs have more than doubled from pre-pandemic figures. Hence managing pricing as well as supply is a major issue for the industry to tackle.

So more than ever, it will be important for consumers and merchants to identify the top wines and ensure you're getting value for what you're paying for. The good news is that our tasting has revealed a wide range of compelling wines. 5 wines scored 96+/100 (Exceptional), another 39 wines scored 93-95 (Excellent) and 37 wines scored 90-92 (Highly commended).

2021 has proven to be an excellent season overall. The warm, dry summer resulted in minimal disease pressure, meaning grapes were harvested early and in near perfect condition. The autumn period was marked by cool nights, ideal for retaining naturally fresh acidity levels, perfect for Sauvignon Blanc. Overall, the quality level seems very high, especially for the top-quality labels. The best wines have a freshness, vibrancy and energy that may even prove superior to those from the excellent 2020 and 2019 vintages.

There's a continuation of the trend in recent years where New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc is evolving to a new level of flavour complexity and structural subtlety, resulting in some captivating wines. No longer is there a plethora of labels that taste pretty much the same. There's a broad range of styles emerging from herbaceous and crisp to decadently fruity with softer acidity and a growing number of vinous, textural, food-friendly wines. Superior site selection, lower vineyard yields, indigenous yeast ferment, extended lees-contact and prudent use of barrels are all leaving their mark.

While the top 5 'exceptional' wines all hailed from Marlborough, there were excellent wines from across the country including Waiheke Island, Hawkes Bay, Martinborough, North Canterbury and Otago. Furthermore, the barrel fermented & matured wines from these regions showed excellent oak handling and are integrating and holding well in the bottle. There's an increasing number of wines that can give the top whites from Bordeaux a good run for their money.



Lastly, congratulations to the Judd family and the team at Greywacke who produced the two top wines of the tasting, an impressive achievement following on from top wine in last year's tasting. And a special mention to Ka Tahi Wines for their 2021 Sauvignon Blanc which was best value wine in the tasting with an impressive 93/100 for a wine with a recommended retail price of just NZ\$15.

As always, we hope you the consumer will enjoy the top wines as much as we did.

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