

## The wines of New Zealand

Rebecca Gibb MW

# Think you know New Zealand wine? Prepare to be surprised

Most regular wine drinkers will be familiar with Sauvignon Blanc from Marlborough, and red wine lovers may well have sampled one of the South Island's Pinot Noirs. But how many of us have explored beyond that? New Zealand is a relatively new wine country, whose modern industry is only around 40 years old but in that time huge changes have taken place and there is now an extraordinary variety of wines coming out of these two islands.

During this century exports have increased from 19.2 million to 253 million litres, so the country's wines are clearly popular. As the industry approaches middle age it needs to keep on its toes – the fickleness of fashion means that producers cannot rely on the continuing popularity of New Zealand 'Savvy'. So now seems a good time to take stock. In a new book, *The wines of New Zealand*, master of wine Rebecca Gibb expertly takes readers through the past, present and future of New Zealand wine. Gibb notes that, "New Zealand wine has reached its early adulthood with new faces, new varieties and innovative new methods appearing at breakneck speed, and there is so much more to come. The national industry and all its many components are constantly adjusting in the vineyard, the winery and the global marketplace."

Gibb confesses that she is "known to get excited about wine," and that excitement proves infectious here. She guides us energetically through the history of New Zealand wine, employing a genial style that makes even the section on climate entertaining, without taking away any of its authority. Her chapter covering the grape varieties is far more than just a study of cultivars – as an MW student Gibb was awarded the Bollinger Medal for her outstanding tasting skills, and her keen abilities

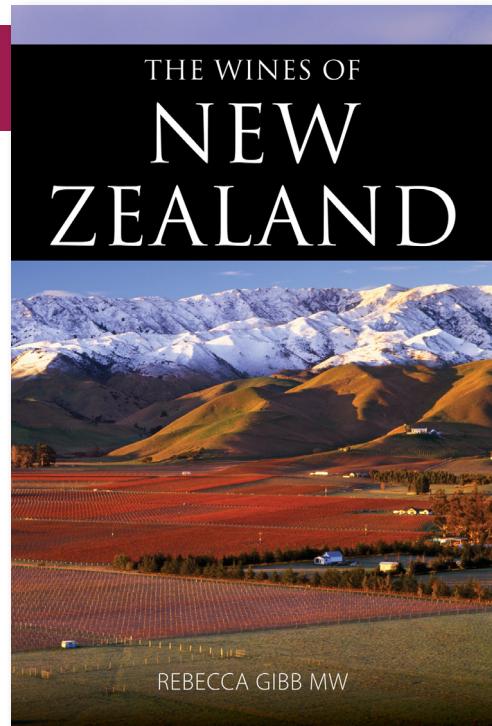
are put to use here in her descriptions of the flavours involved, while each of the major varieties gets its own fascinating biography, rounded off with a top 10 of 'must try' wines.

Gibb then takes each of the 10 main regions in turn, starting with Northland, moving southward through Hawkes Bay and Marlborough to end in the South Island at Central Otago. At last count there were 670 producers so rather than turn the book into a directory, Gibb provides a selection of producer biographies featuring the most exciting, innovative and visitor friendly winemakers, along with details on which wines to try. If Gibb's enthusiasm has you booking a flight, the final chapter will prove invaluable, packed as it is with suggestions on wine-related places to stay and things to do. All in all the book is an invaluable resource for anyone keen to adventure beyond Sauvignon Blanc.

### About the author

Rebecca Gibb MW is an award-winning wine journalist and editor. Securing her first editorial role at UK wine trade magazine *Harpers* after being named UK Young Wine Writer of the Year in 2006, she has since edited several print and online publications. Rebecca contributes to prestigious titles including *Decanter*, *The World of Fine Wine*, *LUX* and *Wine Business International*, in addition to running a small business, The Drinks Project.

In 2015, Rebecca became a Master of Wine. Having lived in New Zealand from 2010 to 2016 with her Kiwi husband and son, Rebecca recently returned to the UK. She maintains her strong ties with the people and wines of Aotearoa.



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