

Wine NZ

Autumn 18

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WHO DRINKS STICKY WINES?



You should always keep a bottle of sticky wine in the pantry in case Harry and Meghan drop by for dinner.

Who drinks dessert wines these days? That question was debated around the table as the *WineNZ* judges and associates took a lunch break during the summer tasting event at EIT in Hawke's Bay.

And there was a fair amount of head scratching.

With the less formal eating habits of Kiwi society, the place once reserved for dessert wine — at the end of a multi-course formal meal — seems to have all but disappeared.

There was a suggestion during discussion at one of the tastings a couple of years ago that dessert wines might become more common as an aperitif, served before a meal, but that doesn't seem to have been the case to any great extent. It would be a very unusual barbecue if you found sticky wines on the table of drinks brought by guests, or offered by hosts.

And there's the rub: the place for dessert

wines is a white-tablecloth setting, say the wedding of Prince Harry and Meghan Markle — not a late summer barbeque on the deck of a suburban house in Invercargill.

One of the team said the only place he had seen dessert wine being consumed in recent years was at restaurants, where the bill was being taken care of by someone's expense account. Ordering a bottle of sticky was often because "it was the thing to do", or to impress the guests.

But these wines continue to be made, and, presumably, sell, so someone must be drinking them. The export market does soak up some dessert wine, as more formal dining environments in the northern hemisphere may lend themselves to higher sticky consumption.

And it was Japanese-owned, Hawke's Bay-based Osawa winery that carried off the top trophy at our dessert tasting.

Victory in our tastings is not new to Osawa as they won our summer bubbles event a couple of years ago, with their

Prestige Collection Hawke's Bay Methode Traditionelle Brut NV entry.

As with the bubbles, the winning Noble Gewürztraminer 2016 was made by Rod McDonald, a former New Zealand winemaker of the year, top judge and the driving force behind Rod McDonald Wines, a rapidly growing brand, headquartered at Te Awanga in Hawke's Bay.

Osawa's grapes come from its vineyards at Maraekakaho, inland and at a higher altitude than Hawke's Bay's main vineyards.

The Osawa team now produces 11 varieties and over quarter of a million bottles annually. Most go to Japan, making Osawa one of the biggest Kiwi wine exporters to that country.

The Noble Gewürztraminer is mostly exported to Japan, although it is also sold in New Zealand. So next time you have a white tablecloth dinner party, and need a sticky, hunt it down and you'll have the country's best.



DESSERT WINES



\$30

**Osawa Prestige Collection
Hawke's Bay Noble**
Gewürztraminer 2016

Simon Nash: Nice, zesty, lemony, bright. Juicy fruits, soft, lifted acids. Good weight, grip and finish. Very nice.

Ant Mackenzie: Lovely, floral, creamy, spicy. Very well balanced palate. Very good.

Dave McKee: Yellow gold. Aromatic. Honey botrytis carried by very good sugar/acid balance.

