



Cameron Douglas is New Zealand's first and only Master Sommelier. He is a Senior Lecturer at AUT University in Auckland, local and international wine judge, wine commentator and wine educator as well speaker and presenter in New Zealand and internationally. Cameron is also an examiner with the Court of Master Sommeliers Worldwide. He writes the wine lists for a variety of establishments including Merediths, Mekong Baby, Nanam Republic and Michelin Starred New York establishment The Musket Room.

Sassy Sauvignon Blanc

New Zealand Wine Growers recently released their 2016 Annual Wine Report showing that a total of 36,192 wine producing hectares of vines are planted across the nation's wine regions. A staggering 21,016 hectares (74%) belongs to Sauvignon Blanc.

Sauvignon Blanc remains the most widely planted variety, most of it is in the Marlborough region, and remains the number one exported wine variety. This wonderful variety put New Zealand on the world wine map in the 70's, and there's no doubt of its importance in the New Zealand wine story.

In tasting through the Sauvignons Blanc for this months' review I noticed a real refinement and attention to detail in many of the examples sent through. A regional character is beginning to emerge in many of the wines tasted: Hawke's Bay, the Wairarapa, Nelson, Canterbury and Otago in particular. Marlborough remains a benchmark region, with many of the wines showing off grapefruit and other citrus aromas, with a distinctive tropical fruit layer, very high acidity and a grassy herbaceous layer. While there are exceptions to these descriptors they are apparent in the majority.

Hawke's Bay examples have a richer and denser fruit core, with more peach and white fleshed fruit flavours; some also have a tropical fruits note, and the acidity seems a little less -

producers who use oak are measuring this very carefully to maintain key varietal characteristics.

In the Wairarapa examples emerges a stronger mineral layer from stone to silty soil undertones. Again the signature aromatics and textures remain, with less pungent aromas in favour of textures and some subtle use of oak.

Nelson Sauvignon Blanc seems to be going from strength to strength - with pure fruit expression, sweet fresh herb, stony and silty mineral layers, plenty of aromatics and where oak plays a role it is quite low key.

Canterbury Sauvignon Blanc wines show off quite a lot of minerality, and where the soil moves into more limestone the resulting wines have a more pristine and pure fruit expression alongside those more obvious mineral suggestions. Here the use of oak is played down in favour of more lees work, adding finer textures and finish.

Otago examples show finesse, crispness, ripe fruit and bold steely characters, ripe acidity and subtle lees work adding texture. These wines also have a distinctive mineral-like flavour.

Sauvignon Blanc can be complex when a skillful winemaker is handed great fruit - it can handle some carefully measured oak - acidity will always be a key attribute, and the range of flavours and textures especially continues to evolve. Pay attention to complexity levels.



[**tasting notes**]

1 CLOS HENRI MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC 2014

Complex, enticing bouquet of white flowers and honeysuckle, gooseberry and fresh herb, peach and a little baked apple add further density and power. On the palate – dry, subtle spice, citrus zest and plenty of pure fruit flavours, firm acid bite and great palate presence with great texture and length.

94 Points

RRP \$32

Distributor Maison Vauron

Phone (03) 572 7923

Website www.closhenri.com

2 PETIT CLOS MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC 2015

Bouquet with a pure fruit expression, a year in bottle has allowed a layer of complexity to develop showing off spice, mineral, shape and texture. On the palate – dry, loaded with texture, shape and form; flavours of lemon and apple, some golden kiwi and herb, great balance and length.

93 Points

RRP \$20

Distributor Maison Vauron

Phone (03) 572 7923

Website www.closhenri.com

3 SEIFRIED NELSON SAUVIGNON BLANC 2016

Fragrant, distinctive, layered and inviting bouquet with aromas of spice, lees, peach and ripe citrus fruits. On the palate – dry with noticeable texture, crispness, flavour and length – a lovely example of Sauvignon Blanc; showing many hallmarks of Nelson with a layer of mineral and soft herb then hints of tropical underpinning a citrus core.

93 Points

RRP \$18

Distributor Seifried Estate

Phone (03) 544 5599

Website www.seifried.co.nz

4 MATAHIWI ESTATE HOLLY WAIRARAPA SAUVIGNON BLANC 2016

A barrel-fermented style showing off ripe citrus and white fleshed fruits wrapped in a blanket of soft mild oak spices, light creamy texture and fresh acidity, flavours of orange and citrus peel, white smoke, crushed stones and silty mineral, a complex wine with a long satisfying finish, balanced and very well made.

92 Points

RRP \$19.99

Distributor Matahiwi Estate

Phone (06) 370 1000

Website www.matahiwi.co.nz

5 CHARD FARM CENTRAL OTAGO SWIFTBURN SAUVIGNON BLANC 2015

Very expressive and vibrant bouquet with aromas of peach and orchard fruits laced with citrus peel and crushed stone minerals. On the palate – fresh, crisp, dry and fruity with cool citrus fruit flavours and fuzzy peach skin suggestions, plenty of mineral and a lengthy finish.

92 Points

RRP \$23

Distributor Chard Farm

Phone (03) 442 6110

Website www.chardfarm.co.nz

Wines are scored out of 100 points and are listed in no particular order. Numbers are not indicative of a ranking.

THREE



FOUR



FIVE



[**tasting notes**]



6 MARISCO VINEYARDS THE KING'S FAVOUR MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC 2015

Bold, riper and richer bouquet with peaches and apples leading the aroma package, hot grapefruit and some tropical notes then emerge. On the palate – flavours of citrus then orchard fruits, plenty of acidity adding crispness and impact, a light spice note, balanced and well-made example.

91 Points

RRP \$22.95

Distributor Lion

Phone (09) 522 9684

Website www.marisco.co.nz

7 THE NED MARLBOROUGH SAUVIGNON BLANC 2016

Vibrant, fresh, distinctive and classic Ned style with aromas and flavours of juicy white fleshed fruits, loads of citrus and some pineapple. Plenty of acidity adds crispness and enhances a mineral stony-like layer – all leading to a lengthy finish.

90 Points

RRP \$16.95

Distributor Lion

Phone (09) 522 9684

Website www.marisco.co.nz

