

Blackenbrook

VINEYARD

Nelson Wines that WOW!

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Japanese Wine Buyers Seek Out Nelson Art

Japanese wine importer Southern Cross is about to use Nelson art as a way of promoting wine from Nelson vineyard Blackenbrook to the Japanese market.

The Blackenbrook Art Series includes three wines using well-known Nelson artist Marilyn Andrews' paintings: **Shangri-La Sauvignon Blanc 2012** displays the painting "Summer View from Princes Drive"; **Shangri-La Gewürztraminer 2011** shows "View from Stansell Ave and **Shangri-La Pinot Noir 2011** is illustrated with "Pathways to Heaven". (see attached photos)

Southern Cross began importing Blackenbrook wines to Japan last year through a New Zealand wine agency – All New Zealand Wines. The response from Japanese wine buyers has been fantastic and order volumes are increasing steadily.

All New Zealand Wines (NZ-Wines.co.nz/pr) Director Shin Saito says they wanted to target Blackenbrook wine more directly to Japanese buyers by creating a label that included local art to display what was uniquely Nelson.

"The appetite for quality New Zealand wines is growing steadily in Japan. Japanese people particularly like the association the Nelson Region has with art and great scenery, so we searched for local artists and chose three of Marilyn Andrews paintings. They are so vibrant and colourful, and showcase Nelson very well."

Shin Saito says while Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc is the strongest name in the Japanese market, Nelson is getting better known for its wine. "Once Japanese people try wine from Blackenbrook, they like the taste and the fact that it's made using gentle winemaking processes. The other important factor in Nelson's favour is that it's one of the best regions for producing top aromatic varieties, which go well with Japanese food."

Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach own and operate the sustainable, gravity-fed Blackenbrook Vineyard in Tasman, near Nelson.

Ursula says: "Creating the Shangri-La labels has been a fascinating journey because Japan's culture is so different to ours. The aim was to find a design that will appeal to Japanese buyers, not an easy thing to do from our base here in sunny Nelson. But everybody worked together really well - Southern Cross, the agent Shin Saito, Marilyn Andrews and us - and we are delighted with the outcome."

“Marilyn’s paintings are so positive and inspiring. They really show the best of Nelson and we feel proud to know that people in Tokyo see Nelson as an art capital. Our region is famous for its art and wine, and it’s fantastic that we can bring those two together in a very literal sense.”

It’s the first time Blackenbrook has created a special label for an individual customer. With Japan being Blackenbrook’s largest single market and growing, Ursula says they were more than happy to follow Southern Cross’ recommendation on how to best position their wine in the Japanese market.

Marilyn Andrews says she was delighted and honoured to be asked to supply her paintings. “I’m just so rapt! It’s really great to have my art on a completely different product and to be able to promote Nelson at the same time.”

Marilyn has sold a number of paintings to Japan in the past and says her colourful works seem to appeal to the Japanese.

“It’s like having your work displayed in hundreds of different settings and who knows where it will lead as my website address is also on the label. It’s a wonderful way to market my product too.”

Marilyn says it’s great to be associated with Blackenbrook because their wines are of such high quality and their production methods have integrity.

“It’s definitely a unique opportunity and if my art can help sell Nelson and New Zealand to the Japanese in terms of both our fabulous Blackenbrook wine and also Nelson tourism then I’m delighted I could be part of that,” says Marilyn Andrews.

The owners of the ‘View from Stansell Ave’ painting currently live in Saudi Arabia and had commissioned Marilyn to paint the scene from their former home. The couple are delighted their painting is adorning the new Shangri-La Gewürztraminer and even ordered some of the wine for their own cellar.

The first shipment of the Blackenbrook Art Series wines has just arrived in Japan and the official release in Tokyo is planned for 13 September.

