



# Blackenbrook

NEW ZEALAND WINE

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## Blackenbrook Vineyard Celebrates a Decade of Achievement

Acclaimed family-run winery Blackenbrook Vineyard is celebrating the 10 year anniversary since their first vintage and thanking the local community.

Renowned Wine Commentator Michael Cooper says “Blackenbrook is one of the highest-achieving wineries on the Nelson scene, with a reputation for aromatic white wines - Pinot Gris, Gewürztraminer, Riesling and Sauvignon Blanc - that are rich and full of personality. Daniel and Ursula are currently celebrating their ten-year anniversary. It’s a major milestone, and as their vineyard matures – to say nothing of the benefits of winemaker age – Blackenbrook’s wines will surely get better and better.”



Winemaker Daniel Schwarzenbach and his wife Ursula built one of the first gravity-fed wineries in the Nelson region and Daniel’s focus on ‘gentle processes’ and depth of flavour has earned them over 15 top awards and 12 Five Star ratings for their wine over the past decade. (See full list of awards under Note 1)

“We are very grateful to those businesses and customers who took the chance to try a new wine all those years ago. This anniversary is a time to look at where we’ve come from and to celebrate with the local community, who are such a big part of our journey” says Ursula Schwarzenbach.

To mark the anniversary, Blackenbrook held a celebration at one of their first trade customer’s award-winning café, the Jester House. The other initial trade customers were Casa del Vino and Fresh Choice in Nelson alongside The Mooring (now Elevation Café) and Super Liquor in Motueka.



Now they sell to 85 trade customers nationwide and export to Japan, Germany and Switzerland.

Since 2004, when they produced 22452 bottles of Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir, winemaker Daniel Schwarzenbach and his wife Ursula have more than doubled production to around 50,000 bottles annually, now also including Gewürztraminer, Muscat and Montepulciano.

“We have grown in many ways over the past decade both in terms of wine production but also in our knowledge of how to get the best flavours from our terroir,” says Daniel.

“From when we started, we have seen a lot more players enter the Nelson wine scene, some quite small without their own winery facilities. The larger wineries now all employ a good number of staff, including vineyard managers and winemakers. When we arrived in 1998 there was only one employed winemaker in Nelson, and that was Daniel at Seifried Estate. Weren’t we lucky to score that job – otherwise we could not have settled here!” says Ursula.

The ten year celebrations also mark a change of direction in Blackenbrook’s look with a new logo, website and video.

The new logo (at the top of this page) combines the couples’ Swiss heritage with their deep connection to New Zealand through a stylised bunch of grapes made up of red koru – the red reflecting the couple’s Swiss heritage and the koru, their bond to New Zealand.

The history of their Tasman vineyard goes back to 2000 when they grafted their own vines to plant the first 4 hectares of Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Pinot Noir. “We used to burn the midnight oil as we both still held onto our day jobs,” laughs Ursula.

In 2004 their first wine was produced and the Blackenbrook label launched – the name being an English translation of their surname. Over the years they’ve added Riesling, Gewürztraminer and the Italian red variety Montepulciano. For their third vintage, a modern gravity-fed winery was opened on site and alongside this, the couple also started a family - Thomas, 10 and Isabelle, 6, who have grown up along with the vines.

While the couple are no longer out tending vines with head-torches at night, they're still extremely hands-on and involved in every aspect of the business – Daniel as vineyard manager and winemaker and Ursula taking charge of marketing and sales.

Vintage 2014 was their largest ever and Daniel is excited about the vibrant new wines: “The 2014 wines have an amazing flavour concentration and balance, reflecting the fantastic conditions we had in the vineyard.”

The passion for winemaking is even stronger now than when they started.

Daniel Schwarzenbach: “We’ve just processed the ninth harvest in our winery and I still love working in there. It’s functional, it’s gentle, it’s clean and it just feels right. “

ENDS

**Note 1:** Since 2004: 6 Trophies (Best of class of the entire wine competition), 9 Gold Medals, 12 x 5 Star ratings, mainly Michael Cooper and Bob Campbell MW; 15 x 4 ½ Star ratings, mainly Michael Cooper and Bob Campbell MW; and numerous Silver Medals and 4 Star ratings. Most prestigious awards went to Blackenbrook Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc 2007 which received 3 Gold and 3 Trophies (Bragato Wine Awards, New Zealand International Wine Show, South African Sauvignon Blanc Competition) – an amazing achievement for a Nelson Sauvignon Blanc, stepping out of Marlborough’s shadow.

Blackenbrook ‘s most recent awards were three gold medals and a Trophy in the last month:

- Gold & Trophy from the Bragato Wine Awards 2014 for Pinot Gris 2013
- Gold from Bragato Wine Awards 2014 for Pinot Gris 2014
- Gold from New Zealand International Wine Show 2014 for Pinot Gris 2014

**Note 2:** David Letsche Photography produced the new video which will be used to share the Blackenbrook story with customers in New Zealand and overseas.

<http://vimeo.com/dlphotonz/blackenbrook-wines>

**Photo captions:**

Photo 1: Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach cutting the 10 Year Celebration Cake at Jester House in Tasman

Photo 2: Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach at their Blackenbrook Vineyard

**For more information:**

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