



MEDIA RELEASE

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Blackenbrook wins Trophy for 2020 Pinot Blanc *Two trophies for the winery's new varietal in as many years*

Blackenbrook Vineyard's 2020 Pinot Blanc received the Trophy in the 'Other White Wine Varieties' class from the New Zealand International Wine Show at its awards announcement last night. This is the winery's second vintage of Pinot Blanc and second trophy in prestigious competitions honouring alternative white wines.

The New Zealand International Wine Show (NZIWS) is the largest wine competition in the country. This year Bob Campbell MW chaired a panel of senior judges who awarded a record number of gold medals. The judges included leading winemakers, several Masters of Wine, and many key industry personnel, most of whom have been involved in major wine competitions for more than a decade. Judges expressed delight to see a New Zealand made Pinot Blanc topping the 'Other White Wine Varieties' class.

Owner and winemaker Daniel Schwarzenbach says that 2020 was a near-perfect season for grape-growing generally, and the Pinot Blanc vines benefitted from another year in the ground to deepen their roots.

"The 2020 Pinot Blanc is a superbly balanced wine from what has been a stellar year for winemaking all-around. The Pinot Blanc fruit came pristine off the vine, a real joy to work with. You can taste the minerality in the wine from roots that have found their way deeper into the soil, continually searching for moisture and nutrients. Wine drinkers will notice that minerality as well as a zing from the combination of floral and spicy notes. It's slightly more acidic, which means it's fresher to drink. And it will be equally good for cellaring."

Last year's inaugural Pinot Blanc vintage won the Trophy in the New Zealand Aromatic Wine Competition in the 'Other Aromatic' category. Mr Schwarzenbach was confident that this new product, matured in stainless steel to allow the fruit's natural flavours to shine, would be pleasing to kiwi wine lovers. In fact, it was such a good vintage, he held some back in old barrels and added it to the 2020 vintage.

"Adding in a bit of the 2019 helped bring some texture to the 2020 wine, which was honestly looking incredible anyway thanks to the quality of the fruit and the incredible growing season." Adding wine from previous vintages brings depth to a fruit crop that is taken from the same site each year. It is one of the tools Mr Schwarzenbach uses to create his style of wine. Other wineries with more land and vines can blend with grapes from different soils to achieve their own unique vintage.

Mr Schwarzenbach is grateful to the team who worked in the vineyard this year, especially under the uniquely stressful conditions.

“Our family, the vineyard team, and the folks who hand-picked our grapes under extreme pressure ahead of the pandemic lockdown are all due immense thanks. We are honoured to win the Trophy and humbled by the accolades we are getting for this varietal.

“I’m not surprised, however, that the Pinot Blanc is attracting awards and interest, though. We felt confident this particular grape, by growing it in our terroir and climate with our natural approach, would produce incredible wines for our customers to drink now and later.”

Purchase the 2020 Pinot Blanc online at www.blackenbrook.co.nz and at select retailers found on our website. Read more information about the varietal and its previous awards in our News section.

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About Blackenbrook Vineyard, Nelson, New Zealand

On a gentle north-facing slope near Tasman Village, you’ll find Blackenbrook Vineyard, a 20ha block owned by Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach. Blackenbrook Vineyard produces seven grape varieties: Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Blanc, Gewürztraminer, Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and the Italian red variety Montepulciano. Blackenbrook Vineyard is accredited by Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand.

It is a winery designed by a working winemaker. In this region, vines grow into Moutere clay soils and the mild maritime climate sweeps over the hillsides. The vineyard was first planted in the spring of 2001 and the first vintage was launched in 2004. Healthy soil, strong vines and sustainability are the focus of the vineyard management. Daniel, also the winemaker, strives for minimal interference with natural processes, which has resulted in pure and genuine wines. Most of Blackenbrook’s white varieties – including the Pinot Blanc – are completely unfinned and vegan. Read more on www.blackenbrook.co.nz.

About the Pinot Blanc variety – from www.caros.co.nz

Pinot Blanc, a white mutant of Pinot Noir, has sometimes been confused with Chardonnay as they share regions of origin, physical characteristics, and taste profiles. Pinot Blanc resembles the more famous grape’s medium body and rounded apple/stonefruit, while its less distinctive (or just less obvious) individual character makes it less planted and more often used for sparkling wine.

However, in cooler climates where it retains acidity, like Italy's Alto Adige, 'Pinot Bianco's' neutrality allows elegant still whites with textural richness and focus on its particular subtle nutty/mineral characters. Now hardly planted in its native Burgundy it is more so in Alsace, with a little in Germany and Austria and promising New World examples from cooler climates in South America, New Zealand and Canada's Okanagan valley.