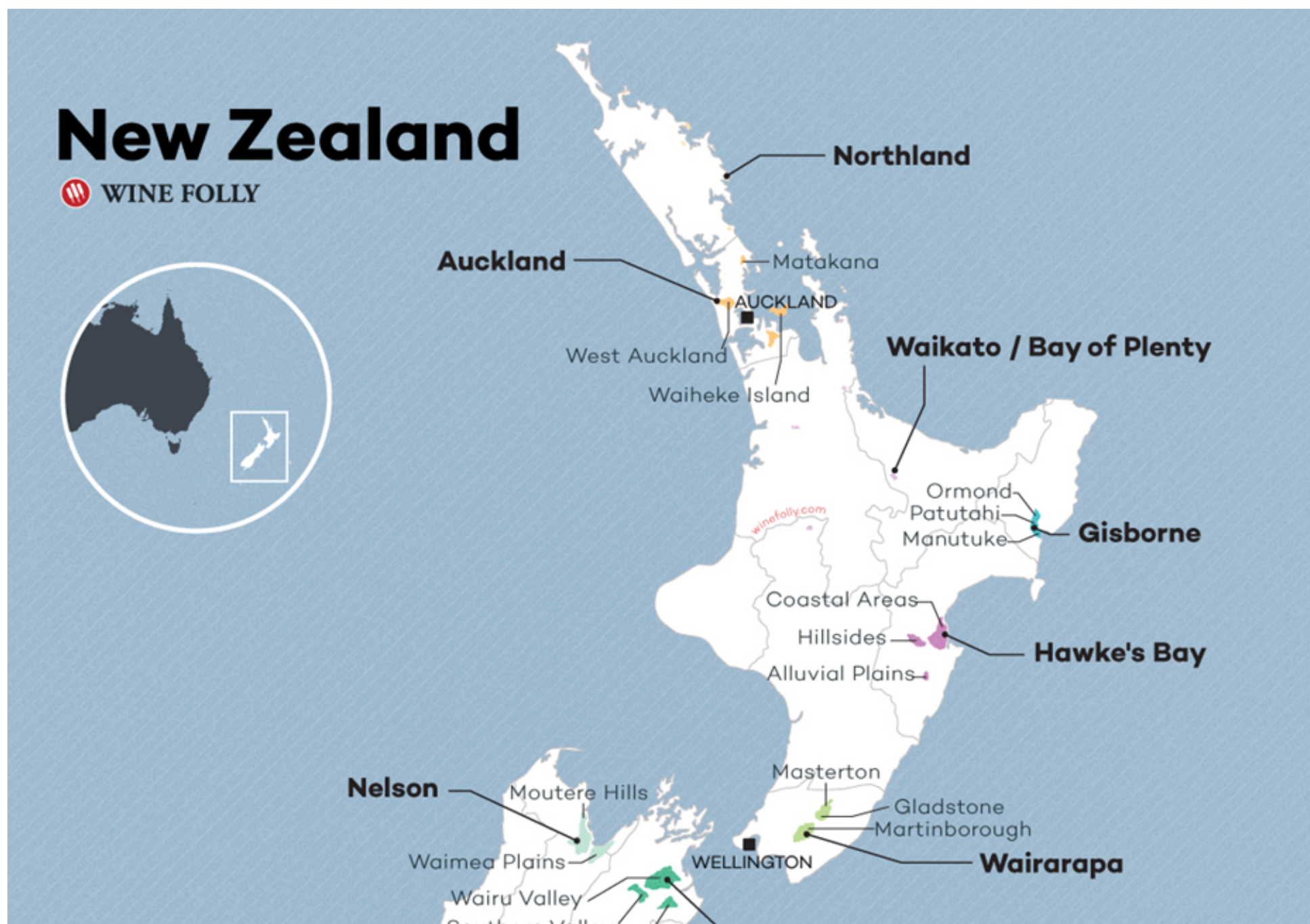




NEW ZEALAND - THE NORTH ISLAND

In the past 30 years, New Zealand has established itself as one of the UK's favourite wine producing countries. Whilst the South Island has lead the charge with Marlborough's incredibly popular Sauvignon Blanc, the original birthplace of the Kiwi wine movement was in the North Island and it's here we turn our focus to this month.

The climate for the North island is quite a bit warmer than the South Island and therefore lends itself to those varietals that prefer these conditions. For the whites, Chardonnay is king of the North and provides very enjoyable Burgundian styled alternatives. For the reds, the warmer, maritime climate favours Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon blends and in the cooler reaches, Pinot Noir.



There are in fact nine distinct North Island wine producing regions: Northland, Auckland, Matakana, Waiheke Island, Waikato-Bay of Plenty, Central North Island, Gisbourne, Hawkes Bay and Wairapara. For more information on the other regions, this is a great resource:<https://nzwinedirectory.co.nz/wine-regions/north-island/>

For the purpose of this month's selection, we will be concentrating on the three most significant of these regions and some of the very best examples - Hawke's Bay, Auckland and Wairapara .

It feels as though New Zealand is on the cusp of another change. Many of the owners of the Wine Estates that emerged onto the scene in the 1980's are now in the process of handing over to the next generation of winemakers. With this changing of the old guard, a favourable cool climate and substantial investments coming in, New Zealand is in a very interesting position, and we look forward to seeing how this progresses over the coming decade.



Ata Rangi - Martinborough

Ata Rangi, meaning 'dawn sky, new beginning' is owned and managed by Clive Paton, his wife Phyll and his sister Alison. In 1980 Clive planted their bare, stony, home paddock at the edge of Martinborough, becoming one of just a handful of people pioneering grape growing in the area. Ata Rangi's first vineyard covered less than five hectares of vines, planted on deep, free-draining alluvial gravels that mark the original course of a local river that flows from the hills flanking the valley's eastern side.

Their oldest Pinot Noir vines, include a clone allegedly smuggled over from Burgundy's Domaine Romanee Conti (!), were planted in 1980.

Their winemaker is Helen Masters, who in 2019 was awarded New Zealand Winemaker of the Year by Gourmet Traveller WINE magazine, in recognition of her 16 years working at Ata Rangi. Ata Rangi is renowned for its Pinot Noir and is widely regarded to be among New Zealand's top Pinot Noir producers.

Picture: Helen Masters – Ata Rangi's Winemaker



2022 Ata Rangi Crimson Pinot Noir Martinborough 14% £41.99

Ata Rangi's 'Crimson' Pinot Noir, produced from vines aged between 5 and 25 years. The 2020 Crimson is engaging and alluring, with a fragrant nose of dried roses and hay. Aromas of fresh thyme and rosemary, with hints of spicy black cardamom, cinnamon and warm cedar are also apparent. The palate is wonderfully open and calm, with red fruits gliding through to the finish. A great pairing would be with a simple pan-fried pigeon.



Trinity Hill - Hawkes Bay

Founded in 1993, by winemaker John Hancock together with Robert and Robyn Wilson, owners of The Bleeding Heart Group and The Don in London, Trinity Hill is synonymous with quality and consistency. Winemaker Warren Gibson has worked at Trinity Hill since 1997. Alongside his winemaking expertise, Warren also manages Trinity Hill's 80 hectares of vineyards across Hawkes Bay and the Gimblett Gravels.

2020 Trinity Hill Syrah Hawkes Bay 13% £24.99

The Hawkes Bay Syrah is sourced from across Hawkes Bay, including Gimblett Gravels and the Red Metal Triangle. A short period ageing in oak helps retain its vibrant fruit profile, defined by wild blackberry, spice and delicious peppery notes. A terrific wine that would be perfect with a rack of lamb, served beautifully pink...from New Zealand of course.

2020 Trinity Hill Gimblett Gravels Tempranillo Hawkes Bay 14% £34.99

Without indigenous varieties, New Zealand has the ability to experiment with different varieties and we have tasted many exciting versions of Gruner Veltliner, Albarino and also from Spain the wonderfully flexible Tempranillo. Here it shows attractive brambly, blackberry-like ripe fruits along with spicy complexity. The palate is rich and textural with beautifully soft tannins. Licorice, chocolate and vanilla flavours linger on the finish, so this would be a perfect wine to accompany a rich, slow cooked shoulder of lamb.



Kumeu River – Auckland

“If you can taste history, duty, and family pride in a glass, it's there in the Kumeu River Chardonnays...now producing some of New Zealand's greatest Chardonnays, not to mention the world's.” - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, M.W./Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate



Kumeu River Wines encompasses 30 hectares of vineyards, which are predominantly clay soils overlying a sandstone base. These soil types retain sufficient water at depth, even during the summer months, to ensure the deep vine roots continue to hydrate the vine without excessive vigour. Therefore, the vineyard doesn't require irrigation, a factor that is critical to the quality of Kumeu River's grapes.

The Chardonnay wines of Kumeu River have gained a strong foothold within the international market, receiving outstanding accolades. In 2014 a blind tasting was held in London for some of the world's most renowned wine critics, pitching the single vineyard and estate chardonnays against some of Premier Cru and Grand Cru wines white Burgundies, from some of the best producer's and Kumeu triumphed over every single flight, apart from one, where it came first equal!

2022 Kumeu River Estate Chardonnay Auckland 13% £34.99

The '22 is Made from a selection of six different sites of which they own four with vines planted from 1989 to 2005 Whole-bunch pressed and barrel-fermented (20% new). This is a beautifully classic and elegant Chardonnay. The excellent 2022 vintage came on the heels of three others, in a magnificent chain of four superb quality harvests. The Kumeu vineyards that contribute to this wine gave a blend of Chardonnay that is particularly ripe, peachy and not only delicious to drink but also has the concentration and lingering complexity that is almost Puligny in style. Serve with a whole roasted Turbot, a regal fish deserving of only the very best.

2018 Kumeu River Village Pinot Gris Auckland £18.99

Pinot Gris (Pinot Grigio) is seeing increasing popularity in New Zealand. Made here in a more Alsatian style, with a about 5g residual sugar, lending it a slightly off-dry style. The aromas have typical peach and stone fruit notes tinged with the floral perfume that we have come to expect from Pinot Gris. The wine is lively, complex and lingers on the palate. Pinot Gris is a variety that goes particularly well with food, including quite intensely flavoured dishes. It is also one of the few wine styles that can handle the spiciness of chilli. Great with a spicy satay chicken.

Squawking Magpie - Hawkes Bay

Squawking Magpie is our second winery based in Hawkes Bay, making a range of wines, predominantly Cabernet/Merlot blends, Syrahs and Chardonnay. Squawking Magpie wines come from four Vineyards in Gimblett Gravels. Gavin Yortt first planted grapes in Gimblett Road, namely the Irongate Vineyard, in 1981.

From the very first plantings, the emphasis has been on creating outstanding wines focusing on viticultural excellence. Gavin Yortt and his team hold a firm belief that great wines come from great grapes. Key to their success is their veteran wine maker, Jenny Dobson who is not only one of New Zealand's top winemakers but earlier in her career, was also one of the very first female winemakers in Bordeaux!

Picture: Jenny Dobson – Squawking Magpie's Winemaker



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2015 Squawking Magpie The Nest Merlot Hawke's Bay £25.99

The 2015 is made from a classic Bordeaux blend of 58% Merlot 25% Cabernet Sauvignon 17% Cabernet Franc and whilst drinking very well now, you can cellar this for a further 10 years.

Handpicked, gently destemmed, small open-top vat fermentation. Post-ferment maceration balances fruit and tannins. Basket pressed, 30% new French oak. Blended after 6 months, 12 months further oak maturation.

Fragrant with red rose, violet, dark plums, and spice aromas. Lush, full-bodied, and mouth-filling, it maintains depth and velvety texture. Black doris plums and sweet, spicy leather flavors unfold on the palate. Supported by fine tannins, the wine's well-rounded balance is a testament to its quality. This wine is well suited to game meats, slow cooked beef in red wine, spicy braised red cabbage with toasted pinenuts.

Regular Price: £181.94 Case Price: £145.55 Wine Club Price: £133

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