

World Wine guru festoons New Zealand winery with medal points.

Robert Parker, the demanding doyen of American wine critics, has today published an avalanche of medal points, lavishing praise and recognition on the Waitaki wines of Antonio Pasquale, and reinforcing the “top tier” status of the sole winery in New Zealand’s newest boutique wine region.

Many Pasquale wines have already reached gold and silver medal status, or taken a trophy in awards through Australasia, and in London, but this is their first major acknowledgement by an American-based publication and ratings system.

An unprecedented total of nine wines have breached the 90 point barrier, suggesting silver and gold medal status. Only “outstanding wines of exceptional complexity and character” are given such a score by the Parker rating system.

Stand-out among the awards, all scoring or exceeding 91 points, are Pasquale’s “rich, dry and silky” Pinot Grigio, the inaugural vintage of a “wonderfully intense” Viognier, and a scarce Pinot Noir from the adjacent, alpine Hakataraea Valley.

A “delicate floral and spice” Pinot Gris, “ruby-purple” Waitaki Pinot Noir, two lime-fresh Rieslings and a crisp “generously fruited and full bodied” Gewürztraminer are all rated highly in the Parker scores.

Even more exotic wines to star in the line-up are a “rich, crisp, viscous” Passito made from air-dried Riesling grapes (90), a unique co-fermented, dry aromatic blend The Alma Mater (90+) and a dry wine from the Italian grape Arneis which expresses “preserved peaches and toast”.

The Wine Advocate magazine’s Robert Parker, America’s most influential critic, and his assessors, have firmly grasped the magic of the minerality and applauded the concentration of the Waitaki wines, says owner Antonio Pasquale. “The high scores across the board recognise our conviction for consistency and authenticity - all our wines are hand-picked and express the limestone of the land, and the purity of the terroir that sustains and elevates them.”

“Parker Points” as they are known in the wine world, can make “all the difference” for export sales, says the winery marketing communications manager, Michael Hooper from Hong Kong. “For these results to become public the day before the Hong Kong International Wine and Spirits Fair is fantastic. The Pasquale family-owned winery has made a huge investment in having its own area at this very influential world wine show, plus a stand in support of NZ Winegrowers. We expect to be run off our feet – any Hong Kong restaurant wanting to be seen as having innovative and exclusive wines will be coming to taste Pasquale as word gets around.”

ENDS.

Dated 2/11/2011.

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