

Marlborough Wine Show 2015 – gold medal tasting notes

Lower alcohol

1. Clark Estate Marlborough Block 8 Riesling 2015
Very pale, almost water white. Gorgeous pronounced nose – fresh, floral but with tangerine hints and mouth-watering appeal. This wine is exceptionally fruity with a bright, sheberty acidity. Light bodied yet plenty of flavour – a real gem at just 8% alcohol.

Chardonnay

2. Stoneleigh Marlborough Latitude Chardonnay 2014
Toasty oak, hazelnuts, caramelised peach on the nose lead to a rich and weighty palate with those nutty, toasty characters and a balancing acidity. A well-balanced, ripe style of Chardonnay that will delight lovers of the style.
3. Stoneleigh Rapaura Series Chardonnay 2014
Lighter nose with a mineral hint woven through the citrusy aromas. A supple, mouth-filling style with a richness that builds. Creamy, lovely lightish use of oak and succulent balanced by ripe fruit and a gentle acidity.
4. Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Vineyard Chardonnay 2014
Cashew nut characters match a fresh, citrus zest aroma. Lifted and attractive, the nose is followed by an elegantly structured palate with toasty hints, underlying lemon zest and a touch of apricot. Lovely wine.

Pinot Gris

5. Wither Hills Marlborough Pinot Gris 2015
Minerally, floral nose with some fresh pear. Palate is off dry, but well-balanced with a gentle acidity. Supple and ripe, quite juicy and smooth this is an appealing style of wine.

Gewurztraminer

6. Johanneshof Cellars Gewurztraminer 2014
Pronounced, lifted nose, so perfumed! Jasmine, citrus flower, lychee aromas. Weighty, rich palate, mouth-coating. Sweet and concentrated with exceptionally long-lasting flavours – an amazing wine.

Sparkling wines

7. Deutz Marlborough Cuvee Limited Edition Prestige Cuvee 2012
Lovely fresh, clean nose – hints of mealiness and meringues. Off dry impression at first but the polished acidity creates wonderful balance. Fruit-driven, forward style with some richness and good length.
8. Nautilus Cuvee Marlborough N.V. Brut Methode Traditionnelle
Toasty, mealy with an attractive richness on the nose. A lovely wine – elegant and seamless, dry but not too dry - lovely fruit undertones – serious style yet deliciously enjoyable.

Sauvignon Blanc

9. Kim Crawford Spitfire Small Parcels Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Searing herbaceous characters with lots of chopped capsicum, freshly-mown grass and citrus on the nose. Dry yet weighty, a textural, rich wine that offers a big and powerful expression of Sauvignon Blanc. Highly memorable!
10. Starborough Family Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Tropical, lifted aromas with fresh herbs. Palate has layers of concentrated flavours and offers a lovely weight and suppleness. Fresh, polished and delicious.
11. Vidal Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Fresh, citrus aromas with a touch of sliced raw fennel. Dry yet fruit-driven with a firm structure of acidity that balances the wine's palate. Lots of flavours that linger indefinitely.
12. Lawson's Dry Hills Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Herbaceous, passionfruit and citrus – it's all here. Lemon barley cordial, lovely fresh, zingy acidity and nice texture. Lemon hints on the finish – deliciously moreish and perfect with shellfish.
13. Brancott Estate Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Clean and polished, lime zest, capsicum, herbs and mown grass on the nose, all of which are echoed on the palate. Ripe and juicy with a fresh acidity and good length of flavour.
14. Summerhouse Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Wet stone, mineral characters, lime and lemon zest, freshly chopped fennel and herbs. Hints at being off-dry due to the fruity nature, but the acidity balances it out to form a classic Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.
15. Rapaura Springs Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Almost a floral touch on the aroma of this wine plus mineral tones and passionfruit. Succulent and juicy, well-flavoured but in balance.
16. Rapaura Springs Reserve Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Nettles, elderflower, passionfruit, lime – pronounced aromas! A big expression of Sauvignon Blanc, concentrated with intense flavours of tropical fruits. Ripe, succulent and offers great length of flavour.
17. Stoneleigh Latitude Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Passionfruit, fresh herbs, elderflower on the nose. Fruit up front, but acidity sweeps through to make this a very fresh and uplifting wine. Plenty of flavours – quite intense and with good length.
18. Wairau River Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Apples, lemon zest, fresh basil aromas. Tangy acidity makes for a great food wine – backed up by a fruitiness and slight mineral character on the finish.
19. Eradus Awatere Valley Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Lime cordial, fresh, mouth-watering aromas. Full-flavoured, intense with good concentration and brilliant citrusy acidity. Lovely mineral tanginess too. Delightful wine.

20. Villa Maria Single Vineyard Graham Vineyard Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Real mineral aspect to this wine – almost a damp earthiness. Also fresh limes and a leafy, nettley component. Dry and linear with a firm acidity and truly tangy, mouth-watering fruit.
21. Selaks Reserve Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Clean, herbaceous style with underlying passionfruit. Polished and concentrated with good length and plenty of the anticipated flavours of top Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc.
22. Saint Clair Wairau Reserve Sauvignon Blanc 2015
Gorgeous nose of lime and lemon zest and a chalky minerality. Dry yet fruit-driven, this wine offers an array of intense flavours.
23. Brancott Estate Letter Series 'B' Marlborough 2015
Mouth-watering nose of ripe tropical fruit with grassy characters. Dry, fruity and well-made with a zesty freshness and firm acidity.
24. Ara Single Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2014
Ripe and enticing nose of lemon barley, firm acidity gives a freshness, making for a lively yet balanced wine. Intense gooseberry!
25. Whalebone Bay Sauvignon Blanc 2014
Tangy, dry, underlying ripe fruit and a gooseberry characters.
26. Brancott Estate Terroir Series Sauvignon Blanc 2014
Piercingly fresh nose – clean, mouth-watering, lime juice. Lemon cordial, succulent and juicy with good length.

Rose

27. Saint Clair Pinot Gris Rose 2015
Attractive pale pink. Pronounced nose – fruit-driven, lollies, candyfloss. Sweeter style but lovely acidity provides balance as does the bucketful of ripe, juicy fruit. Lovely mouth-filling wine.

Riesling

28. Mount Riley Riesling 2015
Fresh citrusy nose, sweet and sherberty. A dry wine, refreshing and crisp with floral characters as well as a zesty vibrancy. Lovely intensity.
29. Ribbonwood Riesling 2015
Wonderful mineral tones lead the nose, together with pronounced citrus fruits, nectarine and mandarin. Palate is off-dry, weighty and long – lovely mouth-feel and concentration.
30. Hunter's Riesling 2012
Intense lime aromas, Roses lime Cordial. Dry wine but with plenty of concentrated flavours – ripe too so a slightly sweet impression. Lovely citrus acidity gives a good structure. Delicious.

31. The Doctors' Riesling 2015

Nectarine and orange zest aromas leap out of the glass. The palate has sweet juicy fruit but is beautifully balanced by the fresh, citrusy acidity. Flavours last and last – totally delicious and very moreish.

Sweet wines

32. John Forrest Collection Wairau Valley Late Harvest Riesling 2012

Honeyed and a touch of kerosene, also a melted butter richness. Sweet, weighty, clings inside your mouth, silky smooth, concentrated peach and apricot flavours that last forever. Not cloying though – gentle acidity sweeps the palate clean. Stunning wine.

33. Ara Select Block Limited Release Block I53 Cut Cane Sauvignon Blanc 2014

Golden yellow, powerful nose of orange zest and an almost resinous, herbal character. Deeply sweet, rich and oily, weighty texture. Buttery richness, smooth, unctuous, intense and a lovely crisp acidity on the finish.

34. Sileni Pourriture Noble 2014

Golden yellow colour, then a nose that embraces honey, apricot, orange and asparagus. Incredibly sweet and rich – almost syrupy – intense, concentrated – a real statement wine! Almost like an orange and herb liqueur!

Pinot Noir

35. Ara Resolute Single Estate Pinot Noir 2012

Garnet red in colour. Nose has attractive savoury, quite gamey characters with underlying dark-skinned fruits. Palate is powerful – again savoury flavours dominate – big tannins on this young wine that will certainly reward cellaring. Serious stuff!

36. Saint Clair Pioneer Block Master Block Southern Valley Pinot Noir 2012

Deep, dark red with a hint of purple. Nose is blueberries, a few herbs, leather, char and a touch of dark, dried fruits. Fine 'pencil shavings' oak on the palate – sweet and concentrated, a powerful wine yet elegant too – big expression of Marlborough Pinot. Very good.

37. Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2012

Dark reddish pink colour. Lifted nose of spicy concentrated raspberries, toasty oak and underlying savoury characters. Sweet fruit up front on the palate, then the power sweeps though – wow! Big, brambley flavours, rich and warm. Mouth-coating tannins – still a baby, but so good!

38. Villa Maria Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir 2013

Garnet red in the glass, then a nose with aromas of dark berries, some spice and warm toastiness. On the palate this wine has lovely concentration and the flavours last for ages. So balanced and elegant yet is able to make a statement. Integrated tannins, smooth and textural.

39. Villa Maria Single Vineyard Seddon Vineyard Pinot Noir 2012
Medium intensity garnet red. Nose has spicy, toasty oak, some red and black fruits and a sprinkling of dried herbs. Palate offers sweet, ripe fruit to begin with, then builds with some more intense raspberry and a touch of plum. Good tannins and a nice balance of acidity.
40. Yealands Winemakers Reserve Pinot Noir 2014
Dark pinky red, the nose then offers raspberry and chocolate – like the Black Forrest chocolate bars! Sweet, ripe fruit upfront, mouth-filling and with lovely almost chewy texture. Savoury hint on the finish.
41. Saint Clair Pioneer Block Twin Hills Omaka Valley Pinot Noir 2014
Brightly coloured, purpley red. Light nose, slightly more subtle with ripe raspberry fruit characters. The palate is medium-bodied and has plenty of ripe red berry fruits. Soft and elegant.
42. The King's Wrath Pinot Noir 2014
Medium intensity, pinky red colour. The nose is quite savoury and smoky with charred oak characters. Sweet on the front of the palate, this is an easy drinking style that is mouth-filling and supple.
43. Brancott Estate Letter Series 'T' Pinot Noir 2014
Medium intensity colour with garnet hues. The nose is perfumed and floral at first before giving way to lovely raspberry and cherry tones. Sweet and ripe, a perceived soft style but then balanced with lovely chocolatey tannins which give structure and mouth-fell.
44. Lawson's Dry Hills Reserve Pinot Noir 2014
Garnet with a touch of purple in the glass. The aromas embrace ripe berry fruit and spicy, almost a nutmeg character from the French oak. Sweet, ripe berry fruit with a touch of plum – lovely and concentrated. Tannins come through on the finish to give a mouth-coating texture and great length of flavour.