



## **PRESS RELEASE**

**August 10, 2017**

### **Two Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc wines deemed Exceptional**

Two Marlborough Sauvignon Blancs have gone where no other Sauvignon Blanc in the world has gone, gaining 98 points out of 100 in a Decanter Wine Panel Tasting.

The results of Decanter's Premium New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc tasting have been released in the August issue of the magazine. Both Tinpot Hut Sauvignon Blanc 2016 and Auntsfield's Single Vineyard Southern Valleys Sauvignon Blanc 2016 gained an Exceptional rating, reserved for wines that score between 98 and 100, on the 100-point system.

Decanter Tasting Assistant Natalie Earl says from the data they have on panel tastings, this is a first for a Sauvignon Blanc from any region in the world.

Gaining an Exceptional rating of 98 plus is not easy. In Decanter's Top 20 Wines of 2016, the highest score given to any wine was 97.

For Auntsfield winemaker Luc Cowley, the result "confirms the pedigree of Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc" on the world stage.

"It shows that quality Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc delivers exceptional wines with a strong sense of place and those rare characteristics of minerality, complexity and structure, and they deserve to be placed alongside some of the best wines in the world."

Tinpot Hut winemaker Fiona Turner agrees, saying the results show that Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc deserves to be taken seriously.

She said it is not just the fact that two wines were awarded 98 points, but that so many Marlborough wines were ranked as worthy of 90 plus scores.

"2016 was a difficult vintage in Marlborough for many reasons and the fact that we have so many wines gaining such good scores from that year, is really heartening. To grow really good Sauvignon it takes a lot of work, a lot of commitment and just as much time and effort as many other varieties."

That is something Bob Campbell MW, Decanter Wine Awards Regional Chair for New Zealand and Chair of the Tasting Panel, agrees with. He said most international wine critics would agree that Marlborough makes the world's best Sauvignon Blanc, but the variety is often not taken as seriously as some others.

"That's a shame," Mr Campbell said, "because when it is great it gets very exciting. And those two wines were very exciting for us all. We were grinning from ear to ear once we revealed our scores and identified the top wines."

Wine Marlborough General Manager Marcus Pickens believes the latest results are a game changer for Marlborough and for Sauvignon Blanc.

“Rightly or wrongly, Sauvignon Blanc is often overlooked in terms of nobility. But these results show that it is a variety that can reach great heights, when made well. And for Marlborough to gain Exceptional status for two Sauvignon Blancs proves that point. These results show Marlborough can proudly stand alongside the very best wine producing regions in the world.”

Ninety-three wines were submitted for the Panel Tasting. As well as two wines gaining Exceptional ratings, another three (all from Marlborough) gained Outstanding scores of between 95 and 97 points, while 25 wines were Highly Recommended with scores of between 90 and 94. Of those 25, 18 were from Marlborough.

This is the first time in four years New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc has been the subject of a Decanter Panel Tasting. In 2013, the highest score given was 95, while in the tasting undertaken in 2006 the highest score was 96.

***For further information;***

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