

New Zealand Victorious in the Great Trans-Tasman Red Wine Challenge

New Zealand Winegrowers injected some old fashioned rivalry in 'The Great Trans-Tasman Red Wine Challenge' on Friday before Australia's biggest pool game against Ireland in Auckland. New Zealand and Australia resumed their trans-Tasman rivalry as the two sides met head-to-head in the wine equivalent of the Bledisloe Cup.

Each nation was represented by fifteen wines; eight forwards (Syrah/Shiraz) and seven backs (Pinot Noir) selected by team captains. Teams consisted of four judges and were headed up by a well-known wine personality from each nation. Noted New Zealand expert Bob Campbell MW represented the Kiwis with Cameron Douglas MS, Corey Hall (The Gemwine Company), and Simon Nunns (Coopers Creek), whilst wine writer and critic James Halliday led the Australians into battle with Australian sommeliers Andrew Philpot, Patrick White and Matt Sweiboda.

The eight team members participated in a blind tasting on Friday morning to score each wine. The wines with the highest points made the 'First XV' selection and were unveiled at a media tasting in the NZ2011 Business Club Lounge in The Cloud on Queen's Wharf.

The pre-match warm up was well contested, but New Zealand wines rose to the occasion and dominated the tasting with five out of the seven top backs (Pinot Noir) and four of the eight top forwards (Syrah/Shiraz) crowning New Zealand wine as King of the Reds!

New Zealand team captain, Bob Campbell MW, comments: "It was a very strong line-up of wines from both sides of the Tasman. It was no surprise to see New Zealand win the Pinot Noir section but I was particularly pleased to see us hold our own against the Australian Shiraz, which is that country's signature grape variety. It's worth noting that Australia has 45,000 hectares of Shiraz while New Zealand has less than 300 hectares of the variety."

The winners:

Pinot Noir

Terravin 2009, Marlborough (NZ) 28 points

Martinborough Vineyards 2009, Martinborough (NZ) 23 points

Coal Pit 2008 Tiwaha, Central Otago (NZ) 22 points

Felton 2010 Road Block 3, Central Otago (NZ) 21 points

Akarua 2009 Reserve, Central Otago (NZ) 21 points

Tollana Robinson Family 2009 Bin TR474, Mornington Peninsula (Aust) 21 points

Paringa Estate 2009, Mornington Peninsula (Aust) 20 points

Syrah/Shiraz

Craggy Range 2009 Le Sol, Hawke's Bay (NZ) 37 points

Shaw & Smith 2009, Adelaide Hills (Aust) 37 points

Bilancia 2009 La Collina, Hawke's Bay (NZ) 23 points

Mills Reef 2009 Elspeth, Hawke's Bay (NZ) 21 points

Hentley Farm 2009 The Beauty, Barossa Valley (Aust) 20 points

Wynns 2008 Coonawarra Michael Shiraz, Coonawarra (Aust) 20 points
Beach Head 2009 Shiraz, Margaret River (Aust) 19 points
Villa Maria 2007 Reserve, Hawke's Bay (NZ) 19 points

END

Editor's notes:

New Zealand Winegrowers is the national organisation for New Zealand's grape and wine sector and conducts a wide range of tasks on behalf of the industry. One of these responsibilities is taking the lead role in the strategic marketing of New Zealand wine overseas.

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