

Blackenbrook

VINEYARD

Nelson Wines that WOW!

News Release
23 June 2011
For Immediate Release

Blackenbrook Responds to Increased Demand for Vegan Wine

A noticeable surge in demand for vegan wine has been seen by retailers and restaurants in the past year with Blackenbrook vineyard one of only a few wine producers able to offer all their white wines as vegan.

Duncan Gillespie, Retail Manager of Regional Wines and Spirits in Wellington, says they're seeing a small but increasing market for vegan wine for both dietary and philosophical reasons.

"It's following on from people looking at what's in their food more closely. People are being more conscious of what they're putting into their mouths. As well as requests for vegan wine, there's been a trend towards people with allergies looking at how their wine is made and whether it is produced sustainably. Wineries like Blackenbrook where they use gravity plus good practice in the winery means it is vegan and sustainable wine, and that ticks a lot of the boxes."

Blackenbrook is one of less than 5% of wine producers in New Zealand who make vegan wines with accredited sustainable practices.



Daniel Schwarzenbach checks the 2011 vintage of their vegan wine

Most wines are fined - a process that removes bitterness or other unwanted components from the young wine, using milk, egg whites or fish products. Although only minute quantities of these fining agents may remain in the finished wines, vegans won't knowingly consume anything that uses animal products.

All of Blackenbrook's white wines are vegan. Winemaker and owner Daniel Schwarzenbach says their labels currently state that 'no fining agents have been used'. As from the 2011 vintage they will print 'vegan wine' on all white wine labels to make it even clearer to consumers.

"A lot of people don't realise that animal products are often used to fine. Here at Blackenbrook, we don't add any finings because we don't need to. Our driving philosophy has always been to let the grapes speak, with as little interference as possible. We are able to produce vegan wine because of the design of the gravity-fed winery and the processes we use. Every time you pump or press the juice or wine, the rubbing motion creates bitterness. We don't have to use fining agents because gravity does most of the work and our young wines are balanced and don't show any bitterness," says Daniel.

He says they've noticed a steady rise in the number of customers asking for nutritional and ingredient facts about their wine as well as whether they're sustainable.

"Vegan wines are quite often of a higher standard because they have been produced with a lot of care. It's not the easiest or cheapest way to produce wine but it means we preserve the character of the grapes by treating them as gently and respectfully as we can."

Stuart Cliffin, Owner/ Chef of Relish Dining Restaurant in Nelson agrees that there is growing interest from diners about what wine contains and how it's made, but there's still a lot of education to be done.

"We've noticed increasing numbers of customers who have allergies or preferences asking for food and wine that fits with their dietary requirements, that's why labelling is really important. It's a small market for vegan wine but we still need to be able to cater for it and know that the wine we recommend is what it claims to be. With Blackenbrook we know their wine and we know it is vegan so we can offer it with confidence. But being vegan is just a bonus. Really, Blackenbrook wines taste great and they just happen to be vegan as well, because of the way they make their wine," says Stuart Cliffin.

Duncan Gillespie says some foreign wines don't state if they've been fined with animal additives and there is sometimes an incorrect assumption made by consumers that if the label doesn't say it has been fined with additives, then no additives are present.

"That's not the case, and I think it's important that if winemakers are doing things differently and not using additives that they label that well, because there is a market for it. I'm pleased that Blackenbrook state clearly that no fining agents have been used, and will add the word 'vegan' because that makes it clear to the consumer."

Daniel Schwarzenbach says the aim at Blackenbrook is to bring the full flavour from the vineyard to the glass, as naturally as possible.

“We do this through a combination of certified sustainable practices in the vineyard, and gentle wine-making in our gravity-fed winery. It’s all about minimal interference to produce pure wines.

Being vegan is kind of a beneficial by-product of our gentle systems. We simply wanted to keep our wines pure and not subject them to harsh fining agents – and the natural consequence of that is that all our white wines are 100% vegan,” says Daniel.



Daniel Schwarzenbach urges people to read the labels to confirm if a wine is not fined with animal products and is truly vegan.

For More Information:

Daniel and Ursula Schwarzenbach

Blackenbrook Vineyard

Baldwin Rd

RD1 Tasman, Nelson, NZ

Phone 03 526 6888

www.blackenbrook.co.nz email: wine@blackenbrook.co.nz