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TOUR OF NEW ZEALAND
WINE REGIONS



story and photos by Allison Levine

Wairarapa is the northernmost (as well as the oldest) Pinot Noir-producing region in New Zealand, accounting for one percent of the country's wine production. But despite its small size, the wines are anything but small. Located 1½ hours north of Wellington, Wairarapa

consists of three sub-regions: Martinborough, Gladstone and Masterton.

Nestled in a valley, this is one of the driest areas on the North Island.

With lean, stony, free-draining gravels, warm days and cool nights and low humidity (which helps the vines resist disease), the wines are less fruit-driven and have an Old World style. In fact, in 1979, before planting began, scientific research determined that Martinborough shares many of the same qualities as Burgundy, from climate to style.

For Anthony Dias Blue's tasting notes on Martinborough Wines, go to www.tastingpanelmag.com.



Managing Director Richard Riddiford is a fifth-generation Martinborough native and an original investor in **Palliser Estate**. Planted in 1984, Palliser was producing recognized world-class wines two years later by focusing on the highest quality through environmentally sustainable practices.



Kai Schubert of **Schubert Wines**, a former investment banker from Germany, apprenticed with Ernst Loosen. After falling in love with Pinot Noir, he and his partner Marion looked for property in Oregon before Martinborough caught their attention. Producing 5,000 cases, Schubert first planted in 1998 and currently has 14 hectares of vines, of which more than 75% is Pinot Noir. Schubert currently exports 95% of the wines to 25 countries and is in the process of becoming an organic winery.



Ata Rangi (Maori for "Dawn Sky" or "New Beginning") is owned and managed by Clive Paton along with his wife Phyll and his sister Alison. First planted in 1980, Clive was one of the winegrowing pioneers in the area. Producing 15,000 cases, **Ata Rangi** Pinot Noirs have won the prestigious Bouchard-Finlayson Trophy for Best Pinot Noir at the International Wine and Spirit Competition in London three times.



Winemaker at **Gladstone Vineyard** since 2005, Gerhard Smith moved to the Wairarapa in 2004 from Stellenbosch, South Africa after working vintages in South Africa, Bordeaux, the U.S. and Australia. Owned and operated by Christine and David Kernohan since 1996, Gladstone was one of the first boutique wineries in the Gladstone sub-region of the Wairarapa, planted in 1986. A member of the New Zealand Sustainable Winegrowing program since its beginning, Gladstone produces 20,000 cases of wine today and is seeking an importer in the US. ■■

Interesting Fact:

Wairarapa is at the bottom of the North Island; Marlborough is at the top of the South Island. However, the two regions are almost at the same latitude. Therefore, in terms of climate and varietals, Wairarapa is more similar to Marlborough on the South Island than to the other wine regions of the North Island.