



New Zealand Wine
the riches of a clean green land

New Zealand Aromatic Varieties Riesling, Gewurtztraminer & Pinot Gris



Introduction

- New Zealand has an ideal climate for the production of aromatic wines and praise has been mounting in recent years for the increasing number of vibrant, world-class and regionally distinctive examples of New Zealand Riesling, Gewurztraminer and Pinot Gris.
- If New Zealand is well known for making pungent, vibrant, fruity wines then aromatic styles are perhaps the best advertisement of that fact.

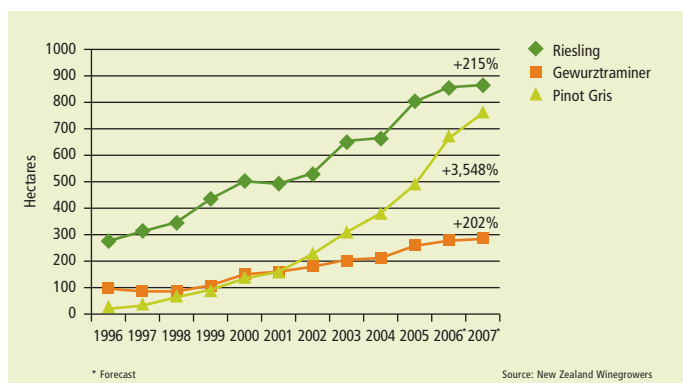
Key Facts and Figures

History

- Though present in the 1800s, it is only since the 1980s that Riesling began to be planted in volume, rising to the third most popular white varietal planted in recent years.
- Whilst plantings of Gewurztraminer are only approximately a third of the Riesling hectareage, since their appearance in early 1970s they have also enjoyed steady growth.
- With the first serious plantings only appearing in the early 1990s, Pinot Gris has enjoyed a dramatic rise to fame and is close behind Riesling as the fourth most popular white variety.

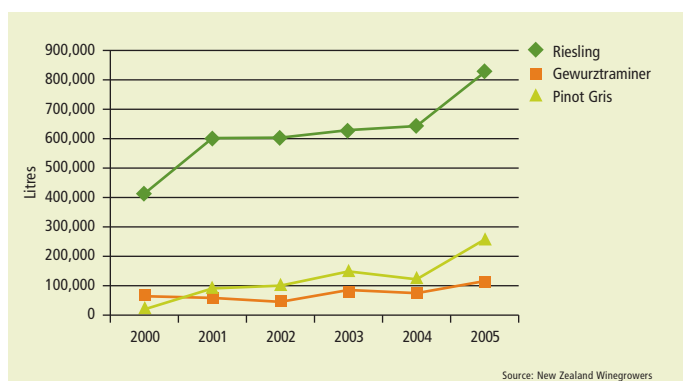
Growth in Plantings

- Plantings of Riesling, Pinot Gris and Gewurztraminer up 391% since 1996, well above industry average of 242%.



Growth in Exports

- Exports of aromatic varieties grew 138% over the last 5 years to 1.2 million litres.
- Riesling constitutes 69% of the total and grew 109%. Pinot Gris is 22% and grew a dramatic 918%.



Riesling

Key Characteristics and Influences on Style

Styles – Wide range from bone dry to lush sweet.

Climate – 90% from South Island, where climate is ideally suited:

- Cool, long, dry sunny autumns
- Large diurnal variance
- Low humidity

Soils – Stony, gravelly sites favoured to enhance minerality.

Typical aromas/flavours – Apple, citrus, lemon and tropical fruit when young. Toasted honey, sometimes kerosene with age.

Regionality – Stonefruit and spice in warmer Nelson, lime/lemon and spice from Marlborough, and green apples and citrus from cooler Waipara.



Winemaking and Viticultural Influences

- Clones – Mainly German ones.
- Careful canopy management to ensure low yields.
- Grapes – Tight bunches, vulnerable to rot. Late ripening, but sturdy.
- Moderate yields of 8–10 tonnes/hectare.
- Some grapes left on to produce late harvest/botrytis styles.
- Key at harvest is ability to produce full ripe flavours at low Brix.
- Use of carbon-dioxide blanket to prevent oxidation.
- Stainless steel fermentation.
- Skin contact to boost flavours in 'drink-now' wines. Less/no skin contact for greater elegance/ageing abilities.

"Maybe Riesling is the unsung hero of New Zealand wine."

Rosemary George, UK

Pinot Gris

Key Characteristics and Influences on Style



Styles – Very versatile. Produces light-bodied, fruit-driven wines as well as rich, mouth-filling ones.

Climate – Grown throughout New Zealand. Higher acids and more obvious aromatics in the cooler South Island regions.

Soils – Grown on range of soils, but flavours clay-rich, low-vigour sites.

Typical aromas /flavours – Apples, pears, honeysuckle, spice, breadcrust, through to riper stonefruit, apricot.

Regionality – Tighter structure from Marlborough and in particular from Central Otago. Riper stonefruit, 'fatter' styles from warmer Hawkes Bay and North Island. However viticulture and winemaking currently have a greater impact on styles than region.

Winemaking and Viticultural Influences

- Clones – Range used: Mission, Barrie, 221, 215 and 216.
- Canopy management – Open canopy required. Suits VSP trellising.
- Grapes – Thin skinned, tight bunches.
- Yields – Can crop erratically. Manage carefully for low yields. Average 4–5 tonnes/hectare.
- Ripens early to mid-season.
- Harvest date critical – Ensure balance with comparatively low acidity and high sugar levels.
- Gentle pressing.
- Fermentation – 10 to 11 degrees. Often portion fermented in oak barrels and/or mature in oak on yeast lees.



Gewurztraminer

Key Characteristics and Influences on Style

Styles – Opulent, good breadth and weight. Smooth approachable texture, with relatively low acidity.

Climate – Performs well in both warm climates (broader, more textural and complex) and cooler climates (focused, linear aromatic-led).

Soils – More linear structure and minerality from stony, low-fertility soils. Broader, more complex styles from warmer, higher fertility sites.

Aromas/flavours – Rose petals, lychees, spices (cinnamon, ginger).

Regionality – Broader, more textural examples from Gisborne/ Hawkes Bay and more linear, overtly aromatic from Marlborough and cooler South Island regions. Viticulture/winemaking have big impact on style.



Winemaking and Viticultural Influences

- Clones – Alsace, German and local selection – big impact on flavours
- Site selection impacts on flavour.
- Careful canopy management – Small leaves can double bud. Shoot thinning, leaf plucking vital.
- Notoriously temperamental – Susceptible to adverse weather at flowering.
- Early ripening.
- Yield – Average 4-6 tonnes/hectare.
- Harvest – Crucial to get aromatic peak, before acidity drops.
- Skin contact – Boost flavours in young wines.
- Impact on style through
 - Yeast selection
 - Temperature of ferment
 - Use of residual sugar
 - Post ferment maturation – stainless steel or old barrels, lees contact etc.

Key Regions

Plantings 2005

Gewurztraminer: 257 hectares

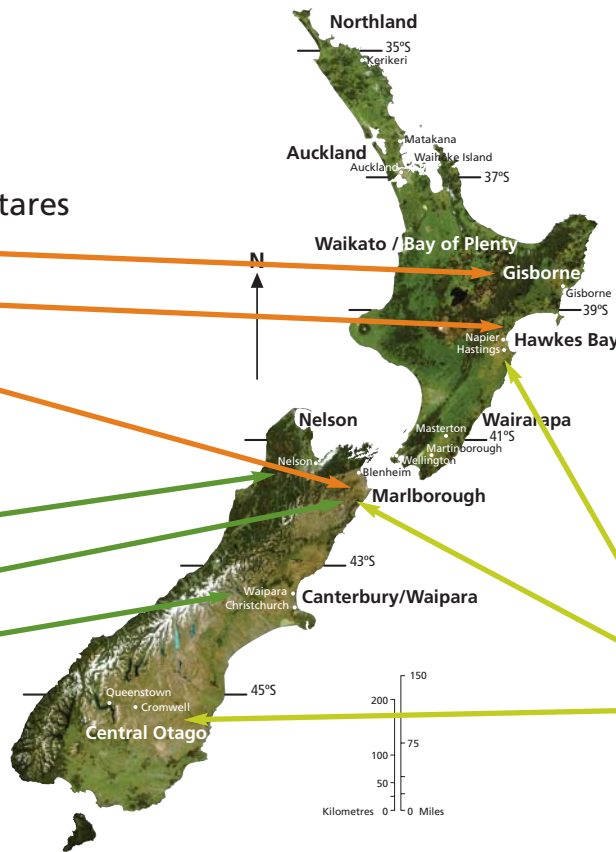
- Gisborne 34%
- Hawkes Bay 26%
- Marlborough 20%

Riesling: 811 hectares

- Nelson 6%
- Marlborough 46%
- Waipara/Canterbury 33%

Pinot Gris: 489 hectares

- Hawkes Bay 18%
- Marlborough 38%
- Central Otago 14%



New Zealand Aromatic Varieties with Food

Riesling

- The intense aromatic flavours and crisp acidity levels of the drier wines may be enjoyed with a wide range of light to moderately-flavoured salads, seafood and chicken dishes.
- Slightly sweet Rieslings are a great accompaniment to spicy Thai and other Asian dishes. They can also suit vegetarian dishes, crab, crayfish and other foods that have a sweet influence.
- Late-harvest and botrytised wines may be served with desserts, particularly fresh fruit, or with soft blue cheese.

Pinot Gris

- The weight, texture and delicate flavours of Pinot Gris make it an ideal accompaniment for creamy pastas, calamari, scallops, whitebait, poached fish, crab, prawns and shellfish.

Gewurtztraminer

- The powerful fruit and spicy flavours of Gewurtztraminer make it an ideal match for moderately spicy food with some sweetness such as mild curries and chillies.
- It works well with Thai cuisine, Japanese dishes with wasabi or horseradish, roast pork and hot ham.
- It is also good with cinnamon-flavoured apple desserts with raisins and cream.

Source: Caroline Courtney, Wine in New Zealand, Montana Wines



“Other New Zealand wines are impressive, to be sure. Its Rieslings are showstoppers, made mostly in a dry style that favours the varietal pristine lime juice/lime zest aromas and flavours and is often enhanced by appealing minerality... Pinot Gris shows much promise, as does Gwurztraminer.”

Steve Pitcher, The Wine News, USA

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