

HAWKE'S BAY TO HOST 25TH AIR NEW ZEALAND WINE AWARDS

New Zealand Winegrowers and Air New Zealand tonight announced that the 2006 Air New Zealand Wine Awards will celebrate its Silver Anniversary in the Hawke's Bay, with Air New Zealand renewing its naming right sponsorship for another three years.

Speaking at the Hawke's Bay Opera House Kate Radburnd, New Zealand Winegrowers board member, Senior Wine Judge and Air New Zealand's newest wine consultant said the 25th anniversary of the Air New Zealand Wine Awards was testament to the success of the prestigious event which has national and international recognition.

"The Air New Zealand Wine Awards are the country's premier wine competition, recognising the very best in New Zealand wines and winemaking excellence. It's with great delight that on the Silver Anniversary we're able to announce our ongoing partnership with Air New Zealand and reveal that Hawke's Bay, one of the country's most celebrated wine regions, will host the Awards," said Ms Radburnd.

Run by New Zealand Winegrowers for 25 years, the Air New Zealand Wine Awards continues to grow and last year attracted more than 1,500 wines - the biggest year in the competition's history.

"The rigorous judging process and combination of renowned local and international judges are positioning this event on the world stage," said Ms Radburnd.

This year also marks the 20th anniversary of Air New Zealand's support for the country's most prestigious wine awards.

"Over the years we've proudly watched the New Zealand wine industry gain international recognition for producing premium red and white wines. As the largest single server of wine in the country - each year passengers consume about 820,000 bottles of wine on our flights - we're proud that we can do our bit to help drive the growth of the industry," said Air New Zealand CEO Rob Fyfe.

The 2006 Air New Zealand Wine Awards dinner will be held at the Pettigrew.Green Arena, Taradale on Saturday, November 11, 2006.

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