

PICTURE / BABICHE MARTENS

Pick

PINOT NOIR is on a roll. Its newfound global popularity nearly all comes down, bizarrely enough, to a low-budget movie. When *Sideways* hit the big screen it succeeded in pushing previously high-rating merlot firmly into the shadows — quite right, too, say critics of much-maligned merlot.

Since then, pinot noir sales have doubled in the United States. But that's nothing compared with New Zealand pinot noir, where the growth is nearly tenfold over the past decade.

My list of top 10 pinot noirs came as a result of spending gruelling hours — I confess there were pleasurable interludes — tasting my way through hundreds of wines at this year's Pinot Noir event. Not that it was the first time I had tasted them — all have been tried and passed the taste test on several occasions.

Although some on this list are big-namers, some are newcomers, some are unheard of, and others are difficult to obtain. Notably absent and nearly as good are The Escarpment Kupe and Muddy Water pinot noirs.

2005 ATA RANGI

PINOT NOIR \$60

Winemaker Clive Paton, first a pioneer of pinot noir in Martinborough, is turning his passions to Project Crimson — a charitable trust with a mission to save rata and pohutukawa. He

has named his second tier pinot noir crimson. It is still Ata Rangi, however, that has the longest track record of being New Zealand's consistently top pinot noir.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.atarangi.co.nz

Eat: Slow-roasted duck dusted in sweet paprika.



affordable style: a little bit country

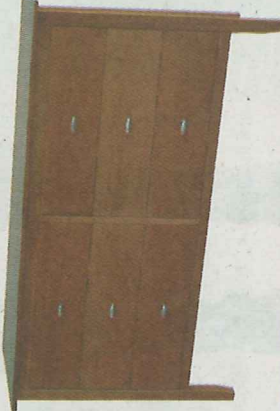


The *Classique* features flexi-slat base and comes complete with Queen size Eurocoil mattress. **\$1299**. Upgrade your mattress from just \$200.



A blend of the contemporary and the traditional with simple shapes, blending solid Rimu construction with sculpted aluminium details on the cabinets.

6-drawer dresser **\$1199**
6-drawer slim boy **\$999**
Bedsides **\$399**



Rest

www.restbed.co.nz

www.northshelvetr.co.nz

of the bunch

Pinot noir is enjoying a surge in popularity both here and overseas. Joelle Thomson rates her 10 New Zealand favourites

2005 AMISFIELD

PINOT NOIR \$40

Experimentation is big at Amisfield winery. Winemaker Jeff Sinnott sources most of the grapes for the winery's pinot noirs from the Bannockburn area, turning out several single vineyard pinots in a bid to understand what makes the best. The winery's main pinot noir is one of New Zealand's top-shelf reds every year.

Available from specialist wine stores, email: admin@amisfield.co.nz or go to www.amisfield.co.nz
Eat: Roast leg of lamb with blue cheese, roasted beetroot, walnut and mixed leaf salad.



2005 CARRICK

CENTRAL OTAGO

PINOT NOIR \$45

Sustainable viticulture and minimal intervention winemaking are important at Carrick Winery in Bannockburn, Central Otago. Winemaker Steve Davies is one of Central's top pinot noir-makers, as this weighty deep southern pinot noir shows every year.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.carrick.co.nz
Eat: Homemade steak and kidney pie, using the best ingredients you can.



2005 FELTON ROAD

PINOT NOIR

Felton Road, which became a 100 per cent biodynamic vineyard and winery last year. The focus has always been on growing great grapes from specific vineyard sites in a bid to pin down differences in flavour. This is easily their best wine.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.feltonroad.com
Eat: Organically farmed pork roasted on quinces.



on a very small scale. Like all their wines, this one is made in tiny quantities, but it's easily one of my top 10 New Zealand pinot noirs every year.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.neudorf.co.nz
Eat: Wild pork, if you can get it.

2005 PROPHET'S ROCK

PINOT NOIR \$55

Like most Central Otago wineries, Prophet's Rock is pretty small and almost entirely devoted to pinot noir — along with smaller amounts of top riesling and pinot gris. This is a stellar, if little known, newcomer on the New Zealand pinot noir list.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.prophetsrock.co.nz
Eat: Duck casserole, cooked slowly.



2004 BELL HILL

PINOT NOIR \$75

This year is the 10th birthday of Bell Hill winery, set up by Marcel Giesen and Sherwyn Veldhuizen in Weka Pass, North Canterbury. The couple make tiny amounts of two different pinot noirs. Neither has a price-tag that fits comfortably with everyday drinking but both are very good. This is arguably New Zealand's best pinot noir.

Available from specialist wine stores or email info@bellhill.co.nz
Eat: Roast mushrooms on crusty homemade pizza with fine shreds of parmigiano reggiano.



2005 CRAGGY RANGE TE MUNA

PINOT NOIR \$40

This is one of the newest pinot noirs on my top 10 list, a wine that has risen quickly to the top tier because of passionate winemaking and viticulture. It's made from grapes grown along Te Muna Rd — one of the newest vineyard areas in the country.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.craggyrange.com
Eat: Slow-roasted lamb in red wine and rosemary.



2005 NEUDORF MOUTERE

PINOT NOIR \$48

Outrageously risky is what some said when Tim and Judy Neudorf Vineyard in 1978. But it's been outrageously successful, albeit



2005 QUARTZ REEF

PINOT NOIR \$38 to \$42

Rudi Bauer, born in Austria, is one of New Zealand's pinot noir specialists and has worked in Central Otago since the early days of its modern wine era. This is a fantastically good pinot noir every year.

Available from specialist wine stores or go to www.quartzreef.co.nz
Eat: Lamb's fry with tomato reduction.



2005 MT DIFFICULTY

PINOT NOIR \$40

Here comes the crowd-pleaser in this line-up. Like Mt Difficulty's riesling, this consistently wins more fans, both here and in Australia. The winery is in Bannockburn and, yes, Mt Difficulty really exists.

Available from specialist wine stores go to www.mtdifficulty.co.nz
Eat: Miso chanko-nabe, or try it with venison back-straps.



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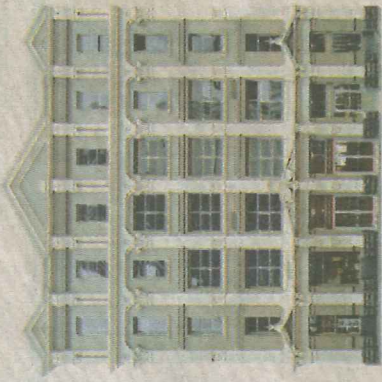
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