

# THE GREAT NEW ZEALAND



PINOT NOIR  
CLASSIFICATION

# the great new zealand pinot noir classification

The **Great New Zealand Pinot Noir Classification** is based on an average rating across the five most recent vintages of Pinot Noir that we have tasted. We both keep detailed notes and scores from all of our tastings as well as impressions of the total performance of every estate listed. We collaborate on these to develop a list of rolling averages. Any estate can move up or down on each and every release, as a number have this year – this is a rolling classification that enables everyone to improve if they so desire.

A classification of **5** is awarded to the top estates and **0** to the lowest, although we do not publish the 0s. Inclusion, even at level 1, is a commendable performance as the majority of estates have not yet achieved this level.

**5**

**Ata Rangi**  
**Felton Road**  
**Mt Difficulty**

**4**

**Dry River**  
**Peregrine**  
Bell Hill  
Escarpment  
Pyramid Valley

**3**

**Cloudy Bay**  
**Martinborough Vineyard**  
**Pegasus Bay**  
**Rippon**  
**Wither Hills**  
Bald Hills  
Craggy Range  
Dog Point  
Hinton Estate  
Mountford  
Mt Edward  
Two Paddocks  
Valli

Each estate is graded on its **estate wine**. No single vineyard or special cuvée wines are taken into consideration.

**2**

**Chard Farm**  
**Gibbston Valley**  
**Ossens**  
**Palliser Estate**  
**Villa Maria**  
Auntsfield  
Kumeu River  
TerraVin  
Voss

**1**

**Carrick**  
**Huia**  
**Nautilus**  
**Quartz Reef**  
Amisfield  
Foxes Island  
Gravitas  
Murdoch James  
Neudorf Vineyards  
Pisa Range  
Rockburn  
Spy Valley  
Te Kairanga

With five vintages in the tank the **bold** rating is awarded. The producers not in bold are tentative inclusions for whom we have not yet seen five consecutive vintages – these will be 'bolded' and firmly positioned on the fifth vintage.

There is no ranking *within* each tier (estates are ordered alphabetically).

We have travelled the length and breadth of New Zealand, sent out exhaustive requests for samples, fronted up for every tasting and tasted every New Zealand Pinot Noir that has come anywhere near us. Thank you to the many estates who responded to our requests this year. If an estate is not included, it is either because the wines don't stack up in our minds or that we have not yet come across them. We apologise if we have missed anyone. We do, of course, welcome the opportunity to taste your wines.

2009

# the great new zealand pinot noir classification 2009

Last year saw the start of our New Zealand Pinot Noir initiative when we launched **The Great New Zealand Pinot Noir Classification**. We always knew that this would cause a stir, pleasing those winemakers who got a mention and ruffling the feathers of those who didn't. Our desire to explain to the consumer our complicated thoughts on this globally important wine style in the end manifested itself in a relatively simple tabular form which we believe works really well and, we are delighted to say, has received the support of the New Zealand wine industry and the opinion-formers within.

Please forgive us for dropping this quote in, but it has spurred us on to work even harder this year in order to finesse this classification further:

"This is one of the most intelligent assessments on the state of New Zealand Pinot Noir." – Wine NZ

There is movement in the classification this year but the net effect is of a slight downward trend, with only three estates joining our hall of greats for the first time. One estate

made the unprecedented leap of two levels, and is to be congratulated for this. Craggy Range's portfolio has grown significantly both in range and quality and we are delighted to bring this incredible improvement to your attention.

Congratulations to all of those estates who have made this table this year. It is worth emphasising that the difference between the levels is slight and while upward and downward movements are inevitable, inclusion in this list at any level is commendable. Maintaining a position is a reflection of continued excellence.

We predicted last year that the New Zealand Pinots set to hit the shelves in 2008 would represent the largest collective improvement in lower-tier New Zealand Pinot Noir that we have seen in any single year. The wines that we have tasted this year have certainly reflected this. The new kids on the NZ block are no longer so new. Their vines are starting to mature nicely, and they've clearly been listening to people like us who keep banging on about wine quality, balance and value.

**The Great New Zealand Pinot Noir Classification** reflects the ups and downs of New Zealand Pinot Noir this year, for the "ups" to be celebrated and the "downs" to set about working harder to reach the next level.