

## Trinity Hill wins Fruitfed-sponsored Syrah category

*Trinity Hill's 2006 Homage Syrah was recently named the Fruitfed Supplies champion Syrah trophy winner as well as the Air New Zealand champion wine of the show.*

An outstanding 2006 vintage played a big part in this award-winning wine says Trinity Hill's John Hancock.

"We were careful to keep crop levels low and fruit quality for the Homage was almost perfect, so we didn't want to interfere too much with any clever winemaking! We used 5% Viognier as a co-fermenter with the Syrah, which subtly changes its masculine characteristics by increasing the perfume aspects and softening the tannins to create something altogether more feminine," says John.

The grapes from which the Homage Syrah is made are grown in Trinity Hill's Gimblett Gravels vineyards. John says they make the Homage wines only when the fruit is up to their own strict quality parameters. To date, Homage wines have been made in '02, '04, '06 and '07.

Syrah has the potential to be to the Hawke's Bay what Sauvignon Blanc is to Marlborough, says John. "The international wine press are very taken with Hawke's Bay Syrah and, because it is so reflective of place, we believe it will be the wine that gives Hawke's Bay something unique."

As a grape, John describes Syrah as "...very transparent as a variety; it very much reflects where it is grown and how the wine is made. Therefore it will produce very different wines from each vineyard, giving a definite sense of place, of terroir.

"The more producers the better, provided the quality is there, since we need critical mass to be effective in the market. So far we have been able to sell successfully, even at the very top end, into some of the most prestigious outlets in the world."

John adds: "We were very pleased to receive the trophy from Fruitfed as we avail ourselves of their expertise and help regularly in our vineyards. We are very appreciative of what they do."

Stephen Guerin, Fruitfed Supplies' general manager, attended the awards' dinner in Christchurch and was delighted to present John with the champion Syrah trophy.

"We have sponsored a varietal category in the Air New Zealand Wine Awards for several years as a way of demonstrating our support for the ever-expanding wine sector," said Stephen. "This is the first time we have sponsored the champion Syrah so it's particularly exciting to see Trinity Hill then win the champion wine of the show with their 2006 Homage Syrah. This really is a significant achievement for which John and the Trinity Hill team can justifiably be proud. Our heartfelt congratulations to them all and our thanks to Air New Zealand and New Zealand Winegrowers for running a world-class wine competition." ❖



*Fruitfed Supplies' general manager Stephen Guerin presents the champion Syrah trophy to John Hancock, CEO of Trinity Hills.*

### JUDGES' COMMENTS

Comments about the 2006 Trinity Hill Homage Syrah from the Air New Zealand Wine Awards judging panel, headed by Steve Smith, MW, included: "This Syrah shows what an opportunity we have with this variety. The nose is serious and complex with heady currant, black doris plum, liquorice, spice, flowers and pepper notes wrapped up in a sense of real restraint. The palate is rich and dense with beautiful fruit sweetness and concentration balanced by a superb savoury and sandalwood note that gives a strong feel of power and elegance. This is great Syrah! An iron fist in a velvet glove."



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