

Media Release
20 May 2011



Nelson Wineart hosts international wine challenge

When the Rugby World Cup 2011 descends on Nelson in September the rivalry on the rugby field will be child's play compared with the rivalry that will come out when the winemakers of the visiting nations go head to head with their hosts.

The Nelson winemaker's group Wineart has put out the challenge to both Italian and American winemakers to front up with their First XV wines for the Nelson First XV Wine Competition. Both nations have accepted the challenge.

In September the United States and Italy will not only bring their rugby teams to Nelson, they will also put forward their best five Pinot Gris, Riesling and Gewürztraminer wines, bringing 15 bottles in total. They will face off against the First XV wines from the Nelson region, New Zealand's home of aromatic wines, as described by wine critic and architect of the original Judgement of Paris wine competition, Stephen Spurrier.

An international panel of judges will converge in Nelson on Sunday 25 September to conduct a blind tasting of the submitted wines. The judges are: Leslie Sbrocco from the United States, Riccardo Castaldi from Italy and Sam Kim from New Zealand. The chairman of the judges will be Ralph Kyte-Powell from Australia.

Chairman of the Nelson Winegrowers Association and Wineart Mike Brown said the competition would go one step further than the Judgement of Paris, with three nations vying for the honours.

"Here in Nelson we believe we're making some of the best aromatic wines in the world and we are relishing the opportunity to taste these alongside two of the most highly-respected winemaking countries in the world."

"The intensity of the competition going on off the rugby field will be a serious rival for the rugby matches themselves. We hope this will add another dimension to the New Zealand experience for the visitors the rugby competition attracts."

The wine competition will be followed by a formal degustation dinner, a public tutored tasting of the wines and the Nelson New Release Tasting of local newly released wines.

Tickets and full details of all of the events supporting Nelson's First XV Wine Competition are available on the Nelson Wineart website: www.nelsonwineart.co.nz.

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