



Wine

BY MICHAEL COOPER

Seeing red in Nelson

There is plenty to celebrate in this line-up of fine 2010 reds from Nelson.

One of the country's most versatile wine regions, Nelson has succeeded with many white grape varieties – riesling, gewürztraminer, pinot gris, sauvignon blanc and chardonnay – and grüner veltliner is promising, too. But pinot noir is the second most widely planted grape, and a rising stream of other reds – from syrah, merlot, malbec, tempranillo, montepulciano and dolcetto – suggests new directions.

The 2010 harvest, much smaller than that of 2009 or 2011, was from the start predicted to yield exceptional wines. After

a settled late summer, Woollaston Estates reported that “the canopy is the healthiest it has ever looked; the fruit is clean and free of disease”. A warm and dry March was followed by an exceptionally dry, hot April.

Phil Gladstone, of Neudorf, rated 2010 as “the best vintage that Nelson has had for a very long time”. Blackenbrook Vineyard reported its greatest vintage to date: “The fruit is fully ripe with sugar levels up to [a soaring] 26 brix and the taste is incredible – amazingly intense.”

Mike Brown, chairman of Nelson Winegrowers, celebrated the production

of “really nice, concentrated, darkly coloured, deeply scented red wines”. The early releases are now filtering onto the shelves – and setting a new standard.

Blackenbrook Vineyard Nelson Montepulciano 2010 ★★★★★

The best yet. Matured for a year in French oak barriques, it's a powerful (14.5% alcohol), boldly coloured red, sweet-fruited and crammed with fresh plum, red berry and licorice flavours. Vibrantly fruity, with



The Te Mania team with their giant rugby ball made from grapevine prunings.



a subtle seasoning of oak and good tannin backbone, it's well worth cellaring. \$27

Aotea Nelson Pinot Noir 2010 ★★★★★

The Aotea brand replaces Seifried's former Winemakers Collection label. Matured in new and one-year-old French oak barriques, it is fullish in colour, mouthfilling and savoury, in a complex, firmly structured style, spicy and nutty. \$35

Brightwater Vineyards Nelson Pinot Noir 2010 ★★★★★

Deeply coloured, this wine was matured for 10 months in French oak barrels (15% new.) Already enjoyable, it is fresh and vibrantly fruity, with ripe cherry and plum flavours, slightly nutty and smooth, and very good depth. \$25

Crowded House Marlborough/Nelson/Central Otago Pinot Noir 2010 ★★★★★

An attractive drink-young style, this is a blend from three regions, headed by Nelson (40%). Vibrantly fruity, with cherry, plum and spice flavours, it has some savoury notes adding complexity, fresh acidity and a well-rounded finish. \$21

Selfried Nelson Syrah 2010 ★★★★★

Grown at Brightwater, on the Waimea Plains, and matured in French oak barriques, this is a ruby-hued wine, mouthfilling, vibrantly fruity and supple, with generous plum, herb, black pepper and prune flavours, and gentle tannins. A very good, drink-young style. \$21

Waimea Trev's Red 2010 ★★★★★

"Round up your mates and enjoy" urges the back label on this deeply coloured blend of cabernet franc (63%), syrah (32%) and malbec. American oak-aged, it has fresh, berryish aromas leading into a full-flavoured wine, vibrantly fruity, spicy

and slightly savoury, with some complexity. \$24

Anchorage Nelson Pinot Noir 2010 ★★★★★

Grown at Motueka, this is a drink-young charmer, with decent depth of strawberry, plum and spice flavours, fresh, ripe and well-rounded. \$21

Brightside Nelson Pinot Noir 2010 ★★★★★

From Kaimira, this is an attractive, drink-young style. Fresh and supple, with vibrant plum, herb and spice flavours, showing a touch of oak-derived complexity, it's fine value at \$18.

Kahurangi Estate Nelson Montepulciano 2010 ★★★★★

A fruit-driven style with deep, purple-flushed colour, it is fresh, vibrant and smooth, with generous, plummy, slightly spicy flavours and a hint of sweet oak. \$21

Richmond Plains Nelson Admiral 2010 ★★★★★

Certified organic, this deeply coloured red is a blend of merlot, malbec and cabernet franc, French oak-aged. Vibrantly fruity, it has smooth blackcurrant, plum and spice flavours, and lots of drink-young charm. \$20 ■