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## Wine: It was New

# Zealand's forgotten region, but Nelson's fine wines are now winning fans

**Published Date:** 07 February 2011

By Rose Murray Brown

Think you know New Zealand wine? You may have tasted your way through Marlborough sauvignon blanc, Central Otago, Martinborough pinot noir and Hawke's Bay chardonnay, but one region which always seems to get left out in the cold is Nelson.

This small sunny area is in the northwest corner of South Island. In the last two decades, residents have watched bemused as wineries and international investors have piled into the honeypot of Marlborough's Wairau and Awatere valleys next door.

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Today, the Waimea plains and Upper Moutere of Nelson remain a place apart - just half an hour's drive down the road.

To many, Nelson is best known for its sheltered harbour, beautiful, isolated, sandy beaches and as an artist's hideaway, but this region - named after Admiral Horatio Nelson - has the longest sunshine hours in New Zealand and is also its geographical centre.

Vineyards benefit from the plentiful sunshine and rain. I have been impressed with the region's rieslings, chardonnays and pinot noirs. Nelson sauvignon blancs are good too, but don't have the pungent power and zippy juiciness of Marlborough.

Out of Nelson's 25 boutique wineries, the three which have impressed me most are Siefried, Neudorf and Te Mania.

The first was set up by Austrian Hermann Siefried and his Kiwi wife Agnes in 1973 near Upper Moutere. It specialises in aromatic whites and his late harvest riesling is a testament to the quality achievable in New Zealand riesling.

Once a hippie commune, Tim and Judy Finn transformed Neudorf in 1978. Now they make impressive pinot gris, riesling, pinot noir as well as their stunning richly textured chardonnay.

Te Mania, founded by John and Cheryl Harrey in 1990, shows potential with pinot noir, syrah and merlot blends.

£14.99

Laithwaites; Waitrose; Naked Wines

Siefried Agnes Late Harvest Riesling

Named after the owner's wife, this deliciously zesty, ripe, nectarine- flavoured sweet gem is a must for riesling lovers. It is now available in the UK.

£17

The Wine Society, [www.thewinesociety.com](http://www.thewinesociety.com)

Neudorf Chardonnay

Neudorf's second label chardonnay is supremely elegant and well- balanced.

£9.25

Henderson Wines, Edinburgh, 0131-447 8580

Siefried Old Coach Road Unoaked Chardonnay 2009

Citric, zippy, lean, elegant, aromatic chardonnay.

For beginners' wine courses in Edinburgh and Glasgow, see [www.rosemurraybrown.com](http://www.rosemurraybrown.com)

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Page 1 of 1

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