

## Te Mata, Woodthorpe Gamay Noir 2006 Hawkes Bay

13 Feb 2007 by JR

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Purple pager Douglas A Braun of Lompoc in California wrote in the [members' forum](#) recently of his attempts to track down more American true Gamays other than his favourite from Brick House in Oregon. This reminded me how overlooked this grape has tended to be in recent years while we have been distracted by big beefy reds with mesmerising amounts of alcohol and oak. Newton's third law of motion is one of my favourites: for every action there is a reaction. Surely Gamay's time for another period in the spotlight is well overdue? Let's forget all those unfortunate, over-stretched Beaujolais Nouveaux, take a deep breath of fresh air and concentrate instead on the pleasures of a well-made Gamay where lively fruitiness is the dominant feature of a wine whose fully integrated juicy acidity positively pushes the wine down the throat.

One of the most popular reds at the recent annual generic tasting of New Zealand wines in London was this **Te Mata, Woodthorpe Gamay Noir 2006 Hawkes Bay** made by John Buck and team who were responsible for one of New Zealand's first serious red wines, Coleraine Cabernet/ Merlot. Woodthorpe is their range for earlier drinking, and one of Gamay's positive attributes is that, with the exception of the new wave of super-serious, barrique-aged wines now being made in Beaujolais' superior cru vineyards (see [Le Beaujolais ancien est arrive](#)), it is designed for immediate gratification.

This example is a really delightful blend of freshness with sufficiently juicy fruit made from superior Gamay Noir à Jus Blanc cuttings imported from France and planted eight years ago in New Zealand's North Island. It has real bite and full-on refreshment factor so that it would make a great red for the growing band of wine drinkers who choose to drink reds as an aperitif without food. The alcohol level is 13% - not low but not ridiculously high either.

Sixty per cent of the fruit was apparently fermented using the traditional Beaujolais technique of carbonic maceration whereby the grapes are tipped whole into a (subsequently) sealed tank and the rest was fermented warmish in open vats, more à *la bourguignonne*. The balance seems about right to me – nothing but carbonic maceration can result in rather simple banana/ rubber/ bubble gum/ nail varnish remover aromas. The wines went through full malolactic fermentation and were aged for a few months in used French oak barriques before being bottled while the fruit was still fresh last August. And there you have it: a red for all seasons. The producers recommend it with "spicy cuisines such as Indian or Thai". I have not thus experimented though can imagine they may well be right. Certainly very fruity reds can be a fine match for a curry. (Cue some enterprising Indian wine producer?)

The wine is £9.49 from [www.greatgrog.co.uk](#), £9.50 at Noel Young at [www.nywines.co.uk](#), £9.75 from [www.surf4wine.co.uk](#), £9.95 at New Zealand House of Wine at [www.nzhouseofwine.com](#) and £9.99 from [www.hedleywright.co.uk](#).

The only other country listed as stocking it by wineseacher.com is – surprise, surprise – New Zealand where you can buy it direct from the winery [www.temata.co.nz](#) at NZ \$14.90 a bottle, not much more than £5 or \$10.

I am also assured by Nicholas Buck of Te Mata that wine is also available in China for 209 yuan from [www.torreschina.com](#) and in Japan from Pony Inc contact [sekido@ponygroup.com](mailto:sekido@ponygroup.com).

But I would urge wine retailers everywhere to give a little thought to Newton's third law. Time for a Gamay revival.

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