

NZ round-up - 2002

24 Nov 2004 by JR

My good friend Bob Campbell MW, New Zealand wine authority and online begetter of www.bobcampbell.co.nz, wrote to me recently because he knows how amused I am by the NZ wine industry's adoption of the term 'lifestyle winery'.

'Jancis,

I thought of you when I stumbled across this quotation written by James Busby in 1831. He must surely be NZ's first 'life-style' winemaker (he already has the distinction of being our first winemaker): "And yet the man who could sit under the shade of his own vine, with his wife and children about him and feel ripe clusters hanging within their reach, in such a climate as this, and not feel the highest enjoyment, is incapable of happiness and does not know what the word means".'

He also passed on the following news:

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Dick Berridge of Duckhorn Vineyards, Napa Valley Merlot pioneer, has bought 500 acres of vineyard land in Central Otago.

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Gary Arcus of Archery Summit, Oregon Pinot Noir specialist, is also planning to spend US\$2-3 million on a vineyard and winery in Central Otago. There is as yet no firm contract.

(Meanwhile, news surfaces of a phylloxera outbreak in this fashionable new area, particularly good for Pinot Noir and Riesling in the south of the South Island. Where vines are ungrafted... This should make both Berridge and Arcus feel quite at home.)

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The 2002 vintage estimate for NZ is 120,000 tonnes, 50 per cent larger than the previous record of 80,100 tonnes and some close to the industry privately estimate the vintage at 130-140,000 tonnes.

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Multi award-winning winemaker Michelle Richardson will leave Villa Maria after the 2002 vintage. Michelle described Villa Maria to Bob as a 'dream company to work for' but simply feels like a new challenge. She does not have a job in her sights but plans to leave after vintage. It is both Bob's and my guess that the offers will flow in. She'd be useful in the northern hemisphere too...