


Top award for winery founder

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Villa Maria Estate founder and managing director Sir George Fistonich has been awarded the International Wine Challenge's lifetime achievement award at the competition's gala dinner at The Hilton, Park Lane in London.

The award, announced on Tuesday, is given to one international wine personality each year for their significant contribution to the international wine industry.

He joins an exclusive group of high-profile figures from the wine world who have previously received this award, most recently including Peter Lehmann, Peter Lehmann Wines (2009), and Miguel Torres, Bodegas Torres (2010).

Sir George founded Villa Maria Estate in Auckland in 1961, and the company remains family owned. In 2009 he was knighted for his services to the New Zealand wine industry.

- The Marlborough Express

Gold for top wine from Mills Reef

Graham Skellern | 27th May 2011



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Mills Reef Winery's premium syrah variety has won a gold medal at the London International Wine Challenge.

Judges were impressed by the Tauranga-based firm's Elspeth Syrah 2009 from the Trust Vineyard in the Gimblett Gravels near Hastings.

They said the wine had cool pepper and mint on the palate, intense with red fruits, spice, acidity and persistence.

The Trust Vineyard is a 4ha block, planted in the perfectly suited varieties of Syrah (82 per cent) and Cabernet Sauvignon (18 per cent) during the winter of 2003 and 2004. Its stony free-draining soils, warm mesoclimate and vineyard design that embraces the French philosophy of intensive planting (6300 vines per hectare) for low vine yields ensures grapes of exceptionally high quality, said winemaker Paddy Preston.

He said the latest success reinforces "our belief in the potential for Gimblett Gravels Syrah to become a global benchmark for this variety".

The vineyard's 2007 vintage of Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon have amassed six 5-star awards, three gold medals, and a coveted Trophy.



Mills Reef Winery. Photo / File.

London fair toasts Hawke's Bay Cape Coast wine

STAFF REPORTERS | 24th May 2011



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Hawke's Bay's Elephant Hill winery has tasted success at the 2011 International Wine Challenge (IWC) scooping gold, silver and bronze medals.

The results were announced at the London International Wine Fair this month and saw Elephant Hill's Central Otago pinot noir scoop a gold, while the locally-crafted 2009 syrah and viognier 2010 took silver medals.

To cap off a toast-worthy entry bronze medals were awarded for the winery's 2010 sauvignon and 200 chardonnay.

At the fair, visitors from more than 100 countries tasted around 25,000 wines from 36 countries.

The winning varieties were tasted and marked by a panel of 400 experienced judges.

For Elephant Hill, the IWC success follows medal wins at the Decanter World Wine Awards 2011 and the Sydney International Wine Competition.

"This is such an extraordinary time," winemaker Steve Skinner said.

"The recognition is definitely a testament to New Zealand's diverse and rich growing climates, and its ability to produce some exceptional wines the world is falling in love with."

Mr Skinner said that the winery, near the Te Awanga coast, hand-picked all its grapes and was 100 per cent accredited by the Sustainable Winegrowers of New Zealand.

Golds for Villa Maria in London

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Tuesday, 24 May, 2011 - 19:28



Four Gold Awards for Villa Maria Estate have been announced at the London International Wine Fair held last week.

Villa Maria was awarded Golds in two competitions: the International Wine Challenge, and the Decanter World Wine Awards. Particularly notable was a Gold medal in both competitions for the Cellar Selection Pinot Noir 2009.

“Over the past 25 years New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc has done wonders for profiling the New Zealand wine industry overseas, but popularity for Pinot Noir has been growing and we’re very pleased to be receiving favour with this great wine. Equally New Zealand Syrah is making its mark on the international stage, whilst Villa Maria’s Chardonnay continues to excel both in New Zealand and overseas,” said Villa Maria Founder and Managing Director, Sir George Fistonich.

The International Wine Challenge boasted more than 10,000 entries this year and is one of the largest blind tasting competitions in the world.

The Decanter World Wine Awards is often referred to as the ultimate ‘terroir competition’ and this year was judged by one-fifth of the world’s Masters of Wine with judges hailing from over 25 countries.

A summary of Villa Maria results:

International Wine Challenge

Gold - Villa Maria Cellar Selection Pinot Noir, 2009

Gold - Villa Maria Cellar Selection Syrah, 2008

Gold - Villa Maria Single Vineyard Taylors Pass Chardonnay 2007

Decanter World Wine Awards

Gold - Villa Maria Cellar Selection Pinot Noir 2009

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Lifetime achievement award for Villa Maria founder

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Contributor:
**Voxy News
Engine**



Wednesday, 7 September, 2011 - 12:50



VILLA MARIA
ESTATE
NEW ZEALAND

Sir George Fistonich, Owner and Managing Director of Villa Maria Estate, has just received the International Wine Challenge's highest honour at the glittering awards dinner where he accepted the esteemed Lifetime Achievement Award.

Sir George joins an exclusive group of high profile figures from the wine world who have previously received this award, most recently including Peter Lehmann, Peter Lehmann Wines (2009) and Miguel Torres, Bodegas Torres (2010).

Sir George Fistonich founded Villa Maria Estate in Auckland in 1961. With vision and determination he has steered the company to a position where it has become New Zealand's leading wine award winner, both locally and overseas. A pioneering figure in the New Zealand wine industry, Sir George has achieved many firsts, and his outstanding contributions were honoured in 2009 when he was knighted for his services to the New Zealand wine industry. Still entirely family-owned Villa Maria Estate is dedicated to the pursuit of making quality New Zealand wines, enjoyed by wine drinkers around the world.

Sir George commented, "I am incredibly honoured to accept this award. It is very humbling to be recognised by the wine industry for Villa Maria's achievements. We've worked hard promoting our premium New Zealand wines to the world so it's a great feeling to be among such an elite group of wine industry icons. I founded Villa Maria Estate nearly fifty years ago and feel very lucky to be part of an exciting and stimulating industry. It is the effort and dedication of the fantastic teams I have worked with, both past and present, that make Villa Maria and the wines that we produce the success that they are and I would like to thank every one of them for their commitment and passion."

The International Wine Challenge Awards are the world's most prestigious and influential wine awards. The 2011 ceremony took place at The Hilton, Park Lane. The judging panel, chaired by Tim Atkin MW, Oz Clarke, Charles Metcalfe, Sam Harrop MW & Derek Smedley MW, chose to honour Sir George Fistonich with this accolade, which is bestowed annually on one senior industry leader for significant contributions to the wine industry internationally.