

## New Zealand wine outshines EU favourites

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British consumers are creating record demand for quality New Zealand wine, retailers report, as a result of an unprecedented harvest.

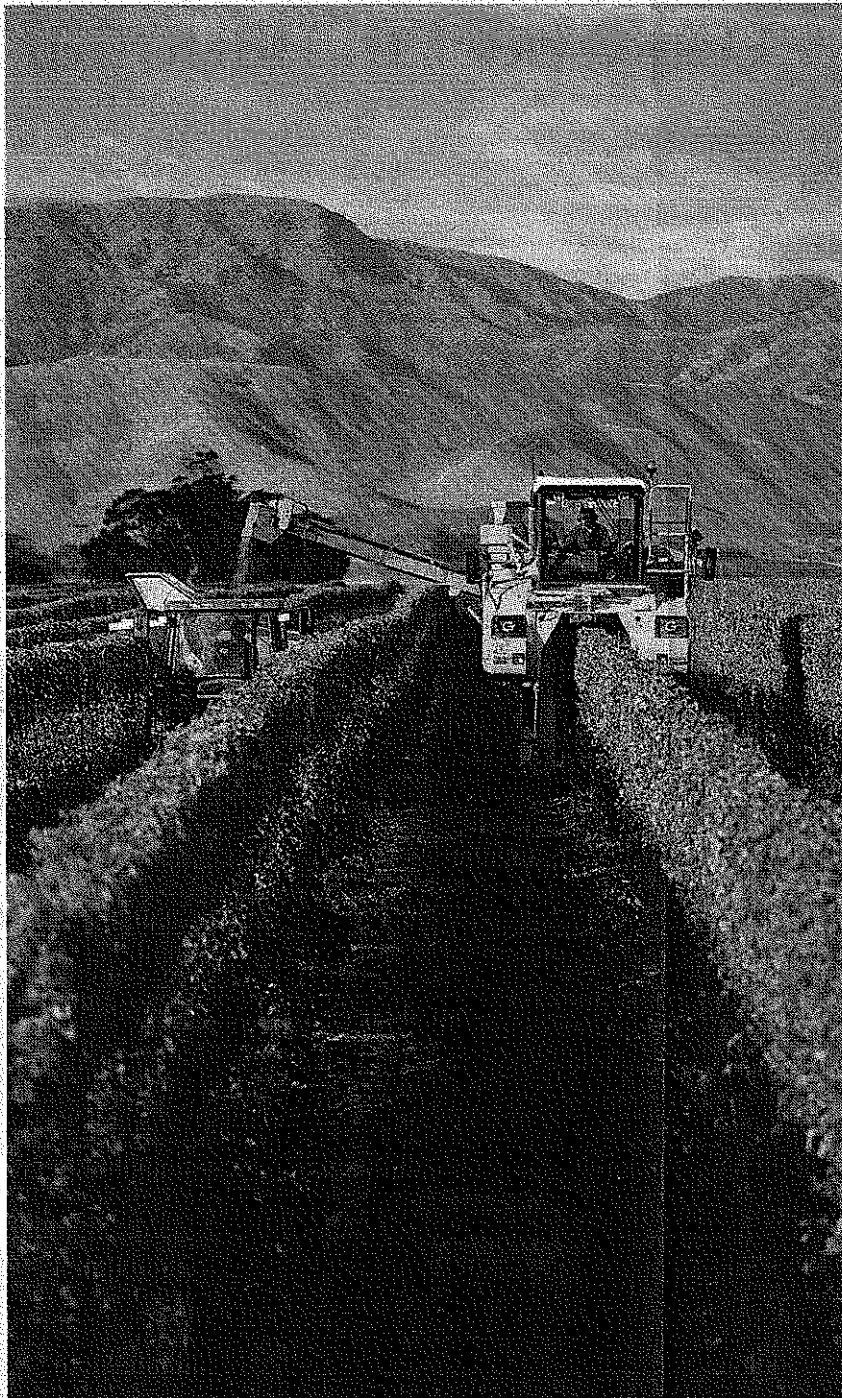
With the largest ever volumes available to UK retailers at substantially lower prices, the greater value for money of New Zealand wines has created a stir in the market. In contrast the strength of the euro has made traditionally favourite wines from France, Italy, Spain and Germany more expensive.

New figures from researchers AC Nielsen show that New Zealand wines are selling more than the market average - an exception to the decline most countries are facing during the harsh economic climate. While UK volume growth of New Zealand wines over the last year was already strong at 11.5%, in the last 12 weeks sales have rocketed by 42%, the data shows.

An example is New Zealand sauvignon blanc. It has become Tesco's bestselling wine with sales in the last fortnight up 370% compared with the same period last year.

Tesco wine category manager Andrew Carpenter said: "New Zealand sauvignon blanc is more accessible than ever before and is currently out performing long established favourites such as French chablis and Australian chardonnay.

The development of New Zealand's wine production from its early days in the 1970s has gathered at an astonishing rate. The number of wineries has rapidly increased and in 2008 the country crushed 285,000 tonnes of grapes - up 39% on 2007. Quality is also increasing as vines mature and winemaking methods are refined.



New Zealand vineyards have produced a record harvest Photograph: Alamy