

PRESS RELEASE
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WINE MARLBOROUGH IS LOOKING FOR THE REGION'S TOP YOUNG VITICULTURIST

- **Proud tradition of producing country's best continues this year**
- **All viticulturists under the age of 30 with three years experience can enter**

Marlborough is renowned for producing New Zealand's most famous wine. But accompanying Sauvignon Blanc, the region is also renowned for producing some of New Zealand's most talented young viticulturists. Now the local wine industry is gearing up to find the best of the best in the 2009 Young Viticulturist Marlborough.

The annual competition where young men and women test themselves in all forms of viticulture will be held in Marlborough on July 25.

It is the fourth year the Young Viticulturist has been held and organisers Wine Marlborough are hoping for a strong contingent of competitors. Competitors are not required to be working in Marlborough alone, but competitors are welcome from Nelson, Waipara or Central Otago.

To compete, individuals must be under the age of 30, be currently working within the viticultural industry and have at least three years experience.

Wine Marlborough Marketing Manager Marcus Pickens says the many practical skills viticulturists have gained in the field, will be put to the test at the day-long event.

"There is an array of activities the competitors will have to undertake. Some are practical based, while others are more theoretical. Then there is a general knowledge section and a prepared speech on a topic given in advance. Our previous contestants speak highly of the benefits to them in testing themselves against their peers"

For the first time the event will culminate in a formal dinner to be held at Wither Hills, where the competitors will deliver their prepared speech to the guests as well as take part in a quiz round. The overall winner will go on to represent Marlborough at the upcoming New Zealand Young Viticulturist at the Romeo Bragato conference in August.

Mr Pickens says this region has a strong core of young people involved in the wine industry. The skills learnt here are obviously impressive given the success of past competitors.

"At the last three New Zealand Young Viticulturist competitions, Marlborough has produced two winners. We are hoping to emulate that again this year."

Entries for the competition will open on Monday 25 May and entry forms will be available online at www.wine-marlborough.co.nz, or by contacting the Wine Marlborough office, phone 03 577 9299.

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