

Press Release

July 27, 2009

Stuart Dudley Is Marlborough's Young Viticulturist of the Year

- **South American Wine Industry Inspires Winner**
- **From Bio Chemistry and Genetics to Viticulture**

26-year-old Stuart Dudley, a viticulturist for Delegat's Grower Division is the grand winner of this year's Young Viticulturist Marlborough competition in association with Ormond Nurseries.

He was one of eight competitors taking part in the annual event, which attracted viticulturists from Waipara, Nelson and Marlborough. It was his first time in the competition, having only moved into the viticultural field two and a half years ago.

With a degree from Otago University in Genetics and Bio Chemistry, Stuart originally planned a career in research, but was lured to the world of wine growing after travelling overseas.

"When I graduated from University I was unsure about moving into the world of research straight away, so I took a few years off to travel. I went to South America and saw a little bit of their wine industry. It appealed to me and when I returned home I went back to Lincoln, initially to do a wine making course. Within a short time I decided that wasn't the area for me, and the appeal of working outside was greater – which is how I ended up doing the viticulture diploma."

Stuart has been working for Delegat's Oyster Bay since the beginning of 2006, where his role has been to liaise between growers and the company, managing yields, intake, quality and trial work.

The eight competitors were put through a range of tasks during the daylong event, including budgeting, identifying pests and diseases, pruning and trellising, machinery safety and use, and an industry panel interview.

The final stages of the competition took place at a formal dinner where all the competitors had to deliver a three minute speech on How to Improve Grower Winery Relationships, followed by a general knowledge quiz.

Stuart will now go on to represent the Top of the South at the upcoming Markhams National Young Viticulturist of the Year competition, at the Romeo Bragato Conference in Hawkes Bay next month.

Second place went to one of Stuart's compatriots from Delegat's, Nick Wright, while third place went to Simon Clark who manages his family vineyard, Boreham Wood.

The Young Viticulturist Marlborough Competition in association with Ormond Nurseries was proudly supported by Waterforce, Onsite Education, Markhams, Gascoigne Wicks, Biomin, Orchard Rite and naming rights sponsor Ormond Nurseries.

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