



Felton Road winery, Bannockburn.

PHOTO: SUPPLIED

Felton Road keeps 'winery of year' title



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I'm delighted to report that the winner of the 2025 Real Review New Zealand Winery of the Year is Felton Road Wines from Bannockburn in Central Otago.

Felton Road Wines has been in the top 10 every year since the inception of the award (its lowest placing was sixth) and becomes the first winery to be a back-to-back winner as they also took out top spot last year. Congratulations to all the team.

The Australasian online wine review platform, The Real Review, boasts 10 staff across four countries with the New Zealand arm now headed by Stephen Wong MW, assisted by Jane Skilton MW and Dr Jo Burzynska. They annually publish a classification of both Australian and New Zealand wineries and their wines, distilled from the more than 10,000 wines that they taste and review each year.

In 2018, they founded their Winery of the Year Award and last week published their 2025 winners.

The judging criteria not only includes the outright quality of

2022 Astrolabe Sleepers Vineyard Kekerengu Coast Albarino

Price RRP \$30
Rating Very Good to Excellent

Perfumed nose, gum, honey, white flowers florality, wisps of citrus and salinity, mango and marmalade with air. The nose hints at something fatter but the palate travels a lighter, cooler, crisper path mirroring that salinity on the nose, adding a seasoning of spice and creaminess while grilled nuts/ almond join later. The nose says hedonism, the palate calls out for food.

www.astrolabewines.co.nz



2024 Riverby Estate Single Vineyard Marlborough Grüner Veltliner

Price RRP \$24
Rating Excellent

Engaging and floral, notes of lime zest and ground pepper are joined by peach and spice aspects, a touch of lanolin later. Fruit sweetness leads with accents of pineapple, pear and peach lifted by lime, ripe yet dry. The texture is a star here, silky, creamy, a lovely mouthfeel while the flavours carry long on the finish. Lots of interest, this just really works.

www.riverbyestate.com



2024 Trinity Hill Gimblett Gravels Marsanne Roussanne

Price RRP \$39.99
Rating Excellent

A peppery, quality, dry honey, initially vinous, more about the whole, but really fleshes out with air adding white flower florals, jasmine, seasoned with pepper. The fatness and richness in the mouth is matched by freshness, fruit pastille notes contrasted by a little bittersweet quality, with a wonderfully long, dry close. Fascinatingly different, inherently food-friendly.

www.trinityhill.com



a given wine over the preceding year, but also the winery's track record over 10 years or more, the wine's ageing potential and market performance, stewardship of their land and more.

This year, The Real Review initiated a new set of awards recognising best sparkling, white, red, rose and sweet wines of the year along with best vigneron and rising star winemaker/s categories and I'm also delighted to report that Central Otago pulled off a

trifecta of wins.

The trophy for sparkling wine of the year went to Quartz Reef for their 2017 Quartz Reef blanc de blancs methode traditionnelle brut. The trophy for white wine of the year went to Prophet's Rock for their 2022 Prophet's Rock cuvee aux antipodes blanc, while the trophy for red wine of the year was awarded to Doctors Flat for their 2021 Doctors Flat pinot noir.

It is always exciting to see Central Otago wineries making

the news, and I can say from experience that these are three superlative wines.

Best rose went to Te Whare Ra for their 2023 Te Whare Ra S.V 5182 rose, while the sweet wine category went to Astrolabe for their 2022 Astrolabe Wrekin Vineyard late harvest chenin blanc. The vigneron award went to Anna and Jason Flowerday of Te Whare Ra, while the rising star award went to Simon Sharpe and Lauren Keenan of A Thousand Gods.