



## GIMBLETT GRAVELS WINEGROWERS ASSOCIATION

Hastings, Thursday, 23 October 2008

**Media Information: MasterClass tasting Bordeaux & Gimblett Gravels**

### Taupo Surprise!

*Fledgling New Zealand winegrowing district Gimblett Gravels is recognised as a serious challenge to some of the world's finest wines.*

A very exclusive event took place in Taupo this past Saturday. A selection of six New Zealand produced 'off the shelf' wines from the tiny 800ha Gimblett Gravels wine-growing district in the Hawke's Bay were tested against six very highly-rated wines from the celebrated Bordeaux region in France.

The Bordeaux selection was anything but ordinary. It included names like Lafite Rothschild and Haut-Brion, red wines synonymous with class, quality and elegance amongst the world's crème de la crème. A single vintage was chosen for the tasting – 2005 is reputed as the best in a decade for the Bordeaux region.

At the head of the MasterClass tasting, two of the world's most foremost palates and wine critics; Elin McCoy and James Halliday. Both impartial: One from Australia, one from the USA.

James Halliday stated that the idea for the tasting was both audacious and courageous. For the Gimblett Gravels winemakers it had long been an aspiration to be measured in the same context as the best of Bordeaux.

What occurred in the subterranean tasting room of Taupo lakefront wine merchants Scenic Cellars on Saturday October 18<sup>th</sup> 2008 was nothing short of astounding, and is likely to have a profound effect on the future of the New Zealand wine industry:

**Four of the top six wines, including the judging team's first preference were from Gimblett Gravels.**

<b>Rank</b>	<b>Wines – all 2005 Vintage</b>	<b>Provenance</b>
1	<i>Blake Family Vineyards "Redd Gravels"</i>	<i>Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand</i>
2	<i>Chateau Lafite-Rothschild</i>	<i>Pauillac, Bordeaux, France</i>
3	<i>Sacred Hill "Helmsman"</i>	<i>Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand</i>
4	<i>Mills Reef "Elspeth" Cabernet Sauvignon</i>	<i>Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand</i>
5	<i>Chateau Mouton-Rothschild</i>	<i>Pauillac, Bordeaux, France</i>
6	<i>Trinity Hill "The Gimblett"</i>	<i>Gimblett Gravels, Hawke's Bay, New Zealand</i>

Gimblett Gravels is found alongside Highway 50 to the south of Hastings, and is a tiny 800ha shared between more than 30 vineyards on land that was dismissed as 'miserable and useless' by local sheep farmers. In less than quarter of a century, this tiny district has developed into a world-beater, renowned for its Bordeaux style varieties and the sky rocketing popularity of its Syrah.

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