

April 2010

Hollywood Royalty pays Homage to NZ Syrah

When Steven Spielberg declared his love for the multi-award winning 2006 Homage Syrah, the team at Trinity Hill winery was understandably excited. But when the request came through from Spielberg himself to purchase a large quantity of the 2007 vintage, Trinity Hill's executive director John Hancock couldn't contain his pride. "Steven had tasted the 06 when he was in NZ last year making the first Tintin movie with Peter Jackson" says John, "they had it on set apparently. When he was back in States had his people scour US for all he could find. He then pre-ordered 5 cases of the 07 from his supplier in Southern California – hopefully he'll share some with his friends in high places" John laughs.

This news comes hot off the back of John learning that the Homage 2007 had scooped the coveted Trophy for Champion Syrah at New Zealand's prestigious Royal Easter Show, the latest in a string of impressive accolades awarded to this wine since its inception in 2002. Grown in the now world-famous stony, riverbed soils of Hawke's Bay's Gimblett Gravels winegrowing region, the reputation of the Homage Syrah is well known in New Zealand and is spreading across the globe as the world looks to New Zealand as the seat of a new wave in exceptionally high quality red wines.

"Homage is the pinnacle of winemaking at Trinity Hill. It's a wine whose quality and integrity we protect ferociously. If the year is not good enough then (to the benefit of our lower tier Syrah's), we simply will not bottle Homage" says John. This dedication to preserving the level of quality drinkers expect in Homage is unwavering, and no compromise will ever occur.

When a new vintage of Homage Syrah is released demand is immediate and sales fierce. Industry enthusiasts continue to question why Trinity Hill still chose to enter the wine into competitions, but John is adamant he'll keep doing it. "Of course, to put this wine into any competition carries a certain amount of risk, which is why many of our competitors simply won't enter their prestige wines into the shows" he says. "However we believe that wine shows are an integral part of our quality enhancement program, so we'll continue to put Homage up for independent assessment".

The Homage (along with other premium Trinity Hill wines) will also be assessed by the world's most influential wine critic Robert Parker at Parker In Asia from the 1st – 3rd of May. Trinity Hill is one of only 100 international wineries invited to Singapore to participate in what will be a groundbreaking event that will no doubt increase their exposure to the growing sophistication to the Asian wine market. Parker rarely accepts invitations for public or trade appearances, and it is unlikely he'll visit this part of the world again, so John is relishing the opportunity to show him just what the Gimblett Gravels region is capable of.

2009 harvest is now 80% in and John's impressed with what has been harvested so far. According to him the Syrah harvest isn't far away and it's looking very, very good – so it's exciting stuff for 2010. "We are very proud" says John, "that Homage continues to show what it can do as New Zealand's most widely internationally recognized Syrah, or perhaps NZ's most recognized red wine".

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