

# IWSC – a success story

**Tessa Nicholson**

In the past three years, New Zealand wines have had one of the highest success rates of any country at the prestigious International Wine and Spirits Competition (IWSC). New Zealand ambassador for the competition, Jo Burzynska, is hoping we can replicate those past results in 2017.

Entries are now open, with the deadline date of August 28 for entries and samples to be received in the UK, looming.

The IWSC has been a part of the international wine competition calendar since 1969. While New Zealand hasn't been represented over all those years, in the more recent ones it has done remarkably well. What's more, the varietal range gaining

accolades and more importantly trophies has been vast.

Burzynska says since 2013 the medal percentage of New Zealand has been 85 percent or higher every year.

"That means 85 percent or more of New Zealand wines entered into the competition have gained a medal. Putting that into perspective, this is not just a turn up and if you are okay you get a medal kind of competition. To get even a bronze, the wines need to be offering something special."

In comparison, the New Zealand 85 percent or more medal percentage is above the rest of the competition. In 2016 the total average of medals was 79 percent for the competition. In 2015 it was 76 percent.

## KEY DATES

**Entries are open now – details at [www.iwsc.net](http://www.iwsc.net).**

Entries close and samples must be received in the UK by August 28

IWSC, working with logistics partner Hellman, will send a consolidated air freight shipment with entries – the deadline for being included is August 14.

**Awards dinner – Nov 15 – Guild Hall, London**

"So New Zealand is always punching above its weight," Burzynska says.

And it is not only our flagship wine Sauvignon Blanc that has stood out. Over recent years there has been a vast range of varieties taking out the top product trophies. (These are only awarded to noble grape varieties). In the past

six years, New Zealand has won at least one top trophy, every year.

Last year we won the top Sauvignon Blanc as well as the top Pinot Noir trophies. In 2015, we won the Sauvignon Blanc trophy. In 2014, we won the Riesling, Pinot Noir and Single Vineyard White Wine trophies. And in 2013, it was three trophies again, for

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Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir.

"So there have been some really, really strong wins for New Zealand."

In terms of the competition judging, the IWSC is very different to others. Owning their own premises, Burzynska says they are able to carry out their judging over a seven-month period. Which means the wines can be judged as they hit the market, rather than wines from New Zealand having to wait until the year after release to be entered.

"Historically the dates of many Northern Hemisphere competitions don't work very well for New Zealand wines. Whereas with the IWSC there has been a move to undertake all

the Southern Hemisphere judging in the latter part of the cycle. As New Zealand is the last country in the world to harvest its

grapes, it has the last position in the competition. This enables the new, freshest vintages to be judged." It also allows any winning wineries a chance to make the most of those wins, while the wine is still available.

There is one other major component that makes the IWSC stand out and that is the chemical analysis of all the winning wines. Burzynska says having a fingerprint of the winning wine batch, ensures there are no show wines or blends going into the competition, providing consumers with an assurance that if they purchase a winning wine, it is in fact the exact wine that won the award, medal or trophy.

Judging of the New Zealand wines will take place early September, with the initial results due out later that month. The final product and country trophies won't be announced until the awards dinner, to be held at the Guild Hall in the city of London on November 15. ■

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IWSC New Zealand ambassador, Jo Burzynska.  
PHOTO KURT LANGER.

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