



23rd
edition
of the
longest
serving
wine
guide

SCHUBERT

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a guide
to
new zealand
wine
2002

Kai Schubert. We are told. Schubert Wines Ltd is 100% owned by Kai. He is assisted by partner Marion Deimling and Hiroyuki Kusuda from Japan, both of whom were graduates with Kai at the University of Applied Science (Viticulture and Oenology) at Geisenheim, Germany. Some main-vineyard Pinot Noir was produced in 2001. Bordeaux grapes were bought in from Hawkes Bay to get the label going from 1999.

Schubert Cabernet Franc Hawkes Bay 1999 **Dry red \$70**
Bold and rich, a big dark red with lots of life and fruit strength. Grapes bought off Gimblett Gravels, a wonderful wine to watch unfold and expand into 2003. Very promising.

Schubert Chardonnay Hawkes Bay 2000 **Dry white \$28**
Gimblett Road fruit, half oak fermented, half stainless steel. It feels like lots of leesy characters add to a nice body and texture; this is quite impressive. Just a little young, a wine with class and weight to unfold further through 2002.

Schubert Dolce 1999 **Sweet white \$26 375ml**
Quite a luscious blend of unspecified varieties, maybe Muller Thurgau from the home block is a base but the wine is generous, not feeling very influenced by botrytis but lots of apricot and marmalade characters. Very much ready for 2002, hearty mature and satisfying dessert white.

Schubert Sauvignon Blanc Hawkes Bay 2000 **Dryish white \$22**
Fairly solid Sauvignon, a year older and past the crisp and fresh stage, but a pretty determined effort at keeping a decent Sauvignon tone in a serious style.

Schubert Syrah Hawkes Bay 1999 **Dry red \$45**
A blend of Hawkes Bay (Gimblett Gravels) and Martinborough grapes. ripe and rich, still a little under-done for some big flavours bulldozing around but there is a big wine here waiting to get out. It may be late 2002 before it becomes user-friendly but the promise is there.

Schubert Tribianco 2000 **Dryish white \$22**
What a blend, partly oak fermented! Tri (three) bianco (white) Muller Thurgau, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris from Wairarapa and Hawkes Bay. With a hint of gas, it's a real aperitif! Different and interesting for sure. For all the lightness and things, I can't get past the fairly austere, over-serious style which should have been light and fun. Maybe overcooked, but will work for some people with food. Clean, no hurry, yet probably best from now on.

Wellington-Wairarapa (550 hectares, 43 winemaker licences)

The catchment area for Wellington may be centred around Wairarapa, over the hills north of Wellington city. Wairarapa includes sub-regions like East Taratahi, Martinborough and Gladstone. Even the city of Masterton has vineyards within a few kilometres of its centre. But also included in 'Wellington' are some plantings up the west coast from Paraparaumu to Otaki.

Next comes 'East Taratahi' - based closer to Masterton and needing a better and more commercial name than this, but the home of several committed Pinot Noir growers who feel this may be close to the centre of the earth for Pinot Noir. There are German growers here who have searched the world for the right site.