



Historic Waipara vicarage wins inaugural wine tourism award

An historic Waipara vicarage which offers guests accommodation among the vineyards of the Waipara wine valley has won a Christchurch | South Island Best of Wine Tourism Award.

The Old Glenmark Vicarage was named today as one of four winners in the inaugural awards run by the prestigious Great Wine Capitals Global Network.

The awards honour outstanding wineries and other tourism related businesses in the Network's member cities and regions. Christchurch | South Island, which includes the Waipara Valley, Canterbury, Marlborough, Nelson and Central Otago wine regions, was welcomed as the newest member of the Network in November 2009.

The Old Glenmark Vicarage, built in 1907, won the accommodation section of the awards. The vicarage is sited on the grounds of a boutique winery and offers its guests beautiful accommodation and an enticing insight into the world of wine-making.

Dr Joanna Fountain, a senior lecturer in tourism at Lincoln University and one of the judges for the awards, said the two properties the judges had to assess in the accommodation category were both of a very high standard but offering very different experiences.

"The Old Glenmark Vicarage was chosen as the winner because of their unique and memorable offering, and because of their close proximity and networks with cellar doors and restaurants within the area. Their involvement in Greening Waipara and plans to establish a cycle trail in the area, meant it was a place we felt we could strongly recommend as a base for those seeking a wine tourism experience in the region," Dr Fountain said.

Congratulating the Old Glenmark Vicarage on its award, Christchurch & Canterbury Tourism chief executive Ian Hay praised the owners, Damian and Janette MacFarlane, for their enthusiasm and commitment to both the wine and tourism industries.

"They offer visitors a fantastic experience and an intimate insight into Canterbury's wine-making industry and as such are fantastic ambassadors both for our wine industry and our region," Mr Hay said. "The service and facilities they offer are first-class and they are deserving recipients of this inaugural award."

The Old Glenmark Vicarage, along with the other award recipients, will now go on to compete in the Network's international awards. The international winners will be announced at a gala dinner during the Great Wine Capital Global Network's AGM and international wine conference, Wine Discovery NZ 2010, which is being held in Christchurch from October 31 to November 4. They will receive a Best of Wine Tourism trophy and plaque, as well as international recognition through the Great Wine Capitals Global Network.

Background:

- The Great Wine Capitals (GWC) Global Network (www.greatwinecapitals.com) was founded in Bordeaux, France 10 years ago with a goal to bring together the world's most prestigious wine regions to enhance their economic, education, and tourism projects.
- Until last year, there were eight members, including; Bilbao/Rioja (Spain), Bordeaux (France), Cape Town (South Africa), Florence (Italy), Mainz (Germany), Mendoza (Argentina), Porto (Portugal) and San Francisco/Napa Valley (USA).
- Members of the Network engage in sub activities including: running international best of wine tourism awards, funding annual international student grants and maintaining a growing database of international wine writers and connoisseurs.
- The Network brings together cities that are gateways to internationally-renowned wine regions, for example San Francisco – gateway to the renowned wine region of Napa Valley.
- Only one city per country can be accepted into the Network, and that city must represent an internationally-recognised wine region, have an international airport and have an academic institution that specialises in wine science.
- In early 2009, the Christchurch City Council (CCC), in conjunction with Canterbury Development Corporation (CDC) and Christchurch and Canterbury Tourism (CCT), consulted with the five South Island wine regions and an application was submitted shortly after in June 2009.
- Following a visit from representatives of the global Network, Christchurch | South Island officially became the ninth GWC of the world in October 2009.
- Our wine industry is growing; New Zealand had 585 wineries in 2008, an increase from 2003 of 39 percent.
- The wine industry is an important contributor to the New Zealand economy and in 2008 it was worth \$798 million. However, there is room for growth within Christchurch and the South Island's wine industry and this network will look to support that growth.
- The Network provides an additional tool for South Island wine regions to market their products and improve sales. This will provide economic benefits across the whole of the South Island.
- The Christchurch City Council is the overall provider and manager for the Christchurch | South Island GWC, with its key responsibility to manage the brand development, marketing, communications and events.
- Four committees make up the Christchurch | South Island GWC, including: communications (led by CCC), business development (led by CDC), tourism (led by CCT) and education (led by Lincoln University). Within each of these committees is representation from each of the five South Island wine regions and a collaborative approach is taken when engaging in Network activity.