



ROCKBURN

CENTRAL OTAGO

Press Release

November 4, 2002

HAY'S LAKE BECOMES ROCKBURN WINES AS COMPANY EXPANDS LOCAL AND EXPORT MARKETS

Central Otago wine company, *Hay's Lake* has changed the name of its winery and brand to *Rockburn* to more accurately reflect the geographic spread of its three vineyards.

Hay's Lake vineyard was established in 1991 by Dunedin cardio thoracic surgeon, Dick Bunton, on a three hectare hobby block on the shores of Lake Hayes, probably Central Otago's most scenic vineyard. However, over the past decade the company has expanded its vineyards to include eight hectares on the Gibbston Back Road site, and 33 hectares at their Lowburn Vineyard, one of the largest vineyards in Central Otago.

Hay's Lake's reputation became established with the quality of its Pinot Noir – its first vintage in 1998 won a Gold Medal at the Air New Zealand Wine awards. The Lake Hayes site, nestled on the 45th parallel has a climate similar to Burgundy, the great Pinot Noir producing region of the world.

The company is expanding its export markets and Dick Bunton said the company wanted a new name which strongly symbolised its Central Otago location. It also wanted a generic name to cover all its vineyards.

"There are lots of sub regions which are known for their specific flavours and nuances, whereas a specific geographic name (like *Hay's Lake*) ties you to one region," said Mr Bunton.

The four directors of *Hay's Lake* – the three other directors are Paul Halford and Chris James from Auckland and Michelle Johnston of Dunedin – suggested up a range of names which they believed conveyed the quality and characteristics of the company and its wines. Several focus groups tested these names and arrived at the name, *Rockburn*.

Rockburn was the final choice, says Mr Bunton because it represented the landscape of Central Otago, so beloved by artist Grahame Sydney and full of rocky outcrops and hundreds of small streams, or burns.

Said Dick Brunton: “Interestingly, everyone liked the new name, even people from outside Otago – it is a strong regional name.”

The new *Rockburn* wine labels are simple, but distinctive. They have a buff background and feature a top border of gold foil with an etched white mountain range horizon. The different varieties, such as Pinot Noir, and Sauvignon Blanc are subtly colour coded on the labels.

Dick Bunton has been passionate about wine since he was a medical student at the University of Otago. He belongs to a wine club at Dunedin Hospital and to the Wine Federation of Otago, a group of 12 who have monthly tastings of local and imported wines. Like most people the thought of having a house surrounded by grapes in an idyllic setting was a major reason for his investment at Lake Hayes.

He planted grapes first as a hobby, but the wines right from the beginning proved to be good vintages. Behind the success of *Hay's Lake* wines are the company's winemaker, Rudi Bauer, and Greg Hay, the viticulturist.

So seductive is the wine industry that Dick Bunton and his partners soon bought a further eight hectares of land in the Gibbston Valley. The newer vineyards are planted in a mixture of grape varieties. Gibbston Back Road is an eight hectare mix of Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc. Central Otago is home to a number of celebrities who enjoy the privacy and solitude of the area and the Gibbston Property is in the same region as vineyards owned by film star Sam Neil, producer Roger Donaldson and Henry van Asch.

Lowburn, in a hot arid landscape, has most of its 33 hectares already planted in Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling and Gewurtztraminer. It is one of Central Otago's largest vineyards.

Pinot Noir is still the company's major variety by volume and represents nearly 70% of current plantings. Other varieties grown are Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Gris, Sauvignon Blanc and to a lesser extent, Gewurtztraminer.

Unusually for a wine company, *Rockburn* owns all its properties, which amount to 44 hectares. Over the next two vintages all the vineyards will be producing around 25,000 cases a year.

Dick Bunton says *Rockburn* is comfortable with its current size and position. However, the company does not discount future expansion and acquisition as it can see enormous opportunities for growth in international market for the whole Central Otago wine region. The company's immediate plan is to continue to develop its export markets, targeting the United Kingdom, the United States, and Australia.

Dick Bunton says *Rockburn* definitely went into wine production at the right time and the directors have been able to plan carefully the progressive growth of the company.

Says Dick Bunton: "There is tremendous development going on in Central Otago and we are confident that our vineyards will continue to be successful in terms of providing for the growing demand for premium wine".

He said that although the company has a loyal following within New Zealand, the company wanted to change its name and brands before it developed significant export markets.

Says Mr Bunton: "We are not reinventing ourselves but repositioning ourselves for the next decade. We wanted a strong name which represented our three main vineyards and their sub regional differences. We also want to promote ourselves as a wine company which is genuinely Central Otago and New Zealand in origin."

ENDS

MEDALS WON BY ROCKBURN WINES (AS HAY'S LAKE):

1998 Pinot Noir

- 1999 Liquorland Royal Easter Wine Show - Bronze Medal

1999 Pinot Noir

- New Zealand Wine Society Royal Easter Wine Show - Gold Medal

1999 Sauvignon Blanc

- New Zealand Wine Society Royal Easter Wine Show - Bronze Medal

1999 Chardonnay

- Air New Zealand Wine Awards 2000- Bronze Medal

2000 Sauvignon Blanc

- Air New Zealand Wine Awards - Bronze Medal

2000 Chardonnay

- New Zealand Wine Society Royal Easter Wine Show - Silver Medal
- Air New Zealand Wine Awards - Bronze Medal
- Romeo Bragato 2001 Wine Awards - Silver Medal

2001 Sauvignon Blanc

- Air New Zealand Wine Awards - Silver Medal
- Cuisine Magazine - Five Star

2001 Pinot Gris

- New Zealand Wine Society Royal Easter Wine Show - Silver Medal
- Air New Zealand Wine Awards - Silver Medal

2001 Pinot Noir

- Bragato Wine Awards 2002 - Gold Medal

2001 Chardonnay

- Bragato Wine Awards 2002 - Bronze Medal

The Auckland distributor for Rockburn Wines is La Barrique, 31 Normandy Rd, Mt Eden Ph: (09) 638 5000. South Island distribution is through Rockburn Wines Ph: (03) 489 1008.

Suggested retail prices are as follows:

2001 Pinot Noir	\$35.00
2002 Sauvignon Blanc	\$23.00
2002 Pinot Gris	\$24.00
2002 Riesling	\$24.00

Website: www.rockburn.co.nz

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

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