



The Artisan Winegrowers of Central Otago

Press Release

In a move that signals the changing and evolving climate of the New Zealand wine industry, six modest growers from Central Otago – the eponymous “Artisans” – have banded together and formed their own group under a unified flag. The Artisan Winegrowers of Central Otago (AWCO) comprise Auburn Wines, Ellero, Georgetown Vineyard, Lindis River, Lowburn Ferry and TOSQ; some familiar names, and some that may have escaped under the radar until now. Cumulative production for all members of the group barely scratches five thousand cases, each with their own point of difference and specialisation.

AWCO aspires to a greater promotion, awareness and appreciation for truly artisan wines; the same people that own the brands are the same people working in the vineyard, crafting the wine and selling the product. The organization will also serve as a collaborative sales and marketing team, combining resources to achieve a critical mass that can more effectively tackle domestic and offshore markets.

The announcement and establishment of AWCO follows a growing market trend for greater transparency, individuality and integrity of wine brands, as demanded by consumers moving away from corporate multi-nationals and mass produced “plonk”. There is a tangible shift towards limited production, higher quality wines that offer excellent value and evoke an experience that tells of a place, a person and a story.

“It’s very exciting for us to be launching this group and to be surrounded by such warm, humble and giving people” said inaugural chairman Max Marriott of Auburn Wines. “Being very small and super quality focused, the needs of modest brands such as ours are different from the blueprint that governs the rest of the industry. Far from replacing existing industry bodies, we see this banding together as a way of boosting our profile and supporting each other in addition to the various associations that we contribute and draw from.”

Dragging these growers away from their vineyards and craft is hard enough, but they have promised to find a mutually convenient time to tour the country, affording people an opportunity to meet the people behind the wines and share in their stories, their trials and tribulations, and their triumphs. Check back at the website regularly for details of upcoming events, dinners and tastings. In the meantime, enquiries can be made to artisans@awco.org.nz.

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