

## **FIANO - NZ FIRST!**

April 7, 2014, by Joelle Thomson

This year Hawke's Bay winemaker Jenny Dobson became the first New Zealand winemaker to commercially bottle a wine made from the little known Italian white grape, Fiano.

Dobson made this wine with grapes grown on the Bush Hawke Vineyard in the Bay, owned by Bryce and Adrienne Campbell, who sourced the cuttings from Riversun Nursery in Gisborne; New Zealand's largest vine nursery, which has an exclusive licence agreement with ENTAV-INRA in France.

The 2013 Bush Hawke Fiano was released in December 2013, sealed with a screwcap and retails for approximately \$25: the RRP.

Fiano is a traditional white grape variety of the Campania region in southern Italy, best known under its guise as Fiano di Avellino, made with grapes grown in the volcanic soils of Avellino, east of Naples.

Dobson says the 2013 vintage was a small crop. She also encountered significant hen and chicken issues with bunches, so there was an unevenness of growth and ripening.

"I had also been warned by a friend who is experimenting with Fiano in Rutherglen to watch out for excessive acidity and we picked by hand with brix of 22.7."

Dobson says she first heard of the Fiano grape in 2006 when it was mentioned to her by Simon Ward, who was working at Te Awa at the time. "In 2009 Bryce and Adrienne Campbell of Bush Hawke vineyard in Ngatarawa Road asked what I thought they should plant on a small piece of land that was fallow in their vineyard, so I suggested the volcanic soils and microclimate could be suitable for Fiano," says Dobson, who was delighted when they told her later that Fiano was in the ground.

"From my research and tasting of Fiano, I wanted to express the rich textural quality of the grape along with the lifted floral notes of the variety, so I selected a yeast that I knew highlighted aromatics."

She fermented it in small stainless-steel barrels without malolactic fermentation, using only bentonite for protein stability. The wine was then bottled at Unison Vineyard's new bottling line and hand labelled by Adrienne and Bryce Campbell.

The 2013 Bush Hawke Vineyard Fiano is available for purchase at the Red Triangle cellar door, 217 Ngatarawa Road in Hawke's Bay for \$25 a bottle. It is listed by the glass at the Emporium Eatery and Bar in the Masonic Hotel in Napier.