

THE DISCERNING DRINKER

Andrew Neather



CHRISTCHURCH lies in ruins, though winemakers to the west, in New Zealand's Canterbury region, have been spared. One told Decanter magazine this week: "The whole place was swaying but we're fine." You could send Kiwi friends a sympathetic text, as David Cameron did to PM John Key, but a more sincere statement of solidarity is surely to buy their wine. Not a lot from Canterbury is available here, but there are plenty of fine choices from other regions.

Vidal Riesling 2010, Marlborough (New Zealand House of Wine, mail order only from nzhouseofwine.co.uk, £8.50: you can mix cases, delivery from £5.99/case) A wonderfully refreshing riesling with lovely purity of fruit and definition: bright, lime-tinged fruit with floral notes and a subtle minerality. Just irresistible.



Two Rivers of Marlborough Convergence Sauvignon Blanc 2010, Marlborough (Lea and Sandeman, £11.95 or £10.50 as part of a mixed case)

I'm not a huge fan of Marlborough sauvignon but this is a fine example: aromatic without being pungent, full of vibrant, fat fruit yet underpinned with an insistent minerality.

Craggy Range Te Kahu 2008, Gimblett Gravels (Majestic, £13.99 or £10.99 each when you buy two)

A smooth Bordeaux blend – merlot, cabernet sauvignon, malbec – with ripe fruit and rounded tannins but good acidity and structure. From a top producer in an exciting area, Gimblett Gravels, a unique patch in the North Island's Hawke's Bay region.

Martinborough Vineyard Te Tera Pinot Noir 2009, Martinborough (Wine Society, mail order from thewinesociety.com, £12.50; Majestic, £15.99 or £12.99 each when you buy two)

Burgundian-style pinot from one of Martinborough's pioneers. Elegant and well balanced; forward fruit with lovely savoury notes. Impressive stuff.