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MARTINBOROUGH'S PALLISER ESTATE LIFTS TROPHIES AT AIR NEW ZEALAND WINE AWARDS

Martinborough's Palliser Estate has added more silverware to its awards cabinet, winning the Champion Riesling and Open White Wine trophies at the Air New Zealand Wine Awards on Saturday night.

The trophies were awarded for Palliser Estate's 2006 Martinborough Riesling. The winery has now won 24 trophies from these prestigious annual awards in Pinot Gris, Methode Traditionelle, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot noir and now Riesling.

"We're delighted to receive such tremendous accolades for this particular wine," said Palliser Estate Managing Director Richard Riddiford.

"Winning the ultimate award in its varietal category is one thing; being selected as the top white wine overall is quite overwhelming, and fabulous recognition for winemaker Alan Johnson and the dedicated team at Palliser."

The trophies follow the gold medal awarded to the wine last week, one of four gold medals awarded to Wairarapa wines.

"Proportionately, Wairarapa wines, particularly those from Martinborough, did very well at this year's awards," Mr Riddiford said.

"While Wairarapa represents just 3 per cent of the nation's wine producing area, it was awarded almost 7 per cent of the gold medals awarded – the best rate of return of any region."

The remaining gold medals were awarded to the area's signature variety, pinot noir, while silver and bronze medals were awarded to wines across a range of varieties from the region. Gold medals were also awarded to Gladstone Vineyard, Martinborough Vineyard and Three Paddles vineyard.

"This year's awards are further recognition of the position that Wairarapa has established as one of the top regions in the country in terms of producing premium, quality wines across a broad range of varieties," Mr Riddiford said.

Last week, New Zealand Trade and Enterprise awarded \$600,000 funding from the Major Regional Initiative (MRI) Fund to promote the region's wines internationally.

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