

# NZ Sauvignon Blanc shortage: Is the sky really falling?

## 紐西蘭Sauvignon Blanc短缺：這是大事件嗎？



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Happy Wine Woman 

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Recent reports in the press suggest a shortage of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc may be imminent due to the comparatively small 2015 harvest and while quality has been assessed as very good, quantity is down from the previous year.

So should the dedicated Sauvignon Blanc drinker be stockpiling bottles in preparation for a looming shortage?

To put things in perspective, 2014 was a record vintage so the decrease in 2015 is perhaps not as extreme as it appears; rather it brings harvest volumes in to line with previous years. While the 2015 Sauvignon Blanc harvest was down 30% at 216,000 tonnes, compared with 310,240 tonnes in 2014, the 2014 harvest was a bumper crop. It represented a jump of more than

30% from the previous year of 2013. Thus, in context, the differential between the more consistent Sauvignon Blanc harvests of 2013 and 2015 is only 6%.

Nevertheless the current situation combined with the growth of New Zealand as a quality wine-producing nation provides an ideal time to explore what else New Zealand has to offer for the Sauvignon Blanc drinker. While bulk production may face challenges in meeting supply for the coming year many smaller producers I spoke with indicated they have sufficient stocks and do not expect difficulty in meeting demand.

New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc has come a long way since the first expressions in the 1980's with Cloudy Bay blazing the trail that put New Zealand wine firmly on the

最近有報道指紐西蘭Sauvignon Blanc白酒即將面臨短缺，起因於這種葡萄在2015年的收成相對去年較少，不過葡萄質量卻獲好評。那麼，鍾情於Sauvignon Blanc的飲者應該囤貨，從而在短缺來到之前作好準備嗎？

從另一個角度來看，2014年是個破紀錄的年份，因此2015年的收成下降或許並未如想像中極端，反而與過去幾年的產量相約。Sauvignon Blanc於2015年的收成較去年下降30%至216,000噸，相對於2014年的310,240噸，2014年是大豐收的一年，比2013年的產量上升超過30%。由是觀之，以Sauvignon Blanc的恆常產量而言，2013年與2015年的收成差別只有6%。

然而，上述情況加上紐西蘭作為葡萄酒出產國的增長，現在正是探視紐西蘭的好時機，看看這國還可供應怎麼樣的葡萄酒予Sauvignon Blanc的飲者。當大型生產商可能面對葡萄收成減少的挑戰同時，有小型生產商則向我指出，他們未有預期遇到產量供應低於市場需求的困難。

80年代紐西蘭Cloudy Bay地區出產的Sauvignon Blanc聲名大噪，更令紐西蘭穩佔葡萄酒世界的一席位，自此紐西蘭Sauvignon Blanc幾經變卦。市場上廉價的選擇多不勝數，但亦有更多優質美酒被推出市場，與Sauvignon Blanc葡萄失收似乎「打個和」。

生產商採用lees contact、lees stirring、barrel and bottle ageing技術，為紐西蘭Sauvignon Blanc創建了新的風格。

平常Marlborough產區的「Savvy」(非常愛喝Sauvignon Blanc的飲者會稱之為Savvy)可能會較難找到，也許是時候嚐嚐同一產區較小型的生產商的葡萄酒，例如曾於Cloudy Bay酒莊工作的Kevin Judd，現建立了自己的葡萄酒品牌Greywacke，還有主理Mahi Wines酒莊的Brian Bicknell，以及Ara Wines酒莊的





international map. While there are a variety of lower priced examples on the market there is an increasing number of high quality Sauvignon Blancs being released, bringing previous detractors of the grape back into the fold.

Producers are using techniques such as lees contact, lees stirring, barrel and bottle ageing to offer a new dimension to the wines produced throughout New Zealand.

With the news that your usual Marlborough "Savvy" (an affectionate term used by the dedicated Sauvignon Blanc drinker) might just be a bit harder to find perhaps it's time to look at what smaller producers in the region are doing, such as Kevin Judd, previously of Cloudy Bay, who now produces Sauvignon Blanc under his own label, Greywacke, or Brian Bicknell at Mahi Wines and Jeff Clarke at Ara Wines to name but a few.

In fact, Kevin Judd confirms he does not expect supply issues to have a big impact on Greywacke. While 2015 volume may be down, the 2014 harvest was large enough to produce additional volumes ensuring minimal effect on supply for the coming year.

South of Marlborough in Waipara, Paul Donaldson at Pegasus Bay confirms their Sauvignon Blanc supply is healthy and there are no issues with supply for the foreseeable future. They produce a Sauvignon Blanc under the Main Divide label as well as the Pegasus Bay Sauvignon Blanc, which is blended with Semillon. The Pegasus Bay blend looks to Europe for the stylistic template with 1-2 years bottle age before release, which means that the latest release to the market is 2013.

Further north in Hawke's Bay, New Zealand's second largest area under vine for Sauvignon Blanc, the story is similar for quality wines. The vintage although smaller than 2014 is of excellent quality and producers are looking forward to releasing wines with good concentration and varietal expression. Any gap in supply will come from earlier



vintages and Warren Gibson, winemaker at Trinity Hill in Hawke's Bay confirms their style of Sauvignon Blanc is made in such a way as to benefit from a year or two in bottle meaning the release currently on the market is the excellent 2013 vintage.

In reality nearly every wine region in New Zealand produces Sauvignon Blanc with plantings to be found from Central Otago in the South Island to Wairarapa (much easier to say after a glass or two of Savvy!) in the North Island and on up to Waiheke Island. Quality winemaking in New Zealand is easily found and the key to survival in this time of perceived shortage is to seek out those smaller producers who are less affected by the decreased harvest volumes, as well as exploring the plethora of styles on offer from regions across the country.

The clever Sauvignon Blanc drinker will seek out some of these examples with additional complexity from earlier vintages should one's usual supply being thin on the ground, while the clever producer will have held back stock from earlier vintages to be released in the coming year, ensuring supply is met.

And for those imbibers ready to chart new frontiers, New Zealand produces a variety of white wines in addition to Sauvignon Blanc, in particular Chardonnay, Pinot Gris and Riesling – most definitely something for everyone!

Jeff Clarke等等。

事實上，Kevin Judd表示他預期葡萄供應不會出現問題，對他的Greywacke酒莊影響不大。2015年的產量或會減少，但靠去年2014年的大豐收，額外生產葡萄酒，確保來年的供應受到最小的影響。

Paul Donaldson在位於Marlborough產區南部Waipara地區的Pegasus Bay酒莊工作，他指，並酒莊的Sauvignon Blanc葡萄供應健康，在可見將來並無任何供應問題。他們釀造的Sauvignon Blanc混合了Semillon葡萄，分別屬Main Divide系列及Pegasus Bay Sauvignon Blanc，後者的葡萄組合與歐洲風格相約，於瓶中陳釀一至兩年才推出市面，因此現時市場上的最新年份為2013年。

而位於北邊、紐西蘭第二大種植Sauvignon Blanc葡萄的Hawke's Bay產區，釀造優質美酒的生產商的情況也相差無幾。產量雖較2014年為少，但其品質比去年更優良，預期能釀造出濃度高而更具葡萄特性的美酒。他們同樣會以去年的供應來填補短缺，而該產區Trinity Hill酒莊的釀酒師Warren Gibson指出，他們釀造的Sauvignon Blanc需要在酒瓶內待上一至兩年才推市場，因此目前市面上買得到的年份為2013年。

現實中，紐西蘭幾乎每個產區也生產Sauvignon Blanc，從South Island的Central Otago產區到North Island的Wairarapa產區(喝了一兩杯Savvy後，這個詞的發音可能沒那麼繞口吧！)，以至到Waiheke Island也是。紐西蘭出產不少優質佳釀，面對這次的葡萄短缺，我們可放眼於較不受影響的小型生產商，以及嚐嚐產自各個產區形形色色的美酒。

當供應相對減少，聰明的Sauvignon Blanc飲者會選擇份外具複雜層次的較陳年份，而聰明的生產商則早已囤積起足夠的供應，確保能維持來年的產量以應令需求。

至於勇於嘗試的愛酒者，紐西蘭生產的白酒除了Sauvignon Blanc之外，還有Chardonnay、Pinot Gris及Riesling——總有一款合你口味！