



# RISE STARS



## NEW ZEALAND COLLECTABLES

Today's bargains can be tomorrow's cult wines. Bob Campbell MW gives his tips on wineries worth watching in the Land of the Long White Cloud.

### Hawkes Bay

#### **BILANCIA**

Warren Gibson and Lorraine Leheny are what I would call "classic Kiwis"; others might say 'quiet achievers'. They're a husband-and-wife winemaking team who obviously spend as much time thinking about vine-rearing as they do about child-rearing, and manage to do both with the same level of care.

Gibson has a day job as winemaker at Trinity Hill, where they shape the wine that they have created on their one-hectare hillside vineyard in the Gimblett Gravels district of Hawkes Bay. The couple also buy grapes to provide more economy of scale.

Bilancia's pinot gris has certainly made a name for itself, but it's the product of the hillside vineyard that set my pulse racing. To be specific, it's a syrah/Viognier co-fermented red called Bilancia la collina Syrah.

***Grape Expectations:** The 2002 Bilancia la collina Syrah is an absolute knockout – dense, complex and power-packed, it offers an amazing silky texture. And this from the first vintage.*

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### TOP 12 TASTED & RATED

## NZ Syrah

A relative newcomer to the New Zealand wine scene, syrah has rapidly made up ground. Bob Campbell MW highlights his picks of this increasingly popular variety.

### 95★★★★★ *2002 Bilancia La Collina Syrah, Hawkes Bay, NZ\$80*

This is the first Syrah from Bilancia's small hillside vineyard in the Gimblett Gravels area of Hawkes Bay. A small percentage of Viognier grapes grown in the same vineyard were co-fermented with the syrah. This is a remarkable achievement for a first vintage from young vines. This power-packed wine is enormously dense, rich and complex, with masses of sweet fruit flavours that include violets, cracked black pepper, plum and dark berry fruit. It is surprisingly accessible now but promises to age for a decade or more.