

The New Zealand Herald

'Stellar' vintage up for auction

By Roger Moroney

5:00 AM Thursday Jun 2, 2016

For the successful bidder of a fine example of the 2015 Hawke's Bay winemaking season the timing will be pretty spot on.

As Monowai Estate winemaker Emma Lowe said while describing the 2015 Chardonnay she has passionately prepared – it will be "perfect drinking from 2017".

For the first time, Crownthorpe-based Monowai Estate will be taking part in the Hawke's Bay Wine Auction set to be staged in November – just two months out from the start of the perfect drinking time in the chardonnay's rich, creamy and fruity life.

The auction, which will celebrate a quarter century since first being staged, is a popular fundraiser for the Cranford Hospice and attracts interest from all over the country as winelovers seek the best of the Bay.

Last year's auction raised \$141,000.

Ms Lowe had no hesitation in wanting to be part of the 2016 event and said she was looking forward to being part of future auctions.

"It's always been on the periphery and we've been considering it for a while – we've got to the stage where we are getting good volumes now and it's such a good cause to be part of."

She will be preparing a "very special" half barrel blend of 2015 chardonnay by "picking the eyes out" of the vintage in terms of barrel selections.

While pinot gris, pinot noir, merlot and sauvignon blanc were also part of the Monowai range, chardonnay was her favourite, she said.

"You can just do a little more with it as a winemaker."

It was the first vintage she created back in 2005 after she and her husband Marcelo Nunez moved from his former homeland of Chile in 2002 to set up Monowai which is spread over 22ha at the foothills of the Kaweka Ranges near Crownthorpe.

"We got one barrel of chardonnay that year – now we get 60."

Ms Lowe, who graduated with a degree in winemaking from Adelaide University, looks after that side of the business while her husband steers the viticulture side and is sometimes spotted carefully tending the vines from horseback.

She said the last four vintages had all been "stellar" and the bidders taking part in the big auction would



GOING ... GOING: Monowai Estate winemakers Emma Lowe and Marcelo Nunez taste the "stellar" chardonnay up for bidding at the Hawke's Bay Wine Auction later this year. PHOTO/WARREN BUCKLAND

be in for some seriously fine treats.

The Monowai varieties benefited from being grown at higher altitudes where cool nights and warm days led to the development of "great aromatics", she said.

As well as being sold domestically, they were now exported to Australia and the United States where Kiwi wines have a glowing reputation.

By Roger Moroney

– [Hawkes Bay Today](#)

Copyright ©2016, NZME. Publishing Limited