

BY SHELLEY HOWELLS



## shiver me tea towels

Here's a tea towel that's perfect to bust out for Sunday brunch. **Pancake Pirate, \$26, is available from Martinborough-based designers Dustys & Lulu.** [dustysandlulu.com](http://dustysandlulu.com)



## milk & honey

They're well ahead of the game in Palmie. BioFarm probiotic yoghurts, \$6.99/1lit, have been produced on a small, organic dairy farm there since 1986, long before such products became *de rigueur*. Darn, they're good. Packed with live cultures and no artificial ingredients, and available in flavours including wild apple, acidophilus, low fat, and our favourite, bush honey. [biofarm.co.nz](http://biofarm.co.nz)

## put the kettle on

New Zealand Kettle Korn, a familiar sight at markets and festivals around the country is also available in stores. They say that the secret to the superior flavour is the intense heat of the kettles in which it is popped: "The heat infuses a little salt and a little sweet into each kernel." It's lab-certified gluten-, soy-, dairy-, shellfish-, and peanut-free so it's good for people with allergies. You need never bother with that chewy microwave stuff again. [kettlekorn.co.nz](http://kettlekorn.co.nz)



## WINE BY BOB CAMPBELL

# hot spot

I've just tasted 241 samples of New Zealand pinot noir in search of the best bottle. "Which region do you think produced my number-one wine?" I asked 25 students in my class. Eighteen picked Central Otago, six chose Martinborough, and one person indicated Nelson (she was born there). Not one correctly identified the source of the winning wine, which was Marlborough.

With 58 percent of the national vineyard, Marlborough is clearly our largest wine region, and is primarily known for its sauvignon blanc, of which it makes this nation's lion share.

It's easy to see why more people expect high quality wine to come from small, specialist pinot noir-producing regions such as Central Otago and Martinborough than a large sauvignon blanc-dominated region like Marlborough. The reality, however, is rather different to popular perception.

As well as being placed first, Marlborough pinot noirs occupied six out of my top 10 places. Marlborough certainly deserves a place on the shopping list of all pinot noir buyers. Although the region was a late-starter in the production of fine pinot noir, careful site selection – including the development of several hillside vineyards – has resulted in many great wines, often at bargain prices when compared to the wines of sexier regions.

Marlborough also appears to have more consistent pinot noir vintages than other regions, which gives it an edge when adverse weather makes the going tough in more glamorous areas.

### Villa Maria 2010

#### Single Vineyard Southern Valleys Pinot Noir \$56

Villa Maria produced my top wine and had three others in the top 10 places. The winery seems to make great pinot noir with consummate ease, particularly in a good year such as 2010.

It all adds up to a very intense, powerful wine with a haunting aroma and layers of cherry, berry, and spice flavours. Strong sweet fruit is wrapped around a core of fine tannins and juicy acidity, giving the wine a delicious energy. It's a silken-textured wine with a lingering finish – this is what good pinot noir is all about.



### Nautilus 2010 Pinot Noir \$39

For many years I've thought that Nautilus pinot noir was one of the country's most underrated wines. It has a delicate rather than blockbuster style with a perfume that I find totally charming. The 2010 vintage is a supremely elegant wine with an appealing mix of floral, cherry, mineral, and subtle spicy flavours. I like the way that the wine opens up as it sits in the glass and the lingering finish which reveals power is delivered with great subtlety. Totally seductive.

