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# A peek into Yealands - The Kiwi brand revolutionising sustainability

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I'm no expert, but Yealands' sauvignon blanc - an iconic Kiwi staple - can be attributed for many of my successful karaoke renditions of Sweet Dreams by Eurythmics. If my tuneless singing - despite the confidence - doesn't sway you, Reserve Sauvignon Blanc was named Champion Sauvignon Blanc at the 2021 New

World Wine Awards and Sauvignon Blanc of the Year at the Winestate Wine of the Year Awards that same year. And whether you're a fan of a buttery chard, adding crushed ice for a Friday "frosé", or your sophisticated pallet is partial to pinot noir, there's something for every wino, wine mom, or in the case of my millennial contemporaries, wine witch.

Yealands wine is fabulous for a plethora of reasons: it doesn't blow the budget, it's far too delicious, and it's hyper local with Yealands Estate's stunning coastal vineyard based in Marlborough's Awatere Valley. What you might not know is that the humble brand is incredibly sustainable - and it's been that way since day dot.

Embracing the philosophy 'think boldly, tread lightly', Yealands is the first winery in the world to be Toitū carbonzero since day one. The company was one of the seven initial members of the International Wineries for Climate Action, Two Gold Trophies wins from The Green World Awards 2022, awarded in the categories of "Regeneration" for the work the team have undertaken with their Station Creek Regeneration programme, and "Carbon Reduction" for their Carbon Emission Reduction Programme.

Natalie Christensen, who has been chief winemaker at Yealands since 2019, gives us a peek into how this Kiwi vineyard became one of the most sustainable wineries in the world.





Natalie Christensen, chief winemaker at Yealands, photographed by Daniela Aebli

## Tell us about Yealands' journey with sustainability?

We're all hopefully making much more conscious choices, and this can include the wine we're drinking. Sustainable practices are part of the NZ wine industry and its DNA. Sustainability should be second nature to Kiwi wineries and their teams, with everyone constantly striving for betterment and continuous improvement.

By asking a winery what their commitments and long-term actions are, you can easily work out who is considering the environment when making their wine.

Sustainability is at the heart of our winemaking philosophy, from the careful management of our vines and land, to the way we operate our winery and craft our wines.



On a practical level, where does your electricity come from?

The sun not only ripens our fruit, it powers our solar panels, which in turn powers our winery and everything from the winemaking equipment to our laptops. It's a one-stop-shop thanks to mother nature. A total of 20% of our power is generated on-site through solar, wind, and biofuel energy.





## What do you do when the grape season is over?

We sow cover crops such as peas, beans, oats, and flowering crops to make use of the land, suppress weeds, and to improve the soil generally. We also sow a wildflower mix to attract beneficial insects that support our beautifully biodiverse ecosystem.

Biodiversity ensures a healthier and more resilient environment for growing our vines, too. We have planted more than 200 swan plants and native trees in a part of our vineyard called Butterfly Gully. The plants attract the monarch butterfly and butterflies tell us that we have a healthy ecosystem. We've also planted native shrubs and flaxes alongside our waterways.

Wetlands have multiple benefits; they provide a home for native and local birds, absorb floodwaters, sequester carbon, filter nutrients and runoff, prevent erosion, and add to the natural beauty of our coastal vineyard home.



## What's next for Yealands?

Yealands has been forward-thinking from the start. Thanks to our Toitū carbonzero certification, we ensured carbon emissions were identified, mitigated, and offset from the beginning.

And as one of the first members of the International Wineries for Climate Action, Yealands reset its emissions target to be 'carbon positive' by 2050, with a 50% reduction to be achieved by 2030. Our aim is to share, learn, and benchmark Yealands against the world's best sustainable wineries.





To find out more about Yealands' crafted sustainable wines click [here](#).