

New Zealand Shanghai Pavilion Powerhouse

Selecting wines for VIP hospitality at New Zealand's Shanghai Expo pavilion is Paul Pretty's domain, and comes with some unique challenges.

To make the most of trade opportunities, only wines currently exported to Shanghai will be served, so that potential buyers like premier hotels and restaurants are able to buy it locally.

"Shanghai is such an international city, and has many major hotels with excellent food and beverage programmes. Wine education evenings are well attended, especially by the sophisticated younger crowd and wine consumption is rising," commented Paul.

The logistics of keeping wine temperature-controlled from winery to freight depot, through shipping, landing and delivery to the pavilion is another big issue. Extremes of temperature can damage the wine.

About 20 different wines will feature per month, fine-tuned on the spot in the light of experience. Several of New Zealand's big wine brands will be presented – for example Cloudy Bay, Villa Maria and

Montana as well as some more boutique brands like Bascand, Pegasus Bay and Kumeu River.

The VIP hospitality area is part of a programme organised by New Zealand Trade & Enterprise. Guests are invited by the Commissioner General Philip Gibson, trade organisations like New Zealand Wiregrowers or sponsors like Zespri, and the event might be drinks with passaround food, lunch or dinner.

Results from previous Expos shows this typically kiwi "small, personal and unique" hospitality is a highly effective way for companies doing business in the Expo market to build relationships in a professional yet less formal environment. By contrast with the public areas with hundreds of thousands of people, the VIP area is secluded, where business and government leaders can meet quietly. Ruth commented that at the pre-opening induction meeting, this was described as "the pavilion powerhouse".

Native plants including a huge pohutukawa tree and guardian kaitiaki grace the striking New Zealand pavilion. For freshness, a small but functional kitchen garden was created for Ruth's chefs.



Photos and landscaping: Tina Hart and Kim Jarrett, www.dawnfinder.com