GROWING AREAS

Gisborne's wine region is made up of several distinct growing areas, each with its own unique soil and climatic features. Outside these areas, there is still more to discover with vines planted and producing distinctive wines in Te Karaka, Waimata Valley, Tolaga Bay and Muriwai, along with a number of single vineyard sites.

Golden Slope
A narrow 10 km strip from Ormond, Waihirere and Hexton. The "Golden Slope" is made up of small parcels of elevated sloping land, with tracts of medium to heavy Kaiti clay base material. This base is overlaid with 20-30cm of light black topsoil, with influence from the limestone foothills. These conditions allow vines to grow with a balance suited to super premium wine making. Soils are generally slit loams with reasonably good natural drainage that run down to meet the heavy clay soils on the flat.

Ormond
This area is mixture of slit and clay loam soils with premium wines having been produced from grapes grown here.

Ormond Valley
A mesoclimate of gentle slopes of high-calcified soils within a narrow valley, Ormond Valley holds a fantastic record for single vineyard wines. This appellation has produced tightly structured, youthful wines, which have the structure to age gracefully. Soils are similar to the Golden Slopes containing areas of Kaiti clay which balance the vines, producing rich golden wines with broad palate weight and intense fruit flavours.

Manutuke
Gisborne's oldest wine-growing region, with grapes first planted in the late 1890's. Manutuke is mainly silts, with good drainage and areas of Kaiti clay closer to the hills. During summer the proximity to the ocean allows a cooling effect from the sea breeze.

In late Autumn, the warmth of the rivers' water against the cool night air can give rise to mist, contributing to ideal conditions for the formation of Botrytis Cineria to produce dense, sweet late harvested wine. The silt loams closest to the rivers are varied, light and, combined with the high calcium levels, lead to wines of finesse. Further from the rivers the soils become heavy and complex due to heavier clay colloids and these are well suited to full bodied Chardonnay and Viognier.

Central Valley
This area covers Waerenga-o-Hika, Makaraka, Makauri and Matawhero. The northern areas are made up of a mixture of clay loam soils and silt soils ensuring consistent qualities across blocks. The clay soils crack and harden significantly at the end of summer. The Waipaoa River exerts a profound influence as it meanders its way and on its margins provides deep silt soils.

Riverpoint
Riverpoint is part of the Central Valley that receives the Pacific Coast's cooling sea breezes to temper the heat of summer. The soils consist of free draining slit loams allowing fruit to ripen well, with consistently high fruit sugar levels.

Patutahi
Patutahi is home to more than one third of Gisborne's vines, producing richly flavoured, and award-winning wines. Large parcels of consistent Kaiti clay soils allow premium viticulture on quite a large scale. The soils are predominantly 50/50 split between slit and clay loam. It receives 30% less rainfall - during the growing season.

Patutahi Plateau
The select Patutahi Plateau is the youngest of the new appellations. It has created recent excitement and shows even further promise for the future. Patutahi Plateau this area runs west from about Kaimoe Road back towards the hills. This area grows grapes that produce premium richly flavoured award winnings wines, particularly when grown on the Kaiti clay loam soils. It is generally a warmer and drier area of the plains.

Waipaoa
Waipaoa is protected from cool sea breezes and coastal showers, and its clay soils lead to riper fruit flavours. A heat trap, caused by a narrowing of the valley, means the wines resulting from vineyards in this area develop warm honeyed complexities. Vineyards are mostly situated close to the Waipaoa river on lighter more free draining soils with vines being very productive.