



# WHITEHAVEN

MARLBOROUGH WINE

## Press Release

27 February 2025

### **WHITEHAVEN WINES TRIUMPH WITH MULTIPLE AWARDS AND TOP FEMALE WINEMAKER ACCOLADE.**

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**Whitehaven Senior Winemaker Diana Katardzhieva has been named ‘Best Woman Winemaker’ for still white wines at the prestigious 2025 Sakura Women's Wine Awards. Both the 2024 Whitehaven Sauvignon Blanc and 2023 Chardonnay were awarded the top accolade of Diamond Trophy.**

This prestigious competition celebrates wines that exemplify quality, and Whitehaven wines have shined brightly at this year's tasting. Now in its 12th year, the event attracted 3,969 entries from 36 countries, judged by 430 female wine judges (280 in Tokyo and 150 in Osaka).

Whitehaven has submitted wines to this competition since 2015.

However, the Whitehaven team's greatest pride comes from seeing winemaker, Diana Katardzhieva, recognised as the Best Winemaker in the still white wines category for Whitehaven's 2023 Chardonnay. Diana is one of just nine female winemakers to receive this honour, and one of only two New Zealand female winemakers to make this prestigious list.

Diana, who has been at Whitehaven for over 20 years, says the recognition is a shock, but “proof that years of tasting, tweaking, and the occasional barrel pep talk can pay off.” Diana goes on to credit women in general and her wider team saying the award is a “wonderful reminder of the amazing things women are accomplishing in the wine industry. Great wine is a team effort, and I see the award as recognition not only of myself, but of the fruit quality from our vineyards and growers, and the effort of the Whitehaven team. The fact this wine is judged by a talented group of women, makes this even more special...especially since we all know women are usually the ones choosing the wine anyway!”

Sue White, co-founder of Whitehaven, expresses her pride in the accolade, crediting Diana for her winemaking skill and consistency in winemaking, “This level of success is a credit to Diana and her team who work hard to create wines of exceptional quality.”

Each award-winning wine is now available on Whitehaven's website at [www.whitehaven.co.nz](http://www.whitehaven.co.nz)

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**Notes:**

Originally from Bulgaria, Diana started studying winemaking after leaving a career in medicine. Then, having successfully completed six years of study, Diana spent 15 years working in Bulgaria's winemaking industry before departing for New Zealand with her young son. Experienced with old world vines, Diana's first vintage in Marlborough in 2004 was a huge shift away from all she'd been accustomed to, in terms of size and scale and the approach to wine making.

Diana holds a Master qualification specialising in technology for microbiological and fermentation products from the University of Food Technologies in Plovdiv. Her attention to detail is apparent in the many accolades awarded to the wines she takes a leading hand in producing "even after all these years I can express myself better in my wines than I can with my English language," she laughs.

Diana joined Whitehaven Wine Company initially as Lab Manager and Winemaker in 2004.

View the full list here: [SAKURA AWARDS](#) (available 27 February).

Whitehaven received two Diamond Trophies, two Double Gold Medals, and a Gold Medal at the 2025 Sakura Womens' Wine Awards this year.

All Whitehaven wines are AMW and SWNZ accredited.

Whitehaven first entered the Sakura Awards in 2015.

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