



Winemakers Sarah-Kate and Dan Dineen relocated to NZ.

Wonders of Wanaka

When, in January 2003, Hunter Valley winemakers Sarah-Kate and Dan Dineen got married overlooking Lake Wanaka in NZ's South Island, they effectively delayed the start of the 2003 Hunter Valley vintage — because so many of the Hunter's winemakers flew over to attend.

That says it all for the popularity of the couple and the esteem in which they are held. Sarah-Kate, at the time, was the highly acclaimed winemaker at Tempus Two, while Dan Dineen was one of wine's chosen ones: a winemaker formerly of Mount Pleasant and Brokenwood, he'd progressed to chief winemaker at the late Len Evans' prestigious Tower Estate.

Tower Estate is a plum winemaking job: you not only get access to the Evans' cellar

but you also get to make wines from most of Australia's best wine regions such as riesling from the Clare Valley, shiraz from the Hunter, pinot noir from Tasmania. It sounds more like fun than work.

There was only one problem: they wanted to stake out their own territory and in the past few months they've done just that — by building a winery in Wanaka in NZ's hotly fashionable, but desperately cold, Central Otago region. For Australian winemaking, it's the loss of a highly talented duo — for NZ, it's a boon.

They worked vintage 2006 there, and later this year will have a pinot noir from Central Otago and a sauvignon blanc from Marlborough for sale, both under the label Maude. Early samples look excellent — in quality and value.

CAMPBELL MATTINSON