



Craggy Range

ROB FYFE
STRATEGIC ADVISOR



Growing up in middle New Zealand in the 1960s and '70s, drinking beer from a bottle rather than a half gallon flagon, would've constituted a premium beverage in our home. My first exposure to wine came in my early 20s when, as a young Royal New Zealand Air Force officer, I was seconded to the RAF in Europe.

My leave was spent exploring France and Italy. It was my introduction to wine tourism – not that I would have called it so in the early 1980s – and to a culture focused on eating well and savouring wine and food. I became fascinated by wine and cheese and how much it defined the people and place and the whole concept of terroir: the distinctive characteristics imbued in wine by the unique interaction of the geography, geology, climate and raw ingredients found in a specific place.

For a boy raised in Christchurch from a family of modest means, it was a wonderful initiation in to how wine and food are used to tell stories, to connect us with moments in time and in turn, become the basis for long-lasting and happy memories. I remember returning to New Zealand, where the wine industry as we know it was still in its infancy and feeling deprived of the quality of wine and food I had become used to. But I was fortunate to spend some time in places such as Woodburn near Marlborough where I could see the wine industry developing and sample some of the product. Wine became my drink of choice and has remained so.

Now I am in the enviable position of being Strategic Advisor to Craggy Range. The role grew out of consultancy work I did for Craggy Range. It involves helping the Peabody family, who established the winery in 1997, Steve Smith MW (Master of Wine), Matt Stafford (Chief Winemaker) and the rest of the team to grow brand awareness and build distribution networks in competitive international markets. I was delighted to take on the role because it complements the work I did with Air New Zealand where I was chief executive from 2005 – 2012 and continue to do as CEO at Icebreaker and as a board member for jewellers Michael Hill International as well as Antarctica New Zealand.