

Jancis Robinson OBE MW



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To whom it may concern:

I have been writing about wine for more than 50 years. I founded the subscription wine website JancisRobinson.com 25 years ago and it continues to flourish without ads or sponsorship and with a global readership. I am its Editor in Chief, write a weekly column for the *Financial Times* and am responsible for arguably the two most important wine reference books: *The Oxford Companion to Wine* (now in its 5th edition) and *The World Atlas of Wine* (9th edition to be published in September 2026). The latter has been published in 15 languages and has sold 5 million copies.

You may imagine then that wine geography is extremely important to me. Wine and wine regions are inextricably linked to terroir and what those regions look like. Especially if, like Central Otago, they depend to any extent on the growing trend towards wine tourism.

Part of the excitement of wine, as logged and mapped in detail in the *Atlas*, is the emergence of new wine regions. I first heard of Central Otago at the Cool Climate Viticulture Conference in Auckland in 1988 where I was a keynote speaker. There I met Rudi Bauer and Alan Brady inter alia. Richard Smart was already touting the region as the southernmost in the world.

I must have visited the region not that long after and have been back many times, thrilled to continue to discover Central's unique features as a wine region. Quite apart from the quality of the wines, it's impossible to underestimate the role played by the scenery and unpolluted atmosphere and water in the global image and standing of the region.

I learn to my horror that there are plans for an open cast mine there. Not only will this change Central's ethos from rural to industrial, and blight the region with a vast area of open pits and associated infrastructure. Possibly even more detrimental to the region would be the long-term ecological effects, not least on water supply.

I find it shocking that so little time is being allowed to analyse these effects and for comments on the proposals to be made by those who live and farm here.

I note that supporters of the scheme argue that it will offer highly-paid employment, but mines are not massive employers. And economic parallels with Australia seem to me

misplaced. Australia does not have mines in wine regions as singular and beautiful as Central Otago.

Who would benefit most from this mine? Santana's Australian shareholders, of course.

I implore you to abandon this scheme.