

# The Cellar Club Inc



*Established in 1980*

## *September 2022 Newsletter*



### **Stop Press!! Cellar Club Wins Trifecta of Top Hawke's Bay wineries!!**

*Peter Robertson and Brookfields*

*Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September*

**Door Price: Members \$14 / Guests \$18**

The Committee has been able to arrange for another top-flight Hawke's Bay winemaker to present to the Club on Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> September. This time it is Peter Robertson of Brookfields Winery, one of the doyens of winemaking in Hawke's Bay.

A top selection of eight wines will be on offer. The wines will be available for purchase on the night at very good prices.

Founded in 1937, Brookfields is Hawke's Bay's oldest winery. It is located alongside the Tutaekuri River at Meeanee (between Napier and Hastings). The winery was purchased by its current owner and winemaker, Peter Robertson, in 1977 who has transformed it into a leading winery for premium wines. The history of Brookfields is revealed in the handmade 25cm concrete blocks used to build the winery and cellar in the 1930s. These blocks create the perfect environment for ageing great wines and keeping the cellar cool during Hawke's Bay's hot summers. Peter creates classic wines with grapes only grown in specific locations and to his strict growing policies.

Brookfields reputation has been built on stunning red wines. For example, the 1989 Gold Label cabernet/merlot on release stunned the critics and trade with its excellence. Subsequent vintages have firmly placed Brookfields as one of the best red winemakers. Producing between 8,000 and 10,000 cases of wine each year, Brookfields has no desire to push up volumes when there is always the challenge of creating even more dramatic wine.

Peter has been crafting exquisite wines from his vineyards in and around Meeanee since he bought the winery in 1977. He is often referred to as a quiet achiever, diligently going about his business, shunning the spotlight, letting his wines speak for themselves. Showing the meticulous attention to detail that characterise the man himself, it is the depth, excellence and brilliance across all varietals that reminds you of his adept talent.

As he himself says “It is my belief that superior wine comes from superior fruit; great wines are made in the vineyard. Much of the winemaking at Brookfields is traditional. The “Bergman” chardonnay is barrel fermented. The “Reserve” reds are hand-plunged and then aged in French oak barrels for at least a year. Time is a winemaker’s friend.”

## *Let's Look Out for Each Other*

With the Orange Traffic Light System in place by the NZ Government and the associated COVID19 mandates, you are reminded that you must still wear your mask when entering or exiting the Johnsonville Community Centre.

**NB:** As always, please if you are feeling unwell, please do not attend the dinner and let Wayne know ASAP. Thanks

## *Looking Ahead*

- Y **October** - Mischief Wines, Waipara
- Y **November** – Fun with Bubbles Evening – *more info coming in October*
- Y **December** – End of Year Celebration – *please read below*

## *Committee Musings* Y

**Presenter Etiquette:** As a courtesy, can we remind members to please listen when the invited presenters are presenting during their sessions. We are going to build in time during the presentations for discussion at your tables.

**December Dinner:** Your committee is again considering having our next Club dinner in the Courtenay Place area, close to public transport. This time we are thinking of going to the prestigious Istana Malaysia with a fixed banquet menu, rather than individual meal choices. However, before further planning we need to have a show of hands at the September tasting to gauge support for this idea. This is a spacious venue, great for BYO and well established. If you can't make the September tasting evening, please let the Editor know if you have any comment about this idea.

## *Looking Back - Esk Valley and Gordon Russell*

In 2018 we contacted Gordon Russell to see if he could present a tasting sometime and he said yes, he would be delighted, but it would need to be 2021! Roll onto 2021 when sadly the Covid levels meant that our Esk Valley tasting had to be postponed to that year. So, imagine your committee's disbelief when Gordon contacted us in the week of our tasting to say sadly his wife had COVID19, and that he was having to isolate as a result. He went onto say how disappointed he was but then offered to fast courier the tasting notes and wine to us so the meeting could still go on. Thankfully, Richard Taylor then stepped up to the plate and using the tasting notes, entertained us with an interactive evening that went down well and was much appreciated.

The club's appreciation of the wines presented was subsequently reflected in the 141 bottles ordered by members.

The wines for the evening were:

- Y Hawkes Bay 2022 Rose' – was our mix and mingle wine and beautiful shade of almost metallic pink, gentle on the nose, smooth in the mouth
- Y Hawkes Bay 2021 Pinot Gris – this had a slightly pinkish colour with green gage on the tongue – it was a lovely extra tasty Pinot Gris which comes from free-draining terraces with

the grapes themselves approaching 20 years old! Interestingly it has some oak barrel fermentation too

- Y Artisanal Hawkes Bay 2021 Chenin Blanc – this is a new brand that has only been on the market for 12-18 months, it was a pale shade and at the moment has baked apple/citrus/peach on the tongue
- Y Great Dirt Seabed Chardonnay 2020 – this is their premium label and was buttery on the nose, white peach on the tongue. The terrain where these grapes grow used to be tidal river territory before the 1930's Napier earthquake.
- Y Artisanal Gimblet Gravels Grenache 2021 – nice dark red colour, this is a low yield crop and is 100% Grenache, fermented in open-topped concrete carrels
- Y Artisanal Gimblet Gravels Tempranillo 2021 – almost purple in colour, dry on the nose, dark berries with a hint of vanilla on the nose – has been in American and French oak and comes from a single block in Te Awa planted in 2018
- Y Artisanal Gimblet Gravels Malbec, Cav Sauv, Merlot 2000 – again almost purple in colour, blackberry/currents on the tongue. This would go well with Venison. Again this is a low yield crop, fermented with wild yeast in concrete open-topped barrels and would keep till 2032!

Of the above, the most ordered was the Chenin Blanc. This reflected both the quality of this wine and likely the fact of how starved we are of this variety in New Zealand. Thank you again Richard for arranging this tasting and then stepping in to deliver it for Gordon. I am told that Gordon has already offered to do this again in 2024. You would be most welcomed Gordon.

## Wine News



### **Que sera Bloody Syrah: How a lockdown collaboration turned into a gin world first**

*Gianina Schwanecke 09:35, Aug 11 2022*

[Napier's iconic National Tobacco Company factory](#) on Ossian St in Ahuriri has gone from one vice to another. It is now home to a brewery, [urban winery](#) and, more recently, The National Distillery Company. It is there that Blair Nicholl is doing the seemingly impossible, turning Hawke's Bay grown grapes into wine, [then into gin](#).

A bartender by trade, he has seen firsthand the "ebbs and flows" of the wine and craft beer industries.

New Zealand is one of the biggest wine exporters to the United States, he says, and could soon be the powerhouse of the spirit industry. "It's what the New Zealand [spirits industry](#) has got ahead of them if we band together."

Nicholl's foray into distilling came when he and best friend and business partner Ricardo Reis made a gin using botanicals found in women's luxury beauty products, for a Wānaka event in 2018. Their gin caught the eye of Cardrona's head distiller who invited them for a tour.

They relocated to Napier where Nicholl began distilling from his kitchen. A chance opportunity brought them to the building that had been on his vision board for 10 years.

Like the dynamic duo, the owners were from Kāpiti and eager to see what these "Kiwi blokes with a dream" could do.

In early 2020, Nicholl and Reis found themselves in New York – dressed in jandals and T-shirts despite the cold – promoting their gins alongside New Zealand Trade and Enterprise. "We stood out because we don't take ourselves too seriously, but we're deadly serious."

Interest was growing in their product, and they would soon go on to win many accolades and awards in spirit-making competitions, beating big brands such as Beefeater, Bombay Sapphire and Tanqueray.

But when Covid-19 hit, the pair “thought the National Distillery dream was over,” Nicholl says.

With no means to sell alcohol, he and Reis began making hand sanitiser using grapes from Clearview winery, owned by long-time friend Tim Turvey, where the pandemic had also brought production to a near halt. While it allowed them to keep the business going, it was terribly boring for a creative like Nicholl.

Then he got the idea for what became known as Bloody Syrah: a gin made from wine. “Wine is my first love. It’s something I’m extremely passionate about,” Nicholl says. But he thought he could go a step further.

Using grapes from the coastal vineyard, Nicholl and Reis made a Syrah, aged it in barrels, and played around distilling it into a clear, neutral spirit. Then they added the gin botanicals, distilled it again, put it back into oak, and left it for 12 months, turning it amber.

“We were trying to capture white pepper, and intense berry and earthy tones – the type of Syrah that Hawke’s Bay is famous for.”

They bottled about 130 all up, corked and waxed, also like wine. The label draws inspiration from Penfolds, one of Australasia’s oldest wineries, and includes a dedication to Turvey.

Nicholl isn’t sure if his Syrah gin is a world first, but it might well be, and it is certainly something he is happy to cross off his bucket list. “I’m all about trying things that people haven’t done before or say can’t be done.”



At 44% alcohol by volume (ABV), Nicholl describes Bloody Syrah as the “cognac of gins”.

“Sit on one of these at a dinner party, and you only need one or two to be the life of the party. As long as Tim Turvey and I aren’t there,” he laughs.

## Bistro52 Weltec Training Restaurant

On Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> August some Club members attended the last evening meal put on by **WelTec’s Bistro52** Training Restaurant for this year. It was a well-balanced and portioned meal with well-matched wines. The food was prepared, presented and served to a high standard and was top grade! The menu we savoured is below:

### Tasting Menu

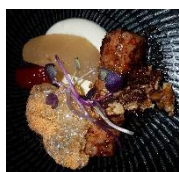
Sourdough Bread, Cultured Butter, Kapiti Sea Salt

#### Course One

Prawn Chorizo Sausage, Puffed Pork Skin, Scallop XO, Almond Crema, Nashi Pear Compression

Wine Match: Sauvignon Blanc

*Green gages on the tongue, this wine took away some of the saltiness of the food and smoothed things out*



#### Course Two

Salt-Fish & Potato Churro, Fennel Bulb Confit, Saffron & Tomato Sofrito Miso

Wine Match: Te Mata Chardonnay

*Wine toned down the spiciness of the food on the back of the throat, nice*



### Course Three



Slow Cooked Lamb Rump, Leek Custard, Lost Bread, Puy Lentils, Pickled Mushrooms, Red Wine Salt

Wine Match: Babich Syrah

*Smooth, devine, blackcurrants on the tongue, the food made the wine almost caramelly*

### Course Four

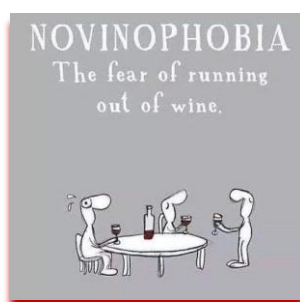


Hangi – Kumara Steamed Pudding, Kumara Skin Infused Buttermilk Ice-Cream, Spiced Caramel, Torched Mandarin

Wine Match: Veuve du Vernay

*I'm sure we've had this at the Cellar Club, bottle fermentation left a light fizzing on the tongue and the food brought out extra fruit flavours in the wine*

*The only query I had for the Maître that evening was course three: at our table we were debating if the 'lost bread' that accompanied the lamb rump was a euphemism for mountain oysters! It wasn't, but the Maître was both amused and said he would speak to the chef about perhaps changing the description of the petite loaf that came as part of the meal!*



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## Screwcaps

Screwcaps are still very welcome, please bring these along to any Club meeting and leave them with Anne, remembering that the cause that benefits from this collection is Kidney Kids NZ and their families.