

# *The Cellar Club Inc*



*Established in 1980*

## *May 2023 Newsletter*



### **The Cellar Club Inc**

**NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING TO BE HELD AT  
THE JOHNSONVILLE COMMUNITY CENTRE,  
3 FRANKMOORE AVENUE, JOHNSONVILLE  
WEDNESDAY 10 May 2023  
COMMENCING AT 8pm**

#### **AGENDA**

1. Apologies:
2. Confirmation of the Minutes of the Annual General Meeting for the year 2021/2022 held on Wednesday, 11<sup>th</sup> May 2022.
3. Matters Arising:
4. Financial Report for the Year 2022/23:
5. President's Report for the Year 2022/23:
6. Notices of Motion:
7. Election of Officers and Committee for the year 2023/24:
  - President
  - Vice President
  - Secretary
  - Treasurer
  - Committee
9. Subscriptions:
10. General Business:

*The Supper and Wines are organised*

*It just remains for us to have a successful and well attended AGM*

*We hope you all can make it on Wednesday 10 May.*

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

As always, please if you are feeling unwell, do not attend the evening's presentation. Thanks

## *Looking Back* – Victor Kattenbel, Confident Wines

Wow, nine wines!

This was an interesting evening full of updated information about the Esk Valley region and touching on areas of Portugal that most members present hadn't been to, yet.

The variety of wines was great, beginning with Linden Sparkling Rose' from Esk Valley, a blend of Merlot and Pinotage, a delicious start to the evening. The rest of the evening's selection was:

- Y Confidential Reserva Rose –10 grape blend
- Y Casa Santos Lima Chardonnay 2020
- Y Moutere Hills Riesling 2022
- Y Waipara Downs Pinot Noir 2020
- Y Confidential Tinto-Red 2020 – 10 grape blend
- Y Mosaico De Portugal 2019
- Y Colossal Reserva Casa Santos Lima 2017
- Y Parcelas Portuguese Tawny Port

Most of the wines for the evening had received at least one gold medal in competitions, with some receiving 10 gold medals.

## *Committee Musings*

1. While there are two resignations from the present Committee, there are six people staying on. Club members have been approached for new positions and numbers are now back up to eight for the new committee.
2. It was great to have everyone help with the tables and chairs at the start of last months' meeting and taking the same down after the meeting. Also taking the tables contents: spittoons/water jugs/cracker plates back to the kitchen. Could we please continue this new routine.

**PLEASE NOTE:** We can't arrive to do the setting up activities any earlier than 7:30pm as we interrupt the cleaner(s) schedule, the cleaners are in the hall until 7:30pm.

## *Looking Ahead:*

- Y **June** – Askerne, Hawkes Bay
- Y **July** – Club Dinner, *details tbc*
- Y **August** – Babich, *details tbc*



**Lucie Jiraska clearly recalls her first taste of wine, unimpressed by her grandpa's Cabernet Moravia.**

Now she's working with Auckland University's Biological Sciences department studying the effect of management on soil biodiversity in Hawke's Bay and Marlborough vineyards.

*What drew you to studying soil in New Zealand vineyards?*

I was five when my grandpa, a hobby winemaker from the south of the Czech Republic, thought it was about time for me to have my first sip of wine. I vividly remember him being so proud of that batch. The cold of the cellar was seeping through my summer clothes, as he ceremonially withdraw the wine from one of the barrels and I was presented with a tiny glass containing less than a sip of dark ruby liquid. My grandma was strongly arguing against it, but my grandpa was adamant. I took a sip, my face twisted into a forced smile, and I thought, what is this adult madness and why is everyone pretending they like it? I did not want to hurt my grandpa's feelings, so I pretended I liked the wine as well, but for a long time after, I kept wondering what the wine industry was all about.

It took me another 15 years and moving to Prague for my bachelor's and master's degree in molecular biology and microbiology, to actually start understanding the science behind fermentation, microbes and soils. From there, it was just a small step, supported by a portion of luck, to join the Vineyard Ecosystems (VE) Programme. I was looking for a PhD project right when my current PhD supervisors Professor Matthew Goddard and Dr Sarah Knight were advertising a position. I did not really have to think twice, and I am very happy that I made this decision to join it.

*What has your research involved?*

My research mostly focuses on the impact of agricultural management on soil microbial communities in vineyards from the Hawke's Bay and Marlborough regions. I specifically researched how soil microbial communities differ between vineyards using synthetic herbicides and those with alternative under-vine management, like cultivation or mowing. I also focused on direct impacts of synthetic and organic fungicides on soil microbes and changes to their functions in response to the application of fungicides.

As a microbial ecologist, I get to go out in the field to collect samples. Samples for the VE Programme were mostly collected by our colleagues at Plant & Food Research in Hawke's Bay and Marlborough, but for other aligned projects I was collecting samples of soil, bark, fruit and/or leaves. While I enjoy being outdoors and sampling, a large part of my work is in the laboratory doing either DNA or RNA extractions from samples or using molecular techniques to understand what microbial communities live in our samples. Or I'm in front of a computer bioinformatically processing and statistically analysing the data. This is what I think the most exciting part is, as this is the step where the data begins to make sense and we can start answering our research questions.

*Who has helped you in your work?*

Besides my amazing supervisors, Mat Goddard and Sarah Knight, I would like to acknowledge Beatrix Jones, Victoria Raw, Innocenter Amima, Jed Lennox, Paulina Giraldo-Perez and Soon Lee. And obviously all the winegrowers that allowed us to collect soils and access their sites for so many years!

*What are some of the findings in your thesis?*

The soil communities between vineyards are highly variable, more than between management regimes. While we found a small but significant effect of management regime on soil microbial

composition, we are still in the process of understanding if these small differences do affect their function in the vineyard. Each vineyard seems to be a microbiome soil island where the history of the site is reflected in the soil community.

And while some of the synthetic fungicides we tested directly in the lab had no impact on the soil microbial community composition, we were able to find an impact on microbial function in these soils. Especially those that had a history of repeated exposure to pesticides. These findings suggest that soils do in fact have an "ecological memory", so what you put in your soils matters, as it may influence how your vineyard responds in the future. However, at this stage we still have a very limited understanding on how it mechanistically works, as soils are extremely complex systems to study. Maybe one day we will be able to design management plans suited for each vineyard, not just generalised guidelines to follow.

## **Fat & Sassy goes to Marlborough**

*Written by Sophie Preece*



It's a steaming 26.5C in Hawke's Bay as a retired King's Counsel handpicks Chardonnay grapes in the wake of a cyclone.

He's one of a team of volunteers who heeded the call from winemaker and Chardonnay specialist Tony Bish, who's lost 75% of his intended intake to the rain and floods this season. "We've written off about 150 tonnes out of a 200-tonne intake," Tony says on 9 March, about to drive his trailer of freshly picked fruit back to the winery. "It's been a hard season."

But despite knowing he won't meet export orders, which take up half his production, Tony is heartened by the response from his local community, with people of all ages joining the harvest, alongside a team of seasonal workers from Vanuatu.

The wine community has pitched in too, with Marlborough growers offering a lifeline for Tony's Fat & Sassy consumer brand. On realising the extent of crop losses, Tony emailed his contacts in the region and revealed he was "desperate for Chardonnay".

The response was good, both from those willing to part with their fruit, and others offering moral support. "It's a case of Marlborough helping Hawke's Bay," he adds. "Basically, the story will be Fat & Sassy goes to Marlborough. Thanks to our colleagues in Marlborough helping us through a cyclone, we'll be able to keep continuity in the domestic market."

In the meantime, he's excited about the quality of fruit still hanging on the vine, to be picked at the end of March for his premium labels. "We are going to pick some really good fruit, so there's a happy ending in sight. It's going to deliver something.

## *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.

## *Club Information*

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*A little something to light up your Autumn evenings*