

The Cellar Club Inc



Established in 1980

September 2025 Newsletter

Ohau Gravels

Presented by Jo Scully

Wednesday 10^h September, 8pm Start

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

www.ohauwines.co.nz

Authentic wines with a unique aromatic expression, making award winning wines since 2009. Ohau is a relatively new wine sub-region, situated to the south of Levin. Since their first harvest in 2009, they have been growing exceptional aromatic varietals and producing awarding winning, authentic wines that reflect the unexpected unique regional conditions.

Wines for the evening are:

- 🍷 Not the Norm Rose 2020 – opening wine
- 🍷 Ohau Gravels Pinot Gris 2023
- 🍷 Not the Norm Sauvignon Black 2021
- 🍷 Selected Vines Sauvignon Blanc 2012
- 🍷 Ohau Gravels Chardonnay 2024
- 🍷 Ohau Gravels Pinot Noir 2024
- 🍷 Not the Norm Te Tihi 2022

This promises to be a special tasting with 2 interesting surprises for club members:

The first wine of special interest is the 2012 Selected Vines Sauvignon Blanc! No that isn't a typo. This wine has been made especially with aging in mind and so will be very interesting to compare it with the 2021 vintage that we will also be tasting.

The second wine of special interest will be our last, the 2022 Not the Norm Te Tihi. This is a fortified Pinot Noir and at 20% alcohol, is probably more akin to a port. The tasting notes talk of an aroma that is a complex bouquet of dried fruit, fragrant toasted spices, hints of roasted almonds, and a subtle note of sweet toffee. I'm really looking forward to finding out if this really is Christmas cake in a glass.

Let's Look Out for Each Other

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

Looking Back – Luna Estate sustainable, restorative farming, letting the fruit do all the talking.

What a fabulous evening for everyone who attended. With an entertaining presenter and wines, made in the Alsatian style that were different, for our tasting pleasure.

While the wines were above our normal price range, people enjoyed the different wine styles and orders were healthy. This is encouraging to your committee. Their cost to members was offset by a generous discount and the waiving of the delivery fee. Thank you Luna Estate for your support and great tasting.

A reminder of the wines we tried on the night:

- 🍷 Luna Brut Rose *a delightful welcoming wine for the evening*
- 🍷 Luna Estate Sauvignon Blanc 2023 *a blend of two very different blocks from Bue Rock Vineyard*
- 🍷 Luna Estate Pinot Gris 2023
- 🍷 Luna Estate Pinot Meunier Rose 2024
- 🍷 Luna Estate Eclipse Chardonnay 2023 *mature vine fruit used for this drop*
- 🍷 Luna Estate Blue Rock Pinot Noir 2021 *a blend from both of their vineyards*
- 🍷 Luna Estate Eclipse Pinot Noir 2021

Committee Musings

1. Thanks again to everyone who helps with the tables and chairs at the start of our evenings and taking the same down after the meeting. Also taking the tables contents: spittoons/water jugs/cracker plates back to the kitchen.

Looking Ahead:

- 🍷 **October** – Rockburn, Central Otago
- 🍷 **November** – Tbc
- 🍷 **December** – Christmas Dinner, 10th December, at La Cloche Kaiwharawhara. **Note your diaries now**

Wine News – Barossa Valley: Exploring Alkina Wines cellar door



Roman Travers // NZ Herald, 23 July 2025

There are more than 150 wineries in Barossa and about 90 cellar doors. Newstalk ZB host Roman Travers heads to one for an afternoon of leisure and learning.

Some cellar doors, like Alkina, let you form your own group tables for a social experience

Being told to stand still, draw in a deep, diaphragmatic breath, and to allow your senses to fully take in where you are, sounds like an instruction given at a yoga retreat. But here I am, standing in the Barossa Valley, only 50 minutes from the city centre of Adelaide, and my senses are exploding with that warm, fragrant, tranquillity that only rural Australia can give you. Why aren't more of the world's soaps and scented candles based on the mindfully cleansing aroma of eucalyptus trees?

I've arrived at Alkina Wines, on the cusp of Greenock. The wee village is so close, a popped cork from a bottle of bubbles may well hit it from their cellar door, if the wind was right. The courtyard setting is stunning and peaceful. Permeated occasionally by the arrival of new groups of people excited to be sharing each other's company with good food and excellent wine. There's a very relaxed atmosphere here that instantly makes me feel welcome, with the staff warmly encouraging you to rearrange the chairs around the courtyard in order to form the tables you need. A group of six women have just arrived and as they laugh and cackle away like early-morning magpies, I listen and watch with interest as they decide upon their lunch selections.

My waiter, Sarah Castle, casually leaves photo albums and books about the owner on my table as she goes about describing the wine and food to me. I'm happy to be led by her recommendations, which are just divine. Sarah moonlights as a food stager and photographer and she's genuinely engaged with me as a customer and the products that she lovingly presents and serves. I watch the easy way she floats from table to table, checking preferences, topping up glasses, taking food orders and introducing the next varietal. Sarah works like a happy octopus, with bottles, platters and plates flowing easily along with her light laughter. When you come to somewhere as delicious as Alkina, be happy to be inspired and led by those who love their work and the products they create.

I've noticed no one is here to push you into buying wine. Instead, they want you to come back and recommend their vineyard and cellar door to everyone back home. And you will, once you're made to feel adequate with your inadequate wine knowledge. Some cellar doors take the price of the tasting off when you do buy their product. I'm very much learning on the hoof and I'm not keen on spitting my wine into the large spittoon, adorning every table. "Just sip a smaller amount of wine, then tip what you don't want to drink into the spittoon" Sarah tells me as she returns to the table with a lunch that would be fitting in any Mediterranean climate. They've had no substantial rain here since November.

I've claimed a large table under a covered area with an open fire and a pizza oven, perfect for any season. Slowly, I work my way from bubbles to rose, crisp, light whites to delicate, then robust kick-you-in-the-toolbox reds. At one point, a woman wanders past my table to study some antique French cheeseboards stacked next to the woodfired pizza oven. "You might fit one or two in your handbag," I remark, and she reveals she is from the south coast of South Australia, visiting with her friend and their husbands. The two couples have spent the past 15 years having annual holidays in Wānaka. We got chatting about why I'm here and the gorgeous accommodation that I'm staying in – The Old Homestead.

"Would you like to come and see the villa?" I ask. Within seconds, they're all up and ready to march the short distance across the limestone gravel courtyard to the huge two double bedroom homestead that's mine for the next two nights. This is the kind of accommodation you dream of having when you're away on holiday. A huge kitchen, an enormous lounge with a log fire, and copious amounts of tinder-dry gum, split and set to go. There are also two double bedrooms with enormous ensuites. I feel like a real estate agent, showing off a home for sale that isn't mine, just like any real estate agent.

"You'll need a bigger handbag," I tell Sharon as they eye up all the exquisite pieces of furniture that make Alkina's Old Homestead feel like a proper home. I've only been here for a few hours and already I've met locals and other tourists like me, all as happy as a flock of Galahs to share their expertise and stories.

Making the most of a tasting - Slowing down and learning how to live in the moment and enjoy everything can take some time, so give yourself plenty of it. If you love a good yarn and you're willing to ask questions, you only need to plan a day with two or three cellar door visits. Talk to those in the trade and to those who organise wine tours. They all want you to enjoy your time here, and too often they speak to tourists determined to have four-six tastings in a day. The cellar doors don't swing open until 11am and that first one might be your first meal as well.

The people of Barossa love what they do, and they love the product you're heading up their vineyard driveway to see. Whether it's a random drive with you at the wheel or a strategically planned expedition, there's every chance that you'll meet sommeliers, vintners and a cast of Barossa people who are warm, authentic and filled to the top of the glass with great stories. If you're not on a well-thought-out mission, talk to the staff where you are. Ask them what they'd recommend next. Towards the end of the tasting, they'll have a great sense of what you like and therefore, where to send you to next in your dusty rental car.

I know it's an added cost, but I recommend having transport booked. Whether that's Barossa Taxis or 'Door to Door' in a chauffeur-driven Land Rover, Mercedes or Jaguar, you won't have that fear rolling around in the back of your mind of "have I swallowed more than I've spat?"

Matangi Beef & Bordeaux Meal Delight

On receiving an email from **FAWC** [Food and Wine Classic] that this Hawkes Bay-wide festival was cancelled for 2025-2026, those of us who usually take in events with such pleasure were a little aghast!

But on reading to the bottom of that same email we were greatly relieved to find some new alternatives were featured. One of these was a dinner organized by Hastings' **Cellar 495** *more than just a wine bar*.

"Cellar 495 combines warmth and hospitality with world-class wine expertise. It blends wine bar, bistro, tasting room and wine shop – all led by the world's 495th Master of Wine, Michael Henley.

Our wine selection represents the finest from around the globe, served alongside seasonal cuisine from Head Chef Carlita Campbell that captures the spirit of New Zealand."

Cellar 495 partnered with a local farm business, **Matangi**, who are a boutique family-owned farming business producing premium 100% grass-fed Angus beef and chicory-finished lamb with a sole focus on eating quality and no compromises along the way. They have a Butchery and Showroom at 308 Heretaunga Street East, Hastings, or to find out more visit them at www.matangi.co.nz

MATANGI BEEF & BORDEAUX DINNER EXPERIENCE

This excellent evening was a collaboration between two Hastings businesses and was excellent exposure for the people who attended.

Both for Matangi Beef and Cellar 495 - the small seating restaurant the meal was held at.

French wines were matched with each course with everyone in attendance was exposed to different cuts of meat than usually consumed, rounded off by excellent cooking and presentation from the Chef.

As a bonus, everyone got to meet and talk with both the café owner and the Matangi Beef owners. Matangi talked about their philosophy on their farming style, animal selection and why, and their seasonal butcher shop over the road from the restaurant Cellar 495.

The evening's menu:

Steak Tartare, Sous Vide Egg, Pecorino – *rump with herbs [tarragon and chives]*

MATCHED WITH: 2022 Chateau de Seuil Graves – *a white burgundy*

Beef Shin Croquette, Horseradish Potato Cream

MATCHED WITH: 2020 Domaine de La Solitude – *from the same sub-region as the above wine, owned by Nuns! This is a Merlot/Cab Sauvignon blend*

Grilled Flank, Chimichurri, Hasselbacks – *slightly spice, delicious*

MATCHED WITH: 2019 Famille J.M. Cazes Saint-Estephe – *Cab Sauvignon/Cab Blanc*

Slow Braised Beef Chuck, Celeriac Remoulade

MATCHED WITH: 2015 Le Petit Vauthier Saint-Emillion Grand Cru – *Merlot/Cab Franc*

Then we finished with a lovely dessert wine: 2015 Bordeaux Saturn – *smooth on the palate but not too sweet, golden kiwifruit/pear notes*

Our table's pick of the night for the wines was the 2019 Famille J.M. Cazes Saint-Estephe, smooth in the mouth, red fruit on the nose and well balanced with the meal.

The pleasant surprise of the night for those of us whose only exposure to steak tartare via the Mr Bean sketch from years ago, was the steak tartare – a delightful starter for the evening, well balanced and tasty.

We would recommend giving Cellar 495 a try if you're in the Hawkes Bay, they're at 319 Heretaunga Street East, Hastings; phone (06) 870 6308; email: enquiries@cellar495.co.nz

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.

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