

# The Cellar Club Inc



*Established in 1980*

## *December 2025 Newsletter*

### *Reminder: Christmas Dinner*

# LA CLOCHE



**Kaiwharawhara, Wellington**

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> December**

**Please arrive at 6.30pm for seating at 7.00pm**

#### **Please Note:**

-  There is some angle parking on the side street going down towards Animates, this is in Westminister Street, there is two La Cloche parks in Animates carpark.
-  You are asked to arrive **on or before 6:30pm**.
-  Please come in either door, both of which have a few stairs, where you will be greeted with a complementary glass of bubbles.
-  The meal is BYO wine, and your prepaid cost includes corkage and a discount on the meal. During the evening, it is customary to share the bottle of wine you have brought with your neighbours.
-  We are expecting to finish sometime between 9.00pm and 9.30pm, but this is a guideline only, in case you are arranging transport home. Please try and stay as flexible as possible.

#### **As a reminder of the menu for this evening:**

##### **Amuse Bouche**

*Smoked Chicken Gougère*

*Mushroom and Blue Cheese Vol au Vent*

##### **Entrée**

*La Terrine de Saumon fumé*

*Smoked salmon terrine with lemon dill cream served with pickled cucumber and crispy capers*

##### **Main Course**

*Le Confit de Canard sur son lit de Lentilles du Puy*

*Duck leg confit with warm Le Puy lentils salad and cherry jus*

**OR**

*Le Poisson du Marché en croute persillée*

*Pan-fried market fish with parsley crust and piperade served with crunchy fennel salad*

### **Dessert**

*Le Chocolat et les Fruits rouges*

This promises to be a very enjoyable way to finish our year with 31 people attending. Wayne will shortly send out a table seating plan so we can make sure that your Duck or Fish main ends up at the right place on your table.”



### *Looking Back* – On our Mission Evening

This was a fun festive evening, hosted by Tammy, Mission’s Rep, who along with Wayne, chose the wines for our evening.

We were fortunate to have two of their premier Jewelstone range, to savour, along with a Rose’ from Stables to compare with a Jewelstone Rose, plus Mission’s Brut Cuvee bubbles, made in the champagne way.

Tammy updated us with the news that the CEO for the last 30 years was departing for other pastures. So they now have at Mission a new CE, new-ish vintner and new web page with new motto – ‘History in the Making!’ Exciting times!

This evening has left everyone with some thoughtfully selected wines to source for Christmas celebrations. As a reminder of what to put on your shopping list, the wines we tasted were:

- 🍷 Mission Fete Brut Cuvee – *Pinot Gris from Mission’s Home Block at Taradale, zesty with delicate pear and apple and fine mousse.*
- 🍷 2025 Stables Rosé – *made from a mix of grapes, to be used as an apertiff, cheap and cheerful*
- 🍷 Jewelstone Rosé [**noting the 2024 has recently been released and is now called *Blanc De Noir***]. *This will cellar well for another five years if you want to. Handpicked whole bunch pressed organic Merlot grapes from Mere Rd in the Gimblett Gravels.*
- 🍷 2022 Jewelstone Chardonnay – *these grapes were from their Green Meadows site in Taradale, made up of two clones, hand harvested and gently pressed, the firstly placed in French oak before spending time in neutral barrels.*
- 🍷 Mission Reserve Syrah – *Gimblett Gravels grapes, a nice light-ish wine, from a single vineyard. Can be kept for up to five years.*
- 🍷 Mission Reserve Malbec – *light, dry and on oak for 12 months, this can be cellared for five more years if you wish.*
- 🍷 Mission Estate Late Harvest Riesling – *this was a nice light-ish desert wine, and as well as going well with our Xmas fare provided by Wayne, it would pair nicely with lemon meringue pie.*

### *2026 Events Coming Up:*

- 🍷 **Reminder:** Currently there is no function planned for this January, but your committee is currently considering a specific idea for 2027. That said, if you have an ideas that we also might consider, please talk to a committee member.
- 🍷 **February** – Askerne Wines
- 🍷 **March** – Penfolds Tasting: *wines from your Club Cellar, plus new wines*

## Committee Musings



Your committee would like to acknowledge how the Club works for and on behalf of everyone in the wine industry. We are a sought-after Club for the wineries, especially the ones that have presented in the past, and are wanting to present to us again. This is down to everyone who attends and orders at our monthly events. Lets continue this into 2026.

Thank you to everyone who answered the Survey that we recently sent out, we received 41 responses in total. To give a summary of responses:

🍷 On the question of which influences your decision to remain a member, there were large numbers besides 'an opportunity to try new and different wines'; 'to meet winemakers and hear them talk about their wine' and also 'socialising with other members – this seems to sum up the reason for our Club!

🍷 Q2 - There was an overwhelming response to the question If you could only choose between these two . . . To try new and different wines won over To purchase wine at discounted price.

🍷 Q3 – If you decide to purchase wine, what is your main consideration – more people leaned towards the combination answer of quality and price of the wine.

🍷 What price would influence your decision not to purchase wine had an interesting tally of responses. We had pretty even responses to \$20, \$40, \$60, with slightly more ticking 'Price is unlikely to prevent me purchasing a wine that I really like.

🍷 Q5, what style of BYO restaurant dining would you prefer we organise, had slightly more people opting for 'Café/Bistro Dining, over Fine Dining and Ethnic restaurants. This reply gives us a steer to focus on, thanks.

🍷 What price (incl. corkage) would you consider too great at a restaurant, had a tie between \$100 and 'My decision would not be based on cost'.

🍷 Q7 – Is easy access to public transport a consideration in your decision to attend a restaurant event, again had an interesting response percentage: 60% said 'no', and 40% said 'yes'.

🍷 Q8 – Do you enjoy the events presented by the Club that don't involve purchase options ... had an overwhelmingly positive response!

🍷 Q9 – In relation to events presented by the Club, would you like to see – we had an overwhelmingly positive response under 'About the same number'.

It is positive for your committee that members feel that things are going in the right direction. Please feel free to talk to a committee member if you have any concerns or ideas to pass on, thanks.

## Wine News – New Zealand 2025 Harvest Report: A Return to Form

*Emma Jenkins MW – Decanter website - May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025*



The 2025 New Zealand wine harvest has been widely welcomed following 2024's reduced yields. Across the regions, winemakers reported not only a normalisation of volumes but also excellent fruit quality – notable in a country where diverse geography often leads to variability.

A warm, dry spring set the season up well, though a cooler, wetter December and January period tested nerves before settling into a classic Indian summer. While perhaps not as straightforward as

the outstanding 2024 vintage, 2025 looks set to produce wines of finesse and charm across the regions and varieties, with the first releases just months away.

## **Auckland**

Michael Brajkovich MW of Kumeu River expressed relief at a 'normal' sized vintage after two seasons down by 35-40%. Auckland experienced the driest summer since 1958, with consistent warmth but no heat spikes. 'The fruit ripened evenly and with gradual aroma and flavour development,' Brajkovich said. Chardonnay was once again the star, arriving early and in pristine condition.

## **Gisborne**

Described as a 'magnificent vintage' by Kirsten Searle of Matawhero, 2025 brought full physiological ripeness and a return to normal yields after two lighter years. Chardonnay excelled, providing excellent fruit for both table wines and sparkling bases.

Searle also highlighted the Gewürztraminer from Matawhero's Riverpoint vineyard as particularly impressive – a fitting celebration for the winery's 50th anniversary.

## **Hawke's Bay**

There is genuine excitement in Hawke's Bay, with some suggesting that 2025 may rival the renowned 2013 vintage. Ben Tombs noted Craggy Range's earliest-ever harvest, with Chardonnay off the Gimblett Gravels picked on 8 February.

Whites show 'electric flavour profiles with moderate alcohol' while Syrah, despite late-summer humidity challenges, enjoyed extended hang time without excessive sugar accumulation, promising finely structured, vibrant reds.

## **Wairarapa**

After four small vintages, Martinborough celebrated a strong yield. A relatively calm spring and lighter winds led to strong shoot growth and abundant flowering. Intensive canopy management paid off with Pinot Noir showing a savoury, charming profile.

Tombs commented on lower acidity and softer tannins compared to the more firmly structured recent vintages at Craggy Range's Te Muna vineyard.

## **Nelson**

Todd Stevens of Neudorf reflected positively on the vintage: 'It's still early but the whites appear beautifully balanced, while the Pinots show poise and should present very well.' Initial signs point to good consistency across this smaller but significant region.

## **Marlborough**

Murray Cook of Dog Point summed up 2025 as 'a season of patience'. 'With generous yields, the fruit took some time to ripen fully. Thankfully, we were blessed with classic dry and warm conditions which kept fruit quality high over what was our longest harvest period (46 days) in 24 years,' he added.

However, with global inventories still high amid flat consumption and geopolitical uncertainties, many producers opted to leave fruit on the vines. The upside: only the best fruit was picked, and consumers can look forward to excellent quality from this key region.

## **North Canterbury**

A rollercoaster year, with Greystone's Dom Maxwell describing it as one that 'challenged us, then offered a lot, then challenged us again, and finally delivered in the end'. Pure fruit flavours and clean fermentations made it a worthwhile ride. 'We're excited about the quality we have in the winery,' Maxwell added.

## **Central Otago / Waitaki**

Valli's Jen Parr described an unusually compressed harvest of around half the usual span. Despite spring frosts affecting yields, she was thrilled with the 'tremendous concentration' and 'crazy colour', particularly in Gibbston and Bendigo. Small berries and clean fruit were common themes with Parr

commenting that wines possess richness and an appealing 'joyful' quality that should drink well young but also reward a few years in bottle.

The Waitaki Valley – often marginal – had one of its best vintages in recent years, for both ripeness and volume.

### **And International News: Marks & Spencer Brings Back Phenomenal Festive Treat that was axed a decade ago**

Sian Baldwin // Evening Standard 19<sup>th</sup> Nov 2025



Christmas is a time for all the yummy food and drink, and one leading supermarket has not let us down - bringing back a festive favourite after a very long absence.

M&S has brought back a tippie which was last sold a decade ago, and already customers are snapping it up - meaning it may be in short supply very soon!

Their popular Rosé Mulled Wine has been brought back for 2025, with news that Rosé is the drink this festive season - with notes of orange and vanilla – set to be this season's viral must-try. Warm up a bottle at your next get-together to get everyone talking.

According to Ocado, searches for 'rosé' are up by 32 percent compared to this time last year, with sales of rosé already up by 25 percent. M&S have seen a similar trend.

Stats show that the week before Christmas 2024, rosé sales were double those seen in their biggest week over the summer, selling 144,000 bottles of rosé in the week commencing July 6, compared to a massive 286,000 bottles being sold in the week of December 16. As a result, M&S have now announced plans to re-release their rosé mulled wine after a 10-year absence on the shelves.

For £6 a bottle the plonk will likely be popular. Gemma Wright, trading manager for Wine at M&S Food, said: "We've definitely seen Rosé become a customer favourite all year round. [Shoppers](#) are choosing rosé in winter because it works really well with the kinds of food people serve at Christmas. It's also a lighter, more refreshing option if you don't fancy a red."

## *Screwcaps*

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

## *Club Information*

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