

# The Cellar Club Inc



*Established in 1980*

## *January 2026 Newsletter*

**Happy New Year to all our members**

**REMINDER:** There is no Club BBQ this January

## *February 2026*

### *Askerne Hawkes Bay*

**267 Te Mata Mangateretere Rd, Havelock North**

*Presenter* - John Loughlin, Co-Founder and Director

**Wednesday 11<sup>th</sup> February 8pm start**

**Door Price: to be advised later**

<https://askernewines.co.nz>



Askerne Estate winery commenced in **April 1993** when wine lovers John and Kathryn Loughlin purchased the original 11.6 hectares site in Te Mata Mangateretere Road. John and Kathryn had studied winemaking and viticulture in the previous years with Kathryn, as the more diligent student, achieving the higher grades.

They called the property Askerne, being the olde English name of Kathryn's birthplace, [Askern in Yorkshire](#), England.

Sauvignon Blanc vines were planted in late **1993**, Semillon and Riesling in **1994**, Chardonnay in **1995** and Gewürztraminer in 1996. The first wines were made at the Waimarama Estate Winery (then owned by Dr John Loughlin, John's father) in **1996**.

In February **1997**, the Askerne cellar door was opened to the public, and it also sold Waimarama Estate's red wines, including the then famous Waimarama Dessert Cabernet. The **1997** vintage produced very fine wines from Sauvignon Blanc, and Chardonnay which confirmed the potential of the site. Askerne commenced exporting with wines from the **1997** vintage. It was a complete surprise to us when our Sauvignon Blanc won an award in The Netherlands as the best match with a cigar. It was not something we thought of in making the wine, nor have subsequently aspired to.

In **1998** Dr John Loughlin sold Waimarama Estate Winery and from the **1999** vintage, Askerne's wines were made on site. The cellar door building was expanded to accommodate winemaking activities. The first red wine grapes were planted. Also, in **1999**

the first Botrytis Semillon wine was made, and the first componentry was created for the Noble Noir wine which was first released in **2013**.

In the significantly frost-affected **2001** the first red grapes were harvested, and a Cabernet Merlot Franc blend and Dessert Cabernet were made. Both these red wine styles were encouraging examples of the desired styles. A Chardonnay from the **2001** vintage won Askerne's first gold medal.

In **2004** a new purpose-built winery was completed, only hours before it was used for vintage. The **2005** vintage saw the first multi-awarded wine with our Gewürztraminer winning double golds. The **2006** vintage saw the first trophy which was taken by our Noble Semillon. The 2007 vintage saw Askerne produce a Gewürztraminer that won 5 gold medals and a trophy.

Large vintages in **2008**, **2009** and **2010** coincided with the global financial crisis and a downturn in business as customers changed and downsized and the market moved to cheaper price points. Export channels also dried up for Askerne. They launched their first white and gold label Rouge and Blanc blends as lower tier responses and sold them directly to consumers. Most of the fruit from the **2011** and **2012** vintages were sold as we sought to rebalance inventories with demand.

in **2014** Askerne commenced an exporting relationship in China with Beijing Touch World International Trading Company.

The **2018** vintage proved to be a great one and saw the launch of two of the planned new wine styles being a Sauvignon Blanc / Sauvignon Gris / Semillon blend and the first of the Icon series of wines in "The Archer" Chardonnay. **2018** also saw the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Askerne venture and was a time to think about the past and present

The **2019** vintage was another excellent one which saw a second Icon wine produced in a Syrah called "Tere" which speaks of our site on Te Mata Mangateretere Road, adjoining the Tuki Tuki River.

The **2020** vintage was spectacular in terms of climate and quality. It was also unusual in terms of vintage operations which coincided with the covid-19 global pandemic, but Askerne was able to operate as an essential business. From the 2020 vintage we added a new product to our range, being the first Sérieux rosé which was made from a blend of Carménère and Mourvèdre

In January **2021** Cairn Coghill joined the Askerne team as winemaker.

## *Looking Ahead Further:*

- Y **March** – Penfolds
- Y **April** - Gold Medal/Trophy/International Wines Awards hosted by Panel
- Y **May** - AGM

## *Looking Back* – **December Christmas Dinner at Le Cloche**

What a lovely evening, the weather gods played ball, and the people, location and food were all wonderful!

We had people spread over three larger tables and the whole evening worked well.

As a reminder of the menu:

We were met with the usual glass of bubbles, thanks Wayne

First course – *amuse bouche* - was a small mushroom vol au vent and a small smoke chicken gougere

Second course – *entrée* – Salmon terrine

Third course – *main* – we had the choice of either fish or duck, both were delicious

Dessert – Le Chocolat et les fruits rouges

A festive evening that everyone enjoyed. A comment from one of the Club members:

*Had a great time last night. The food was amazing, couldn't fault it. (especially the dessert) The staff were so friendly and efficient.*

## Wine News – From NZ House and Garden, Imbibe Section:

**SWIFT WINES – a colourful new stop:** Hawke's Bay has a new cellar door, with Swift Wines opening a bright, playful space on Mere Rd, Fernhill. Visitors can build a platter from the fridge selection and taste six wines. Pipi, a limited sparkling albarino, is also pouring, with only 1500 bottles produced. The venue, run by winemaker Lauren Swift and Henry Williams, is open six days a week through Summer. Visit [Fun Hawke's Bay Wines for Everyday Celebrations | Swift Wines](#) 'Thoughtful, dangerously drinkable and thought provoking. No boring wines (or boring wine labels) here!'

**F.Y.I.: 2026 Wairarapa Wines Harvest Festival** presented by James Henry Ltd, Dakin Road Masterton on Saturday February 21<sup>st</sup> 11am – 5pm. You can buy tickets on-line.

## 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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So that's what that's for... 🍷🍷🍷

