

The Cellar Club Inc



Established in 1980

April 2026 Newsletter

Gold Medal Winners from the New Zealand International Wine Show October 2025

Hosted by Wayne Kennedy, Murray Jaspers and Michael Kuus

Wednesday 9th April, 8pm Start

Door Price: Members \$16 / Guests \$40



Please remember your tasting glasses 🍷 🍷 🍷 🍷



The 2025 NZ International Wine Show (NSIWS) is the largest wine judging competition in NZ, established in 2005. It aims to recognise and celebrate excellence in NZ wines. The show is known for its rigorous judging process, overseen by experienced judges, including Chief Judge Bob Campbell MW and a team of senior judges.

Immediately that the Gold Medal Winners from the New Zealand International Wine Show were announced last October, your club set out to acquire three bottles of seven gold medal wines for us to taste this month. April was chosen to do this as that is a time of the year when the wine industry is busy with harvest and thus many wineries are unavailable to present to us.

Some of these are wines are hard to come by now, so we are lucky to have this tasting. Even better, 5 of the 7 wines to be tasted actually won the trophy in their class. So come and discover whether you agree with the judges.

The wines we will be tasting are:

TYPE	CATEGORY	WIN
🍷 2025 Rapaura Springs Reserve Pinot Rose, Marlborough	Rose & Blush	Double Gold and Champion Rose Trophy
🍷 2025 Te Kairanga Estate Sauvignon Blanc, Martinborough	Sauvignon Blanc	Double Gold and Champion Sauvignon Blanc Trophy
🍷 2025 Sileni Advocate Grand Reserve Albarino, Hawkes Bay	Other Wite Wine Varieties	Double Gold Medal
🍷 2025 Sugar Loaf Riesling, Marlborough	Riesling	Double Gold and Champion Riesling Trophy

🍷 2024 Beach House Cabernet Malbec, Hawkes Bay	Cabernet Sauvignon & Predominant blends	Double Gold Medal
🍷 2023 Barossa Valley Estate Shiraz, South Australia	Commercial Red Wine	Double Gold and Champion Commercial Red Trophy
🍷 2024 Craggy Range Martinborough Pinot Noir	Pinot Noir	Double Gold and Champion Pinot Noir Trophy

Look Out for Each Other

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

Looking Back – Penfolds Evening

Just a reminder for those that attended the prestigious Penfolds tasting last month. For those that couldn't, we were expertly guided through the tasting by Wayne Kennedy and the tasting panel made up of knowledgeable good friends of the club John Saker and Keith Tibble. In fact, such good friends that Keith has now joined the club!

We started with the 2024 Penfolds 311 Chardonnay which proved to be a tasty introduction to the night. Consensus was that there were better New Zealand Chardonnay's for the money available, particularly from the Hawke's Bay.

Next was the 2023 Penfolds Bin 28 Kalimna Shiraz which was nicely fruit-forward. This contrasted with 2006 vintage of the same which of all the cellared wine showed the most age in appearance - a nice tawny colour around the rim. On the palate it did not quite live up to expectation but perhaps might have opened up in time.

This was followed by the 2012 Penfolds Bin 9 Cabernet Sauvignon which sadly is no longer made. This wine proved to be the highlight of the night and was narrowly voted the best wine tasted.

Following supper, we tasted the 2022 Penfolds Bin 128 Coonawarra Shiraz followed by the 2007 vintage of the same. This was both a step up in price and quality on the Bin 28 and received much favourable comment from the panel and floor.

Concluding the tasting was the 2012 Penfolds Bin 138 Shiraz Grenache Mataro which was another highlight of the evening, this GSM almost scoring as many likes as the Bin 9.

Our thanks are extended to the panel at the front and cellar masters of the club past and present.

Our thanks also go to Asahi for the help and special handling of the wines we purchased for this tasting.

A Haythornthwaite Pinot Noir was also supplied by Susan Andrews to raise a glass to our late club member Mark Haythornthwaite. Mark's last known target was to taste the 2025 vintage, and this he achieved, with the vintage being bottle the week after he passed away.

Wording supplied by Gordon Barlow

Committee Musings

1. We also continue to be delighted and thankful for everyone's help with set-up of the hall for our gatherings, and then the pack down at the end of the evening, thank you.

Looking Ahead:

- Y **May** – Club AGM
- Y **June** – Foxes Island, Marlborough
- Y **July** – Club Mid-Year Dinner - **TBC**

Wine News - Big Sky Wines harvest brings friends together in Te Muna Valley vineyard

NZ Herald 16th March

Harvest time at Big Sky Wines begins or ends with friends and neighbours in the vineyard helping to bring in the first grapes of the season.

Husband-and-wife team Kath Jacobs and Jeremy Corban started out 21 years ago, growing mainly Pinot Noir on 6ha in Te Muna Valley, near Martinborough, and were both the viticulturalists and winemakers at their certified organic vineyard.

They did most things by hand, and in mid-March, under a shockingly blue sky in 26C heat, a clutch of neighbours and friends were lending theirs, snipping the first grape bunches from the vines.

"I like this kind of ending one chapter and starting the next chapter," Corban said.

"This is the end of the grape growing and the start of the wine making, so it's a nice point.

"I like seeing the fruit come in.

"That's six months' work, maybe longer, and it's just gorgeous on days like this.

"You know, it's no hardship, is it?"

The couple were among 90% of New Zealand's 700-plus winegrowers classified as "small" - producing under 200,000 litres a year.

With their own winery on site, they produced about 20,000 litres, although that varied from year to year.

Jacobs described it as a classic family-run operation.

"We try and do all the work ourselves. We're organic. We're living on our property. Our children grew up here.

"We love the fact that it's really simple and compact, and we pick as much fruit in a day as we can, Jeremy and I can, process, so we've got a lot of friends who've been involved with us since the beginning."

The pickers were treated to a nice lunch at the end - "A celebration of the time of year," Corban said.

"We like to either do the first pick of the season or the last pick of the season with that, with friends."

Kate Smith was one of the stalwarts with about 20 years of picking under her belt.

"I've known Katherine and Jeremy for a long time," she said.

"We came to New Zealand in 2005, and they'd just bought the vineyard.

"We've been helping them with the harvest almost every year since.

"We're just friends, amateurs who come for a fun day, and it's just a lovely day.

"There's usually a good team of people here. And, you know, I always meet people that I haven't seen before, and we have a nice chat as we go along with vines.

"You know, there's a nice communal feeling. We will sit down and have a lunch together at some point."

The group were picking early harvest Pinot Noir grapes, with the fruit at lower sugar and higher acid levels, for sparkling wine.

"We really like the human factor of people looking at each bunch, it's really important," Jacobs said.

"We're making the best wine we can, not the most wine we can.

"So we really appreciate people's actual eyeballs on the bunches."

The buckets went into bins, which a neighbour picked up and loaded on the back of the tractor.

It rumbles slowly down the rows to the larger field bin at the end, where the morning's harvest was collected, ready for the winery.

The fruit would be chilled down to 10C overnight, then lightly pressed in the morning.

"It's quite a physical, manual process," Corban said.

"You get good at lifting 15kg a lot of times, thousands of times.

"It also gives us another chance to make sure there's nothing going into the mix that we don't want."

With a good amount in the bin, it was time for a break, and the group headed off for scones, a cold drink and a chat.

"We don't do all our harvesting like that, but it's a nice way ... at the end of the day, this whole business is about conviviality."

- RNZ

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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