

The Cellar Club Inc



Established in 1980

October 2026 Newsletter

J K 14 Wines - an Italian Evening presented by Luca Kirwin

Wednesday 14th October, 8pm Start

Door Price: Members \$12 / Guests \$16

jk14wines

I've been having a love affair in Italy, and so far, it's lasted 30 years. It's okay, my wife knows all about it, and she understands. After all, she loves Treviso as much as I do, since she was born there.

Treviso is unbelievable. The region is like a compact sampler of all that is the best of Italy. My first visit, I remember thinking, "This is a far cry from dad's butchery back in Mangere." Climbing the hill near our house, I could look across and see the homes of bright Pinot Grigios, full Merlots, and Proseccos that make Champagne seem dull.

I want to share what I found with my friends and family back here in NZ... and hey, anyone else who wants a taste of something special. I hope you fall in love with Treviso as much as I have

John Kirwan

Our family is half Italian and half Kiwi and growing up in a small Italian town called Treviso, we learnt how important it is to sit down and enjoy our meal, creating meaningful conversations about the wine and the food we are tasting. We are very excited to share some of our favourite Italian products with you. To give us an understanding of the quality that this winery can produce, we will be tasting the following wines:

- 🍷 The welcome wine is a surprise for the evening
- 🍷 Ombra de Vin Prosecco
- 🍷 Nonna Silvana Pinot Grigio
- 🍷 Zin Fiano
- 🍷 Chianti Biskero
- 🍷 Montepulciano
- 🍷 Malanotte
- 🍷 The Grappa and Liquirizia to finish off the evening with

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 - Del Mundo -Argentina Wines with Lucas

It was lovely to have Lucas with us again, this time for an Argentinian wine evening. With 31 attending for the evening, we enjoyed the wines on the night that were from an area at the foot of the Andes, so were from volcanic soils.

The wines from this region are largely made to be cellared, but if you wish enjoyed now also.

Information about the wines from the evening:

- 🍷 Welcome Wine, Senta, is a bottle fermented Italian Semi-Sparkling Wine was a soft elegant wine, bottle fermented, made from the same grapes as Prosecco but without being fermented in the bottle.
- 🍷 2025 San Felipe Classic Malbec Rose from 'La Rural' one of the country's oldest and most historic wineries founded in 1885 by Felipe Rutini. This is made from the Malbec variety that had to be re-planted in France in from Bordeaux after the 'wine blight'. More a blush in colour, fruity on the nose, exposed to French oak for three months, strawberries/raspberries in the mouth..
- 🍷 San Felipe Chardonnay Barrel Select crafted by San Felipe vineyards, from the foothills of the Andes, this wine combines fresh fruit with subtle oak complexity. This wine had 100% malolactic fermentation. This is an 'every day' drinking wine, high in acidity as the grapes ripen slowly. This has exposure to both French and American oak.
- 🍷 2023 Rutini Chardonnay a refined wine known for its vibrant straw-yellow colour, has a delicate oak influence. This wine had nine months in French oak, with pineapple being the backbone of the taste here. This is from their 'collection' wines.
- 🍷 2024 Trumpeter Malbec by Rutini from a selection of vineyards 1,000-2,000m above sea level in the Uco Valley. Trumpeter is the name of a bird in Mendoza, and this wine was originally made for the American market. It had seven months in French oak and is meant to be drunk now, rather than cellared. You get blackberries, cinnamon, cardamon in the mouth.
- 🍷 2023 Rutini Cabernet-Malbec combining the structure of Cabernet Sauvignon with the aromatic richness of Malbec, aged 12 months in French oak for 12 months. The Cabernet Sauvignon softens this wine which was very dry, with blackberries in the mouth.
- 🍷 2023 Rutini Malbec is a deep violet-red colour, aged 12 months in French oak. This wine is produced from the best parcels from three sites and is rich in the mouth, again with blackberries to savour.

Of course, being Argentina, every wine is made to be eaten with a meat: The reds go best with sirloin cuts; the whites with seafood or risotto/pasta; the Chardonnays go with snapper or natural oysters.

Lucas helped us out by drawing the winner of the raffle prize, thanks Steve for the photo.



Looking Ahead:

- 🍷 **November** – Beach House, Hawkes Bay
- 🍷 **December** – Christmas Dinner, The Thistle, Thorndon Quay, WGTN
- 🍷 **January** – an exciting return of our Club function for the start of the year. This will be a ‘High Tea’ when that refers to the sharing of your favourite wine(s) and food with friends. This afternoon tea/high tea will involve people bringing a plate to share with their table too, as in the past BBQs. Numbers will be allocated in the future so you know if you need to bring either a savoury or a sweet contribution.

Committee Musings

1. As always the committee wishes to thank 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.

Wine News – Kiwis’ alcohol consumption falls to lowest level since records began

2nd Sept 2026- Tom Rose, Journalist, NZ Herald Website

Kiwis are drinking less alcohol than ever before, with consumption falling to its lowest since records began.

Recently released Stats NZ data shows alcohol consumption per capita has fallen to 5.98 litres of pure alcohol, down roughly a third since 2011, with New Zealand’s consumption now among the lowest OECD countries.

According to Brewers Association executive director Dylan Firth, it’s a sign of changing times, economically and socially.

As less cash flows through the economy, production costs and excise tax increases outpace inflation, and young people become more likely to swap the pub for alcohol-free alternatives, Firth said consumption habits are responding in kind.

But despite the downward trends, he doesn’t think beer – still the beverage of choice for Kiwi adults – is falling out of favour.

“I think the industry’s been pretty agile,” he told Newstalk ZB’s Mike Hosking Breakfast.

“Most New Zealanders [drink moderately](#) anyway, so it’s not really about that.

“What we’re seeing is that people are looking to maybe spend a little bit less money in tough economic times, and also, the cost of production’s definitely gone up over that time as well.”

Firth noted growth in zero-alcohol and low-carb beer sales, driven by mindful moderation and a desire for healthier alternatives to traditional brews, was bucking the trends, with Speight’s Summit Ultra – a low-carb beer – the country’s most popular.

“You see every brewery’s kind of got one in their stable.”

Despite falling alcohol consumption, Stats NZ data for the year to June 2026 shows beer has maintained its market cap rate of 59.7% of all alcohol available for consumption, a decrease of 0.1% since 2020.

Firth accepted breweries were having to lean into alternatives to maintain this, but still expected there’d be a “balancing out over the next few years”.

“It’s been tough economically. As things kind of settle down and people have a few more dollars in their pocket, we’ll see hopefully a bit of growth again, people going back out to hospitality venues and supporting them.

“And hopefully, less inflation means, you know, lower excise tax increases, which obviously hurt as well.”

Sileni: Hawke’s Bay winery to close after 30 years; job losses

11th Sept 2026- Gary Hamilton-Irvine, Journalist, NZ Herald Website

Prestigious Hawke’s Bay winery Sileni will close at the end of this year after almost three decades.

Sileni was established in 1997 by Sir Graeme Avery.

The winery has been based in a stunning building and property near Hastings since 1999, in the wine district known as the Bridge Pā Triangle.

The cellar door has been shut since last July, raising questions about the winery’s future.

Booster Wine Group (BWG) is the current owner of Sileni and has now announced plans to close the winery at the end of this year and cease winemaking at that location.

The Sileni brand will continue, with winemaking shifting to other BWG-owned wineries in the South Island.

“Post the closure of our Hawke’s Bay winery, Sileni wines will be produced at our Awatere River Winery in Marlborough and Gravity Winery in Tasman,” BWG chief executive Craig Langley said.

Following a review of its operations, Langley said the “difficult decision” was made to exit its Hawke’s Bay operations .

“As part of the restructuring process, a number of roles across winemaking and viticulture have been affected.”

Langley did not confirm how many Hawke’s Bay jobs were going.

He said the decision was based on several factors.

“The global wine sector is facing multiple challenges including an oversupply of grapes and wine, alongside reduced consumer demand for wine.

“New Zealand’s wine producers are not immune to these challenges, and we are starting to see wineries respond by scaling back production and removing vines.

“BWG will continue to operate the Sileni winery until the end of 2026.

“The decision reflects the need to consolidate operations, improve efficiency, and ensure the long-term sustainability of the company.”

Sileni is a prominent brand across New Zealand and is also exported to 36 countries.

Langley said Sileni remained “one of our most recognised and established brands” and “a cornerstone of our portfolio”.

“With significant brand equity built over many years, a long-standing reputation for quality, and a loyal customer base in New Zealand and 36 international markets, Sileni will continue to be central to our growth ambitions and long-term strategy.”

The Avery family, which sold Sileni to Booster in 2018, declined to comment on the winery closure.

BWG leased the property and associated Hawke’s Bay vineyards from Private Land and Property Fund (PLP), managed by Booster Investment.

PLP said, in a statement, it was considering the future of the winery property.

"PLP is currently evaluating a range of options, including running the vineyards, partial or full sale, or redevelopment. No final decision has been made as yet."

AND something for the coffee lovers:

Here Now: China's booming coffee scene is challenging Kiwi ideas about the perfect brew

RNZ News, Liz Garton Team Leader, Podcasts & Series

New Zealanders are serious about their coffee. But while most of the coffee consumed here comes from traditional producing nations such as Brazil and Colombia, another coffee-growing region is quietly attracting attention: China's Yunnan province.

Coffee grows in a band around the globe known as the "green belt", which spans the region between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn. China's southwestern province of Yunnan sits on the northern edge of that zone and has spent the past two decades building a reputation as a producer of Arabica coffee.

Kelly Qu, co-owner of MQ Coffee in Auckland, told RNZ's Here Now that a visit to a coffee farm in Yunnan changed the way she thought about coffee.

Qu first encountered the region's coffee industry while travelling through Yunnan, where she learned how coffee is picked, processed and roasted at origin. "The average coffee consumer doesn't always think about where coffee comes from. They just think about the final product," she said.

MQ Coffee's head of education Hubs Tong said investment, research and strong domestic demand had transformed China's coffee sector. "At first, it was not of very good quality Arabica," he said. "But with more and more resource being poured into it ... the procedures being taken at the region to produce higher quality coffee has been expanding and growing."

While coffee production has grown rapidly in China, the country's coffee culture has evolved differently from New Zealand's.

Tong said coffee was still relatively new in China, gaining mainstream popularity after the arrival of Starbucks. Since then, a generation of growers, roasters, café owners and specialty coffee enthusiasts has emerged.

One of the biggest differences is how coffee is consumed. In China, specialty coffee drinkers often preferred brewed or filter coffee rather than espresso, Tong said.

Filter coffee produces a lighter, less intense drink that highlights delicate flavours such as citrus, floral and honey notes. Tong believes that preference aligns closely with China's long tea-drinking tradition, as filter coffee is "a more tea-like beverage".

Most coffee grown in Yunnan is consumed within China, but Qu said New Zealand consumers were starting to see it appear in some specialty roasteries.

Tong described Yunnan coffee as having plenty of sweetness, body and complexity.

Qu adds, "It holds up well in the milk beverage", which could make it a good fit for New Zealand's enduring love affair with flat whites.

Despite growing interest in filter coffee, Tong said New Zealand's mature café culture could make consumers slower to embrace new trends. "Our coffee culture [has] had its heyday," he said. "Our consumer market is now finding it hard to take on newer ideas and research that's being done in coffee." Still, he believes tastes are changing.

The New Zealand Specialty Coffee Association recently revived its brewers' competition after a long hiatus, reflecting growing interest in pour-over and filter coffee.

If we continue to see consumer demand shift, that gap may start to narrow. And for New Zealand coffee lovers, the next great cup could come from an origin they least expect.

With the sensationalist headline in the Sunday Newspaper of Sunday 20th Sept **'Blood on the Floor'** *fears as grape goldrush withers a wine glut and a drop in drinking has grape growers converting to other crops and decades' worth of vines reduced to 'smouldering mounds. But as some growers dig in for the long run and others diversify to orchards and veges, we ask what's next for NZ's highly lauded wine industry.* It is certainly a reading time of the year for wine lovers!

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