The Cellar Club Inc



Established in 1980

November 2026 Newsletter

Beach House

presented by Chris Harrison

Wednesday 11th November, 8pm Start

Door Price: Members $16 / Guests $20

Beach House Wines – Wines of New Zealand

Chris and Jill Harrison met while studying winemaking at Roseworthy College in Adelaide, fell in love and made the move to Hawkes Bay. In 1996 they began producing wine under the label Beach House. They planted 10 acres in the Gimblett Gravels region of Hastings, in predominantly red grapes, where they lived and raised their children Brittany and Angus.

Beach House Wines embodies the quintessential, relaxed lifestyle which kiwis enjoy by the beach. Ralph and Philippa (Chris' parents) who were enticed by this idea, relocated to Hawke's Bay at the same time as Jill and Chris. They moved from a farm on the Pahiatua Track to Te Awanga to help in the venture. They planted the Levels Vineyard, next to the sea, producing premium Chardonnay and Riesling. The vineyard was grown on stoney beach gravels, where the free draining soil and cool sea breeze provided excellent growing conditions, producing concentrated perfectly ripe fruit with fresh acidity. In 2019 the Levels Vineyard and Cellar Door was sold after the passing of companies' Matriarch, Phillipa Harrison.

Friends and the community are involved around vintage time, hand picking the grapes to ensure only quality in the bottle. Ralph built the straw bale cellar door on the property in 2000 to allow customers to experience the wine and the Beach House story first hand. In 2008 Beach House Winery was built at the Gimblett Gravels site in order to expand production capabilities.

To give us an understanding of the quality that this winery can produce, we will be tasting the following wines:

- 2025 Arneis – our welcome wine for the evening
- 2025 Chenin Blanc
- 2025 Selection Chardonnay
- 2024 Track Chardonnay
- 2024 Merlot Franc
- 2024 Cabernet Malbec
- 2024 Syrah

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 – J K 14Wines An Italian Evening

What a delightful evening we had with Luca, John Kirwan's youngest child, regaling us with stories of both where the wines came from and the significance of the particular areas to their family and stories of their family connections to the wines or indeed the wine labels. He spent the first 13 years of his life growing up in Treviso, then the next 13 years of his life living in Auckland.

JK 14 Wines is run by JK and his daughter Francesca, who could not be with us for the evening as she is just about to have her second child. Luca did a brilliant job informing and entertaining us for the evening, plus bringing special treats with him of the Olive Oil they import, which had a peppery after taste; Balsamic – which is made from grapes itself; Liquorice liquor which was quite smooth; and to finish off the list of extras, their version of Limoncello – which like the wines for the evening was on the dry side instead of the sweetness we are used to with this liquor.

Thanks to the committee for the extra bread that was supplied to mop up the generous portions of both the balsamic and olive oil placed on each table – they were delicious!

A reminder of the wines we sampled during the evening.

The welcome wine is a surprise for the evening, a G&T! *their gin's taste was derived from the addition of rosemary and other herbs, but also uses salt from the Gulf of Venice sea on coast of Italy.*



- Ombra de Vin Prosecco *this was a very light and slightly dry drop, delicious for everyday*
- Nonna Silvana Pinot Grigio *this wine is made in abundance in Italy and was named after their Italian Grandma*
- Zin Fiano *Fiano translates to Sea Urchin and this is Italy's closet wine to our chardonnay. This is fermented in stainless steel and comes from one of the poorer but hotter areas of Italy, at the bottom of the 'heel' of the map of Italy.*



Then for part of our mid-evening supper break the plentiful tastings of both the balsamic and olive oil were placed on tables with supplies of bread for dipping – it was a lovely change of pace and an extension t the evening's tasting.

- Chianti Biskero 2004 *transation is cheeky/a little bit different. This wine was 85% santchveso with three other 'allowed' grape varieties added in; 40% of the wine was n oak for a few months, the other 60% in stainless steel. This comes from a fully sustainable winery which is a multi-floored facility – something new for NZ! This is a lighter red and can be chilled for half an hour if you want to drink it during a hot Summer*
- Montepulciano D'Abruzzo 2003 *there is actually some of this wine made in NZ! Something to look out for perhaps. This was a darker red than the above variety and comes from around the middle of Italy on the east side of the map, which is 550m above sea level which is a national park area complete with bears. It was aged in oak barrels for 1 year. JK14 Wines have changed this wine's original label as they didn't like it, replacing it with the sweet label with Nico [Luca's oldest sibling] and his Grandad's hands on the label.*
- Malanotte DOCG 2020 *means Bad Night in English! Was the darkest of the reds we tasted on the night and very nice, this comes from Treviso. Locals believe that this is the wine that Jesus drank at the last supper. Made from the Raboso grape, which rumour has it means the wines will never go off! It is a difficult style to make and 13-30% of the grape harvest is*

strung up along the walls to dry/raisin as this softens the variety, then placed in oak barrels for a slow aging. The label says 'approved by Jesus Christ'! You will need bigger food to go with this wine, even the fattier cuts go well.



- The Grappa and Liquirizia to finish off the evening with:



- ***Liquirizia*** *was the liquorice drink, which was surprisingly smooth and light. It went down well with most who sampled it.*
- ***Acqua Di Ceclio*** *was a 1litre bottle of what we know as Limoncello, but this was wasn't the sweet variety that we are used to and was more than pleasant.*

Luca had thought to bring supplies of the wines and extras being tasted during the evening with him, to save on freight for anyone ordering. So, at the end of the evening, everyone handed over their orders and Luca filled boxes or bags for most people to take home what was on their wish list! What excellent service. Our invoices are to come, and these will be paid on-line directly to JK 14 Wines. A lovely touch for a new vineyard presenting to our club.

This was a special evening for all those that attended with the addition of balsamic and olive oil tastings, plus finishing off with the two liquors.

THEIR WEBSITE: jk14wines.com where there is also a tab for the families Italian favourite recipes for you to explore and use.

Looking Ahead:

- **December –** Christmas Dinner at **The Thistle,** Wellington. *Details and menu will be provided shortly in a separate email.*
- **January –** An exciting return of our Club function for the start of the year! A High Tea with club members bringing a dish [reminiscent of the Club BBQ's] and a bottle of wine to share. More details of what to expect will accompany the email with the December dinner details.
- **February –** Askerne, Hawkes Bay

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 – Masked robbers steal wine worth over US$5m from top Italian vineyard

RNZ News Kathleen Magramo and Barbie Nadeau for CNN 12th Oct 2026

Masked thieves have broke into a warehouse in Cortona, Italy and made off with around 30,000 bottles of wine from the prestigious Marchesi Antinori vineyard worth more than US$5 million (NZ$8.9m), in what the company says could rank among the largest wine thefts ever reported.

The thieves disarmed the alarm system to carry out the daring heist, which took place at the weekend, but was only discovered on Monday when workers arrived to prepare the wine for export, Antinori's CEO Renzo Cotarella told CNN on Friday.

The stolen wines were all from 2023 and include some of the winery's most sought-after labels that retail for between €150 and €500 ($299 and $998) internationally.

"Solaia, and Guado al Tasso, and Tignanello are the most icon(ic) wines we have," said Cotarella, describing them as category-defining examples of the famous "Super Tuscan" red wines of the region. Between 60,000 and 70,000 bottles of Solaia are produced each year, and the thieves took around 10,000 bottles.

No arrests have yet been made. Cortona police said they were conducting an extensive manhunt, but would not say whether they believe the two trucks used to steal the wine were still in Italy.

"Given the scale of the theft, both in terms of the number of bottles stolen and their estimated market value, the incident may rank among the largest wine thefts ever reported," Marchesi Antinori said in a statement. "The investigation by the competent authorities is ongoing, as are the assessments required to determine the precise extent of the theft."

Cotarella said the company is urging consumers not to purchase these wines from unknown sellers, and to report it if any appear on the market. Because the wine was in the warehouse to be shipped out, it was boxed and packaged, making it easier for the thieves to remove.

The heist follows a string of other wine thefts. Last month 3000 bottles of Barolo worth around €400,000 were stolen from the Conterno Fantino vineyard in Piedmont. It is unclear if the thefts are connected.

Marchesi Antinori was founded in 1385 and is currently run by the 26th generation of the family. It exports to 170 countries and has annual revenues of around €265 million.

Cotarella said he believes the wine will be found. "Two trucks cannot just disappear. I remain always positive," he said. -***CNN***

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