



The Cellar Club Inc

Established in 1980

Newsletter - February 2015

Next Event: Ash Ridge Wines

**Wednesday 11 February 2015, 7.45 for 8.00pm start,
Johnsonville Community Centre Hall, 3 Frankmoore Avenue,
Johnsonville**

**Members and unaccompanied guests: \$10, \$14 member with a
guest**

Presenter: Simon Bell, The Sales Manager.

ASH RIDGE
WINES of HAWKES BAY



In January 2014, in their biggest step to date, Ash Ridge opened a brand new Winery on their home site in Maraekakaho. The 100 tonne winery was designed to offer all modern winemaking facilities in a Boutique size, allowing them to be truly hands on in their winemaking. The small winemaking team can nurture the process from vineyard to bottle.

Ash Ridge wines are all hand-crafted, single estate wines which reflect the unique vineyard location, the passion for wine making and the premium quality that they make. Ash Ridge produce premium Hawkes Bay Syrah, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc.

In order to create a range of Bridge Pa Triangle wines they have partnered with the Peet Vineyard. The vineyard is based on an ash pumice ridge of soil, and is planted in sauvignon blanc, merlot, cabernet sauvignon. In more recent years they have also partnered with neighbour Shawn Hill, of Raptor Rise Vineyard, to source Malbec and Viognier grapes. With the vineyard being over the fence and on the same soil they are truly staying local. Wines offered at the tasting are likely to include:

Ash Ridge Sauvignon Blanc 2014
Ash Ridge Chardonnay 2013
Ash Ridge Viognier 2013
Ash Ridge Vintners Reserve Chardonnay 2013
Ash Ridge Rose 2014
Ash Ridge Syrah 2013
Ash Ridge Vintners Reserve "The Blend" 2013

From the Editor

February Tasting – As mentioned in my Email last week, Simon Bell from Ash Ridge has stepped in at short notice.

We want to encourage as many members as possible to attend so we have fixed an entry price of only \$14 (in total) if a member brings a guest.

Please line up someone who has shown an interest in win and bring them along on Wednesday. It will be a great tasting. This Winery has now been awarded the HB Winery of the Year Award for two of the last three years (See "In the News"). They have also received accolades from NZ Herald Wine writer Jo Byrzynska as one the best boutique wineries. This is great going for a relatively new winery.

Note: This is what happens when you reach a significant birthday. Can't even blow out my own candles even though they generously only used two.



Cheers

Robin Semmens, Editor

Looking Forward - March 2015 - Auburn Wines (Central Otago)



This will be a Summer Wine Tasting. Auburn have a special passion for Riesling and indeed are the only winery in New Zealand that produces only Riesling Wines. Their strapline is "We grow Riesling. We craft Riesling. We love Riesling. A lot."

They sat that, in Central Otago, there is a special dynamism – a tangible synergy – between Riesling and this place. The schist rock, the hot days, the cool nights, the arid climate, the mountain and valley landscape. And no other grape variety has the ability to express site so authentically and candidly. The small satellite sub-regions of Central Otago tell us, very plainly and very simply, who they are through the medium of Riesling.

They produce wines from a number of vineyards and have some differing vintages. This will be a interesting opportunity to look at a single variety from different sources.

Looking Back - December 2014 and January 2015

There have been two events since the last Newsletter. Firstly, we had the **December Dinner at Strawberry Fare**. What a lovely and convivial evening we had.

The meal was fine, if not brilliant, and the service was excellent. Naturally the desserts were great, which was to be expected of course. Some good feedback re the bubbles provided for the event. Our Treasurer, spent a little time trying to convince one of the staff that she looked like Antonia Prebble, no idea whether it worked or not.

Then on 25 January we had the annual **BBQ at Derek Thompson's**. Brilliant day, weather wise, and yet another enjoyable Club event. We would like to see more members attending, it is a fun event.

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Have you Heard



FOR THE LAST TIME, FIRST WE CATCH
OUR MAN, THEN WE GO ON A WINE TOUR.



General Information

Screwcaps - Anne collects screwcaps at meetings. As mentioned she gives them to the Lions organised Kidney Kids Support Group. No food lids or beer tops please.

Drinking and Driving - Members will be aware that the drink/drive limits have now been lowered. We ask members to always be conscious of the new limits and to take care when attending Club events.

Members Draw - There is a members prize draw at each meeting, you must be present to win, and it must be won each meeting.

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In the News - Ash Ridge wins HB A&P Bayleys Wine Award for 2014 - (October 2014)



Winemaker Lauren Swift and owner Chris Wilcock have plenty to celebrate after Tuesday night's awards dinner. A couple of the staff were running a little late for work yesterday but Ash Ridge Winery owner Chris Wilcock wasn't too concerned as they had a good excuse. As did he for his slightly "slow start" to his own working day.

The 14th annual Hawke's Bay A&P Bayleys Wine Awards served up the second top accolade in two years for the Bridge Pa grape growing "triangle" based Ash Ridge - Hawke's Bay Winery of the Year. "It's not bad is it," he said modestly. "We are one of the youngest wineries in Hawke's Bay and to win this trophy twice is just fantastic."

Mr Wilcock and his partner Sonya did not enter the wine industry until 2007 when they released their first commercial wines after planting vines two years earlier. Until then it had been a life of working in foreign exchange trading rooms in London, Zurich, Singapore and Sydney - until they spotted two potential vineyard sites on the Heretaunga Plains in 2000. It simply moved on from there. "It has been a lot of hard work and we are a young team - we only built our own winery this time last year," he said.

Mr Wilcock reserved special praise for the devotion of his team, as well as the EIT. As he told the gathering at the awards dinner - "all of us here have gone through the EIT". His winemaker Lauren Swift only graduated from the EIT's winemaking course a couple of years ago and had already claimed success - Ash Ridge Merlot 2013 picked up a gold trophy at the awards. "For her first effort - that is mighty."

Mr Wilcock said his philosophy was simply to make the best wine they could, and he said Hawke's Bay was the best place to achieve that. "The wine industry here is in a fantastic place at the moment - we are making wines people want to drink and more people are discovering us - exciting times." Despite picking up the title for the second time in as many years there was still "plenty of work to do" and the morning after the awards he was back out among the vines.

At this stage of the winery's development the focus was on the Kiwi market rather than the international. "We are very domestic focused at the moment - that is most important to us and where we put our efforts." But in the years to come that focus could also move toward the international market.

Club Contacts

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Coming Events

Wednesday 11 March 2015
Auburn Wines - Central Otago

Wednesday 8 April 2015
A Waipara evening

Wednesday 13 May 2015
AGM

Wednesday 10 June 2015
Akarua, Central Otago

Wednesday 8 July 2015
Mid-Year Dinner TBA

Wednesday 12 August 2015
Gladstone, Wairarapa