

The Cellar Club Inc



Established in 1980

February 2022 Newsletter

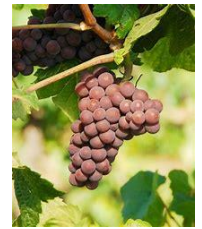
THIS MONTH

All things Pinot

presented by your fellow Club members

Wednesday 9th February

Door price: Members \$16 Guests \$20



2021 Waipara Hills Pinot Noir Rose

[Moving up the country]

2017 Peregrine Saddleback Pinot Gris

2017 Giesen Marlborough Pinot Gris

2017 Church Road McDonald Series Pinot Gris

2016 Peter Yealands Reserve Marlborough Pinot Noir

2016 Russian Jack Martinborough Pinot Noir

2016 Peregrine Saddleback Central Otago Pinot Noir

We will end with a special Pinot tasting [to be revealed on the night](#)

Let's Look Out for Each Other

With the new Traffic Light System put in place by the NZ Government, in order to use the Johnsonville Community Centre under COVID19 mandates, you must scan to enter the premises when you arrive and show your vaccine pass to be recorded by Wayne – when you pay for the evening.

The showing of your pass will be a one-off until it expires.

At the moment, the wearing of masks when entering and exiting the Johnsonville Community Centre, plus the distance we have to be settled at, etc is all in play and we've adapted well, thank you.

Your vaccination pass can either be printed or stored on your mobile phone. For people that haven't yet got one of these passes:

- ✓ You need to have had two COVID19 vaccinations
- ✓ If you have a Real Me ID, go into the COVID Record Health site: <https://mycovidrecord.health.nz>
- ✓ If you don't have a Real Me ID, go into the <https://mycovidrecord.health.nz> and follow the instructions to get access to your medical record, then download/print a copy of your pass
- ✓ Carry this with you in your wallet/purse

This pass will ensure you have all the freedoms you can access for your Summer pleasure.

NB: As always, please if you are feeling unwell, do not attend any of your Club's meetings, thank you




Your committee

Looking Back

The January BBQ at Derek's was the start of our calendar year and was a lovely afternoon in the sun for the approximately 40 club members who came. Thanks to Derek for letting us use his house for this event, Anne for her organising skills, Richard and Wayne for their culinary skills and to all those who supported the event, and their wine and food contributions.

In a change to previous years, the committee decided to eliminate the salmon and do a major upgrade in quality for the burgers and bangers. Wayne successfully approached the Cameron Harrison butchery shop on 4 Crofton Road, Ngaio and arranged for them to supply 48 x 100gm Venison patties and 60 Pork, Apple and Sage gourmet sausages at a very competitive price. Whilst still not cheap, it was evident from the feedback at the BBQ that this change was met with wide appreciation, as their quality was excellent and the Cranberry sauce on the patties a wonderful accompaniment.

2022 Events Coming Up:

-  **March** Bald Hills, Bannockburn, Central Otago
-  **April** Brookfields, Hawkes Bay
-  **May** AGM

Wine News -

Famous name in wines goes global

Michael Donaldson, for Stuff, Oct 31 2021



When Matthew Deller decided it was time to bring his family home from Napa Valley in California, there was only one place he wanted to work: Villa Maria.

He made his move in January 2020 after seven years as chief operating officer at Tor Wines – a winery globally renowned for its single vineyard chardonnay and cabernet sauvignon.

And so, after a roller-coaster journey of sorts, he's perfectly placed to oversee the first global launch of Villa Maria's single vineyard series of wines from tomorrow.

Deller, a master of wine, is Villa Maria's chief global sales and marketing officer. In his almost two years with the brand, he's experienced the rapid change brought by Covid-19 as well as seeing Villa Maria pass out of family ownership.

Villa Maria's parent company FFWL, owned by founder Sir George Fistonich, went into receivership late in 2020 and as part of that, Villa Maria was sold to Indevin, New Zealand's largest wine-making company, in September.

"When we decided we wanted to move back to New Zealand and I was thinking 'who would I want to work for?' Deller says. "Villa Maria was the only option. There's no other winery in New Zealand that makes the calibre of wines that Villa Maria does and that's not going to change in under the new ownership.

"We've all been on a roller-coaster over the past 18 months. But the management at Villa Maria weren't exposed too much to that financial side as that was between the family and the banks.

"Indevin is very protective of the brand and what drove its success: it's all about quality and global critical acclaim. And that's not my opinion, that comes to us from our wine intelligence research."

Other significant changes include the way Villa Maria is marketed.

"We've renovated every brand," Deller said. "We've brought out Earth Garden range this year which is our first 100 per cent Biogrow-certified brand and fully vegan. And we've really ramped our global fine wine programme."

As part of that global push, this year marks the first time that Villa Maria is doing a world-wide launch of its single vineyard series. That will involve events around the world throughout November. "We're there in New York, London, Europe and there'll be dinners, wine-maker tastings with a unified release of these single vineyard wines."

Single vineyard releases are a winery's way of showing what a particular block of land delivers. The 10 wines Villa Maria are releasing come in tiny volumes – just hundreds of cases for some styles. The grapes are mostly hand-picked and many are fermented with wild yeasts.

The idea is to create a series of bespoke wines that Deller says are chosen for their elegance and as "the greatest expression of a particular vineyard".

The release features vineyards in Auckland (Ihumātao), Gisborne (McDiarmid Hill) Hawke's Bay (Braided Gravels, Keltern) and Marlborough (Attorney, Taylors Pass, Seaspray, Seddon, Southern Clays).

Deller said it was the right time to make a global push as New Zealand wine – particularly Marlborough sauvignon blanc – was at a “tipping point” in terms of appreciation by critics and collectors.

“Now that New Zealand wines are getting really high scores from international critics, all of a sudden, they’re of tremendous interest to the fine wine community, British wine merchants and top New York restaurants. The market has been created by those global critic scores.”

And that maturation of the industry, in terms of quality, has dove-tailed with Covid-19 to create a perfect storm of desire for New Zealand-made wines.

“What happened last year was huge shift in awareness of, and demand for, New Zealand wine and Brand New Zealand was on fire last year. The insights I have from the US is that a significant part of that is our sustainability story.

“What’s happened this year is another seismic shift – and perhaps one that’s more exciting and of more significance for New Zealanders. We had a small harvest in 2021 but it’s high quality. And with that we’ve reached a tipping point where New Zealand wines are now recognised as really good. They’ve always been regarded as good but now they moved to really good.”

He noted that one of the world’s leading wine commentator, Jancis Robinson, wrote a glowing report on New Zealand wine, focusing on sauvignon blanc and pinot noir which helped push Marlborough sauvignon blanc from a supermarket staple to standing proudly alongside the best France could offer.

“Marlborough sauvignon blanc had already surpassed France in terms of mass awareness but the more conservative critics have always considered the fine wines of Sancerre as superior to Marlborough sauvignon blanc but that seems to have changed and Marlborough sauvignon blanc is now a fine wine benchmark as well as reliable benchmark.”

The other thing that’s happened is that a number of factors – including increased costs of packaging and shipping – drove up the price of New Zealand wine and no-one blinked. In fact, demand increased.

Deller says not only are people in love with the flavours of New Zealand wine, but they are “buying an experience they can’t get from anywhere else” and part of that is a story of sustainability, ethical employers, and a focus on quality.

For Villa Maria a critical part of that story is staying New Zealand owned. When the receivers came in at FFWL they needed to find over \$200m to pay back bank loans. Selling Villa Maria was critical to raising that money and there was a fear an iconic Kiwi brand could end up offshore.

But it stayed in New Zealand thanks to Indevin, a giant wine-maker that most people have never heard of.

Indevin’s model is to grow grapes and make wine. It leaves the sales and marketing to third parties including brewing giant Lion – for whom Indevin produces the Lindauer range, among others – as well as Waitrose and Tesco supermarkets in the UK.

Chief executive Duncan McFarlane says Indevin had been on the lookout for a quality New Zealand global brand for some time.

“Rather than Indevin doing the brand building and holding the sales expertise in-house we’ll partner with someone who has that, and we’ll focus on the parts of the supply chain where we have expertise and can create value,” he explains.

“But that meant there was a significant part of the New Zealand category that we weren’t participating in – that wasn’t a problem as such as we’d been successful with our model – but we believed that as the New Zealand wine industry matured, with the right brand, the right proposition, there was a lot of additional value to be created.

“Our long-term strategy has been if the right opportunity came along to acquire a genuine global New Zealand brand, then that would be a very interesting, exciting and rewarding acquisition.

“Identifying that and actually having the opportunity are two different things.”

McFarlane couldn't have hoped for a better opportunity than the unexpected sale of Villa Maria after 60 years of family ownership. “We felt that not only was it an amazing opportunity it was an unparalleled opportunity.”

McFarlane says Indevin and Villa Maria will continue to walk their own paths when it comes to sales and marketing, with Indevin remaining a business-to-business model and Villa Maria being a business-to-consumer operation.

But behind the scenes, on the production side, there is huge room for efficiency and growth.

“In many cases, the two business literally have vineyards next to each other or in the same street – so it makes sense that the production side of the business will come together

Adding Villa Maria's vineyards and expertise to Indevin's means a diversity of supply that “de-risks” the business on one hand while “putting you in a strong position to maintain and provide consistent quality season-to-season”.

As the ultimate boss, McFarlane has no qualms about Villa Maria hosting a series of global launches during a global pandemic.

“Like any business we're conscious of Covid, and management of risk is at the forefront of how we do things, but at the same time there's growth opportunities overseas and where we can do it, and do it safely, it's business as usual.”

As for his pick of the single vineyard wines, the chardonnay lover says he's “quite honestly staggered” by the Keltern chardonnay from Hawke's Bay

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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.