

## **The Cellar Club: President's Report 2021**

Wednesday 12 May 2021

It has been a privilege to have continued as your President for the 2020-2021 year and to have enjoyed your company and involvement in the club. Certainly this last year some things were delayed and have been variously impacted but we have come through. I will tonight follow prior practice and report briefly on the year and reflect on club matters and activities for the preceding 12 months.

### **A Big Thank You and the Covid – 19 Year**

On looking back, the club years prior have almost seemed to have been universally normal. Nobody foresaw the impact of the global pandemic experience that has restricted us. Even at the beginning of 2020, when in the pandemic's first phases, we never foresaw the length or intensity of what was to unfold before us. But we learnt some new language – “zooming”, “corona - the virus”, “stay at home”, keep your social distance, MIQ, “lockdowns”, QR codes, Bubbles, being “Ashley Bloomfield”, even determining what was “fake news” and showing resilience. And so a year on we are still experiencing the impact; both with restrictions and adapting to our new normal. It is with gratitude that we can reflect on how well you, our friends and the club have come through allowing us to plan and look forward to a stellar year ahead.

All of this makes us appreciate that our personal work situation and our families and our friends and our participation in such as the Cellar Club are all so very important. These are the anchors to hold on to in challenging times. Hence I want to extend thanks to all members for the support and participation that you have shown over the preceding year in your involvement with our club. This has without doubt contributed to a sense of “keeping it all in perspective” and allowed us to enjoy the friendships and continue the interest that the club engenders for us all.

### **The Club is Forty Years Old**

The 2020 -2021 year was indeed our 40<sup>th</sup> as a club. Back in 1980 wine tasting was very different; was it ever ! Much was planned for our anniversary year and surprisingly much was achieved with tastings, dinners and a trip whilst always being aware of our social responsibilities and being cautious. I want to thank the club's committee for the planning and wide ranging discussions that the year has required of us. We have faced some issues as never before, unprecedented email trails and certainly challenges. However, we have come through with “flying colours” all being wiser for the experience and as committed as ever. Vino certainly has its own inherent value and a social bond that we all enjoy.

In the president's report for the 2019 – 2020 year I commented widely on the club and its affairs. This was a reflection of the time and the history of the club and so rather than an extensive repeat on such matters this year may I again commend that report, which is on our website, to you for your interest.

### **Now A Committee of Some Renown**

In all previous annual reports I have commented in detail on what the committee, collectively and individually, has achieved in managing the club. This year these efforts have continued from each and every committee member. The “old hands”, dear I mention, have been reliable and a tower of strength, and we have valued the newsletter experience of Evelyn Dawson and benefitted from Terry Friel joining the committee's work this year. Thank you to you all.

I want to confirm that even more-so, all on the committee have delivered and excelled in your interests. Our secretarial support and our financial 'well being' have been in good hands enabling the club to thrive. The newsletter provision and the club's website remain amongst the best and most informative for wine clubs such as ours. All of these roles are deserving of our thanks and are the reason for the club's viability. The organisation of logistics, tastings, events and scheduling have meant we have functioned with certainty and with a continuity that occasionally took extraordinary efforts. Knowing the books are balanced, the licensing is in place, the membership is managed, the venue(s) are organised and that the dialogue with presenters has been undertaken have all contributed to keeping the club in good heart and with camaraderie in a year like no other. Always of course, with at least an XL 5 in hand.

### **So How Did The Club Shape Up this Last Year ?**

It was extraordinary that in this year we were able to celebrate at the dining room at Parliament (Bellamy's) for the club's anniversary dinner – certainly a benefit of being Wellington-based. And further to manage a brilliantly successful trip to the Wairarapa with 4 wineries and lunch and over 40 members without losing anyone and the transportation went without a hitch. During the year there was only the need to do a little rescheduling of the AGM and tastings before we hit our stride again. Tastings during the year continued a trend of sampling Europe (Portugal and Italy), highlighting the prime NZ regions, the merits of aged wines and even a wine options quiz night that saw those attending excelling in their wine knowledge and guess work. We experienced the saints (St Clair), the rims (Crater Rim), the ridges (Hawkes Ridge), a BBQ at Derek's and spectacular wineries. All this was an integral part of the wine education and promotional roles and the good company that the club subscribes to.

### **The Club's Future**

We have over time as a club traversed the horizons and catered for the interests of many wine enthusiasts in both our immediate northern suburbs and the greater Wellington area for these 40 memorable years. Indeed this is quite an achievement. Our challenge is to continue our interest and grow our membership in the immediate decade ahead and to mark a truly great 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary. Thank you for being part of this journey in wine. It is my hope that you and friends will nurture your cellars, indulge your wine interests and continue to be part of the next period of the club's history.

May I conclude by thanking all members for their support for the programme the club has undertaken and for your ordering support for the wineries who have presented to us. Our regular monthly attendance numbers have never been better but may I reiterate that suggestions to the committee for tastings and activities are always welcome. I know many of you attend other wine events and wineries in your local travels so we are always keen to explore some of these options. We look forward to your continuing involvement in the club as perhaps Wellington's premier wine tasting entity and certainly the best on many scores. I raise a glass to you in these challenging times. Please share with us the range of wines available tonight from your club's cellar (and from a member's very kind donation to us) and enjoy the supper that has been catered for by this culinary talented committee.

*Murray Jaspers*

Cellar Club President