



July 2009 Newsletter

Federation of Wine and Food Societies of New Zealand Inc

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Federation News

Federation of NZ Wine and Food Societies
Presidents Report

May 2009

It is with much pleasure that I present my first report. I took over from Stuart at a function in Kinloch in March last year, where we enjoyed a fine afternoon good food and wine. After a few short weeks to gather breath it was off across the ditch to Melbourne to sample Aussie hospital at what turned out to be a tremendously enjoyable 2nd joint Australasian convention. We enjoyed 3 days of fine wining and dining and exemplary service. Melbourne certainly knows how to put on a fine show. I was very proud to lead a strong contingent of New Zealanders who made the journey across and this was undoubtedly the highlight of my year.

The Stanley Harris Dinner in Taupo in October I count also as a success, our numbers were down but those who attended enjoyed a fine dining experience and very good wines which is what these functions are all about.

My aim at the beginning of the year was to get out and about the Societies this year, unfortunately for many reasons this has not been possible however I do hope that members of the Executive should be able to visit every Society at some stage over the next year.

It was satisfying to welcome the Whakatane Society back into the fold this year. Whakatane was one of the Federations founding Societies.

I am delighted to welcome new blood on to the Executive this year, Robyn Anderson from Palmerston North, John Cotterill from Hawkes Bay and David Corlett from North Shore who have all made the commitment to the Federation, Robyn has become 2nd Vice President and will follow Phillipa into the Presidency, I welcome David Robyn and Johns input which has already had a positive influence on the executive.

I would also like to thank Phillipa, and Ken for their input at various times during the year and of course Maureen, who kept me in line all year. There is no doubt that an efficient Secretary makes life so much easier for a President.

Ray Toms
President

Other Federation News

Stanley Harris Dinner

This years Stanley Harris dinner will be on Saturday 3rd October. We are evaluating some menus at present and will let you know where it is going to be in the near future. We are also looking at some format changes and hope to also have an exciting announcement shortly. Don't forget to diary this function which is one of the highlights of the year.

Federation Certificates

At the Convention in Christchurch I was made aware that many Societies had changed personnel and didn't know about the Federation awards that they could make.

The Federation has two awards. A Certificate of Merit and a Certificate of Appreciation.

Each member Society can award one Certificate of Merit in any one calendar year and it is to be awarded to a restaurant (or venue) or Chef who puts on an outstanding function for that Society. These are applied for and a case made as they are not automatically given. The exception to the one per year rule is for a Society who hosts The Federations Convention who may apply for Certificates of Merit for any Convention functions that reach the required standard.

A certificate of Appreciation can be awarded to anyone who has done something beneficial for your Society and as many as you wish can be awarded. They were instigated at Federation Convention in

Gisborne where we were served an outstanding meal by wonderful young people doing a hospitality course at the local Polytechnic. Certificates of Merit were obviously not appropriate so we created the Certificate of Appreciation acknowledging the wonderful job they had done, which they could then put in their CV's.

Ray Toms
President

Federation of Wine and Food Societies of New Zealand Convention 2009

“The Garden City, Christchurch, hosted the 30th annual convention for the Society. Forty-one members from Australia and New Zealand gathered to participate in a very friendly weekend. It was a wonderful occasion the only drawback being that the good Lord decided to water his garden the weekend of May 8-10. The Christchurch Society opened their cellar and provided some stellar wines together with some local delights for our sampling.

Four superb, classic meals were presented exquisitely by top chefs. I mention just some of the highlights that were served in great surroundings.

The occasion opened with a Spanish themed dinner at the historic Lansdowne Homestead a little out of town. An entrée trio of hot white bean and chorizo soup with grilled scallop and sherried duck breast on a peach and pine nut salad was served with Hermanos Lurton Rueda 2005 and two 2004 NZ Chardonnays from Pegasus Bay and Kumeu River caused much discussion. There was also much talk and no consensus over the Spanish reds served with steak Coto deHayas Gran Reserva 2001, Marques de Caceres Reserva 2001 and Torres Coronas Cabernet Sauvignon 2003, my favourite. Lustau Pedro Ximenez San Emilio with Crème Catalan was divine.

Next day we travelled to the foothills of the Alps for another great meal at the Terrace Downs Golf Course where a Pegasus Bay Riesling welcomed us. We sampled wild game and some superb wines that caused much discussion.

The formal dinner at The Canterbury Tales was a winner. We were greeted with Veuve Cliquot champagne and delicious canapés of duck, salmon wings, goats curd with quince and walnuts. The entrée of Akaroa Salmon, parsnip puree, shallot marmalade and porcini scone served with Rifleman's award winning 2005 Chardonnay and Cloudy Bay Te Koko. The main was wild Thar, Jerusalem artichokes, boudin blanc (a brain sausage) blackberry and caramelised shallots was to die. The wines were all from their cellar and very special château pichon longueulle comtesse de Ielands 1990, Penfolds bin 707 cabernet sauvignon 1994, Babich winemakers reserve syrah 2002.

The final lunch was held in the Retour Restaurant in the old band rotunda by the Avon where we sampled more wild game and great wines.”

Philippa Harrison

News from Societies

Auckland

No report

Christchurch

Congratulations on an obviously successful convention. I am sorry I had to miss it at the last minute due to my mother's illness. Happily she is fine now. I would have enjoyed being present when Stuart was awarded a Stanley Harris medal. He was thrilled and I am very proud of him. He joins a group who have been recognised for their hard work and commitment to the Federation.

Kathleen Brooker
Editor

Gisborne

No report

Hamilton

29 January 2009

Members will be saddened to learn of the sudden death late last year of Dr Min Loke Wong, a rheumatologist and long time member of the Hamilton Wine and Food Society. Some of you may remember Min Loke serving wine off the spoiler of his Porsche car at a NZ Wine and Food function at Woodlands near Hamilton and his addiction fast cars was legendary.

Blessed with a quirky sense of humour, he could always be relied on for some entertaining comments at the Hamilton functions. His company and his encyclopaedic knowledge of wine will be sadly missed by all our members.

Malcolm Baigent
President

Hawkes Bay

Obviously plans will soon be underway for the next joint Australia and New Zealand convention in 2011.

North Shore

North Shore continues to send their newsletter regularly and they certainly have some interesting functions. One of note is the visit to “Obsidian Vineyard which nestles in the coastal hills of the Onetangi valley adjacent to the northern coast of Waiheke Island. Here small batches of wines are grown on four distinctive and individually named hillside sites. The sheltered vines enjoy high levels of heat summation, tempered by the maritime breeze. The mineralised clay soil is rich in iron and manganese oxides, and overlays ancient weathered rock. These conditions perfectly suit the noble red and white grapes originating from the Mediterranean countries. The first wine made in 1997, was the “Obsidian” Bordeaux blend” If you visit their website www.nswineandfood.org.nz you will find other interesting info such as Local Farmers Markets etc.

We are looking forward for to the 2010 Convention being hosted by their Society.

Palmerston North

No report.

Taupo

The Taupo Wine Taster's Club has been very active judging by their very interesting newsletters. A few excerpts:

"A very pleasant evening was enjoyed by 18 members at the Barrel Room earlier in the year. Francis de Jager, the Cellar Door Manager and Events Manager for Blackburn took Dave McKees place at the last minute and presented us with 7 whites and 3 reds. The reds were a vertical tasting of 2005/2007. Excellent selections of wines and of particular interest were the Fume style Sav Blanc and the Bordeaux style reds. He was a very good speaker and took us through the development of Blackburn. It was extremely interesting the entrepreneurial way that Andy Coltart and Kim Thorp have developed the whole complex." Another interesting function judging by the photos was the "Toast to the Queen" evening!

Tauranga

The Tauranga Wine and Food Society held their AGM in April.

"Presidents Report 2008/09.

It has again been a good year. We have held a varied selection of functions at different venues which, most importantly, have all been successful. Choosing the right venue has become increasingly difficult. Either our numbers have been too many or not enough. Restaurant availability, due to their previous bookings, or the days we prefer, don't synchronise.

Chefs are not always available to confer with so intermediaries enter the discussions thus much time is spent talking and arranging. Some chefs are easy to agree with and some are not so easy, so the menu can take a while to finalise, both on content and service and cost.

Choosing the wines has become quite testing due to the huge selection we now have available. However we have taken a value for money approach for the majority of our choices apart from allowing at least one more expensive wine at each dinner.

Bearing in mind that we have to suit all of our members, we feel at times we are trying to do the impossible! However we get through and we are pleased that the numbers attending our functions have kept up for every event, and we still have money in our bank.

The committee has worked hard and have done an excellent job. My thanks go to them and our Secretary, Anne, for their support; it has not always been easy.

However, given the current economic circumstances, it may mean in the forth coming year the committee will have to consider our get-togethers may just be that, to keep costs down and extend our choice of venues.

On a personal level, considering the increase in availability and selection of wines, generally at discounted prices, the importance of the wine being served has been taken away. We are being lead by advertising and the price, rather than by the individuality and character of the wine, so not extending our knowledge and wine experience. We must not forget that we are a Wine and Food Society.

It is with a certain amount of sadness and regret that I will not be continuing as President, but have a very busy year ahead with my involvement with the SPCA. As Immediate Past President I will do my best when I can and when asked to do."

Tony Marshall
President.

Wellington

The Wellington Society has continued to hold monthly functions. Attendance has been fairly consistent with 18-25 members enjoying themselves. The Society has a few new members and a couple have left so their membership is reasonably static at about 40. They continue to enjoy superb wines from the extensive cellar. With an abundance of excellent restaurants for venues the Society is very fortunate. Chefs are only too happy to prepare varied and interesting menus with collaboration from the Cellar Master to match the wines. Chefs enjoy the challenge of "cooking" not the usual restaurant fare but a menu for real food enthusiasts. For variety there are different functions such as annual BYO picnic at Waikanae and having the use of a members "staff room/kitchen" at his work. There the members were able to have a DIY evening, in teams responsible for the different courses. Following these events the members generally agree that we have some very good "chefs" in our midst!

Note from the Editor

Thank you to those Societies who regularly send in contributions from their Society. These have declined a little in frequency hence the longer time lapse between Newsletters. Some of those Society's who have not contributed before or for a long time, I urge you to do so otherwise it will not be worthwhile producing a Newsletter. It will just become a Flyer to advise of Federation functions and events! Any contribution or comment will be gratefully received from any individual or Member Society. Also please don't forget to advise me of changes in your Societies personnel. Also Secretaries please don't forget to forward the Newsletter to all your members even if they receive it direct from me. It is these contributions which provide interest for readers. It would be really great if we could hear from all the Federated Societies. **Remember Stanley Harris Dinner 3 October.**

Just to finish: a couple of quotes from the Taupo Wine Taster's Club newsletter:

"Wine improves with age. The older I get, the better I like it". ANON

"There are two reasons for drinking; one is, when you are thirsty, to cure it; the other, when you are not thirsty, to prevent it" THOMAS PEACOCK

"Drink? DIE! Drink not? Die anyhow! Therefore drink it!!!!" GERMAN PROVERB

Kathleen Brooker
Editor