

Media Release - *Embargoed to 11pm Sat 10 October*

## **Wairarapa Sweeps NZ Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards, 2020 Best Year Yet**

**New Zealand, 11 October 2020** – Wairarapa Olive Oil makers have swept the annual NZ Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards, winning four of the five major awards for Olive Oil Excellence, with the region’s growers also taking home 58 medals.

The New Zealand Olive Oil Awards began in 2000 and recognise excellence in NZ Extra Virgin Olive Oils (NZ EVOO). The winners were announced tonight at the Olives NZ 2020 Award Ceremony.

The following four Wairarapa Olive Growers received the top awards:

- Best Boutique - Juno Olive Oil Picual
- Best in Show – Olive Black Extra Virgin Olive Oil
- Reserve Best in Show – Loopline Picual
- Best Flavoured Oil – Leafyridge Olives Chilli.

Gayle Sheridan, Spokesperson for Olives NZ, says the Wairarapa’s climate and soil contributes to its success, both in New Zealand and on the world stage.

“We have a maritime climate and a different environment from the traditional olive-growing countries, like Spain. For us, that means we produce distinctive and complex tasting oils - much like the NZ wine industry and its wines. Our oil is also fresh resulting in an amazing taste,” says Gayle Sheridan.

The 2020 Awards had 128 entries, the second highest on record. Charlotte Connoley, Head Judge, says the quality of the award entries is superb and shows what great shape the New Zealand Olive industry is in.

“We’ve been told that 2020 is ‘the’ year for NZ olive oils, this is reflected in the number and standard of entries. This season saw higher polyphenol content in many oils, which increases the health benefits of the oils and contributes to longer shelf life.

“Much like wine, you can smell and taste different notes in olive oils, anything from fresh cut grass to banana and tropical fruits, floral notes and spices such as aniseed. We would love for more people to seek out and try locally grown and pressed extra-virgin olive oils. Our growers are true artisans, and NZ Olive Oils are extraordinary” says Charlotte Connoley.

NZ EVOO producers have won 42 Gold, 75 Silver and 11 Bronze medals. In total Wairarapa received 58, Kapiti 18, Canterbury 12, Nelson nine, Auckland eight, Bay of Plenty six, Northland and Waiheke Island five each, Hawke’s Bay five, Marlborough two, Central Otago one. The Awards are judged by a panel of six experienced judges to International Olive Oil Council Panel (IOC) standards. 2020 judging took place remotely due to COVID-19.

### **The 2020 Winners**

#### **Best Boutique – Juno Olive Oil Picual, Wairarapa**

Juno Olives is a commercial-sized grove of almost 2,000 trees owned by Karen and Ian Juno located on the outskirts of Greytown. Juno Olives specialise in boutique production of single varietal olive oils and flavoured oils. They have previously won this award three times as well as Reserve and have been consistent winners of Best in Class awards.

#### **Reserve Best Boutique – Waikawa Glen Blend, Kāpiti Coast**

Waikawa Glen is a boutique grove of around 500 trees located on the Kapiti Coast and owned by Lisa Buchan and Glenn Wigley. Waikawa Glen is one of the few organic registered groves in New Zealand and recently won two Gold medals in the Royal Easter Show Olive Oil Awards.

#### **Best in Show – Olive Black Extra Virgin Olive Oil, Wairarapa**



Olive Black is a medium-sized grove of more than 1,000 trees located on the outskirts of Masterton and is owned by Richard Nga Wai Chiu. Olive Black has a market niche supplying specialist food stores in Auckland as well as exporting its Extra Virgin and Flavoured Oils.

**Reserve Best in Show – Loopline Picual, Wairarapa**

Loopline Olives owned by Stephen Davies Howard is located on the outskirts of Masterton. A medium-sized grove of around 900 trees, Loopline Olives has previously won the supreme award of Best in Show at the NZ EVOO Awards three times as well as being awarded Gold medals at the prestigious New York International Olive Oil Competition two years running.

**Best Flavoured Oil – Leafyridge Olives Chilli, Wairarapa**

Leafyridge Olives situated near Masterton is a commercial grove of almost 4,000 trees. The grove is owned and managed by the Leaf-Wright family.

A complete list of the award entries and results can be found [here](#).

ENDS

**About Olives New Zealand**

Olives New Zealand is the industry body for olive growers and supports its members to produce premium quality Extra Virgin Olive Oil (EVOO) and olive products. Olive NZ also certifies the oils as Extra Virgin Olive Oils with the red Olive Mark. People should look for the red Olive Mark to ensure they are buying the authentic New Zealand EVOO product. Imported products are not required to meet the same stringent standards.

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