2013 NEW ZEALAND EXTRA VIRGIN OLIVE OIL AWARDS – MEDIA COVERAGE

30 September: Herald – Bite Magazine

jo's kitchen

Who knew?

I popped in to Massey University's Albany campus last week to get a peek at the judging of the NZ Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards. These awards recognise excellence in certified New Zealand olive oils and, because the judges are international, enables New Zealand olive oils to be benchmarked against the best in the world.

There are more than 200 olive groves in New Zealand producing 400,000+ litres of olive oil annually and despite being a boutique industry, New Zealand olive oils typically punch above their weight in international competitions.

Head Judge Sue Langstaff from California said "I have recently judged at the Los Angeles County Fair Show which attracts a huge international entry. The oils I tasted for the New Zealand awards were predominantly up there with the best internationally. I was also impressed that all entrants must have been formally assessed as extra virgin olive oil as a condition of entry."

My interest in all of this came about through the red OliveMark – I had seen this sticker on olive oil bottles but didn't really know its significance. It means the oil has met the stringent certificate requirements of Olives New Zealand and has passed the International Olive Council's tests for being extra virgin olive oil. We can be assured that olive oil displaying the red OliveMark is extra virgin, of high quality and an authentic product. It must be extra virgin to have the associated medical benefits.

The 2013 award winners had not been announced as we went to print, but I get the feeling they are worth looking out for because every good cook needs to have a quality extra virgin olive oil to hand. See olivesnz.org.nz for the results.

Judges in their booths, from back to front: Sue Langstaff – Head Judge from California, Richard Gawer – South Australia, Charlotte Meehan – Auckland, Raffaela Delmonte – Auckland, Hilary Fenemor – Nelson, Peter Olson – New South Wales.

9th October: The Press – Zest Magazine

Fruity finish: Olive-oil judge Sue Langstaff has praise for New Zealand olive oils. Photos: FAIRFAX

Peninsula winner: A blend of olive oils from Robinsons Bay takes top prize at NZ awards.

Region has the good oil

Abbie Napier

The 2013 New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards were held in Christchurch last month and showcased the best the country has to offer, with Canterbury coming out on top.

Akaroa's Robinsons Bay Grove Blend collected Best in Show and a Best in Class (commercial, medium blend). Best Processor went to Canterbury Olive Processors Ltd. Old French Road also collected a Best in Class (commercial intense blend).

Head judge and sensory scientist Sue Langstaff was flown in from California to lead the process.

She says New Zealand, like America and Australia, is classed as a 'new world' olive oil producer because of our relatively recent arrival on the scene. Old world producers include countries such as Spain and Italy, which have been making olive oil for centuries.

Langstaff judges olive oil internationally and says New Zealand extra virgin oils are on a par with other new world producers.

New world oils are characteristically fresher and have less historical baggage in the production process. Many old world oils are produced today the same way they have been produced for generations. The new world doesn't adhere to tradition and the oils are usually made with modern machines and processes.

Langstaff and her team of judges blind-tasted all 75 oils entered in this year's national competition. Robinson's Bay Best in Show was set apart by its balance and long fruity finish.

"We all agreed this was an outstanding oil," Langstaff says.

"You've got really great products," Langstaff said. "They are more expensive, but once you've tasted fresh New Zealand olive oil, you won't go back."

11th October: Akaroa Mail

Robinsons Bay makes NZ's best olive oil – again!

They are thrilled. Again. For the second year in a row Annette and Chris Moore have won the supreme award in the New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards.

The judging panel of six trained and experienced tasters said that their 'Grove Blend' oil had a striking aroma, was balanced on nose and palate, had ripe fruit flavours and was a 'real beauty'.

Chris and Annette have been running the olive grove in Robinsons Bay for about 8 years, and the first of the nearly 1000 olive trees were planted in 1994.

"We are thrilled, obviously thrilled" Annette said after the award ceremony in Christchurch last week when they were presented with the awards for Best in Show, Best in Class (commercial, medium), as well as gold medal status for their Robinsons Bay Grove Blend 0113 oil.

"It was wonderful last year, but this year…"

She said that growing good olive oil is rather like growing good wine. Every year is different.

"It depends on the summer – how much rain and sun you get."

The trick then is to blend the oils from the different varieties so as to get something that really works.

"We put together what we think is pretty damn good – and it is nice that someone else agrees with us."

Annette said that the main variety in the winning blend is Manzanillo, with smaller quantities of other types blended in.

It was a good season at their Robinsons Bay olive grove, with a bigger harvest of olives than ever before, and with bigger individual fruit.

The Moores did the picking themselves, with the help of family members.

"It was a huge up on last summer – the biggest ever."

The awards ceremony at the Sudima Hotel in Christchurch included a dinner featuring oils from the competition.

Robinsons Bay oil was used in a main course dish matched with Akaroa salmon steak.

"That was quite cool – a perfect combination" Annette said.

And the Moore's winning oil was processed by Canterbury Olive Processors Ltd, of North Eyre Road, which also won a special award to mark it as the country's best processor of olive oil.

The Moores were not the only local winners either – Jan Whyte and Niall Holland were Best in Class and won gold medal status for their Old French Road blend in the 'commercial, intense – blends' category.

They also won silver medals for two of their single varietal oils.

One was awarded to their Manzanillo oil in the commercial, light, single varietal class and one to their Kalamata oil in the commercial, intense, single varietal class.

"Commercial" indicates a production of over 100 litres of the variety concerned.

There are separate award classes for productions of between 30 and 99 litres.

In all 22 awards went to Wairarapa growers, 11 to Hawkes Bay, 10 to Kapiti, 8 to Auckland and six to Canterbury.

Chris Moore was back at the Riccarton Farmers Market on Saturday offering what is officially New Zealand's best olive oil, for the second year in row.

FOR

16 and 23 October: Petone Herald and Northern Courier

Living the Good Life

The New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oils Awards were recently judged in Auckland with an entry of 75 New Zealand produced and certified Extra Virgin Olive Oils.

The Head Judge was Sue Langstaff from California along with two judges from Australia and three from New Zealand. All judges have been trained to International Olive Council standards and are experienced olive oil tasters. The New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards recognise excellence in certified New Zealand olive oils. With the use of international judges this enables New Zealand olive oils to be bench marked against the best in the world.

Olive growers in the lower North Island (Kapiti, Wairarapa) performed very well winning almost half of the medals awarded. Gold Medals were awarded to Dali Picual (also taking a Best in Class), Blue Earth, Boundary Gardens and Gabbani Olives Frantoio. Plus there were 24 Silver and 4 Bronze awarded to local growers.

The red OliveMark® signifies that the olive oil has met the stringent certification requirements of Olives New Zealand; it has passed the International Olive Councils tests for being Extra Virgin Olive Oil (both chemical and Organoleptic), it is packaged and labelled appropriately and it is New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil. Consumers can be assured that New Zealand olive oil displaying the red OliveMark is extra virgin, of high quality and an authentic product. It must be Extra Virgin to have the associated medical benefits.

There are more than 200 olive groves in New Zealand producing 400,000+ litres of olive oil annually. There are olive groves from Northland to Central Otago. The industry is mainly a boutique industry with growers focussed on producing high quality extra virgin olive oil and other olive related products. Despite being a boutique industry, New Zealand olive oils have typically punched above their weight in international competitions regularly taking out Best in Class and Gold Medals.

Sue Langstaff, Head Judge for the New Zealand EVOO Awards, said "I have recently judged at the Los Angeles County Fair Show which attracts a huge international entry. The oils I tasted for the New Zealand Awards were predominantly up there with the best internationally. I was also impressed that all entrants must have been formally assessed as Extra Virgin Olive Oil as a condition of entry."

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When buying Extra Virgin Olive Oil, look for the OliveMark® which ensures the the olive oil:

- Has passed the International Olive Oil Council's requirements to be certified as Extra Virgin Olive Oil (Chemical and Organoleptic assessments)
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- Is guaranteed 100% New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil

It must be Extra Virgin Olive Oil to have the associated medical benefits.

Simply the Best
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Olives New Zealand
www.olivesnz.org.nz

9 October: Kapiti News

A DECADE OF AWARDS FOR OLIVE GROWERS

ANN READING

David and Helen Walshaw, from Kapiti Olives, in Te Horo, deserve congratulations.

Last week they continued their 10 year unbroken medal-winning streak at the Olives New Zealand annual olive awards.

They were awarded silver medals for both of their olive blends.

The Walshaws bought their eight hectare property, a former cattle run-off by the Otaki River, in 2003, and planted five varieties mostly Italian, Spanish and Greek.

Their oil is certified extra virgin. "That's the only way we can win awards," Mrs Walshaw explained, "it has to pass the chemical analysis and blind tasting tests before it can be certified, and only certified oils can enter for the awards."

Of the continuous 10 year stream of awards Kapiti Olives has won best in show 2010, best in class 2005, and either gold, silver or bronze medals every year.

They produce over 4000 litres of oil annually and their bottles of competition oil are just taken from store so what wins is exactly what is found in the supermarket, in restaurants or online.

The oil is marketed by direct sales. They also supply restaurants and New World supermarkets.

The olive grove has often been visited by overseas university groups interested in the New Zealand olive scene and the Walshaws have regularly held field days on the property to help develop the industry.

Kapiti Olives was one of only two New Zealand olive oils chosen by the USA Olive Society to promote to their membership in 2005. Kapiti Olives is used by various high profile New Zealand chefs.

The Walshaws are in the throes of pruning, which Mr Walshaw says is as important as correct fertilisation and planting techniques to produce the best crops.

They say last year's good, long, hot summer has helped in the production of this year's medal winning oils.

"It has been most rewarding to continue producing consistent medal winning oils and also to have a choice of a fruity, more pungent, oil along with a softer, smoother oil to suit a wide range of palates," he said.

More information about Kapiti Olives can be found on the website www.kapitiolives.com

AWARD WINNING TREES: David and Helen Walshaw and their eye-catching van among the Frantoio olive trees at Kapiti Olives grove at Te Horo.

PHOTO: ANN READING / KAP031013AROLIVES

for Thornton growers

THORNTON olive growers Gerrit and Wil Kruithoed have collected more prestigious olive oil awards in spite of fierce competition this year in Olives New Zealand's Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards.

They won best in class in the commercial light single variety category for their Moutohora Piqual, and a gold award for the same variety – one of the best six oils in the competition.

Mr Kruithoed said they thought their two other entries had a better chance of winning so it was a big surprise to win the best in class award for their Moutohora Piqual 2013.

He said in their view their Moutohora Koroneiki with its delicate flavour and delicious taste was "a real cracker".

The judges commented that the Kruithoed's picual was a well-balanced olive oil with fragrances of artichoke, kiwifruit and herbs, while their koroneiki produced aromas of artichoke, herbs and pomme fruits.

Mr Kruithoed said each year the competition standards increased and this year "the competition was a lot tougher."

They won silver medal for their Moutohora Grove Blend in the commercial light blended category and for their Moutohora Koroneiki in the commercial light single variety category.

The 2013 olive season with its high temperatures was a great year for producing olive oil, but Mr Kruithoed said the high temperatures and the drought posed difficulties growing olives in the Thornton sands.

They had a lot of extra work keeping their trees watered during the drought he said.

Their olive oil is processed by Parkhill Olives of Wellsford, which won best in class for processing.

Mr Kruithoed said Parkhill Olives was just one point behind the best processor.

The Kruithoeds are regular winners in Olives New Zealand's annual olive oil awards.

In 2011 they won the supreme award for their Moutohora Grove Blend.

They also won three gold awards.

WINNER: This Piqual variety of extra virgin olive oil produced by Gerrit and Wil Kruithoed of Thornton, won best in class and a gold medal at Olive New Zealand's recent Extra Virgin Olive Oil awards.

Photo Troy Baker C9675-04

15 October: BOP Times

16 October: DomPost

More than 400,000 litres of olive oil is produced each year in groves around New Zealand. Sarah Catherall talks to olive growers whose oils recently won awards.

Olive industry COMES OF AGE

Oil bounty: Olive groves are spreading around the countryside, allowing New Zealanders to buy local olive oils.

WHEN Karen Juno was growing up in Greytown decades ago, her family home was surrounded by an olive grove. Those olive trees were planted by her Lebanese grandfather, who imported them from his homeland about 80 years ago, and they're still standing today. She says: "I had to help shake the trees every May and my grandmother pickled the olives. Despite that, my uncle imported drums of olive oil for the family as you couldn't get olive oil here at that time."

Today, Karen and her husband, Ian Juno, grow 2000 olive trees in their olive grove, Juno Olives, in Greytown, and their story shows how much the olive oil industry has changed over the years.

While olive oil was difficult to source when the couple were growing up, today their grove is one of 72 in the Wairarapa.

Says Ian: "We were looking at doing something different in the later part of our lives, for our retirement, and that's how it all started."

Their oil won a gong in the New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards — the premier awards for extra virgin olive oils which are judged by international olive oil specialists. Juno's medium single varietal, Koroneiki, was described by judges as having "aromas of fig leaf, olive leaf and artichoke. Good balance with a warm finish."

Harvest time: Juno Olives.

Another Wairarapa olive oil producer, Dali, was awarded Best in Class and Gold Medal for its Picual olive oil.

Juno Olives grows eight varieties, and produces five extra virgin olive oils along with infused oils such as orange, lemon and basil. Last season, Karen and Ian picked six tonnes of olives which turned into 600 litres of oil.

Liquid gold: Juno Olive oil.

Ian says: "It's a bit like buying a white wine. A pinot gris is different to a sauvignon blanc. Different trees produce different flavours."

At Dali Olives, Ross Vintiner, and his partner, Andrea Stewart, commute from Wellington to the Martinborough grove they bought two years ago. For Vintiner, a communications consultant, it's a return to the lifestyle he first ventured into about 20 years ago, when he bought an olive grove in the Wairarapa.

Vintiner was one of the first to make the brave move at a time when flat land in the Wairarapa was filled with vineyards and paddocks and few olive trees.

He says: "I had a trial plot and it worked okay but for a variety of reasons I sold it after three years. I decided to come back to it later. Part of that is because I

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Origins of oil

Olive oil has been produced for more than 4000 years, and was once rubbed on dinner guests as a mark of respect. Today, there more than 200 olive groves in New Zealand producing more than 400,000 litres of olive oil annually, with the largest olive groves being in Auckland and Hawke's Bay. Olive operations vary from hobby groves of less than 100 trees to commercial groves of 40,000 trees. Despite being a boutique industry, New Zealand olive oils have typically punched above their weight in international competitions, regularly taking out Best in Class and Gold Medals.

Dali estate: A view from Dali Estate in Martinborough.

THE JUDGE

Sue Langstaff is California's leading sensory scientist. Even as a child she had a strong sense of smell, picking up leather shoes and handbags and sticking her nose in them. After training in sensory science, she began her career smelling, tasting, and judging beers. Five years ago, she became interested in olive oils, and became a member of the University of California Davis olive oil panel. Since then, she has been tasting – and judging – olive oils in both hemispheres.

Langstaff says olive oils from New World regions like South Africa, California and Argentina are typically green and herbaceous. Old world countries like Greece, Italy and Spain, which have been producing olive oils for centuries, are more likely to use what we would regard as spoiled oils. "The New World is much more concerned about freshness," she says.

After judging our oils for the recent awards, she says that just like our wines, an olive oil from Auckland will taste exceptionally different from an oil produced from Central Otago trees. "For me, I like moderately pungent oil with some bitterness. It's like asking the question – what wines do I like best?"

really love a good olive oil."

While Juno Olive trees grow in gravel, Dali Olive trees sit in silt. Vintiner is also focused on producing a grassy, herbaceous oil, so he deliberately picks early.

"It's the way they pick in Spain and Tuscany, and my philosophy is to make oils that are unashamedly green.

"The picual has a really strong flavour, and not many people grow it in the Wairarapa or New Zealand for that matter.

"But in Spain, it's really popular.

"It's got a beautiful flavour and it's great with roasted foods."

Another Dali winner, Frantoio, an Italian olive varietal, is much less intense and is used with salads, sautes and dipping.

To enter the national award, oils must pass strict international chemical and sensory tests.

Says Vintiner: "It was a generally good growing year.

"While the drought was bad for farmers, it was great for olives, and the Wairarapa did particularly well."

Dali Frantoio Chocolate

Ingredients:
2 Tbsp Dali Frantoio
200G of 70 per cent chocolate, chopped
145ml of water
Sprig of rosemary
Orange zest

Place chocolate, water, olive oil and rosemary sprig in a heavy bottomed pot over medium heat. Stir until smooth, watching it does not catch on the base of the pot.

Transfer chocolate mixture to high-sided metal bowl, immerse in larger bowl filled with ice cubes and water. Remove rosemary.

Hand beat chocolate for 5 minutes until thick and glossy, like butter and cream mixture.

Immediately scoop chocolate mixture onto parchment paper in a tin and refrigerate until needed. Sprinkle with orange zest when serving.

Winning oils: Dali champions.

15 October: NZ Farmer – Manawatu Standard

NZFARMER MANAWATU
nzfarmer.co.nz

On a back road near Foxton, where rows of olives briefly interrupt the fields of grass, is a small firm that, in its first go, tasted success at the national olive oil awards. **Mathew Grocott** went to see how.

Top crop: Paul Stephens checks his olive grove in Foxton, from which he produced olive oils that won a gold and two silver awar

The good oil

"I'm meant to be retired but it's fun." So says Paul Stephens as he walks along a row of olive trees on his Foxton property considering what needs to be pruned from each tree.

And, with 2200 trees, his olive grove is no mere retirement hobby. It's a business that has just been recognised with a gold and two silver awards at the national olive oil awards.

"It's a bit of trial and error," Stephens says of the pruning needed.

The trick, he says, is to consider each tree from the north and open it up so light can get through to the back of the tree. The trees also need to be open to make picking easier.

With the trees about to flower – the fruit won't be picked until May – a myriad of tiny buds runs along each branch.

"Soon these will be rows of white, yellow flowers," Stephens says.

Then the olives will start to grow, small and green at first. And all the time, he has to consider spraying, watering and mowing.

Regardless, olives seem to like growing in this patch of Horowhenua, just north of Foxton in Motuiti Rd.

Stephens thinks it is the mix of sandy, free-draining soil and fairly regular sunshine. The almost constant southerlies are a problem so he has planted shelter belts.

These trees then started growing their roots out in one area to take nutrients from the olives so that had to be fixed.

As Stephens says, it's trial and error.

The 2200 trees on the property produce on average about 24 kilograms of fruit each, with about 1000 olives needed to make a kilogram.

Picking season takes six weeks, with the olives being trucked, along with those from surrounding estates, every other day to a press in Masterton, where they are turned into olive oil.

He recalls seeing in Italy olives left for days between being picked and pressed, the fruit going off in the heat. "The best olive oil is made if you press it the next day."

And through all his trial and error, Stephens has learned a thing or two about making top olive oil.

He entered the national olive oil awards after attending an event for growers in Kapiti.

There his Frantoio oil was among those tasted by top olive-oil judge Sue Langstaff of California. She said it was good enough for a gold medal and so he entered it into the awards.

Sure enough, the panel of five judges, including Langstaff, agreed and Gabbani Olives won the only gold medal given to a grower on the western side of the North Island.

Gabbani also won two silver medals for its Koroneiki oil and Tuscan Blend.

The judges said the Frantoio had "complex flavours" and a "good balance" along with tomato and fresh almond aromas.

For Stephens, the awards mean recognition and hopefully a boost in sales.

His products sell in stores in Horowhenua, Palmerston North and

wards at the New Zealand Extra Virgin Olive Oil Awards.

Photos: MURRAY WILSON/FAIRFAX NZ

Award winners: The three oils recognised at the national awards.

Family ties: The Gabbani brand is named after Paul Stephens' wife's maiden name.

Somewhat secret: Gabbani Olives is one of several of olive plantations just north of Foxton.

Whanganui, and his oil is used by some cafes in the area.

Promoting the products has meant a lot of visits to potential clients but word is spreading and the company now sells its oils in both 250ml bottles and 2-litre packs for those who really love it.

Stephens' own love for growing olives was sparked his wife. On a trip to Italy, she suggested they buy a villa and grow olives, but Stephens did not want to settle in Italy.

After they returned home, they realised they could have their own slice of Italy in Horowhenua.

"I came home from work one day and she said, 'I've found it, I've found a villa'. I said 'where?' She said 'Foxton' and I said 'you're joking'."

That was 2009 when the oldest trees there were 5 years old. The villa is a Tuscan-inspired building that overlooks the property.

As a former Tararua dairy farmer who sold up to run a resort in the Marlborough Sounds, Stephens said the olive grove was his retirement plan. "To me, it's a lifestyle."

He can work every day if he wants, or not, and is aided in the business by his family. He has been told the farm is capable, in time, of producing 40 tonnes of fruit a season once the younger trees he has planted in the past two years mature.

However, as long as he's covering his costs he's content; after all, this is meant to be his retirement.

"I don't expect to make a fortune, but I don't want to sit back and be bored, it's good to have interests and something to do."

Online articles:

http://www.radionz.co.nz/news/rural/223165/akaroa-company-again-wins-top-olive-oil-award

http://www.nzherald.co.nz/wairarapa-times-age/news/article.cfm?c_id=1503414&objectid=11133874

http://www.stuff.co.nz/business/farming/agribusiness/9289262/The-good-oil-comes-from-trial-and-error

http://www.scoop.co.nz/stories/BU1309/S01065/dali-recognised.htm

TIP: Why not do your own press release to your local papers?

If there was an article in your local paper on your success at the 2013 NZ EVOO Awards, please scan and email a copy to the Executive Officer for inclusion in this document.

And great to see the bottle below is NZ EVOO ...

Catching up by Kate Fraser

Lil Huckle, executive chef White Tie

Photos: KIRK HARGREAVES/FAIRFAX NZ

Lil Huckle graduated in 1997 from Christchurch Polytech (by Recognition of Prior Learning) and prior to 2010 was head chef at Hay's Restaurant in Victoria St, where she tutored students from the New Zealand School of Food and Wine in practical work experience. She has been with White Tie Catering for three years.

"As executive chef I manage all food production for White Tie both here at 'base' in Gasson St and our kitchens at Koru Club Wellington and Christchurch.

"I enjoy developing recipes and menu ideas with our team and on busy days rolling up my sleeves and working in event kitchens. At the Gasson St site we have staff lunch every day and anyone having a birthday gets to choose what we cook (and eat). We have a fantastic team and we love what we do."

FAVOURITE HOME COOKED MEAL

Crispy skinned roast chicken, roast agria potatoes with roast preserved lemons and gremolata, new season's asparagus and bernaise sauce. For dessert, warm berry clafouti and freshly churned vanilla bean icecream. My secret tip for the chicken is to salt it overnight.

> My cooking style is eclectic. It depends on using great ingredients and making everything taste of what was used to make it. I love to experiment.

MY MOST MEMORABLE MEAL

This was everything served from the degustation menu at Attica in Melbourne and meeting Chef Ben Shewry. It was all wonderful but the outstanding dish of the meal was a crab broth: absolute umami heavenly perfection.

FAVOURITE TIPPLE

If I can get my hands on it, a glass of Veuve Clicquot. Another favourite at the moment is gin and tonic, with a fresh lime.

LAST MEAL (if I knew the end was nigh)

Oysters Rockefeller; Beef Wellington with bordelaise sauce and creamed spinach; apricots from our tree at home, with panna cotta.

INSPIRATIONS

You can never have too many cookbooks. My current favourites are Bouchon by Thomas Keller, and Momofuka.

TOOLKIT

I would never want to be without my Maginix and a microplane.

ESSENTIALS

Fresh herbs from our home garden: Italian parsley, coriander, lemon thyme, lemon verbena . . .

THE STAPLES

Our work fridge:
Granna Padana, confit garlic, prosciutto, fresh thyme

My home fridge:
Preserved lemons, Castello cheese , kalamata olives

The work and home pantries:
In White Tie kitchens and my home kitchen there are always quantities of Village Press olive oil, sherry vinegar, Belgian chocolate, and flaky salt