

Wairarapa Excursion

John Dunlop has written the following article for the Nelson Branch newsletter and kindly agreed to share with the broader membership.

Day 2 of the Olives New Zealand Conference was a field trip to the Wairarapa looking at the Olive Groves of Juno Olives, Olivo Ltd and Lot 8 and visiting The Olive Press in Masterton.

Juno Olives is a 2000 tree grove owned by Ian and Karen Juno. They sell most of their oil from the grove on weekends only, have some excellent retail outlets and also sell on line. They also sell table olives and make a line of creams and lotions. Both Ian and Karen still work in their day jobs.

Olivo Ltd is a 16 acre grove of 1200 trees owned by Helen and John Meehan. It is the oldest grove in the Wairarapa with the first plantings made in 1991. The majority of the grove was planted in Barnea with Manzanilla pollinators. A third of their sales are through the cellar door at weekends only with the balance of sales through on line sales and exports to North America as part of Wairarapa Olives 2007 Ltd.

Lot 8 is owned by Nalini and Colin Baruch. It is part of an 11 lot subdivision each with approximately 500 trees. Nalini has spent a huge amount of time creating the Lot 8 brand. She has travelled extensively both overseas and in New Zealand establishing markets for her many products. The product range includes five different oils, dukkah and table olives and various herbs and spices. She conducts cooking classes in their purpose built kitchen, showcasing all of their various products. Most of their sales are in bulk to the restaurant industry both in NZ and overseas. T

Both Lot 8 and Olivo have established their markets by travelling extensively and making a significant investment in time and resources. Both Nalini and Helen stated that their hard work was now finally starting to pay off.

The Olive Press is a company established 13 years ago by a group of forward thinking people in as much that they bucked the trend at the time by developing a processing facility well in excess of what was needed at the time. Their 1.5 tonne per hour M O T press is now the basis of one of the more innovative processing companies in NZ. They now offer a processing, storage, bottling, grove management and EVOO brokerage service. They are hoping for a 1000 tonne throughput for the first time this year. Their rates for pressing range from 99 cents per kg for less than 2 tonnes down to 29 cents for quantities over 100 tonnes.