

WINETALK

413

WINE CONNOISSEURS CLUB OF HAMILTON
Since 1965

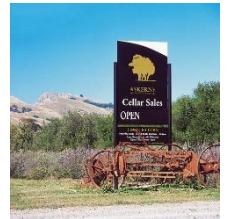
March 2026

Coming Functions

Mar 8	'Karens' Bubbles tasting
Apr 12	Brockenchack Wines (AU)
May 10	AGM
Jun 14	Bushmere Wines
Jul 12	Chardonnays and Cellar

WINETALK MARCH 2026

Excellent tasting last month of the delicious Askerne Wines. John was an entertaining speaker and very generous with his 8 tastings. We really appreciated his generosity and very good prices for his wines. They were Hawkes Bay at its best.



PINOT GRIS/PINOT GRIGIO

With summer hopefully here for a little longer, we are all still drinking the French Grape.

Pinot Gris is a white wine grape grown around the world but originating in the Burgundian region of France then spread over the centuries across Europe. It has a very close DNA and clone of Pinot Noir, as the grapes are a pine-like shape and have a pinkish/gray hue but colours can vary. Flavours vary around the world. Although made from the same grape, Pinot Gris and Pinot Grigio differ significantly in style, flavour and origin. Pinot Grigio (Italian style) is typically light bodied, crisp dry and acidic. Pinot Gris (French/Alsace style) is fuller-bodied, richer and more aromatic.

Key Difference: Pinot Grigio is lighter and crisper, while Pinot Gris is rounder and more complex. While both are generally dry some Pinot Gris can have a touch of residual sugar.

At a tasting recently we tried 3 Pinot Gris and 1 Pinot Grigio. The first three were from 3 different regions of New Zealand and the Pinot Grigio was from Italy.

[KUMEU RIVER Pinot Gris, West Auckland, 2025](#). Aromas of peach with stone fruit notes, Lychee. Light on the palate. This wine was rich and complex with a lively texture. Beautiful Gold Medal wine. Grapes were grown in West Auckland with a wild yeast fermentation over an extended period of time which has produced this wine of layered complexity and lusciousness.



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BOATHOUSE BAY, Pinot Gris, Marlborough, Awatere Valley, 2025. Off dry style. Slight acidity. Thinner and we thought “green” Marlborough style. Perhaps needs more time.

BIG SKY, Martinborough, Pinot Gris, 2023. Classic Wairarapa, dry, floral notes, stonefruit flavours. On the palate, warm spice with luscious mouthfeel. Delicious and enjoyable.

JK14, Nonna Sylvana, Pinot Grigio, 2023, Treviso DOC Region Italy. Crisp and zesty with citrus aromas, Light and refreshing, balanced and elegant. Refined and aristocratic. Exactly what you would expect in an Italian Pinot Grigio. Beautiful wine for a summer day with friends and family. Delicious.

What a great tasting it was on a lovely summer’s day. We fell in love with Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio all over again! We thought the Kumeu River Pinot Gris was the pick of the bunch of the Pinot Gris. Not surprising as they produce gorgeous world famous Chardonnays as well. The jk14 Italian Pinot Grigio was also singing for us as we shared the late summer wines.

FOOD PAIRINGS: Pinot Grigio pairs well with light seafood, shell fish and salads, while Pinot Gris matches well with richer dishes, creamy sauces and spiced aromatic foods, Asian foods.

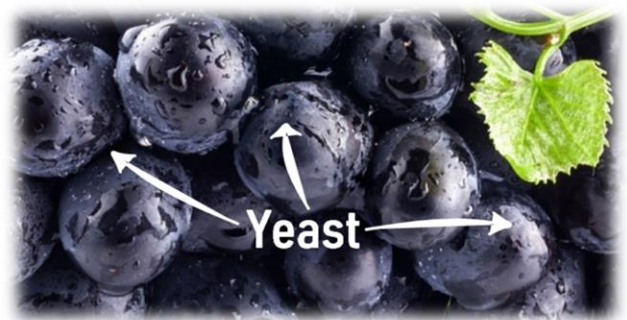
BUBBLES

WHAT IS WILD YEAST FERMENTATION?

Simply put, fermentation is the process by which yeasts turn sugars (in winemaking, sugars from the grapes) into alcohol (with a by-product of carbon dioxide).

WILD yeasts are exactly what they sound like – those which occur naturally. They are on the grapes, in the vineyards, on surrounding vegetation and in the air. Yeasts are everywhere, in fact, if you left grapes alone, they would eventually spontaneously ferment because of the thousands of varied fungi that exist in the natural environment.

With wild yeast fermentation rather than controlling the process, when winemakers “wild ferment” they essentially allow these yeasts to do their thing without interfering.



WHAT ARE THE METHODS OF MAKING BUBBLES

So you are ready for the Bubbles presentation here are a few details of two different methods of making our wonderful summer bubbles.

METHODE TRADITIONELLE: A premium labour intensive winemaking process used to produce high quality sparkling wines, most notably Champagne where the second fermentation occurs inside the individual bottle. It creates fine,



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persistent bubbles and complex, toasty or creamy flavours. This method is used in other European countries and many New Zealand wineries.

CHARMAT METHOD: Or Tank Method. This method is a fast cost effective and widely used technique for producing sparkling wine, where the crucial secondary fermentation occurs in large pressurised stainless steel tanks rather than individual bottles. This method is ideal for preserving fresh, aromatic fruit characteristics in wines like Prosecco.

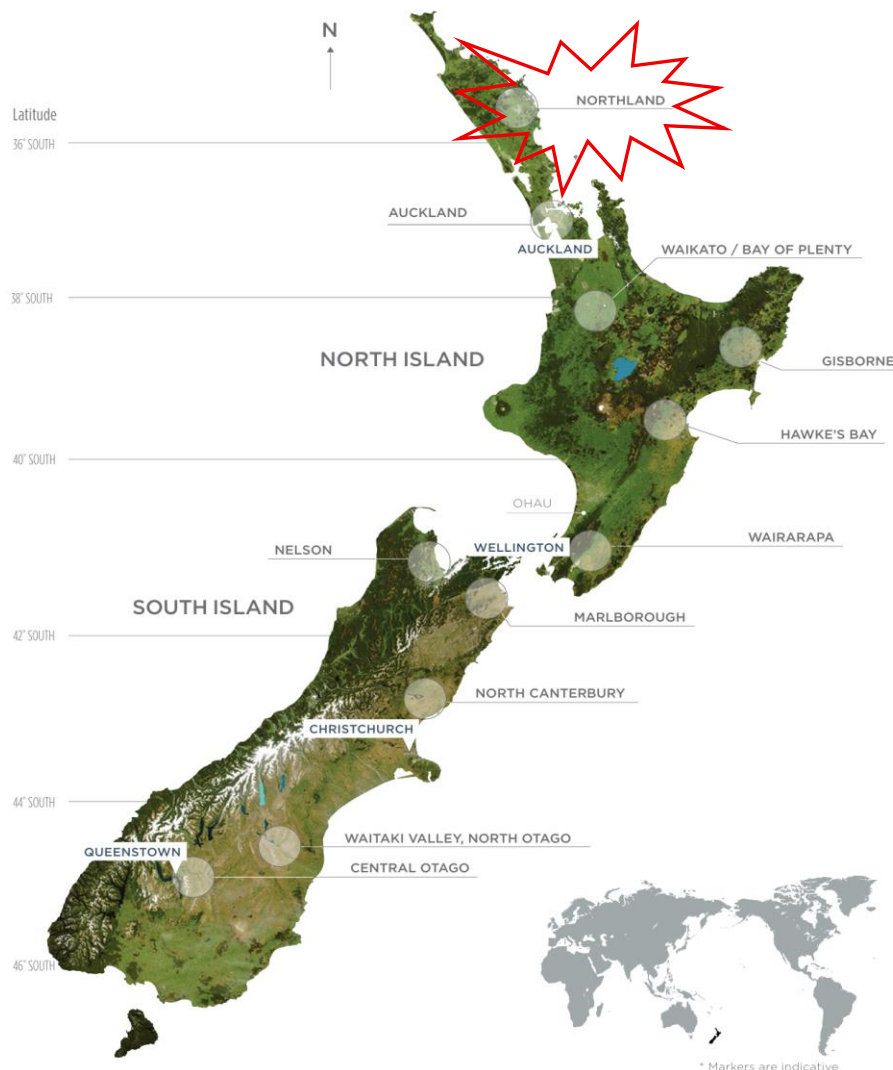
These are just the two main ways bubbles are produced. Come along and learn more at the next meeting.!

WINE REGIONS OF NEW ZEALAND

There are ten main wine growing regions in New Zealand with each showing great diversity in climate and terrain. No region is more than 130km (80 miles) from the sea and the proximity of vineyards to the ocean has a pronounced effect on the character of New Zealand wines. Mild, sunny summers and marked differences between day and night temperatures in many regions slow the ripening of the grapes and allow them to develop pure, intense varietal flavours.

This is the foundation of New Zealand wines' elegance and power, and helps explain their famed balance, structure and food friendliness. And with growing regions extending 1,600 km (1,000 miles) — from latitude 35° South in the subtropical north to latitude 45° South in the mountainous south (some of the most southerly vineyards in the world) — regional diversity is dramatic, enabling a striking array of wine varieties and styles to flourish

NEW ZEALAND WINE REGIONAL MAP



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75

TOTAL PRODUCING
HECTARES

<1

TOTAL PRODUCTION
(000 TONNES)

<1%

PROPORTION OF TOTAL
NZ PRODUCTION (TONNES)

NORTHLAND

As its name implies, Northland is New Zealand's most northerly region, with pockets of winegrowing stretching from Karikari in the north, to Mangawhai in the south. Northland's long, narrow shape means there is nowhere further than 50 kilometres from the ocean, and its northerly latitude delivers as close to a subtropical climate as is found in New Zealand. Beyond this, Northland's soils, vineyard aspects and microclimates are all unique, creating a diverse collection of wine styles from a wide range of varieties. Vineyards are generally clustered in the coastal areas around Whangarei, the Bay of Islands and Kaitiā, taking advantage of both the flatter coastal land and tempering sea breezes.

Northland has a long history of winegrowing, with the country's first vines planted in the Bay of Islands in 1819 by the missionary Reverend Samuel Marsden. Plantings remained relatively small until the late 1800s when the Croatian gumdiggers arrived, establishing New Zealand's earliest wine industry, one focused on a strong trade in fortified wines - a style well suited to Northland's production of ripe, richly flavoured grapes. Many present day producers across New Zealand can still trace their roots back to Northland.

Northland's tropical fruited Chardonnays, popular Pinot Gris and intensely flavoured Viogniers are leading the region's white wine growth. A variety of red wines are produced canvassing spicy Syrah, stylish Cabernet and Merlot blends, peppery Pinotages and even the seldom-seen Chambourcin.



CLIMATE



AVERAGE ANNUAL SUNSHINE

2,037 HOURS



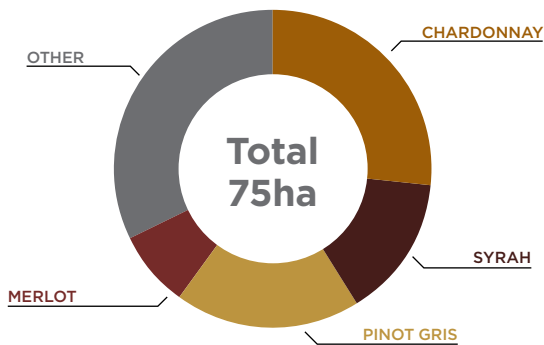
AVERAGE ANNUAL RAINFALL

1,518 mm

Northland is renowned for its warm, relatively sunny subtropical maritime climate with mild winters, accompanied by plentiful rainfall and humidity. The latter can provide challenging conditions for winegrowers at times, but also varies quite significantly according to individual sites. The mild climate allows a wide range of varieties to ripen, and delivers generosity and warmth to Northland's wines.



MAP OF NORTHLAND



CHARDONNAY 20ha

Chardonnays are typically made in a variety of styles, anchored by full-bodied ripe melon, fig, stonefruit and citrus fruit. Some producers also produce earlier-picked crisper, lighter-bodied styles.

SYRAH 14ha

A key red variety for the region, Syrah appreciates Northland's warm climate and long-growing season. Wines are medium-bodied with soft tannins and ripe, spicy berry fruit and plums plus a hint of florals.

PINOT GRIS 11ha

Ever popular Pinot Gris is made in densely fruited, full-bodied styles with peach, spice and gingerbread notes. Most wines are fruit-focused and unoaked but there's occasional seasoned oak use for extra texture and complexity.

MERLOT 6ha

Merlot enjoys Northland's long, warm growing season, delivering robust, spicy, berry-rich wines with moderate body and tannins.

OTHER 24ha

Made up of 27 varieties



SOIL

Northland's vineyards are planted on a highly variable range of soil types, perhaps not surprising for a region encompassing such a long, narrow and diverse topography. Northland has more than 220 soil types, a significant increase compared to other New Zealand regions which typically have around 20. Owing to the small number and relatively far-flung locations of producers, subregions are not yet clearly defined within Northland, thus it can be difficult to generalize about the impact of soil on the wines other than on a case by case basis.

However, heavy clay loam and free-draining volcanic soils are relatively common throughout the region, with free-draining soils particularly prized for vineyards in a region with abundant rainfall. Subsoils are generally compact clays. Maintaining balanced growth in Northland's mild climate is a priority for producers when establishing vineyards. The other key feature of Northland soils is the legacy of the lush subtropical climate's generous plant growth and historically extensive kauri forests, which have provided many areas with deep layers of acidic leaf litter and low fertility, though these are not typically soils used for vineyard plantings.

NEXT MEETING: Sunday March 8th, 4.30pm. BIG BUBBLES!

Cellarmaster Karen Nixey will present her choice of 'bubbles' from around the world. There will be questions to be answered about what country, what type of bubbles, Is it Champagne is it Prosecco..... is it New Zealand is it Spain, is it Australia? How much do you think they could have cost.....there will be no clues offered as most bottles will be wrapped in newspaper so no peaking!!!! This is a very popular tasting which we have annually. Come and taste the last of the summer bubbles.....and show your expertise.....or not!



See you there

Cheers,

Gay Main