

NEWSLETTER Issue 105 – March 2024

Dear Oliveti Members

Welcome to the first newsletter for 2024 and welcome to our new editor Adrienne Gilmore. We are so pleased to have her skills and are so appreciative of her taking on this role. The Newsletter is a big part of Oliveti. Researching, finding and then writing articles for the Newsletter is not easy and needs the support of all our members and not just left up to Adrienne. So please if you find something of interest please send the information to Adrienne (email: adrienz@icloud.com.) so she can include in one of our Newsletters.

As you are all probably aware Murray Thoms has been producing the Newsletter for the past 5 years and has done a superb job. Murray has great skills in that area and the newsletter that he has produced is a reflection of that. Those skills will not be totally lost as he will remain in a supporting role for Adrienne as she gets to produce the first few Newsletters.

Hopefully we are over the worst effects of 2023 weather events and as we move into a more benign period of weather the yellow leaves and dieback from too much rain will become a thing of the past.



In my case, with advice from Greg Scopas, I have stag horned some of my worst tree and then will fertilise them and hopefully bring them back into production in a 2-3 years' time. My Koroneiki seemed to be the worst affected.

So next on the agenda for us all is the harvest. Checking of nets, bins, crates, mechanical pickers, batteries and of course all the faithful friends that you get to help. Also remember to book the press.

So good luck with the harvest

We recently held our Field Day on the 25th February at Melanie Abernethy and Jo Crowley's Grove at Mangawhai. The weather for the most part was fine and we were able look over their grove and hear their story of how they came into olives and developed their property including a large swimming pool and a golf course. Now that is a first!! Jo gave a demonstration of driving skills on her mower over some rather steep country. Greg Scopas gave us an interesting talk on how to manage dieback from the rain we had last year. A big thankyou to Melanie and Jo for their hospitality.

The final part of the day was the AGM. The two major items were the election of officers for the next year and the adopting the new Constitution to meet the 2022 Incorporated Societies Act. These were all passed unanimously.

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The committee for this year is Chair & Treasurer John Pearson, Secretary Pauline Young, committee members Ewen Hutchinson, Adrienne Gilmore, and new members Ban Aldin and Iona Cameron-Smith. So thank you for those who have volunteered to be on the committee. As I have said a number of times without members being willing to be on the committee there would be no Oliveti.

Our next field day will be held at the end May at Julie Bell & Georgia McKeefry's grove at Patuau South Road Whangarei Heads (date to be advised) The field days are great fun and you learn so much so please do try to attend. We like to move the field day locations around as much as possible so all Northland locations are covered so if asked, please try to make your property available.

Well that it from me. Hope the harvest goes well and I hope to see you at the next field day.

Kind Regards

John Pearson (Chair Oliveti)

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Melanie Abernathy & Jo Crowley talk about their Mangawhai Property

10 kms Southwest of Mangawhai township sits Mel Abernathy and Jo Crowley's weekend Northland retreat – "Olive Hill". A beautiful elevated 5-acre property overlooking the Mangawhai sand dunes, Tara Iti and with the Hen and Chick islands beyond.

After a scrumptious shared lunch, Melanie and Jo welcomed the dozen or so members who had braved the elements to attend the first Oliveti field day of 2024. Jo Crowley is a former Chair of Oliveti and who during her tenure - circa 2012-2013, introduced a number of notable initiatives including the now renowned "OLIVETI Olive Awards".



"When I first met Jo she said what would you like to do I said I'd like to grow olives, She said that's a great idea - so we did. Jo knew the Mangawhai area and we looked at a few properties and choose this place. It was a cow paddock with one pine tree and pretty steep but with a great view from the top. We began by planting a few olive trees on the steepest part of the land and didn't stop till we had over 400 – too many..... We have since progressively replaced many of these with Natives and we then took some more out to make 3 hole golf course down near the Machine shed".

Jo and Mel have found that living in Auckland and travelling up to Mangawhai every weekend developing the property has made them focus all their efforts on achieving their objectives and consequently there has been less time to be involved in other activities and pursuits - the likes of Oliveti. Fortunately, the property is now replete and they have created a wonderful holiday home that they are now able to share with their grandchildren, friends and family.

Mel began her talk by posing the question – what do you do with a Grove when you don't have time to have a grove, and you have other priorities. One of the first things we quickly learned that there was no money in olives. In fact back then, we decided to attend the Olive School at Tai Rawhiti and the tutor told us "there was no money in it" we didn't believe her. But she was right says Mel. "there was no money in it" we didn't believe her. But she was right says Mel.

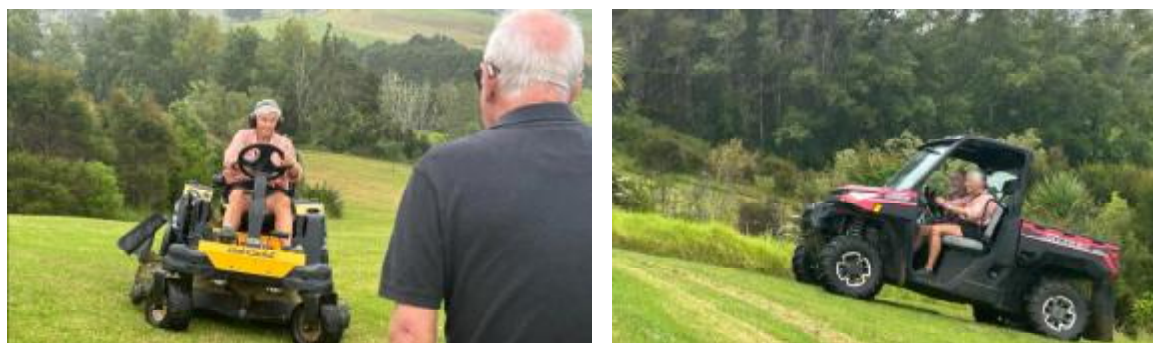
I have absolutely no interest in marketing, so we have ended up only making enough olive oil for friends and family who all love it, and that's the joy of it really, says Mel. What we've ended up doing with this property is to turn it into a place we can truly enjoy and the trees are a big part of it. Initially I thought the olive trees were quite forgiving but as we get older you realize there is quite a bit to it and the trees can very quickly get away if you don't pay attention and some of the work was hard. What do you do with prunings once you've cut them back – do you mulch or burn? It's certainly a lot of work and we've now taken out a lot of trees. We started off with 400 trees and are probably down to 150 now.

Greg Scopas came in just two years ago and took out every second row. Our remaining trees should grow wider and lower and hopefully generate more fruit. That's the strategy - but it is definitely a work in progress. We are only part way through that journey and I think it was very wise, as we had far too many trees. So now we've got less, and we can manage them as we get older plus they are lower and easier to manage as we get into our dotage.

As with all groves, some years you have good crops and this year it's looked positive, certainly judging by the amount of florets on the branches. There is some fruit but it's not as heavily laden as in the past. The bottom of our property was very, very wet and we have lost some trees but fortunately, not too many. We have also taken Greg's advice about chopping out some dead wood to encourage growth.



Jo introduced Dolly, one of three articulated remote control Husqvarna lawnmowers that roam the property continuously, quietly nibbling the Kikuyu. The whole property is geo-fenced and the mowers keep the majority of the property well mown which means Jo only needs a small amount of their precious time on the ride-on managing the less accessible lawn areas. The mowers can be monitored and controlled from an app which means the lawns are being mowed while Mel and Jo are down in Auckland.



Jo concluded by giving us a demonstration of the stability of her Cub Cadet Zero Turn commercial ride-on mower and her much loved Polaris Side-by-Side 4WD ATV. Also on display at the property was a range of quality ride-on mowers offered by Poland ATV and Mowers of Wellsford.



Following article from OLIVE OIL TIMES Australia - By Lisa Anderson March 2024

After Two Bad Harvests, Producers in New Zealand Anticipate a Rebound

Less rainfall in New Zealand has sparked hope for the country's growers, but the drier weather has come with another set of problems. With growers in New Zealand preparing to start harvesting in late March, some are looking forward to a better outcome after a second-consecutive production decline last year.

New Zealand produced 125,000 litres of olive oil in 2023, down from 180,000 litres in 2022. The poor harvests came after bumper crops in 2020 and 2021, when the country produced 200,000 and 270,000 litres, respectively.

The quantity of fruit may not be quite as high as the last couple of big years, but the weather so far suggests that we will return to much higher oil yields and polyphenols. Margaret Hanson, co-owner, Blue Earth

In December 2023, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) reported rainfall well above normal levels in certain areas, contrasted by below-normal levels in others. According to NIWA data, producers will not have to contend with the extreme rainfall that marred their harvest last year, the country's eighth wettest on record.

"After a couple of wet seasons, particularly last year, when it was so wet that two-thirds of our growers couldn't get machinery into their groves, we are quietly optimistic this season is going to be better," Emma Glover, Olives New Zealand's executive officer, told Olive Oil Times.

However, she added that the South Island regions with a bumper crop last year would likely produce fewer olives due to the olive tree's natural alternate bearing cycle. The outcome is not set in stone, though. In March 2022, producers were optimistic for a third high production year. However, heavy rains and cool conditions during the harvest combined to lower the final yields.

Glover said the next few months are critical as the fruit ripens. With the harvest season starting soon for the early regions, most will begin harvesting slightly later, from the end of May to mid-July. "Fruit set, in general, looks good, but it is patchy between groves and tree varieties as they bounce back differently from the last few years," she said.



After two years of heavy rain, olive groves in the Wairarapa are now coping with drought-like conditions. (Photo: Vintiner's Grove)

Diana Crosse, co-owner of Kāpiti Olives on the North Island north of Wellington, expressed optimism ahead of the harvest, which will start in her groves at the beginning of June. "The crop on the trees looks very good, and we are hopeful of a high yield," Crosse said. "The weather has been good," but she added they would like more sunshine.

Meanwhile, Ross Vintiner, co-owner of Vintiner's Grove in the North Island's Wairarapa region, said the abrupt shift from too much rain to too little is taking a toll on his groves. "After two years of consistent and heavy rain, the trees are regenerating, using most of their energy to regrow branches and foliage," he said. "Now we are in near-drought. Fruiting has taken a hit with continued stress."

"As with a number of local groves in the Wairarapa, fruit volumes and oil yield will be down compared to last year," Vintiner added. "The oil quality will likely be very good, with high polyphenols expected from a very hot summer and likely autumn." He predicted that the harvest would begin in early May. "The trees look amazing, responding well to biodynamic and organic nurturing," Vintiner said.

Margaret Hanson, the co-owner of Blue Earth, also from the Wairarapa region, is expecting results similar to Vintiner's. "After the last two wet years, the challenge this year so far is how dry it is," she said. "A lot of work has gone into repairing irrigation that has not been used for a long time."

Hanson said the yield of their Barnea olives will be down significantly this year. "It has not enjoyed the wet years and is exhausted after five big harvests in a row," she said. "So we are taking the opportunity to do some major restructuring on our trees. The rest look great," Hanson added. "The quantity of fruit may not be quite as high as the last couple of big years, but the weather so far suggests that we will return to much higher oil yields and polyphenols. Good news."

ONZ DEFERS CHANGES TO MEMBERSHIP STRUCTURE

In our last Oliveti newsletter we reported that OLIVES NZ were proposing to make changes to their Membership categories and structure in 2024. Their intention was to encourage more members and add value to the levels of ONZ Membership.

After feedback from some members, the ONZ Executive decided to defer the changes until 2025 as this would allow all ONZ members the opportunity to have their say and discuss options available at their forthcoming AGM in March.

Therefore, the 2024 ONZ Membership structure will remain as it stands:

HOBBY GROVE < 100 Trees: \$150 (inc. GST)

SMALL GROVE 101 - 250 Trees - \$300 (inc. GST)

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OLIVE VARIETAL ANALYSIS - February 2024 Update

An Oliveti sponsored project

This report has been prepared by Oliveti Committee member - Ewen Hutchinson of Oruati River Olives in Mangonui who has initiated this research.

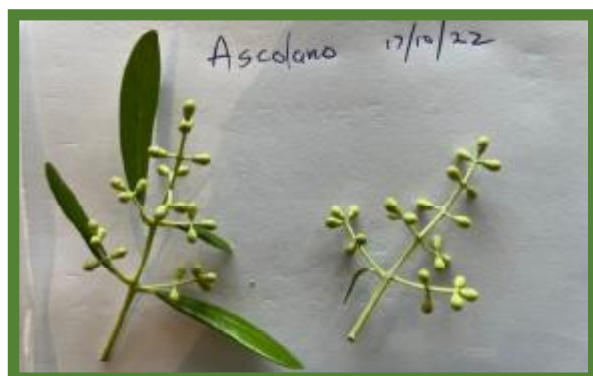
Work is continuing on the varietal analysis project begun in 2022 of Ascolano and J5, with Frantoio as a standard for comparison.

Morphology.

The three varieties have similar leaf and fruit, with minor differences in flowers and pits (Ascolano and Frantoio). See photos of flowers from 2022.

Morphology is not a precise measure, as there can be 10 to 15% variation in data between seasons and even location on the grove.

Fatty Acid profile.



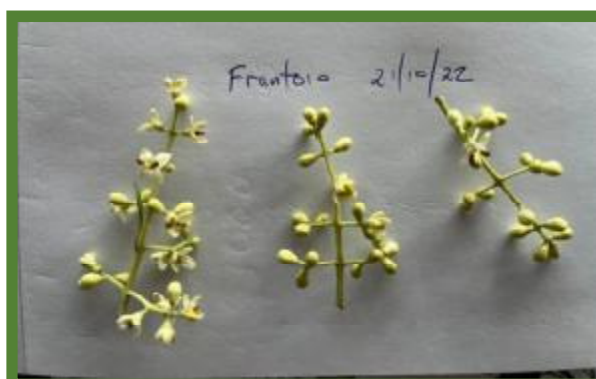
Frantoio and J5 profiles were very similar, and close to the French standard for Frantoio. The results were all within the IOC criteria. Again a somewhat imprecise measure, as the ratios of the fatty acids vary with climate and altitude.

DNA

Ascolano, Frantoio, and J5 leaves have been analysed for DNA by Centre

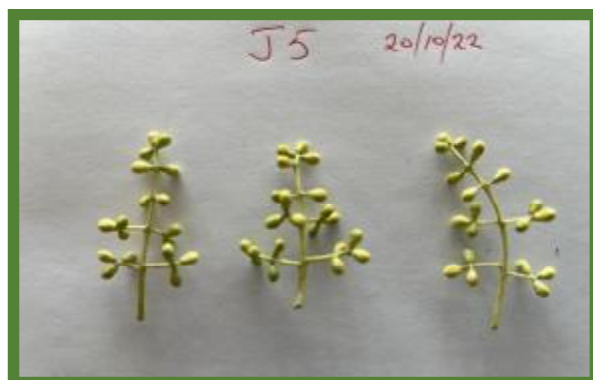
Technique de l'Olivier in Provence, France (Dr C Pinatel), in December 2023. All were shown to be Frantoio. However, as there were minor differences in morphology (above), DNA work will be done on the olive pits in an effort to refine the varietal analysis. Samples will be sent to France shortly.

It is worth noting that Frantoio specimens imported into NZ since the 1970s have come from many different



locations and exhibit minor differences in morphology even if the DNA shows as Frantoio. Leon Narbey for example, has Frantoio imported by Seresin and Marlborough Olives, and notes mature fruit has colour differences between the two imports!

Further results will be reported in due course, with the hope that we can correctly identify Ascolano, and know what our J5s really are!



TO FILTER OR NOT FILTER? WELL, IT DEPENDS.

Credit - Olive Oil Times

Filtered or non-filtered? Cloudy or Clear? Asked how they prefer their olive oil, people tend to be in one camp or the other, for reasons they're not quite sure of and often with little basis in facts.



Producers of extra virgin olive oil weigh the implications of filtering on the quality of their product through its shelf life and the often-divergent preferences of their customers.

With the aim of bringing a little clarity to the filter-or-no-filter question, researchers at the University of California at Davis Olive Center set out to review the scientific evidence on the effects of filtration. What they found in a report released today, is that, while each option has its pros and cons, the answer remains a little murky.

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The effects of filtration depend on the chemical and sensory profiles, quality of the initial oil, the type of filter aid and system, and storage conditions.- *UC Davis Olive Center*

To make olive oil, olives are washed and crushed into a paste that is stirred (or, *malaxed*) before being pressed, or spun in a centrifuge. What's left after removing the water is unfiltered olive oil.

Those little bits floating around include pieces of olives, water and enzymes that make the oil cloudy in appearance. Some people find unfiltered olive oil to be more flavourful. Others look at the ominous sediment at the bottom of the bottle and think the oil has gone bad.

Filtering the oil removes the suspended solids, resulting in a clearer appearance. But it might also remove some of the healthy phenolic compounds and actually decrease the shelf life of the oil, depending on the type of filter used.

"The suspended solids contain water and enzymes that impair oil stability, increase fermentation and degrade the oil's sensory quality," the Davis researchers found. "By removing these solids, filtered oil has less water activity, clearer appearance, less green colour, and no deposits in the storage container."

"On the other hand, the literature also shows that filtration can have negative impacts on a variety of parameters."

So which is better? Filter or unfiltered? As it turns out, the Davis team discovered, research suggests the effect of filtration depends on "the chemical and sensory profiles, quality of the initial oil, the type of filter aid and system, and storage conditions."

Which means producers need to take those factors and the myriad of other moving parts of olive oil production into consideration to determine which filtration technologies, if any, will yield the best results.

As for the rest of us, it could just remain a matter of personal taste.



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THIS MONTH'S OLIVE OIL RECIPE



Easy Olive Oil Dip

By Adam and Joanne, the creators of "Inspired Taste"

Prep time – 5 minutes

You can swap ingredients based on what you have in the kitchen or based on who's coming. Good combination of flavours is something salty like capers and parmesan cheese, herbs like rosemary and lots of garlic and if I have it in the fridge, a mashed up anchovy or a small squeeze of anchovy paste is delicious. If you want to add a little sweetness to the dip, add a small splash of high-quality balsamic vinegar.

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 garlic cloves, or more depending on how garlicky you want it
- 2 tablespoons capers, drained
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh rosemary
- 2 teaspoons chopped fresh thyme
- 3 tablespoons finely grated parmesan cheese
- Pinch sea salt, if you have it try truffle salt
- Fresh ground pepper, to taste
- Pinch crushed red pepper flakes, optional to make it spicy
- 1/2 cup extra-virgin olive oil, plus more as needed
- Crusty bread, cubed

DIRECTIONS:

Finely mince garlic and capers. Add to a bowl with oregano, rosemary, thyme and cheese. Season with a small pinch of salt and pepper. Use the back of a spoon to smooch the herbs into the garlic and capers.

Make-ahead: Prepare the garlic-herb mixture a day or two in advance and store, covered tightly, in the refrigerator. The fresh herbs may lose some colour. When ready to serve, add the mixture to a plate and top with olive oil.

Makes about 1/2 cup, Serves 4 to 6

2024 Oliveti Committee contact details:

Chairperson and acting Treasurer John Pearson info@oliveti.co.nz 02 902330

Secretary Pauline Young secretary@oliveti.co.nz 027 2880462

Committee Members:

Ewen Hutchinson ewen.hutch46@gmail.com 021 770919

Ban Aldin banaldin@xtra.co.nz 021 2699991

Adrienne Gilmore adrienz@icloud.com 027 7333890

Iona Cameron-Smith kiaora@mangapaiolives.com 021 08859744

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