



NEWSLETTER Issue 107 – October 2024

Report from the Chair

Dear Oliveti Members

Olive Oil is such a great product and we should all be so proud to be producing such a wonderful health food.

More and more we are hearing about the health benefits of Olive Oil. Observational studies have shown a link between lower risks of cardio vascular disease, some cancers and even dementia in people who consume higher amounts of olive oil than those who use little or none. Of course not all olive oil is the same quality and the EVOO, cold pressed olive oil that we produce with higher concentration of polyphenols is the supreme product.

The olive oils that were entered into the Olive Awards exhibited those qualities and that was reflected in the many Gold Silver and Bronze medals that were awarded.

Congratulations to all those who won medals. We had 44 entries, the second biggest ever so this was very challenging for our four judges. A huge thankyou to our judges Roberto Zecca, Geoff Webster, Georges Feghali and Ament Nagar. They do the tasting evaluations on a voluntary basis and this helps keep the costs down for members. We are so fortunate.

The Awards programme, coordination, the medals and certificates are all organised by Pauline Young with help from her husband Wayne. This is a huge undertaking however she would like to be able to have an understudy who could take this activity over. Please consider this as it is a very important part of Oliveti.

The Olive Awards produced 17 Gold, 16 silver and 3 bronze medals with best in show going to Murray Thoms Vernazoni Grove for his Single Intense J5. Congratulations to you all and particular congratulations to Murray Thoms.

On the 22nd September we held a very successful Field Day and Anaru and Danielle's Grove at Hihi. Anaru has 870 Olive trees and though he is new to the world of olives, he has shown a remarkable ability to get to grips with all the activities and plant that he has on his property. He is ably assisted by his amazing family. Thank you Anaru and Daniel for hosting us for a great day and also for turning on such great weather (the winterless north).

Everyone will be completing their pruning and looking in anticipation of the amount of flower they are getting on their trees. The seasons roll around.

That's it from me

Kind Regards

John Pearson

Oliveti Chair

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Oliveti Field Day held on Sunday 22nd September

Anaru and Danielle Moa – Hihi Estate, Doubtless Bay, Far North

We have been operating our business in Mangonui for 10 years, commuting from Hihi to Mangonui and navigating the timing of the school bus, to make the journey to work through the Far North traffic - which can disrupt your day by 2 mins . . . the life!

As we headed to work daily, we passed the Hihi Olive Estate. It was for sale. Busy people need to stay busy - what could be more fun? Fraught with enthusiasm and underestimating the weekends of head scratching with no idea what we are really doing.

The Estate has 800 trees and its own press. Training sessions were fast and full of failures. We managed to flood the press shed 5 times, everything that could break did. Our training prepared us for pressing customer's orders. In hindsight, the perfect lesson! We came away with 22% yield and two gold medals. A fluke for us and testament to the previous owners for their stewardship.

At the recent Field Days, so many of our lessons were restated amongst fellow Oliveti members, (we are not alone), and proved the value of such face to face contact on the common issues we all face. And the raft of possible solutions!



We have a new understanding of the flavours, palate and indeed manufacturing processes, to get the olives from the tree to a bottle that can return a fraction of your investment wallet, but reward your attitude and labour to another level.

Our journey continues just like the members who attended. Oliveti Northland is thriving in this space - well done!

The Annual Awards were presented at the Field Day with an opportunity for all to sample all entries.



Next Field day : Sunday the 17th November – Totara Barn Olive Grove, Matakana

Oliveteti Olive Oil Awards 2024



Oliveteti Awards 2024						
Class	Brand Name	Member Name	Varietal	PP	Award	Health Star
Single Delicate						
1	Oruaiti River	Ewen Hutchinson	Ascolano		Silver	
1	Oruaiti River	Ewen Hutchinson	Frantolo		Silver	
1	Narbey Olive Oil	Leon Narbey	Frantolo (1)		Silver	
1	Koutu Olives	Cornel de Ronde	J5	115	Gold	
1	Koutu Olives	Cornel de Ronde	Koroneiki	158	Gold	Best In Class
1	Hihī Olive Estate	A. & D. Moa	J5		Bronze	
Single Medium						
3	Oruaiti River	Ewen Hutchinson	J5		Silver	
3	Piwakawaka Estate	A & R Gilmore	J5 (1)		Gold	Best In Class
3	Estuary Olives	W & P Young	Mahurangi		Bronze	
3	River Estate	B & S Wade	Picual	270	Silver	1
3	Narbey Olive Oil	Leon Narbey	Frantolo (2)		Silver	
3	Piwakawaka Estate	A & R Gilmore	J5 (2)		Silver	
3	Donnall Grove	D & A Windybank	J5		Gold	
3	Shaken Down Olives	M & J Guillaume	J5		Bronze	
3	Narbey Olive Oil	Leon Narbey	Frantolo (3)		Silver	
3	Narbey Olive Oil	Leon Narbey	J5 (4)		Silver	
3	Duck Creek Olives	D & S Holland	J5	245	Gold	1
3	River Estate	B & S Wade	Frantolo	272	Gold	1
3	Puketū Olive Farm	P Creighton	J5	811	Silver	3
3	Hihī Olive Estate	A. & D. Moa	Ascolano		Gold	
3	Totara Barn	C & C Bayly	J5		Gold	
Blend Medium						
4	Oruaiti River	Ewen Hutchinson	Tuscan Blend Frantolo 50% J5 50%		Gold	
4	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Matakana Blend J5 50% Frantolo 50%		Gold	
4	Estuary Olives	W & P Young	Kaipara Blend 50% Mission 50% Chemlali		Silver	
4	Olives on Porter	Ban Aldin & Guy Audiss	Grove Blend		Gold	Best In Class
4	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Premium Blend J5 50% Frantolo 50%		Gold	
4	Oktai Olives	K & A Waterhouse	Frantolo 40% J5 30% Verdale 20%		Silver	
4	Estuary Olives	W & P Young	Tuscan Blend 75% Leccino 25% Mission		Silver	
4	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Frantolo 40% J5 40% HNT		Silver	
4	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Frantolo 90% J5 10% HNY		Gold	
Single Intense						
5	Hihī Olive Estate	A. & D. Moa	Leccino		Gold	
5	Duck Creek Olives	D & S Holland	Frantolo	342	Gold	1
5	Vemazoni Olive Oil	Murray Thoms	J5		Gold	Class Best In Show
Blend Intense						
6	Opito Olives	Jane Anderson	J5 90% Koroneiki 10%		Silver	
Flavoured Oil						
7	Vemazoni Olive Oil	Murray Thoms	J5 Lemon Lime Fused		Gold	Best In Class
7	Narbey Olive Oil	Leon Narbey	Lemon Lime Fused (S)		Not Medalled	
7	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Frantolo 50% J5 50% Lime Fused		Not Medalled	
7	Salumeria Fontana Olives	Greg Scopas	Frantolo 50% J5 50% Mandarin Fused		Silver	
Class 1 Single Delicate		Class 5 Blend Intense				
Class 2 Blend Delicate		Class 7 Flavoured				
Class 3 Single Med						
Class 4 Blend Med						
Class 5 Single Intense						

At the judge's table



With John helping out the back



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VERNAZONI OLIVE OIL

2024 Oliveti BEST IN SHOW Awardee

Winner of this year's Oliveti "Best in Show" award is Vernazoni Olive Oil. A small boutique olive grove in Kumeu, West Auckland run by Husband-and-Wife team – Murray and Alwin Thoms

Alwin and Murray moved onto their lifestyle property in Kumeu the Summer of 2010. The Kumeu-Huapai area is well known as having some of the best growing conditions for fruit and vegetables in New Zealand. It is relatively frost free and with pockets of elite soil and the region has become renown primarily for fruit production from its many orchards. It is also home to some of New Zealand's best known wine producers – Kumeu River, Nobilo, Matua Valley, Soljans and Coopers Creek all of which had their genesis in the area. It is also home to a number of small and medium olive groves



Murray explained that their lovely 3-acre lifestyle block lies on well drained but relatively flat fertile land just 1Km from the Huapai Village. The property was formally the homestead for a much larger farm (now subdivided) that has over its history been a livestock farm, a fruit orchard, Table-grape exporter, and more recently a large-scale strawberry farm. When they took over the property, the original owners had consolidated down to just 3 acres comprising the homestead and a mix of native bush, exotics and specimen fruit trees. The back third of the property had recently been planted in young olive trees. Unfortunately shortly after this, due to ill-health the owners had decided to sell up.



Alwin, who grew up on a large Copra Plantation on Vanua Levu, Fiji was no stranger to working the land and Murray, whilst not having a farming background was encouraged by his grandfather, Laurence Vernazoni to become a keen vegetable grower and gardener. So, between them, Alwin and Murray relished the opportunity for develop this fledgling olive grove which they named "Vernazoni. Olive Grove" after Murray's Italian heritage and Grandfather.

Comprising just 150-young sapling J5 trees planted out at just 4 m centres, the grove needed little care initially apart from wire netting to keep the rabbits at bay and stop them chewing on the bark. After a couple of years Murray says he was encouraged to join Oliveti by a friend – John Pearson (the current Chair of Oliveti) as a way to learn more about olive cultivation and production.

As the trees grew, Murray said they began their pruning regime to ensure that the trees developed the open vase shape from around the 2-3foot mark thus ensuring an abundance of air and sunlight. As we know says Murray, "left unmanaged, olive trees will quickly grow to exceed the available space and become very tall, crowded and mutually shaded. This causes a reduction in growth, poor leaf health and a subsequent loss of cropping potential".

Because the trees were planted relatively closely with sometimes less than 4m centres, Murray says mechanical shakers were never going to be an option. "We opted for the *vase shape* and our pruning methodology ensures that sunlight reaches all parts of the tree during long periods of each day. This encourages new growth and shoot development whilst also facilitating hand harvesting" says Murray.

At the time of their first harvest Murray said they realised that not all their trees were J5. A number of the trees in the grove were nowhere near as vigorous as the J5, the leaves were lighter in colour and fruit was much smaller. Looking at the trees it was easy to see that around 30 were something other than J5. To this day he has been unable to clearly identify them, but

several experts have suggested they are either El Greco or Olea Rakino which is an Olive cultivar best suited as a hedging plant.



The upshot for Murray and Alwin is that they only have 120-producing Olea J5 trees (they don't harvest the El Greco) and based on harvesting records, their best yield is around 12.5Kg/tree and normally around 10Kg or less. Murray says they will try grafting J5 onto the El Greco wood this year after trying a couple of years ago with no success.

In line with Oliveti's "Healthy Soil – Healthy Trees" initiative, Murray and Alwin

have been practising organic techniques around the grove since 2018 when they stopped the use of Roundup under trees - Now all grassed. Soil and leaf tests are conducted regularly, and appropriate organic fertilizers are applied as a foliar spray, soil drench or loose per tree.

"Our first major harvest occurred in 2018" recounts Murray "when the trees were approaching 9-years old and only after we had come to understand that the 'flowering' occurs on last year's new wood – unlike many other fruit trees. Our pruning technique has now improved".

"Over the last 2 or 3 years as the tree foliage got denser between rows, we have experimented with allowing the tree canopy to grow taller to ensure there was plenty of light and ample new growth to support flowering and olive production" says Murray. "This larger/higher canopy has resulted in an increased yield per tree but complicated harvesting as these higher branches are now out of reach for the hand-held olive rake we use for harvesting. One way around this is we cut these tall, fruit bearing branches at the time of harvest. Our harvest team are then able to strip the olives off those branches while they are on the ground." Very easy. In addition, we have invested in battery-powered extendable hand-held mechanical harvesters and a 5.5m olive collection umbrella from Grove Supply. This combination has increased productivity dramatically and enabled us to now easily harvest the taller trees with branches left in-situ.

Two years ago, on the advice of Olive Arborist - Neil Smith, they commenced a programme of reducing each tree volume by cutting out one major limb and the intention is to work around each tree progressively cutting one limb every second year so. Over an 8–12year period, each tree will be completely renewed.

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Winning the Awards



Murray tells us that this year they harvested their first pick of J5 on Sunday May 5. "All olives pass thru our Grove Supply - leaf blower before going into 500Kg shipping bins. These were then delivered to Olivado in Waipapa for pressing next morning less than 20 hours from harvest. This resulted in our achieving a total Polyphenols count of 329 mg/kg and qualifying for a **1-Health Star Award** from Oliveti and the oil is considered "Intense".

"We have been entering the Oliveti Awards since 2018 and whilst we have previously won Gold medals for our EVOO and for our Agrumato Citrus Fused Oil, this is the first time we have be fortunate enough to receive the **Oliveti Best in Show trophy**" says Murray. "Alwin and I would like to acknowledge the work of Oliveti Secretary Pauline Young who has for many years, organised the Awards and to also thank this year's team of Judges led by Roberto Zecca."

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THIS MONTH'S OLIVE OIL RECIPE(S)

Anaru says *"We have converted many of our friends to EVOO on French Vanilla ice cream with a dash of salt . . . "*

Olive Oil Pistachio Cardomom Cake

from Pauline Young

Ingredients

150g Pistachios crushed	125g flour
2 tsp Cardomom	1 tsp baking Powder
125 ml EVOO	150g Caster Sugar
3 Eggs	60ml Milk

Topping

3 Tbsp Honey	1 Tbsp Water
2Tbsp or more Pistachios roughly chopped	

Method

Preheat oven to 180°. Line a 20cm tin with baking paper.

- Place pistachios in food processor and blitz until finely crushed.
- Place flour, cardomom and baking powder in bowl and add the ground pistachios.
- Measure EVOO in a large jug and add sugar, eggs, & milk. Whisk until light in colour and thick.
- Fold dry ingredients into the wet and mix until fully combined.
- Pour batter into cake tin and bake 40 - 45 minutes.
- Leave to cool a little before removing from tin.

Topping

Heat honey and water over a low heat and stir until a thick syrup.

Place cake on a plate and brush top with syrup.

Sprinkle with chopped pistachios

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