

Press Release
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Gibson Bridge Cellar Door Rated Top In Marlborough

A boutique winery, owned and operated by Howard and Julie Simmonds, has been judged as the very best in Marlborough, following up on a gold standard effort last year.

Gibson Bridge opened its cellar door only two and a half years ago, with the couple having developed the vineyard in 2004.

Mr Simmonds says they were “overwhelmed with satisfaction” at being awarded the title of Marlborough’s Best Cellar Door 2010.

“We are thrilled. Moving into the wine industry has been a late found career for us both and we have been involved in every aspect of developing the vineyard, through to building and operating the cellar door. It has been five and a half years, seven days a week for the both of us, so this acknowledgement is an absolute delight.”

He says their aim was to create a wine studio that reflected the quality and passion of their wines.

According to the judges they have achieved just that, with chandeliers, candles, mirrors and a 100 year old former work bench for a tasting table. Their ability to impart information in a friendly and knowledgeable way was also commented on by the judges.

The Marlborough Cellar Door competition has been run by Wine Marlborough for the past four years, with each cellar door in the region being visited twice by mystery shoppers during the busy summer months. They are all judged on a variety of business aspects, including the service given over the telephone, their knowledge of the local wine industry right through to the experience of tasting wines in person.

In each of the six categories, Gibson Bridge scored a perfect 100%, a never before achieved feat.

Some of the comments made by the shoppers include:

“Both husband and wife were passionate about the Marlborough wine industry and their small plot in particular. We were especially delighted to be offered use of their private deck for our picnic lunch.”

“It would certainly be at the top of my list as to where to recommend people to visit when visiting the local area.”

While Gibson Bridge was the only cellar door to gain a perfect score, 12 others were rated as Gold Standard, scoring above 90%.

Wine Marlborough’s Marketing Manager Marcus Pickens says the region’s cellar doors are a vital facet of the wine industry overall.

“For visitors to the region, this may be their very first opportunity to try the wines Marlborough is famous for. The experience they receive at the cellar door can play a major role in how they enjoy the wines, and developing loyalty to that winery in the future.”

Mr Pickens says for international wine visitors, Marlborough is the most popular region to visit. NZ Tourism statistics show 45,000 international wine tourists visit the region each year, injecting hundreds of thousands of dollars into the local economy.

“The annual Mystery Shopper event helps ensure we continue to provide the excellent service we have become renowned for.”



The 12 Gold Standard Cellar Doors are;

- Framingham
- Bladen Wines
- Drylands
- Auntsfield Estate
- Clos Henri
- Hunter's
- Saint Clair Family Estate
- Cloudy Bay
- River Farm Wines
- Te Whare Ra
- Forrest Estate
- Johanneshof Wines

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