

Press Release
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Marlborough's Top Cellar Doors Announced

- **Two companies tie for top place**
- **Mystery shoppers discover an impressive line up at Marlborough cellar doors**

For the first time in the three year history of Wine Marlborough's Mystery Shopper – Cellar Door of the Year, two companies have tied for first place.

Both Spy Valley Wines and Herzog Estate delivered top results on two separate occasions, gaining an average of 98%.

The Mystery Shopper concept was instigated back in 2007 in an effort to appraise the standard of service visitors to the region's cellar doors were receiving. The mystery shoppers visited each cellar door twice, once in February and for the second time in March.

Services from online enquiries, through to staff presentation, service experience, relaying information, knowledge and developing loyalty were assessed by the independent shoppers.

In the case of Spy Valley the mystery shopper concluded the visit was "a very good experience and I would be proud to take overseas visitors there. The cellar door certainly added value to Marlborough being our premier wine producing region."

The shopper concluded that Herzog Estate's cellar door offered "an air of elegance and sophistication, but in an unpretentious way. The staff member was able to go into great detail about how they fitted into the international markets."

In total 44 cellar doors were visited during the mystery shopper campaign, with seven gaining a 100% mark on at least one of the visits.

The visits and reporting was undertaken by Customer Care Ltd of Christchurch and spokesperson Melissa Wilson said there were some stunning results achieved.

"You have 13 cellar doors that achieved an average rating of over 90%. Then there were another 13 that averaged a rating of over 80%. That is truly remarkable."

In a new move, Wine Marlborough has created categories to rank the achievements of the cellar doors. Each company that achieved an average of over 90% has been ranked as Gold, 80 – 89% Silver and 70 – 79% bronze.

Wine Marlborough's Marketing Manager Marcus Pickens says cellar door staff are often the only contact a visitor to Marlborough has with a winery and it is important to ensure the experience is a good one.

"Cellar door staff are the face of the industry and it's vital they create a relationship with each and every visitor. It is our visitors that will go away talking about Marlborough wine and hopefully buying it when they return home. That's why the Mystery Shopper programme is so important. The best part is that this is an independent assessment, and not an in house promotion," Mr Pickens said.

New General Manager of Destination Marlborough, Tracy Johnston, echo's that it is excellent to see Marlborough's tourism being assessed to encourage high standards of service and experience.

"Wine is a key ingredient in Marlborough attracting tourists and to have the standards independently assessed helps ensure the experiences our tourists have are world class"

The Gold category cellar doors are:

Herzog Estate (tied for supreme winner 2009)
Spy Valley Wines (tied for supreme winner 2009)
Villa Maria
Bladen Wines
Te Whare Ra
Gibson Bridge
Nautilus
Yealands Estate
Mahi Wines
Boldevines
River Farm Wines
Framingham Wines
Wairau River Wines

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