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**MEDIA RELEASE**



## **Marlborough-Wellington Wine Race put on ice**

The Waikawa Boating Club's annual Wine Race from Marlborough to Wellington has been withdrawn from the racing calendar.

The racing committee has made the difficult decision to call an end to the race which annually delivered the first drops of Marlborough wines from the current vintage to the capital. Rear Commodore of Sailing, David Grigg, said that the committee looked at every option for making the event happen but simply couldn't find enough guaranteed overnight berths in Wellington.

"This is one of the downsides of the increase in popularity of boating, with berths and moorings being snapped up," Grigg said.

Wellington City Council, Seaview Marina and the various boating clubs in Wellington all had some space. But combined there just isn't enough spaces for what has become one of the most popular events in New Zealand yacht racing.

Club Development Officer, David Hancock, had the difficult task of contacting long time sponsor, WineWorks to break the news. "Waikawa Boating Club is incredibly grateful for the partnership with WineWorks over years of running the event. To have to pass on the decision to cancel an event which has so much potential is devastating."

"And of course you can't have a wine race without the wine. The Marlborough wineries have made that side of it happen, year after year."

WineWorks Marlborough, General Manager, Damien Gillman, said that he'd heard of the event being one of the most desirable races in the country. Our association with the event has been an easy choice where we could link with Marlborough's wineries and the excitement of racing across Cook Strait.

"We've enjoyed the partnership and we'll continue to talk with Waikawa Boating Club on how else we can combine WineWorks, the Marlborough wine industry and yacht racing for the future."

Hancock says that the growth and popularity of events like the Evolution Sails Women's Regatta (September) and Giesen New Year Regatta (January) give the sailing committee confidence that the other offshore races to the Brothers, Tarakohe, Mana, Sentinel Rock and Catherine Cove can be developed further to fill the gap.

**ENDS**

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