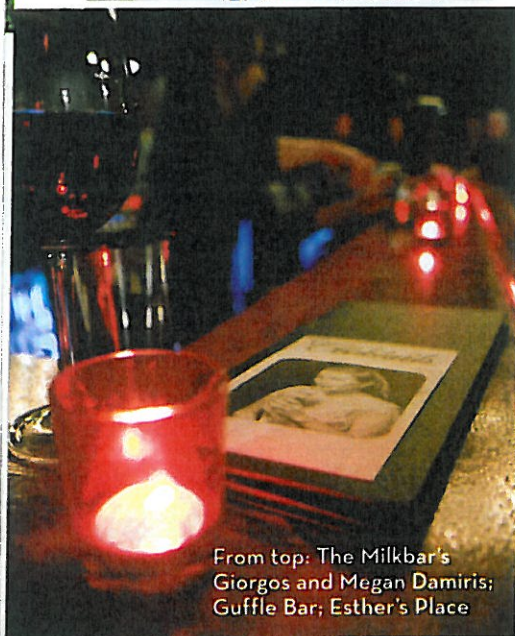




Elephant Hill winery restaurant;
opposite page: Tukituki River Valley

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KIERAN SCOTT



From top: The Milkbar's Giorgos and Megan Damiris; Guffle Bar; Esther's Place



Adoro Café

142 Hastings St, ph: 06-835 1747
Newly arrived to shake incumbents from their complacency, Paul Greaves has owned cafés for 15 years in Auckland, Queensland and Italy. He uses his own tailor-made coffee blend to make excellent cappuccino at his hole-in-the-wall, Melbourne-style espresso bar and also offers a vast counter spread of croissants and Danish pastries, imported frozen from France and baked fresh daily.

Gernot's Gold

102 Shakespeare Rd, ph: 06-835 1552, gernotsgold.co.nz
Farmers' markets are somewhat overcrowded with artisan-made preserves these days, but Gernot's delicate jams and jellies are a notch above the rest. Made with unusual fruits such as yuzu, loquat and Rangpur lime, the jellies have huge intensity of flavour, thanks to their being made without thickening agents, which have a dulling effect.

Guffle Bar

29A Hastings St, ph: 06-835 8847
At Napier's stylish late-night cocktail bar, it is the house margarita that is on tap. It's served in recycled jam jars, which may seem at odds with the sophistication of the place, but there's a reason: they began doing so one art deco festival weekend, to fit in with the theme of prohibition and bath-tub booze, and the habit has stuck.

Ti Kouka Farm Organic Meat

301 St Aubyn St West, Hastings, ph: 06-870 3598, theorganicfarm.co.nz
When Andy Tait-Jamieson and Sophie Siers moved on to their sheep and cattle farm in 2002, they turned to organic and bio-dynamic methods. The South Devon cattle and Wiltshire sheep are not drenched or fed serums, while their pastures are not sprayed with pesticides or fertilisers. Since the grass takes longer to grow, so do the cattle and sheep.

This, they believe, helps explain why Ti Kouka beef and lamb are tastier, and noticeably denser in texture without being tougher. The meat is also hung and aged.

Find Ti Kouka meat at the local Sunday farmers' market, as well as in good food stores nationwide.

Te Awanga

Elephant Hill Estate & Winery Restaurant

86 Clifton Rd, Te Awanga, ph: 06-872 6060, elephanthill.co.nz
Always good, Elephant Hill's European-inspired cuisine has recently taken an upward turn with the appointment of Ashley Jones as executive chef. Dine in sleek modern surroundings, inside or out on the deck, with glimpses of the sea shore between the vines.

To stay

Elephant Hill Lodge

219 Parkhill Rd, Te Awanga, ph: 06-873 0400, elephanthilllodge.co.nz
High behind Elephant Hill winery sits a luxurious U-shaped cluster of three self-contained suites to sleep six guests, overlooking the vines, the ocean and Cape Kidnappers beyond. Minimalist design accentuates both the dramatic artworks and the view.

Esther's Place

7 Humber St, Pandora, ph: 06-875 1977, esthersplace.co.nz
This member of the Millar Road family is a luxurious modern apartment in a new building, with a terrace overlooking Ahuriri lagoon. The prints and paintings are from well-known local artists, such as Dick Frizzell, Fane Flaws and Para Matchitt.

Haumoana House at Millar Road

83 Millar Rd, RD2, Hastings, ph: 06-875 1977
The newest - and largest - addition to the cluster of cottages at Millar Road, Haumoana House is a spacious, open-plan modern home with wide views, and an outdoor pool. All the furniture, artworks and ceramics are Hawke's Bay designed and made, including duvets from owners Greg Collinge and Gabrielle Simmers' design store, Esther Diamond. Sleeps eight.