



BELINDA HENLEY

in search of our finest ... winery restaurants

This week I am celebrating some of the wonderful winery restaurants we are lucky enough to have in Hawke's Bay. In fact, they are so good, four of the six finalists in the *Cuisine* Winery Restaurant of the Year Award are on our doorstep.

They are Black Barn, Terroir at Craggy Range, Elephant Hill and Vidal Winery Restaurant.

Now in its sixth year, the *Cuisine* awards are widely regarded. There are 50 finalists across eight categories and the winners will be selected after a

series of anonymous visits by judges and announced on August 16.

To celebrate this achievement, the Hawke's Bay finalists have come up with a way to reward diners who visit all four restaurants.

All you have to do is dine at all four

(no real hardship there!) over a two-month period, collect a stamp at each restaurant and you will be invited to a celebratory cocktail party.

It's a great way to support these local businesses and enjoy some of the best in New Zealand cuisine.



Black Barn

Along with Elephant Hill, Black Barn is a first time finalist in the *Cuisine* awards.

Open for lunch from Wednesday to Sunday and for dinner by private arrangement, the Black Barn menu is light, modern and delicious.

In summer it is easy to while away the hours sitting in their courtyard underneath the canopy of grapes.

Black Barn offers much more than just a meal; you can also visit the art gallery, tasting room and market during the summer months.

Right now Black Barn's menu is full of winter comfort, including a confit duck terrine with winter vegetables and a twice cooked free range pork belly with chilli pineapple salsa. I'll be paying a visit for their baked banana pudding with butterscotch sauce — awesome!



Terroir at Craggy Range

Last year's joint winner with Waipara's Pegasus Bay, the team at Terroir is hoping to make it two in a row.

With a "French country" influence, Terroir is a destination not only for its superb food but its spectacular location. Its terrace is one of the most idyllic spots to dine during summer.

Terroir's new bistro menu is proving a real hit with the locals, many of whom have already tried some of the restaurant's signature dishes including the whole baked fish and pork rack for two. Whatever you are eating, team it with some of the famous "Terroir fried potatoes" and save room for a home made ice cream in a cone for dessert. As the current holder of "Winery Restaurant of the Year" I've asked chef Leyton Ashley to submit a recipe for you to try at home.

the Bay's
fantastic

4



STAR TURN: Pictured at Black Barn in Havelock North representing the finalists are restaurant managers, from left, Tracey McInnes, Craggy Range; Robert Scholes, Elephant Hill; Pru Barton, Black Barn; and Shane Pugh, Vidals.



Elephant Hill

One of the new kids on the block, the architectural masterpiece that is Elephant Hill, hasn't taken long to establish itself as a foodie destination in Te Awanga. Its outside terrace, complete with sea breeze, offers the best in al fresco dining.

With a food philosophy of combining the best, simple flavours but in an interesting way, Elephant Hill frequently changes its menu to reflect seasonal and local produce.

Current favourites are a lamb shank pie served with a truffle parsnip puree and a roasted beetroot risotto with a poached egg and Danish feta. Keep an eye out for its series of degustation dinners which offer a chance for chef Ashley Jones to go wild in the kitchen.



Vidal Winery

The dining room at Vidals is warm and inviting and dominated by four spectacular caves, no longer in use, other than for your aesthetic pleasure.

A Hawke's Bay institution for 30 years Vidals is still offering the same consistently high level of service and food that has seen it win a number of awards over the years.

Open seven days for lunch and dinner, Vidals also offers tapas and sharing platters to eat by the fire.

Vidals is currently taking part in *Cusine* magazine's "Dining with the Stars" promotion where two of their signature dishes are paired with Villa Maria wines.

For entrée you can try the roasted black pudding with shallot ice cream and for main and bluenose served with a gouda cheese and chive gratin nage.

PICTURE / PAUL TAYLOR HBT103188-01