

High achievers in the local business community have been recognised with the announcement of the finalists in the Westpac Hawke's Bay Chamber of Commerce



Business Awards. Each week *Hawke's Bay Today* profiles the finalists. This week we look at two categories, the NZ Trade & Enterprise Exporter of the Year Award, open to all businesses based in Hawke's Bay primarily engaged in exporting, and the Xplore.net Online Award, open to businesses based in Hawke's Bay that show excellence in customer service, marketing and sales using the web.

— See p16 for Xplore.net Online Awards



Belting out a big business

Craftsmanship, quality and innovation are three words which sum up Otane-based company Wood Mallets Ltd.

They are a small but passionate team of craftsmen who manufacture polo mallets and croquet equipment from The Park home-stead, 5km east of Otane.

They are world leaders in the development of polo and croquet equipment and cite their ongoing research and development pro-

gramme as a major factor in their success.

They have operated for 27 years and have three fulltime and three part-time employees.

A large proportion of orders are taken via their website woodmallets.com and deliveries to over 50 countries are made within a few days. Exports are 85 per cent of their business.

They say they take as much pride in their customer service and overall business excellence as they do in their product quality and craftsmanship.

They were the supreme business of the year winner in 2001.

MASTER MALLETS: Fidel Russ and George Wood of Wood Mallets Ltd of Otane. PICTURE / FILE

State of the art and sustainable

Elephant Hill Estate and Winery's owners are passionate about wine and great food and have fulfilled their dream of one day owning a winery restaurant with ocean views.

When visiting from Germany in 2001, they fell in love with the beauty of Te Awanga and after purchasing the land engaged a team to build a state-of-the-art winery merging old and new-world wine styles to produce exceptional, world-class wines.

The first planting was made in 2003 and this year 168 tonnes of grapes were picked and processed.

Officially opening in November 2008, it continues to receive local, national and international attention, with 19 established markets, new markets emerging and over 60 wine accolades and awards.

This year they were a proud finalist in the Cuisine Restaurant of the Year, a true accomplishment for a young restaurant.

Elephant Hill has sweeping views



INSPIRED: Elephant Hill's Steve Skinner, winemaker, and Gunter Thies, managing director.

PICTURE / SUPPLIED

along the Te Awanga Coastline to the iconic Cape Kidnappers.

They are inspired by their environment and architecture and are passionate about our wines, food and service.

All fruit is 100 per cent hand-picked from sustainably run vineyards, reflecting the seriousness with which they regard their ongoing stewardship of the land.

Exports dominate placenta products business

Waipukurau's Agri-lab is the leading supplier of animal placenta products worldwide and a key supplier of raw ingredients and pharmaceutical and medical biomaterials.

The company specialises in placenta, glands, membranes, tendons, eyes, brains, blood and glandular products.

It has been in business for 11 years and employs two to 11 people.

The company has reported steady growth over the past few years with more than 95 per cent of products exported.

Their freeze drier is available for small-scale contract processing for all types of products.

They have developed new export markets through naturopaths and dietary supplement companies interested in glandular therapeutics ingredients and placenta extracts.

Managing director Angela Payne said milestones in the past year included the purchase of a \$200,000 freeze drier, extensions to the premises and a trip to Hong Kong that promoted freeze-dried glandular products.

"Business is great. We put our resilience down to being very lucky in the market we are in, and staying cashed-up enough to ride out humps and make the most of opportunities that come along," she said.



REBIRTH: The main part of Agri-lab Co-Products' business comes from placentas provided by farmers. PICTURE / SUPPLIED