

March 2008

Slow Food for Marlborough

“Whether standing at a BBQ, kneeling on a tatami mat or seated at an elegant restaurant, eating is fundamental to living. Elevating the quality of our food and taking time to enjoy it is a simple way to infuse our daily lives with joy. This is the philosophy of Slow Food.”

The Slow Food Companion

Seven Marlborough foodies passionate about good food and wine have formed a local ‘convivium’ of the international Slow Food movement.

Slow Food is a non-profit, member-supported organisation encouraging people to take an interest in the food they eat, where it comes from, how it tastes and to think about how their food choices affect the rest of the world. Today there are over 80 000 members internationally.

The movement has its origins in Italy in the 1980s. When McDonald’s planned to build a franchise outlet near the Piazza di Spagna in Rome, Carlo Petrini, organised a demonstration in which he and his supporters brandished bowls of penne pasta as weapons of protest. Soon after, Carlo Petrini began the international Slow Food movement, to protect local food traditions and encourage a positive food culture.

The Slow Food Marlborough founding committee is made up of members from wineries Clos Henri, Herzog and Seresin, Marlborough Vintner’s Hotel and local chef and Farmer’s Market Chairman, Chris Fortune. The role of the committee is to get Slow Food established in Marlborough and look for people interested in supporting its objectives.

Marlborough Convivium Leader, MJ Loza, says “there is a lot of publicity about healthy eating, sustainability, food miles and carbon footprints. The concept of slow food brings all those issues together.”

“Food is absolutely fundamental to life. That’s a no-brainer.” says MJ Loza. “But the hidden power to that fact is that by improving the quality of our food, the way it is made, and the way we buy and eat it we can bring about some big changes. Individually, we can improve our own well-being and collectively we help the health of the planet too”.

But it’s far from being about activism, MJ says simply put Slow Food is about fun and appreciating good food.

“Have you ever had a good feeling about sitting down to eat as a family, or sharing a fun meal with friends? Or enjoyed making a cake from scratch, the taste of a tomato fresh from your own garden or talking with a food producer at the Farmer’s Market? All these are celebrations of Slow Food. It doesn’t have to be gourmet and expensive. It’s about good, genuine food”.

The group is planning a range of food and wine events and visits to local producers. Ideas include informal cheese-making classes, bread-making, easy vege gardening, home composting and time with a barista to learn the art of espresso making.

The first Slow Food Marlborough event is a 'Picking Party', which will be hosted by Seresin Estate on Saturday, 12 April. The morning will be spent as part of the Seresin vintage team, hand-picking and hand-sorting grapes and learning about biodynamic viticulture and winemaking. The event is free of charge and a homemade morning tea will be provided. Register at slowfoodmarlborough@gmail.com or phone MJ Loza on 03 5729408.

To find out more about Slow Food see, visit www.slowfood.com. For enquiries about local activities and events email slowfoodmarlborough@gmail.com or call MJ Loza on 03 572 9408.