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New press means more of a good thing

Award-winning Cable Bay Extra Virgin Olive Oil is set to get even better, with “the Rolls-Royce of olive oil processing equipment” being installed in the winery.

The new Pieralisi Fattoria 2 olive oil plant is “the one of the best of its size you can get”, says Cable Bay shareholder and olive oil maker Margaret Edwards, and is the only model of its kind in New Zealand.

It can also process 10 times as much fruit as the older “hobby press” the oil was previously made on, she says.

“Our old equipment could process just 50kg of fruit an hour. This one is capable of handling up to 500kg an hour.”

Even though Cable Bay Extra Virgin Olive Oil is relatively new to the market, it has notched up considerable success, with its 2007 oil winning a silver medal in the New Zealand Olive Oil Awards, and the 2006 oil winning a gold medal in the prestigious Los Angeles International Extra Virgin Olive Oil Competition.

Cable Bay 2007 Extra Virgin Olive Oil is blended principally from four varieties of fruit: Koroneiki, originally from Crete; Frantoio, and Pendolino from Italy and J5 a variety propagated from an olive tree that is thought to have been in New Zealand since the mid nineteenth century with a very small percentage of Picual, a variety from Spain.

With 300 more trees being planted in the past two years, bringing the total able to be used by Cable Bay to 1800, the new press means the vineyard will be able to make more of its world-class oil in a few years. But an increase in quantity won't mean a decrease in quality, rather the reverse, says Edwards.

“This is still a small, artisan operation by world production standards,” she says. “We will still be paying the same attention to detail and ensuring our oil is of the highest extra virgin standard.

“For example, we will still be pressing fruit on the same day it is picked – within four to six hours whenever possible. By pressing fruit when it is freshest, you get the best oil.”

Cable Bay Extra Virgin Olive Oil is available exclusively to diners at Cable Bay's restaurant and for sale through the tasting room, online at www.cablebayvineyards or by mail order.

The first oil produced by the new press will be released around September this year.

Released on behalf of Cable Bay by Goode PR, Auckland.

For more information, images or to arrange an interview, please contact:

Vikki Lee Goode of Goode PR, Auckland on +64 9 480 9948 or 021 964 888 or email
vikkilee@goodepr.co.nz.