



it's road trip time!

A haven of artisan food, boutique wine makers and craft beer brewers, North Canterbury has something on offer for everyone.

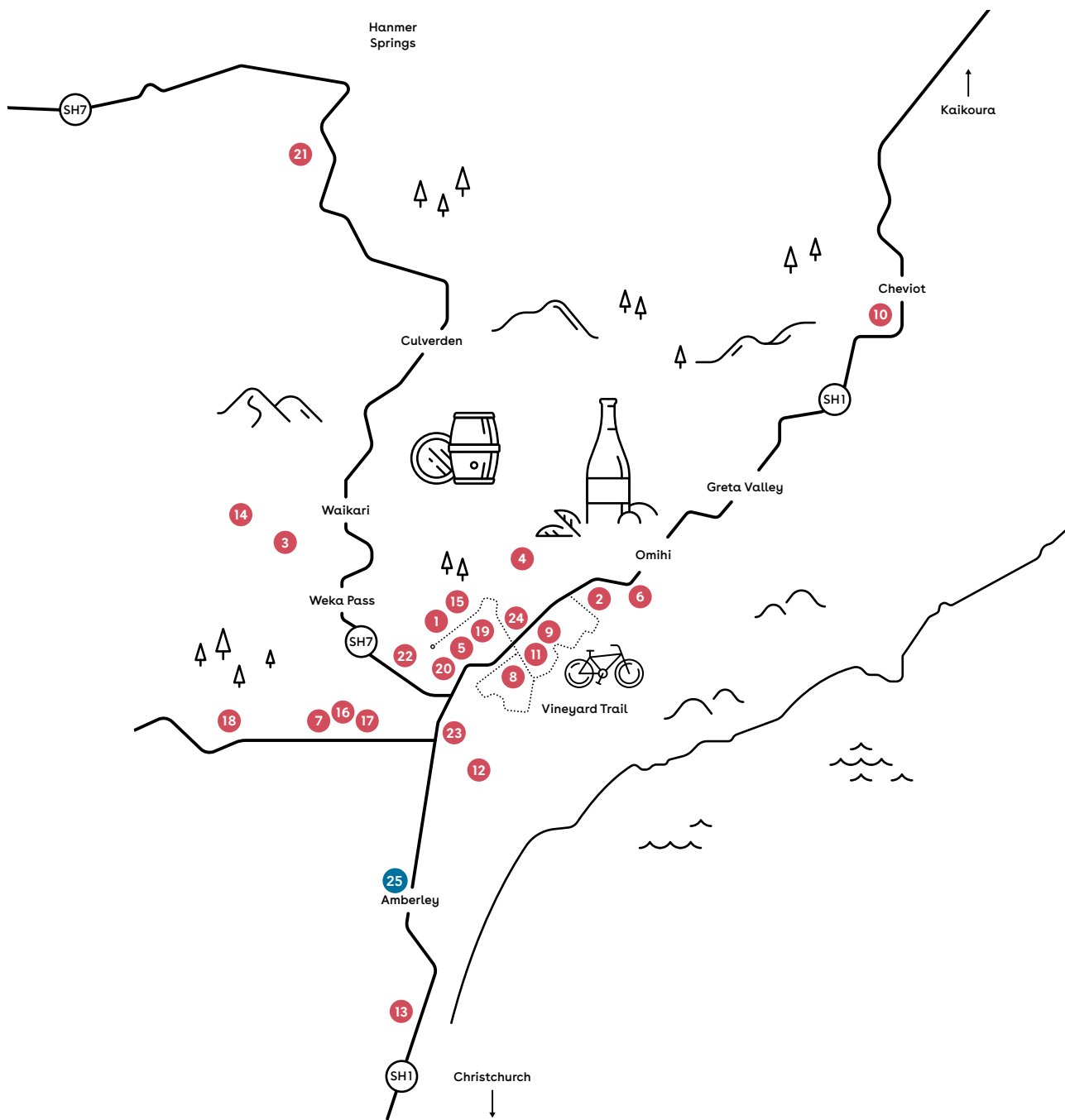
WORDS Lizzie Davidson **IMAGES** Naomi Haussman

It's summer. And with summer holidays come visitors. We often have a full house and love to leap in our trusty chariot and hit the road to show our guests some serious day trippin' good times across the North Canterbury wine region.

We like to head out on a Saturday morning to catch Amberley Farmers' market because we're a little bit obsessed with Rachel Scott's delicious ciabatta stuffed with goat cheese and studded with a few Mt Grey Olives. Then, if we can resist the magnetic pull of Mumma T Trading Lounge – an emporium stuffed to the rafters with New Zealand gifts, vintage goodness and curiosities – we'll keep on cruising, our next destination the local wineries.

Since I moved to Christchurch 16 years ago, I've seen North Canterbury blossom into an international food and wine destination, celebrated for its Pinot Noir, Chardonnay and Riesling, and for the quality of its local produce. Now we have one of the finest wine regions in New Zealand right on our doorstep, which is pretty darn awesome.

With around 20 varied and interesting wineries north of the Waimakariri River, we can't do them all justice in one day. Inevitably some good-natured wrangling commences, with people requesting their favourites. But we're on a mission to try a few new flavours each trip. For our next roadie, we're planning a stop at the Bone Line cellar door. As our local



Experience North Canterbury

Drink in the country's most diverse and unique wine.

WINERIES

1. Ataahua Waipara*
2. Black Estate
3. Bell Hill*
4. Bellbird Spring*
5. Dallington Downs Vineyard Estate
6. Fancrest Estate*
7. Georges Road Wine

8. Greystone Wines
9. Mountford Estate*
10. Mt Beautiful Wines
11. Muddy Water Wines
12. Pegasus Bay
13. Pukeko Junction
14. Pyramid Valley*
15. Sherwood Estate Wines*
16. Silver Wing Wines*

17. Terrace Edge Vineyard and Olive Grove
18. The Boneline
19. The Old Glenmark Vicarage*
20. Torlesse Wines
21. Waiau River Estate
22. Waipara River Estate
23. Waipara Hills
24. Waipara Springs

BREWERIES

25. Brew Moon Brewing Company

* By appointment only
See northcanterburywines.co.nz
for opening hours and directions



We can't do it all, but the beauty of North Canterbury is that it's just on our doorstep, so we'll toss a coin, and come back another day for more.

barman would attest, we're quite familiar with their spicy plummy Iridium, made from some of the oldest Cabernet vines in the country, and we like it so much, we're keen to try their other varietals. Then it's on to Black Estate for some lunch, because that picnic in Amberley was hours ago. If there's a finer spot to sip a glass of Chenin Blanc and eat delicious local food while gazing out over the vines, we haven't yet found it.

We can't make up our mind what to do after lunch. My daughter wants to ride the Weka Pass Railway. This adorable vintage steam train run by volunteers, puffs between Glenmark and Waikari, and it's the perfect post-lunch adventure. I'm muttering about cycling part of the Waipara Valley Vineyard Trail with its spectacular mountain views and cellar doors, but if truth be told, that will probably prove far too energetic and I'll settle for a gentle stroll instead. My partner loves driving through the rolling hills and likes to press on to the aptly named Mt. Beautiful Wines and their tasting rooms in Cheviot. My parents like to visit Gore Bay and its baroque clay Cathedral Cliffs like a natural Sagrada Família. My sister is a wildlife tour guide and fancies a trip to St Anne's Lagoon



TOP / The North Canterbury Wine Food Festival is held annually in March in the Glenmark Domain and showcases some of the regions best wine, beer and artisan foodies. This year the 'coolest little wine festival' is on Sunday 10 March. ABOVE / Harvest time at Greystone Wines in the Teviotdale Hills.



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to see if she can spy Cape Barren geese. And my brother is a geocaching enthusiast and wants to combine fossil fossicking with bagging a cache at Motunau Beach.

By then it’ll be mid-afternoon, so we’ll head home via a pot of tea and a wedge of cake at Pukeko Junction. Or maybe we won’t go home. Maybe we’ll turn off at Glenmark and head inland to Hanmer Springs, for some evening relaxation in the hot pools, an overnight stay in an alpine lodge and another glass of sublime local wine. We can’t do it all, but the beauty of North Canterbury is that it’s just on our doorstep, so we’ll toss a coin, and come back another day for more. ●

For more information about North Canterbury Wine Region visit northcanterburywines.co.nz. To plan your visit to North Canterbury, check out visithurunui.co.nz and alpinepacific.nz

TOP / Food writers, chefs and international wine writers spend a day foraging, fishing and gathering in North Canterbury at Forage North Canterbury. Photo Forage North Canterbury. ABOVE LEFT/ A couple tasting wines at Bell Hill in Weka Pass (open by appointment). ABOVE / Filled Grizzly Bagels await the crowds at the North Canterbury Food and Wine Festival.

in detail

Discover some of our favourite places to stop, eat and drink in North Canterbury.



Fiddler's Green Vineyard & Bistro

Through the double gates at 246 Georges Road is a boutique vineyard and Mediterranean-style wine tasting cellar and bistro. Founded 1994, the bistro specialises in fresh, seasonal dishes paired with North Canterbury's finest wines, local craft beers and premium liquors. Delicious European-inspired fare sits alongside Kiwi favourites and comforting pub-style dishes, made with locally sourced ingredients. Indoor and outdoor seating overlooks the vineyard with a large outdoor amphitheatre and panoramic vistas. Keep up to date with their event schedule on their website. Open 11 am – Midnight, Tuesday – Sunday.

03 314 7679, fiddlersgreenbistro.co.nz



Black Estate Wines

A family growing organic wines at three hillside vineyards Black Estate makes wines with as much care as possible to gain an original expression of each site. Their restaurant and tasting room (614 Omihi Road, Waipara) are set against a breathtaking vista and serve up local and organic food. The cellar door and restaurant are open seven days. (Check website for winter hours.)

03 314 6085, blackestate.co.nz



Brew Moon Brewing Company

Established in 2002, the Brew Moon Brewing Company is a family-owned brewery and taproom in Amberley. North Canterbury's only craft brewery, they produce a range of high-quality, popular beer styles alongside a selection of more exotic seasonal brews. They also pour a range of Waipara wines and Nelson ciders, perfect for washing down their wood-fired pizzas.

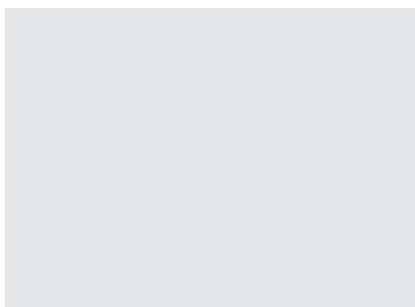
03 314 8036, brewmoon.co.nz



Georges Road Wines

A constantly evolving labour of love and dedication, Georges Road Wines crafts their wines to be delicate, elegant, food friendly and, above all, enjoyable. The picturesque winery and cellar door at 625 Mount Brown Road affords you the opportunity to taste their range of award-winning wines. Book a visit online, or order a taster direct to your door.

021 121 8669, georgesroadwines.co.nz



Saving Grace Wines

At Saving Grace Wines the Nor'wester is both fierce and benevolent, a friend and sometimes foe. Their vines grow deep into the soil, which keeps them grounded. The hills shield and embrace. Their hands, weathered from the seasons, tend the vines and pour a glass of wine to welcome you. These are their four saving graces.

03 314 6900, savinggraceswines.co.nz



Pukeko Junction Wine Centre & Gallery

Pukeko Junction Wine Centre sits alongside Pukeko Junction Café & Deli and proudly supports local wine producers and artisans. An extensive range of premium wines and local knowledge is set against a backdrop of eclectic local art, sculpture, jewellery, gourmet essentials, gifts, homewares and local designer clothing. Open 7 days.

03 314 8867



Pegasus Bay Winery

Regarded as one of the best boutique winery experiences in the country, Pegasus Bay serves up fresh local and seasonal cuisine alongside a wine list offering a wide selection of back vintages by the glass and bottle. Dine inside or outside among the extensive, breathtaking gardens. Tasting room open seven days 10 am – 5 pm, restaurant Thursday to Monday 12 pm – 4 pm.

03 314 6869, pegasusbay.com