

BAY GETAWAY

With numerous wineries, innovative artisan producers, art deco marvels, exciting eateries and cycling trails, there's plenty going on in food and wine country.

STORY SARAH LANG



HASTINGS IS UNDERGOING quite the renaissance. In recent years, there's been redevelopment and beautification of the once tired, under-utilised area centred on "East Block" on the main road, Heretaunga Street, and now it is home to a diverse mix of artisanal businesses, including a microbrewery, gin distillery, bagel shop, baker, bar/music venue, chocolatier, antiques store, and eateries – all with proprietors who support each other and take pride in the area.

Craft-beer aficionados should stop by Brave Brewing Co, started in 2014 by Matt Smith, who used to make beer for his flatmates. Now he helms an award-winning microbrewery. Try core brews, special-release and seasonal beers, plus there's good eats at Brave Brewing Co Taproom & Eatery. Start with a flight of four and they will suggest food matches, if desired. There are sharing plates, a kids' menu and generous servings of comfort food: burgers, hot dogs and Southern fried chicken.

Close by is Bayside Bagels. Mates Tom Foley, Cian Jefferson and Thomas Hughes started a pop-up bagel store last year. It was so popular that they've moved into a space in the retro-styled Common Room bar/music venue. Over at YA Bon French Baker, huge windows frame the bakers at work in



1. Heretaunga Street East has undergone a transformation. 2. David Ramonteau and Kate Galloway, the founders of Hastings Distillers.

the kitchen. It supplies sweet treats to adjoining cafe Cupple, run by local coffee roasters First Hand Coffee.

GIN IS IN

East Block is also home to Hastings Distillers: New Zealand's first producer of Biogro-certified organic artisan spirits and liqueurs, with a focus on gin.

Proprietors David Ramonteau and his partner Kate Galloway have been winemakers and winery consultants. Galloway spent three years creating an "olfactory library" of 300-plus botanical ingredients by growing, sourcing and distilling them – think wormwood, hibiscus flowers, liquorice root, lemon verbena and juniper, for starters. Meanwhile, Ramonteau travelled the world to learn the craft of distilling spirits.

The distillery opened in 2019 and has already won national and international awards and supplies restaurants and outlets countrywide. Its drop-in Tasting Room is a minimalist space with a long bar, behind which botanicals and ingredients are on show. Try a gin or two, and small plates such as crispy portobello wontons. It's well worth \$20 to do the guided tasting flight experience. The East Block 200 Gin and Albertine Gin have flavour and aroma notes that are fruity, rooty and spicy; the L'Opera Bitter Orange Aperitif won Best Liqueur at the 2021 New Zealand Spirit Awards. They're all delicious. Another option: book the 90-minute guided bespoke tasting which includes sampling their beverages, seeing some botanical ingredients, learning about distilling, snacking, with a cocktail to finish.



3. Craggy Range's vineyard at the foot of Te Mata o Rongokako/ The Sleeping Giant has been described as the "most Instagrammable vineyard in the world". 4. Oak Estate's cellar door and kitchen. 5. Napier has the second largest collection of art deco buildings in the world. 6. The Napier Art Deco Festival Weekend is a big event in February. 7. Hawke's Bay Farmers' Market is a must for foodies.

DECO DAYS

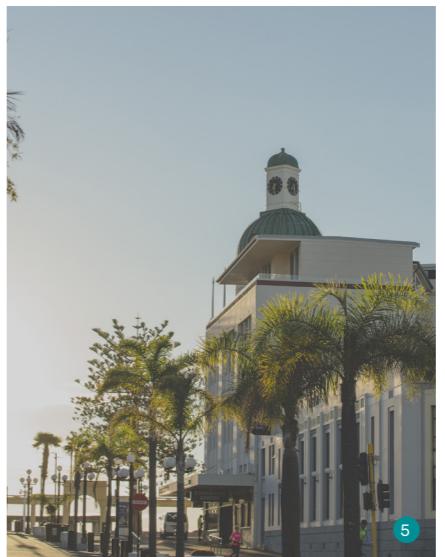
Over in Napier, the art deco capital of the world, take a guided walk past the town's most striking buildings. The tours run at least twice daily, with an Art Deco Trust volunteer. Or pick up a self-guided walk brochure. Another great option is an Art Deco Vintage Car Tour. Guide Tony Mairs, driving a Packard and wearing deco-style threads, has all the Napier and deco intel – Māori settlement, James Cook and, of course, the 1931 earthquake that killed 256 people, razed buildings, and raised 4000ha of seabed. He backgrounds the city's rebuild, in the flamboyant art deco architectural style of the 1920s and 1930s – inspired by cultures such as Inca, Aztec, Mayan, Māori and Egyptian. The National Tobacco Company building is the region's art-deco masterpiece, also influenced by the nature-inspired art-nouveau style.

No expense was spared when noted architect Louis Hay built it for tobacco magnate Gerhard Husheer. Rose motifs are everywhere: in the domed skylight, on the exterior lamps, and styled as sunrays in the archway above the entrance. The building now houses the award-winning National Distillery Company, which produces gin and other spirits.

WINE TIME

Hawke's Bay is blessed with perfect vine-growing conditions, from which dozens of wineries have sprouted including Craggy Range, Church Road, Mission Estate, Elephant Hill, Askerne Estate Winery, Te Mata Estate, Black Barn Vineyards, Clearview Estate, Te Awanga Estate, Trinity Hill, Villa Maria Gimblett Gravels, and many more. There are around 30 cellar doors open to the public.

Established in 1897, Church Road produces wine ranges from premium



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Wine Cycles' Simon Nash – an accredited Master of Wine – takes visitors on personalised cycle tours to wineries. Hawke's Bay Trails comprises a 200km network of connected loops of cycling and walking trails through coastland and farmland, waterways and orchards. It's one of New Zealand's designated Great Rides and has fairly flat gradients. The Water Ride is a gentle cycle along the coast, while the Landscapes Ride takes you through three coastal settlements.

THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT MARY'S

Deep-fried broccoli might not be the obvious top pick at a restaurant, but this starter, at Mary's restaurant in Havelock North, is crispy delicious. For a main, try the gnocchi carbonara – a dish that's been fine-tuned because Mary's asks diners for feedback. The space is elegant and inviting and, as for the food – just wow. Head chef Casey McDonald, a Kiwi, has worked around the world, including at two-Michelin-starred London restaurant The Square. He's also head chef at Craggy Range winery's casual fine-dining restaurant, working for wine legends Terry and Mary Peabody. Last year McDonald and the Peabodys decided that people want comfort food in a casual environment, so they launched Casey's Diner pop-up in a Craggy Range cellar, serving dishes like fried chicken and hot dogs. It ran for three months and was far more popular than imagined. This showed McDonald and the Peabodys that many people – including families – want top-notch food in a relaxed environment. Cue Mary's (the cellar was temporary), which opened in November 2020, where you're encouraged to linger. That's the thing about Hawke's Bay. It encourages dawdling – you want to stay just a little bit longer.

hawkesbaynz.com



8 Contact Centre
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gem in central Napier, this hotel offers 11 suites, studios and an apartment. masonic.co.nz

PORTERS

Havelock North's Porters is luxury with a local twist, such as Hawke's Bay artworks. It's just a short walk to Mary's restaurant. portershotel.co.nz

Do

TE MATA PEAK WALKS

Hike, bike or drive up Te Mata Peak for spectacular views. Stop at Peak House, a cafe in the landmark's highest dwelling. tematapark.co.nz

GANNET BEACH ADVENTURES TOUR

This tour on vintage tractors along the beach is a great way to take the rugged route to Cape Kidnappers and get up close to the world's largest gannet colony. gannets.com

HAWKE'S BAY FARMERS' MARKET

Don't miss what's one of the largest farmers' markets in the country, complete with entertainment, kids' corner and pony rides. hawkesbayfarmersmarket.co.nz



Eat

CENTRAL FIRE STATION BISTRO

Opened in 2019 in Napier's art-deco former fire station, this big warehouse-style space comes complete with firefighter's pole. Owner/head chef Sam Clark focuses on French- and Italian-inspired food, and his pastry-chef co-owner wife Florencia Menehem creates delectable treats. centralfirestation.co.nz

MISTER D

Napier's Mister D is open for breakfast, brunch and dinner, serving fresh local fare. You simply must try the "injectable doughnuts" where you squeeze in your own chosen filling (chocolate, jelly or custard). misterd.co.nz

Sleep

THE DOME

This Napier landmark waterfront art deco accommodation has, yes, a dome on top. It offers boutique studios and apartments to suit various budgets. thedomer.co.nz

ART DECO MASONIC HOTEL

In the Masonic Building, an art deco

Getting there

NAPIER 

Air New Zealand operates daily non-stop flights to Napier from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, with connections across the domestic network.

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