

Marlborough's one-stop shop

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TIM AND JEFF FULTON HAD A VISION /
OF AN ARTISAN HUB SHOWCASING
THE BEST OF MARLBOROUGH.



Nobody who has met the Fulton twins would accuse them of lacking in ideas or enthusiasm. So when *Tim* and *Jeff Fulton* saw an opportunity to combine their main passions in life - family, wine, tourism and property development - into one project, there was no doubt that they would make it happen.

THAT WAS 2013 AND THE PROPERTY LOCATED JUST OUT OF BLENHEIM THAT IS NOW 'THE VINES VILLAGE' WAS SIMPLY EIGHT RETAIL BUSINESSES SELLING THEIR WARES TO LOCALS AND PASSING TOURISTS. THE FULTON TWINS HAD THE VISION TO MAKE IT SO MUCH MORE, SO THEY PURCHASED THE PROPERTY ALONG WITH SOME OF THE BUSINESSES ON IT, AND SET ABOUT TURNING IT INTO AN ARTISAN HUB SHOWCASING THE BEST OF MARLBOROUGH.

The Vines Village now has six retail outlets, ranging from fashion, art and crafts to gourmet foods and sweet treats, as well as the Whitehaven Wines cellar door, the Vines Village Café, and boutique accommodation right on site. The 4 hectares of land that was completely inaccessible to the public when Tim and Jeff bought the property has been transformed into a stunning lakeside site that includes a pirate playground, pump track, outdoor amphitheatre, a petanque court, giant chess board, and viewing platform across the vineyards. As if all of that isn't enough to draw you in, Vines Village regularly holds events, festivals and concerts.

There is also bike hire available, because this is the first stop on the 'Golden Mile' cycle track that links cellar doors and food outlets in Rapaura & Renwick along an easily accessible bike ride (10 stops within 6 kilometres) - another brainchild of the Fultons. Oh, and don't forget to try a beverage from Golden Mile Brewing while you are there. It's dubbed "New Zealand's Greatest Beer For Bikers" and is, you guessed it, yet another Fulton creation.

The next step in this ever-evolving project is turning Vines Village into a full eco-village. They have set up a comprehensive recycling system and constructed a kid's playground out of recycled material found around the Vines Village grounds. Their award winning gardens are part of a programme to help encourage Tui from the Wairau North bank to town through specific planting that attracts the native bird.



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If you dine at the café you can be sure some of the ingredients have come straight from the kitchen garden, and the free-range hens happily pottering around the property are rescued battery hens who deal to the café scraps and provide eggs for baking in return. Vines Village also produces its own honey with the innovative 'FlowHive' that minimises any disruption to the bees when harvesting.

It may sound like a restless life the Fulton twins lead, but somehow that translates into an incredibly relaxing and laidback destination that provides the perfect place for the whole family to while away a lazy afternoon. ■



CLOCKWISE FROM TOP RIGHT | Vines Village Cafe - Golden Mile Brewing Grand Tour Lager Beer | Whitehaven - 2018 Sauvignon Blanc Wine \$20 | | Mihi - Mihi Baby Blanket \$115, Farmer Brown's Tough N' Comfy Work Socks, 2 x pair \$35 | Lilac Wine - Living Light Candles, Large \$36, Medium \$34 | The Quilter's Barn - Peach Knitted Top (6 months) \$55 | Sweet Treats - Sweet Clouds \$3 per bag | Gourmet Collection - Sacred Spring Dry Gin (Nelson) 700ml \$81, 200ml \$30 | Molto Bella - Black Lamb Hat (made in NZ) \$95, Allure Design NZ Necklace \$60, 100% Linen Dress (made in Italy), \$225.