



JO THROP
East Coast Trading Co.
Boss + Director

Jo entered the outskirts of the wine industry in Aotearoa New Zealand while working at Vidal Estate winery restaurant. After a four year stint at Otago University where she graduated with an honours degree in Classical Studies, she was working at Vidal Estate before heading overseas when she met the then cellar hand, now winemaker, Rod McDonald. And the rest is a 28 year-long (and counting) history together.

Before Rod and Jo nestled in at Te Awanga Estate, Jo worked for Tourism New Zealand in the media and communication department in Wellington. But Hawke's Bay and a winemaker beckoned so she returned home to set up her own business, Muse Event Management + Communication, where the lion's share of her work involved wineries, including organising the Harvest Hawke's Bay wine and food festival and the Hawke's Bay Charity Wine Auction. At Te Awanga Estate she dabbled in writing, branding, label design and social media, she also ran the wine club, cellar door events and was the finesser of all things wine.

Next stop is a new business, East Coast Trading Co., which is the umbrella company for some interesting labels being brought to life by Jo and Rod, including Dawn Chorus an organic Hawke's Bay Sauvignon Blanc heading to the United States this spring and summer.

"I love taking the brand you know inside out and giving it a distinct personality. Some of these brands were created at home, hand labelled at the kitchen table by ourselves or our three children, and dropped off in the family car to customers around Hawke's Bay, so they are very personal to us," says Jo.

"This is the same for our two new babies Dawn Chorus and Underground. There's a lot of exciting work to do but the process has certainly begun as we kick off in America with an organic Hawke's Bay Sauvignon Blanc under the Dawn Chorus label - perhaps not what is expected over there, but definitely something to explore and enjoy on the other side of New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc."

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