

THE ART OF CHANGE

Farming has long dominated life in Hawke's Bay, but there's a growing population of artists among the crops and vines.

By Ginny Anderson



I'm in Hawke's Bay following the art trail—the arty sister of the more famous wine trail, and cousin of the tasty food trail. Crikey, there are so many trails down here I'm bound to get lost. Luckily, I have a navigator to veer me away from wino lane until I have done my job, which is to talk to a few local artists and find out how Hawke's Bay has evolved from sheep to chic. Good reason then to rev up the slinky S-Type Jaguar I've been lent for the journey and head to Hastings.

Ema Scott—the stone sculptress from Haumoana—

sees it like this: "The culture used to revolve around farming, then there was a grape revival. Growing grapes is quite mystical in the way that we still don't understand why some soils produce certain flavours. Wine evokes the senses and the more senses you evoke the deeper connection you make with a place. The CEO of Montana Wines, Peter Hubscher, said at the Hawke's Bay Wine Awards, "What use is a beautiful glass of wine without culture, without the arts, the sounds, the smells?"

Scott, who is an art trail member, sells her wares from her Haumoana home, nestled beside the Grange Creek. She reminds me of a Maori princess as she floats out to greet me—big brown eyes, long fingers and a perfectly coiffed black bun. Zen-like sculptures feature in the garden and the house. I would like to buy them all.

A teacher and professional blues-jazz singer, Scott added sculpting to her repertoire just four years ago. "A bit of poverty leads to design solutions," she says, pointing to one of the



stone altar tables sitting in the sun beside the river. She's coy about revealing her creative process, but I squeeze out the basic ingredients of her smooth, sculptural artworks and functional bowls. She collects sediment laid by the river then mixes it to form an augmented stone in three basic colours—grey, charcoal and ivory.