



## February 2012 Feature Story:

### "Sarau 2012: the world's only blackcurrant harvest festival"

We think the Sarau Blackcurrant festival might be the only one of its type in the world; but if you know of another let us know!

The Festival (in its 5th year) is held in an idyllic valley in the region of Upper Moutere at the north western end of the South Island of New Zealand. (Sarau is the name early European settlers gave to the area.)

This years more than 4,000 people attended, mainly local but including overseas visitors.



Jim Grierson, IBA President and retired Irish Blackcurrant farmer, Peter Jeffares, enjoy the friendly atmosphere of the Sarau Blackcurrant Festival with locals. From left: Averil Stephens, Jim Grierson, Sue Cleaver, Peter Jeffares, John Thorn, and Libby Bibby. Peter has travelled to New Zealand every year for the Festival and attended all five!



New Zealand Blackcurrant industry representative on the International Blackcurrant Association, Mike Kearney (right) offers tastings of various blackcurrant varieties produced by the New Zealand Blackcurrant Cooperative to Festival goers. For many people, the chance to taste fresh blackcurrant berries straight off the bushes is a unique opportunity.

They enjoyed cheese-making and stone-carving workshops and a guest chef showing how to use blackcurrants in novel but home-friendly recipes. The Festival also featured local history; blackcurrant cooking, and photography competitions; blackcurrant displays; activities for children and a purple hat competition. There was a mountain bike race and a gentle cycle ride, and aerobatic display and pony rides.....and for those who wanted time out – they sat on hay-bales, drank boutique beers or local wines, listened to music and watched the world go by.

Jim Grierson, International Blackcurrant Association President, spoke warmly to a receptive crowd about the work of the International Association and about the health giving qualities of blackcurrants.

For more on Sarau check out: [www.saraufestival.co.nz](http://www.saraufestival.co.nz)

*Bill Floyd, Editor*