

Media Release

Lazy Juan crowned Burger Wellington 2026 champion after record-breaking public vote

Wellington, 26 August 2026 - [Lazy Juan's Marites burger](#) has been crowned the winner of Burger Wellington 2026, following the festival's biggest competition yet.

A record 35,645 public votes were cast, with more than 245 burgers on menus across the Wellington region - around a quarter of a million burgers were devoured between 3 and 23 August. The public vote determined the five finalists: [Bellbird Eatery's Lamb-da Rassa Pao](#), [Elemental Eats' What's The Buzz?](#), Lazy Juan's Marites, [Sushil's Muslechef Café's The Street Whisper](#) and [The Old Quarter's Squeal The Deal](#).

The five burgers went head-to-head in a live cook-off at Le Cordon Bleu New Zealand, where they were judged by internationally renowned Burger Scholar George Motz, Floriditas' Dominique Fourie McMillan, Papa's Smashies founder Piripi Baker and Double Vision Brewing's Dustyn Ford.

Archie Juanta, along with his wife Maru, owns Lazy Juan and opened the Terrace cafe in December 2022. He says the win came as a surprise.

"We were finalists alongside some incredible chefs, so we weren't expecting to win. We want to thank everyone who voted for us for their support, which is helping us bring Filipino food to the fore in Wellington."

Visa Wellington On a Plate Festival Director Beth Brash says the extraordinary public response shows Burger Wellington has become much more than a fixture on the festival calendar.

"More than 35,000 votes is phenomenal. As well as eating these burgers, Wellingtonians debate them, recommend them to their mates, plan which ones to try next and champion the venues behind them.

The wide selection of burgers on offer across the region has drawn in thousands of new fans; Brash says the community-run Burger Wellington Facebook group has grown by over 5,000 new members alone, with 21,000 people sharing their reviews.

"It feels particularly fitting in a year when Visa Wellington On a Plate's theme celebrates Word of Mouth, Burger Wellington gets the whole region talking - but behind every burger are the chefs, front- and back-of-house teams, suppliers and local businesses putting an enormous amount of creativity and mahi into August.

"Huge congratulations to Archie and Maru, Archie and the team at Lazy Juan and to every venue that took part. The creativity we've seen this year is exactly why Burger Wellington remains such a loved part of Wellington's winter."

Burger Wellington has grown into one of Visa Wellington On a Plate's most recognisable events. It encourages diners to discover new venues while giving hospitality businesses the freedom to experiment with new ideas, ingredients and flavours during what is traditionally one of Wellington's quietest periods. In 2025, Visa Wellington On a Plate and Beervana contributed an estimated \$10 million to Wellington's economy and attracted more than 4,500 visitors from outside the region.

About Visa Wellington On a Plate

Visa Wellington On a Plate is brought to you by the Wellington Culinary Events Trust, a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting our local hospitality and national brewing industries. It's one of the southern hemisphere's most significant and boldest food festivals. From burgers and cocktails to chef collaborations and immersive experiences, it showcases the best of the Wellington region's producers, venues, and creative talent, and is dedicated to supporting and celebrating the capital's hospitality industry.

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