

WINESTATE

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND WINE BUYING GUIDE

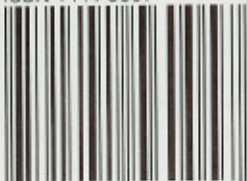
WORLD'S GREATEST SHIRAZ CHALLENGE II

YARRA VALLEY
revival

Vintage REPORT
the mixed fortunes of 2007

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plus

Semillon & Blends Yarra Valley Brandy, Cognac & Armagnac
McLaren Vale, Langhorne Creek & Fleurieu Hawkes Bay (NZ)

CUT-THROAT
CALIFORNIA
competition way beyond wine

yarra valley

STATE OF THE ART ESTATE

IN THE two decades since it was established by Marc and Eva Besen, TarraWarra Estate at Yarra Glen has established itself as one of the highlights of any visit to the Yarra Valley - and not simply because of the quality of the TarraWarra and Tin Cows wines.

There's the TarraWarra Museum of Art, opened in 2003, which attracts art lovers from around the globe. It houses modern art by the likes of John Olsen



and Charles Anderson, in a gorgeous setting next door to the lovely modern cellar door.

The on-site Winebar Cafe, open daily from 11am-5pm, is much more than a wine bar or cafe, with a range of dishes that include entrees like tempura zucchini flowers with goat's curd and tomato and house-marinated ocean trout with pickled vegetables and sweet mustard herb dressing. Main courses, all under \$30, might feature the likes of new season lamb fillets with an aubergine caviar, broad beans and olive jus, or saffron and Atlantic salmon risotto. There is a large range of wines available by the glass, starting from \$6.

In summer, visitors can sit on the hillside and enjoy a glass of wine, while there's a roaring open fire to warm guests up in winter. Phone (03) 5962 3311 or see <www.tarrawarra.com.au>.

TRAIL DOTTED WITH DELICACIES

THE Yarra Valley Regional Food Trail was established in 1998 and is the perfect way to discover the best food producers in the region at your own pace. There are over 100 signposted epicurean outlets, all displaying distinctive blue and orange Food Trail signs, running the gamut from orchards to farm gates and roadside stalls, at many of which you can sample the produce before buying. The range of delicacies is amazing; from

clotted creams and hand-made chocolates to seasonal berries, organic vegetables, jams, chutneys, cheeses and farm-bred trout to handmade pasta.

Among the spots worth visiting are the Yarra Valley Dairy at Yering, the Wantirna Lavender Farm, Maroondah Orchards at Coldstream, Blue Hills Berries and Cherries at Silvan and the Buxton Trout Farm.

The Yarra Glen Cafe and Store stocks a wide range of local wines and gourmet goodies.

For a copy of the Regional Food Trail brochure, phone (03) 9513 0677.

GREAT TASTES OF ITALY

DE BORTOLI is my favourite Yarra Valley winery - and winemakers Steve Webber and Bill Downie are producing a fabulous range of wines at all price points, specialising in superb chardonnay and pinot noir, but also producing some excellent shiraz-based



reds. The lovely cellar door is also home to a fine upstairs restaurant (with vineyard views), where chef Cameron Cansdell uses local produce in his Italian-influenced dishes.

Think pork terrine with capers, eschalot and rocket and mustard vinaigrette, or pan-seared sardine fillets and scallops with a chickpea and olive oil puree. There's also a cheese maturation room run by master fromager Richard Thomas, open daily from 10am-5pm that offers tastings and wine and cheese matching courses.

Try the 2005 Gulf Station pinot noir or any of the superb wines under the new Phi label that Webber is producing in conjunction with the Shelmardine family, whose Lusatia Park vineyard he considers one of the best in the region. The restaurant is open for lunch seven days a week - and the Italian feasts on Sundays are legendary. Dinner is served on Saturday evenings. Phone (03) 5965 2271 or see <www.debortoli.com.au>.

WINE POTIONS FOR PAMPERING

YOU know you've hit the big time when American magazine *Condé Nast Traveler* names you as one of the hottest new spas in the world. That's what happened to the Natskin Spa Retreat, part of the Balgownie Estate Yarra Valley complex, a couple of months ago.

The spa uses a wide range of wine-based lotions and potions as part of its treatments.

Situated just past Yarra Glen (about one



hour out of Melbourne), the spa offers views of undulating hills and vineyards. Pampered guests can enjoy private rooms or double suites and, in addition to the signature vinotherapy treatments, there is a variety of water therapies and a wide range of skin and body treatments.

The property boasts on-site accommodation (with 65 spacious suites),

a cellar door, restaurant, and a health club consisting of a multi-station heated activity pool, which sounds rather luxuriant after a tough day of tasting. See <www.balgownieestate.com.au>.

RESTAURANT WITH A BIG REPUTATION

ROCHFORD Wines is housed in a building that has enjoyed a chequered past - but it is one of the must-visit cellar doors in the Yarra, as much for the food as the wines. Situated at the former Eyton on the Yarra premises, Rochford is home to an award-winning restaurant that is open for lunch seven days a week. Chef Andy Borg changes the menu seasonally and uses local produce where possible.

There are lovely views of the vines, and dishes include the likes of herb-crusted tuna with cucumber spaghetti, radish and preserved lemon dressing, and confit duck leg served with a pinot noir and cherry reduction, with sautéed broccolini and barbecued eggplant.

Two courses cost \$55 and three courses \$65 and there's a range of David Creed's Rochford wines, from both the Yarra Valley and Heathcote, available by the bottle or glass. If your mood is less formal and you simply want a light meal, there's an adjacent cafe open daily from 10am-5pm.

Rochford regularly hosts big-name concerts. Phone (03) 5962 2119 or see <www.rochfordwines.com>.

MUCH MORE THAN SUPERB SPARKLING

DOMAINE Chandon has built a formidable reputation for the quality of its large range of sparkling wines, which often means its superb table wines under the Green Point label get overlooked. You can taste both ranges at the Domaine Chandon cellar door, one of the Yarra's premier attractions.

The original homestead, built around 1880, was renovated when Moët & Chandon purchased the Green Point property, and a modern winery was built next door. The winery is a multiple winner of the best wine tourism destination award at the Victorian Tourism awards.

Guided tours start each hour and take visitors through the exhibition area, winery and riddling hall, where the traditional methode champenoise is explained. Tours end in the spectacular Green Point Room, where visitors can purchase wines and gourmet platters while taking in some seductive vineyard views.

EDUCATION LOCATION

IF YOU want to learn about wine in congenial surroundings then the Coldstream Hills cellar door is the place to do it. There are no distractions here, no restaurant, no cafe; just a long tasting bench overlooking the vines and some of the most knowledgeable staff you'll find anywhere. Andrew Fleming's chardonnays and pinots are remarkably consistent in quality - and there can be few more bucolic spots in which to sample them and learn about the process. Phone (03) 5964 9410 or see <www.coldstreamhills.com>.

**Yarra Valley wine producers recently launched a new website aimed at underlining the variety of experiences available in the region. See <www.wineyarravalley.com.au>.*

*Above: Natskin Spa Retreat private double room.
Centre: Domaine Chandon.
(Courtesy of Charmaine Grieger)
Below: Rochford restaurant.*

*Opposite page
Left: De Bortoli winery. (Courtesy of Visions of Victoria)
Right: TarraWarra Estate. (Courtesy of Visions of Victoria)*

mclaren vale, langhorne creek & fleurieu

RESORT THAT'S WAY ABOVE PAR

FANCY mixing a little golf with your wine tasting? Links Lady Bay Grand Mercure on the Fleurieu Peninsula might just fit the bill. The new luxury golf resort, with 28 executive suites and 14 fully self-contained apartments, opened on July 1. All apartments feature full kitchen and laundry facilities, TV and DVD players, air-conditioning and a patio or balcony with outdoor setting. Suites all have kitchenettes.

For dining, Grand Mercure guests have access to The Dunes, the resort's award-

RURAL LUXURY AMID THE VINES

MOST of the accommodation in McLaren Vale and the Fleurieu Peninsula are small, personal operations; either bed and breakfasts or self-catering cottages among the vines.

If you want to stay among the vines, the two-storey chalet-style Chapel Hill Winery Guest House is a lovely bed and breakfast facility.

Catering for up to six guests, it has lovely views and is wonderfully rural. There are three queen-sized en suite bedrooms,

the State, possibly the known universe".

Gastronomes will enjoy the 'Joseph Experience' – the chance to sit down and taste a flight of four Joseph wines, two olive oils, fresh bread and grana padano cheese. The tasting costs \$10, which is refundable if visitors make a purchase.

Designed by Sydney-based Michael Harvey (Joe and Dina's brother-in-law) and Bruce Watson, of Edwards Design, the cellar door offers a complete change of pace from some of the region's older buildings, with dramatic square lines,



winning restaurant, as well as a sports bar. Dishes on The Dunes menu can include fried local arrow squid tossed with snow peatendrills, bamboo shoots, Spanish onion and wasabi mayonnaise, and tea-smoked rack of Normanville lamb with rosemary and mint pea puree, and redcurrant sauce on a bed of bubble and squeak.

The resort has an 18-hole links course designed by Jack Newton, Graeme Grant and John Spencer that offers stunning coastal views and is ranked among the top three courses in South Australia. McLaren Vale is just a short drive away, as are Kangaroo Island and Victor Harbor.

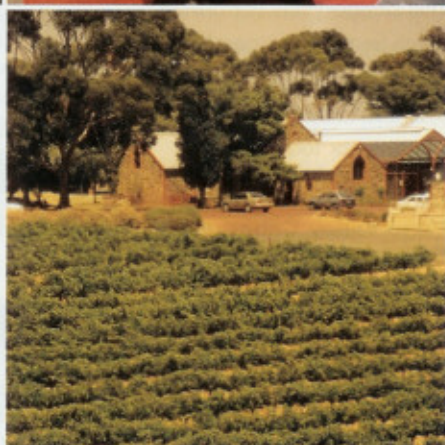
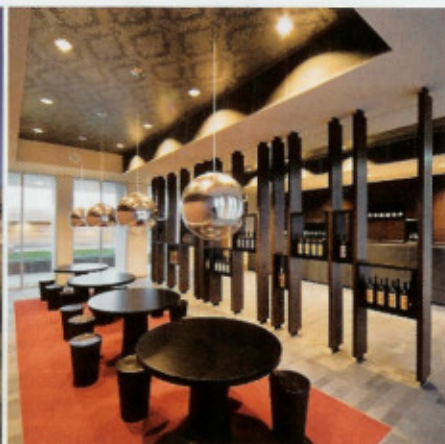
Links Lady Bay is part of the South Australian Golf, Wine and Food Trail that connects the dots between the State's quality golf resorts and four major wine and food producing regions: the Fleurieu Peninsula, McLaren Vale and the Barossa and Clare valleys. Phone (08) 8558 2220 or see <www.links-ladybay.com>.

all with air-conditioning, television, telephone and internet access, kitchens and laundries, an outdoor barbecue area, and an open fireplace. Full breakfast provisions are included in the tariff, which starts from \$260 per night per couple with a two-night minimum stay.

The guest house is situated on the corner of Chapel Hill Rd and Chaffey's Rd in McLaren Vale. Phone (08) 8323 9182.

SPECTACULAR PLACE TO SIP

PRIMO Estate's spectacularly modern new cellar door is one of the 'must visit' attractions in McLaren Vale. The new facility opened by Joe and Dina Grilli late last year is the perfect venue to showcase their Primo Estate and Joseph labels, olive oil and vinegars. It's been described as "the most intelligently beautiful tasting room in



white stone, wood panelling and a tasting room with a modern ambience. Look for the wines like the Zamberlan cabernet/sangiovese blend and the powerful La Caseta vinegar. The cellar door is open seven days a week from 11am-4pm, including some public holidays. Phone (08) 8323 6800 or see <www.primoestate.com.au>.



VINTAGE LOCATION, MODERN TASTES

THE OSBORN family has been growing grapes in McLaren Vale since 1912, so there's a real sense of history when you visit the d'Arenberg cellar door and restaurant. d'Arry's Verandah restaurant, open seven days a week for lunch, is something of a McLaren Vale treasure and is regularly featured in restaurant guides.

In 1996 the original 19th century d'Arenberg homestead was renovated and extended to house the winery's cellar door facilities – which offer superb views over d'Arenberg's vineyards, McLaren Vale and the Willunga Escarpment to Gulf St Vincent. The restaurant underwent further renovations in June and July.

Winemaker Chester Osborn and his father d'Arry are rightly proud of the restaurant, which incorporates a large outdoor brick-paved patio, which is next to the original ironstone dairy, sheltered by two striking white sails in front of a large natural amphitheatre, which hosts outdoor concerts and festivals.

The restaurant specialises in local produce, with the menu featuring dishes ranging from adventurous to comfort food. Starters include the likes of jellied veal tongue and brisket with white sardines, to lobster medallions with blue swimmer crab ravioli and lobster bisque. Main courses may range from beef, kidney and candied onion sausages with parsnip mash and jus

to confit of duck leg and breast with witlof and beetroot salad, while there's a large range of very tempting desserts.

There is an extensive estate and museum wine list, that features some intriguing older vintages, while at the rustic cellar door you can taste a formidable range of wines, most handcrafted using basket presses – and a trio of sticky wines that have garnered widespread praise: a botrytis riesling, botrytis Rhone blend and a new addition, a noble chardonnay semillon. See <www.darenberg.com.au> or phone (08) 8329 4848.

HISTORY WITH A DELICIOUS TOUCH

THERE's plenty of history, along with fine food and wines, at the Salopian Inn. The award-winning restaurant is on the outskirts of McLaren Vale in a slate-floored, stone building dating from 1851. Much of the original building remains, including the three-room cellar where guests select wine from an extensive range which, naturally, features the fine wines from the surrounding vineyards of McLaren Vale and also includes choice wines from interstate and overseas.



HURTLER DOWN TO A WINNING WINERY

IT'S ALL about the wine when you visit the Geoff Merrill cellar door at the historic Mount Hurtle winery in Reynella. The wine, along with the ducks, geese and swans that populate the winery's rather lovely dam, make a great spot for a picnic. There's no on-site restaurant, but you can sample the range of cellar-worthy Geoff Merrill Wines (Merrill was the Jimmy Watson Trophy winner in 2005) and wines under the drink-now Mount Hurtle label.

The historic cellar door, built in 1897, is a heritage-listed building – and an important piece of Australia's winemaking history. There are lovely landscaped gardens and a fully catered area available for hire for weddings and functions. Mount Hurtle is at 291 Pimpala Rd, Woodcroft. Phone (08) 8381 6877 or see <www.geoffmerrillwines.com>.

In creating the seasonally changing menus, chef Nigel Munzberg selects only the best ingredients, preferring local fresh produce where possible. Typical dishes include the likes of grilled Onkaparinga Valley venison with roasted carrot and sweet potato, poached bone marrow and a pepper jus (\$17) and twice-cooked crispy pork belly with a salad of red grapes, olives, basil, orecchiette pasta with a quince and cabernet jus (\$29). There's a daily fish special, too.

The Salopian Inn is open for dinner every night except Tuesday and Sunday, and for lunch on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. It's at the corner of McMurtrie and Willunga roads. Phone (08) 8323 8769 or see <www.salopianinn.com.au>.

Left: d'Arry's Verandah restaurant. (Courtesy of SATC). Right: The Salopian Inn. (Courtesy of SATC).

*Opposite page
Left: Links Lady Bay Grand Mercure, luxury golf resort.
Right: Primo Estate cellar door.
Below: Chapel Hill Winery. (Courtesy of SATC).*

hawke's bay

THE CHEF WITH TWO HATS

VETERAN chef Malcolm Redmond may be the busiest man in Hawke's Bay, splitting his time between cooking for up to 240 guests a day at Church Road winery and also operating his luxury getaway, Breckenridge Lodge. Malcolm says he switches with ease between the two contrasting environments. "I take very simple flavours, harmonise them with a few carefully selected ingredients to make balanced, flavoursome meals

SAY CHEESE, AND HERE'S THE SPOT

WINE and cheese are perfect partners, so anyone visiting the Hawke's Bay region should make a point of dropping in to the Te Mata Cheese factory and cafe in the foothills of the brooding Te Mata Peak outside Havelock North. It's a lovely rural setting - and the feta, brie and blue cheeses have proved themselves to be among New Zealand's best. Te Mata Cheese Company's Pacifica Blue, a blue cheese made from sheep's milk,

typical tour lasts 30 minutes and includes a tutored tasting. Tours cost \$5 per head.

Te Mata Cheese is open from 10am-5pm during summer and 10am-4.30pm during winter. It's at 393 Te Mata Rd, just five minutes out of Havelock North. See www.tamatacheese.co.nz.

CHIC GETAWAY FOR COUPLES

MILLAR Road provides chic and modern self-catering vineyard accommodation in Hawke's Bay, with two stylish cottages offering vineyard and sea views. Each cottage is suitable for two couples and both are completely self-contained, including fully equipped kitchens and gas barbecues. All bedrooms have en suite bathrooms and each cottage has a separate 'bathing room' containing a luxurious cradle bath. There's cable TV, DVD and CD players, wireless broadband connection, telephone, laundry facilities and a 4x15m swimming pool with automatic cover.

Guests are free to stroll around the 20-hectare vineyard property - and Napier, Hastings and Havelock North are all within a 20-minute drive. Several of New Zealand's best winery restaurants, including Terroir at Craggy Range, and Clearview Estate, are close by.

Breakfast provisions are provided, along with a complimentary bottle of Millar Road wine. Tariffs start from \$400 a night per cottage and from \$750 a night for a group renting both cottages. See www.millarroad.co.nz.

TAKE A BREAK IN THE WILDERNESS

AFTER a couple of hard days among the vines, it's always nice to get some exercise. Cape Kidnappers Wilderness Safaris offers exclusive access to isolated areas of the peninsula, Hawke's Bay's most iconic landscape.

The company operates tours throughout the 2200-hectare Cape Kidnappers Wildlife Reserve, the largest predator-safe area



and match them with wonderful Church Road wines," he says.

Malcolm has been at Church Road for six years, but opened Breckenridge Lodge only 12 months ago. The property has five luxurious bedrooms, all with en suites, and the sweeping views of the Omarunui Valley are a feature. The lodge is just a short drive from Napier and Hastings. The focus is firmly on food, with a typical menu featuring dishes like tuna with wasabi mayonnaise, nectarine, wakame and salmon caviar; and smoked duck with black cherry and chocolate ravioli. All dishes are matched to wine recommendations.

Double rooms cost \$750 a night but that includes pre-dinner drinks, a four-course dinner, breakfasts and a free activities booking service. See www.breckenridgelodge.co.nz

was named champion new cheese at the 2006 Champion of Cheese Awards.

At this year's awards, Te Mata won nine medals, including golds for its Kidnappers Traditional Brie, Bay View Creamy Blue and Te Mata Creamy Blue. The cheeses are available for tasting daily and the building is a destination in itself, a combination of rustic rural charm and sleek stainless steel that was designed by award-winning architect Pierre du Toit.

The cafe offers a selection of cheese platters, along with some simple cheese-inspired treats including goat's cheese tart and antipasto platters. Local wine, boutique beers, fresh juices and Hawthorne coffee roasted just down the road are all on the menu.

Anyone interested in the process of cheese making can take a factory tour between 10am and 3pm, although prior notice is required. A



2500-hectare sheep and cattle farm, from which the ground plunges almost 300m to the sea. See <www.capekidnappers.com>.

KIWI LUXURY WITH A FRENCH ACCENT

AFFORDABLE luxury is the keynote of the French-styled Mon Logis guesthouse, which overlooks the ocean but is just a short walk from Napier city centre. Lovingly restored, the grand colonial building is the perfect base for exploring the wineries of Hawke's Bay

MASTER THE ART OF RELAXING

LOOKING for somewhere special to stay in Hawke's Bay? Check out The Master's Lodge, a luxury getaway that caters for a maximum of four guests at any one time. Situated on Napier Hill, with spectacular views across Hawke's Bay, the lodge was once the home of tobacco baron Gerhard Husheer and has been lovingly restored.

There are just two suites, Kidnappers and Deco, both overlooking the garden, the city

of its type in New Zealand. Tourists see magnificent views of Hawke's Bay and the Pacific Ocean before descending a coastal escarpment to some of the finest beaches and dune systems in the country.

Visitors can expect to spot seals, penguins and rare birds, including the New Zealand dotterel. The dunes also contain many native dune plants, the bones of moas and other extinct birds and archaeological sites, some dating back 600 years. Half and full-day excursions are available, with small groups travelling in air-conditioned wilderness coaches, and individuals or couples in four-wheel-drive vehicles. See <www.kidnapperssafaris.co.nz>

NOW YOU CAN STAY AND PLAY

CAPE Kidnappers has already established itself as one of the finest golf courses in the southern hemisphere and will soon be welcoming overnight guests. The Farm at Cape Kidnappers, sister property to the spectacular Northland lodge Kauri Cliffs, will open in November.

The May issue of Golf Digest ranked the Cape Kidnappers course the 10th best in the world outside the United States, and owners Josie and Julian Robertson are aiming to make the accommodation and food equally spectacular. General manager Jay Robertson has moved across from Kauri Cliffs.

The Farm will be the focal point of the



and caters to a maximum of eight guests. It's a little slice of France in New Zealand, with the property priding itself on personalised service and its French cuisine.

There are four guest rooms, all upstairs and featuring antique furniture and balconies. All have en suites, with two boasting queen-size beds and two having twin beds. Downstairs is an informal guest lounge for relaxing, television viewing, or perhaps reading up on the region's many attractions. Tea, coffee and home-made biscuits are available throughout the day, while breakfast has a decidedly French accent, with dishes including freshly baked breads, croissants or brioche, with a compote of locally grown fruits or a herb omelette.

Mon Logis is non-smoking and does not cater for children. Double rooms start from \$120 a night. See <www.hawkesbaynz.com/pages/monlogis>.

of Napier and the sea. The elevated bathtub in front of the window in the Deco bathroom is a prime spot for soaking away the stresses of a day spent eating and drinking. A la carte breakfasts on the verandah during summer are all part of the experience and gourmet dinners are available; winemakers regularly host tasting dinners. Should you wish to dine out and enjoy a couple of glasses of wine, courtesy transport around Napier is provided.

Rates start from \$980 per suite, including accommodation, breakfasts, hors d'oeuvres, four-course gourmet dinner for two and use of all facilities, including the spa and swimming pool. The Master's Lodge is at 10 Elizabeth Rd, Bluff Hill, Napier. See <www.masterslodge.co.nz>.

Left: Cape Kidnappers golf course. (© Blanche Will)
Right: The Master's Lodge.

Opposite page.
Left: Millar Road cottage interior.
Right: Millar Road cottage exterior and pool.