



## CELLAR DOOR GUIDE

# Hunter Valley

**ALEX MITCHESON** heads to Australia's oldest wine-growing region to uncover the best of Hunter Valley.

THE HUNTER VALLEY HAS NO SHORTAGE OF VISITOR ATTRACTIONS, from stately stopovers to paddock-to-plate eateries and a vibrant year-round events calendar. Leaving is the hardest part of any trip here. Two hours can get you from Sydney's CBD to Australia's oldest wine-growing region, where a host of talented winemakers use the warm and humid conditions to their full advantage. This subtropical climate benefits from the Pacific Ocean and flanking gradients part of the Great Dividing Range, creating a wind funnel effect pulling cooler sea air and cloud cover inland. Without this, vineyard management would be challenging.

If semillon is king here, then chardonnay is queen. The former holds iconic status, yielding enigmatic, internationally revered wines. Verdelho shows well in the prevailing heat, as does shiraz, sometimes contributing to a unique blend with pinot noir, first incepted in the mid-1900s.

Expect warm welcomes, excellent dining options, and contemporary tasting experiences: the original gourmet getaway.

## GUNDOG ESTATE

**101 McDonald's Road, Pokolbin**

Small, intimate, and with personable service at its core, everyone is made to feel welcome – including man's best friend. Housed in the original Pokolbin Schoolhouse, Gundog's signature semillon and shiraz are explored daily in premium glassware alongside knowledgeable, passionate staff. You can continue the experience at home by grabbing small goods such as chutney and jam from their Gourmet Pantry.

## TYRRELL'S

**1838 Broke Road, Pokolbin**

From the moment you see Edward Tyrrell's original 1858 ironbark hut, you know you're somewhere extraordinary. Stand-up and private tastings showcase generations of familiarity with shiraz, chardonnay, and pinot noir. But it's the Vat 1 Semillon – Australia's most-awarded white wine – that steals the show. Tasting it in these surroundings is truly special.

PHOTOGRAPHY DESTINATION NSW (TYRRELLS)



Clockwise from below: Winmark Wines' cellar door at Broke; Pepper Tree Wines at Pokolbin; and the restaurant at Mount Pleasant. Opposite, from top: Tyrrell's award-winning wines; Gundog Estate's tasting room; wine production at Tyrrell's.



### WINMARK WINES 229 Wollombi Road, Broke

When old winery buildings transform into graceful cellar doors, there's a visceral feeling of antiquity you cannot deny. And this former Pooles Rock storage shed is a prime example. Chardonnay is taken to pearly heights, and Winmark Wines' mindset is, luckily, to never keep secrets. The Art Gallery and Sculpture Park are other impressive reasons to visit.

### MOUNT PLEASANT 401 Marrowbone Road, Pokolbin

A striking blackbutt and zinc countertop takes centrestage, bringing this historic, recently renovated winery's 140-year ancestry to life in every drop. Beyond affable and whip-smart tasting staff, there are elegant, art-filled spaces that offer serenity and propose contemplation. Or, for the curious-minded, take part in elaborate tastings of iconic single vineyards and back vintages.



### PEPPER TREE WINES 86 Halls Road, Pokolbin

Pepper Tree elevates the intention of single-vineyard and specific-vintage tastings. The Best of Four Worlds is a one-off guided look at the finest wines they create across four different regions in the removed and exclusive setting of The Vault. Otherwise, local cheese plates, a crackling fire, and pet-friendly gardens offer plenty of other draws.