



The Weekly Review - South East

Wednesday 15/03/2017

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slice

CUT STRAIGHT TO YOUR NEWS

press clip



You could visit four or five wineries a day in the Yarra Valley and still not be done in a week. While this might be a fantastic proposition for some, what if you could dodge all that tedious driving and have the best of the valley in one place?

The Yarra Valley Food and Wine Festival on the weekend of April 1-2 is taking a different tack this year. For the first time, the event will be held at Rochford Wines. Stalls and food trucks

will be spread out on the lawn and top local chefs and *My Kitchen Rules* contestants will hold masterclasses.

Wine "streets" will showcase the area's varietals. There will also be live music and entertainment, with ABBA tribute phenomenon, Bjorn Again, performing on the Saturday night. Sunday, April 2, will be a family day with kids' activities.

To check out some of the festival exhibitors, we jumped in a new Ford Focus for a weekend tour of tasting and previews.

Originally there was talk of taking a SUV, but I'm glad we had our zippy, nippy little hatchback.

Using the satellite navigation system to find our way along the valley's back roads might well have saved our marriage. The instructions were clear and precise and we didn't even need a teen to help us out. The rear-parking camera was also welcome in some of the tight winery car parks. ●

JAN FISHER

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WHAT'S ON

Yarra Valley Food & Wine Festival, Rochford Wines, 878-880 Maroondah Highway, Coldstream. April 1 & 2

» Tickets start at \$25 for adults. Tasting cards for 10 wines are \$20.

» rochfordwines.com.au

» yarravalleywineandfoodfestival.com.au

Jan Fisher travelled courtesy of Yarra Valley Food & Wine Festival.

FESTIVAL FAVOURITES

YARRA VALLEY DAIRY is an institution in the area. Best known for its Persian feta, the dairy concentrates on soft cheeses, all of them deliciously addictive. Staff will match your wine purchase to one of their cheeses.

● yvd.com.au

The Yarra Valley is all about wine, wine, and more wine, until it's not at **NAPOLEONE BREWERY AND CIDERHOUSE**. The youngest generation of a family of fruit-growers has branched out into beer and cider.

● napoleone.com.au

HELEN & JOEY ESTATE is a winery that likes to enjoy itself. Cellar-door manager Stephen Powell says the winery is tilted more towards wines to drink around the pool than around the table. Not that they don't have gravitas; the head winemaker, Meg Brodtmann, is Australia's first female master of wine.

● helenandjoeyestate.com.au

Family-run **DE BORTOLI** is one of the valley's biggest producers, with 240 hectares under vines, and is a major player in food tourism in the area. For something different, try the



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La Boheme Act Four Syrah Gamay.

● debortoli.com.au

As one of the older vineyards in the area, **OAKRIDGE ESTATE** has made it its business to "honour the grape". Winemaker David Bicknell was instrumental in moving chardonnay away from the big buttery wines of the '80s to the more mineral offerings of the modern varietal.

● oakridgewines.com.au

Eat

ZONZO ESTATE

957 Healesville-Yarra Glen Road, Yarra Glen.
9730 2500

zonzo.com.au

It's a buzzy atmosphere at Zonzo, where the food is fuss-free Italian. And that curious name? It comes from the word for strolling, in an Italian dialect. ●

Stay

BALGOWNIE ESTATE

1309 Melba Highway, Yarra Glen. 9730 0700

balgownieestate.com.au

Award-winning accommodation with a spa, pool, wine tasting and restaurant. This five-star property has fabulous views. Watch the sun go down with a glass or two on your balcony. From \$175 a night, with packages available. ●

Visit

COOMBE YARRA VALLEY

673-675 Maroondah Highway, Coldstream.
9739 0173

coombeyarravalley.com.au

Dame Nellie Melba's former property, Coombe, is open to the public, and includes a providore, elegant restaurant, wine-tasting bar and gallery. Garden tours are twice a day. ●



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The wheels

FORD FOCUS S HATCH

Price \ \$28,490 drive away

Engine \ 1.5-litre, gtdi 4 cylinder Eco-Boost

Boot capacity \ 316 litres (plenty of room for cases of wine)

Fuel consumption \ 6.2 per 110/km

FEATURES

- Keyless entry
- 20cm touch screen
- Satellite navigation
- Bluetooth
- Rear view camera
- Auto start/stop

*Ford Focus S provided courtesy of Essendon Ford.
essendonford.com.au*



GETTING THERE

The Yarra Valley is an hour's drive north-east of the city, about a 100-kilometre round trip.