

# WINESTATE

AUSTRALIA & NEW ZEALAND WINE BUYING GUIDE

## WINE OF THE YEAR

SPECIAL EDITION 2009

*56-Page*  
**SPECIAL FEATURE**

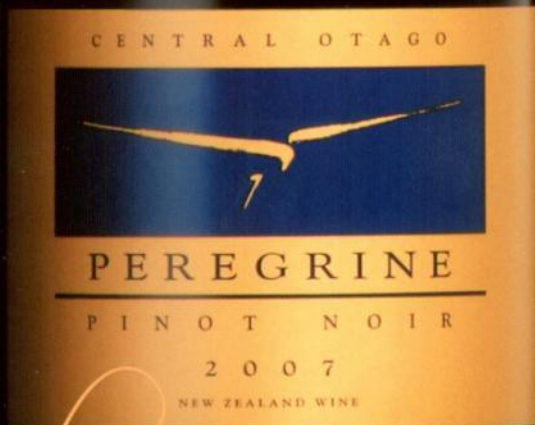
the best wines, winemakers  
& wine companies of the year

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*plus*

Hunter Valley Riesling Sauvignon Blanc Pinot Gris/Pinot Grigio

## hunter valley

### FRENCH FLAIR'S NEW LOCATION

EARNING a chef's hat in the 2010 *Sydney Morning Herald Good Guide* confirmed the return to form of leading Hunter Valley chef Robert Molines, whose creative juices have really been flowing since his move to the Tallavera Grove site in Mount View. Bistro Molines offers spectacular vineyard views but the real stars are the seasonal dishes, prepared with Robert's traditional French flair. It's hard to think of a better



spot at which to enjoy a long lunch. The menu changes every day and there are daily blackboard specials but dishes like rillettes with spicy chutney, cornichons and Melba toast (\$24) and sauteed lamb kidneys with puy lentils and rosti potato (\$35) are perennial favourites, and the desserts are suitably decadent.

There's a wine list featuring local standouts (think Pepper Tree, David Hook and Briar Ridge) and I had one of my best meals of the year here. For those wishing to make a night (or weekend) of it, Robert's wife Sally recently opened Little Orchard - the original homestead of the Tallavera Grove property - as a very stylish guest cottage. The two bedroom/two bathroom, self-contained cottage overlooks rolling hills but has all the comforts of home.

Bacon, eggs from the family's chickens, fresh local breads, juices and fruit from the

little orchard (hence the name) are provided for a leisurely self-cooked breakfast.

After a day of wine tasting and enjoying the valley, the restaurant is just a stroll away from the cottage. As an added luxury, Robert can provide picnic baskets or light suppers for in-house dinners by the cosy wood fire.

Little Orchard costs \$400 a night for one couple or \$500 a night for four people. Phone (02) 4990 9553; [www.bistromolines.com.au](http://www.bistromolines.com.au).

### LAST WORD IN LUXURY

THE VINTRY was named best deluxe accommodation at the 2009 Hunter Tourism Awards and offers boutique luxury accommodation for up to eight people on De Beyers Rd in the quiet part of Pokolbin. The Vintry uses Green Power from renewable energy sources, is accredited as environmentally friendly and is benchmarked and certified by Green Globe. It has one king-size bedroom with hydrotherapy spa bath and three queen-size bedrooms, each with en suite bathrooms and private terraces.

The ultra-modern Vintry also showcases artwork from Australian and overseas artists including Roy Jackson and Alun Leach-Jones and has its own petanque piste, Austar satellite television, Gaggai espresso machine and a range of cookbooks. Phone (02) 4998 6825; [www.thevintry.com.au](http://www.thevintry.com.au).

### MANOR FROM HEAVEN

THE SEBEL Kirkton Park is one of the Hunter Valley's longest-established hotels, and still one of the most popular. Designed in the style of a traditional manor house, it is set in 30 hectares of countryside off the beaten track but within easy striking distance of all the region's major attractions.

Of the 71 guest rooms, most have period furniture and some have open fireplaces, four-poster beds and either French provincial or heritage-style decor. All rooms overlook lush gardens, with roses a particularly lovely feature.



The guest lounge has an open fire in the winter and is a great spot for a drink before dinner at Infuzion, the on-site restaurant, which offers a range of regional wines. While the hotel hosts a lot of conferences, it is also ideal for a weekend getaway.

After you've done enough tastings, the Sebel offers an indoor Grecian-style swimming pool, spa, gymnasium and massage retreat, as well as a floodlit tennis court. Packages start from \$215 a night depending on the season. Phone (02) 4998 7680; [www.sebelhuntervalley.com.au](http://www.sebelhuntervalley.com.au).

### TRACK DOWN VENERABLE VINES

THE HUNTER has some of the oldest vines in Australia, and visitors will soon be able to tour them following the launch of the Hunter Valley Heritage Register, which tracks the region's wine history. Maps will soon be available to enable wine lovers to pinpoint the exact location of the oldest vines.

The concept has been developed, researched and collated by Bruce Tyrrell, who says, "The idea came about from the need to both acknowledge and protect the many sacred viticultural sites we are so lucky to have in the valley. Forget the Barossa, Burgundy or even Bordeaux; when it comes to original vineyard plantings, we have some of the most internationally historical sacred sites. The register will preserve and promote our truly exclusive heritage as one