

Southern Highlands



SUNDAY DRIVE



By Margaret Hughes

I am sure that everyone knows the Hunter Valley wine region but in Macarthur we have an emerging region practically on our doorstep. The Southern Highlands is quickly being recognised for the excellent cool climate wines it is producing. There are now at least fifteen wineries with cellar doors and each has its own special character. This drive manages to cover a good selection.

Take the freeway heading south to Mittagong and stop at the Tourist Information to pick up a map and other information on the wineries. Alternatively, plan ahead and go online to southern-highlands.com.au.

Leaving Mittagong, take the Old Hume Highway towards Berrima. Just after you have crossed the bridge over the freeway turn left to Mundrakoona Estate, home of the talented Balog family. Barbara and Josef and sons Anton and Mark, produce Artemis wines and also Fish Rock Beer. There is also a smithy where Josef hand forges many and varied items for sale. Local produce is available including some delicious cheeses from Country Valley of Picton.

Back on the Old Hume Highway take a left turn to Centennial Vineyards. This state of the art winery is one of the largest of this region. There is a wide range of wine to be sampled and we can highly recommend the restaurant. Sitting on the verandah with a warm breeze wafting through, sipping beautifully chilled Verdelho and dunking bread, baked on the premises, into some Glenlee Olive Oil; what could be simpler or more enjoyable? The lunch that followed was excellent too.

Tear yourself away if you can and once again return to the Old Hume Highway. Just before Berrima, Greenhills Road heads off to the right. A few kilometres on follow the sign to

Blue Metal Vineyard to the left. This is well worth a visit as the knowledge of Chris, the Cellar Door Manager, is extensive and cheerfully passed on to all comers. There are also some designer decanters and other wine goodies for sale along with local produce. We did manage some wine tasting too and I particularly enjoyed their Fumé Blanc.

Return to Greenhills Road and continue to the crossroads. Either turn left to Joadja, the oldest cellar door in the region, or turn right, then left at the first intersection and right at the next. After a few hundred metres visit McVitty Grove Estate which is an excellent little winery with the most beautiful view from its café.

Back to the road and continue until you come to Kells Creek Road on the left. Follow this until you reach Bou-saada to the left and Tertini to the right. These are both great boutique wineries and work together closely to promote their products. I would recommend that you visit Bou-saada first (photo opposite), sample their wines and relax on their shady patio whilst enjoying a cheese or cold cuts platter. Stroll across the road to Tertini for further wine tasting and a really good coffee and Italian biscotti to finish off lunch. You must try their award winning wine made from the rarely used Arneis or "little rascal" grape, so called because it is very temperamental.

Time to head back home. Either take the freeway for a quick return or follow the signs for Tourist Drive 12 which ambles up the Old Hume Highway to Picton. If there is room in the car stop at the orchards at Yerrinbool and stock up on locally produced fruit, veggies, honey and eggs.