



MEDIA RELEASE

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MELBOURNE'S YARRA VALLEY & DANDENONGS

You'll never want to leave

A region of over 80 world class wineries and set amidst a back drop of mist covered hills – the **Yarra Valley & Dandenongs** are easy to get to, but impossible to leave.

Located less than an hour's drive from Melbourne, the Yarra Valley & the Dandenongs are home to Victoria's earliest vineyards and is Victoria's premiere wine region bustling with cellar doors; winery tours, farmers markets, restaurants serving quality local produce; and boutique accommodation set in picture-perfect vineyard or mountain-top locations.

The region is perfect for an overnight stay or short break from Melbourne, which is best enjoyed aboard one of the many wine tours that leave the city daily including **Victoria Wine Tours** or the state tourism award winning **Australia Winery Tour Co.**

The wineries are world-class and include famous names like **De Bortoli** (with its Italian-inspired Restaurant), **McWilliams Lilydale Estate** (great for cooking your own gourmet barbeque), **Ainsworth Estate** (with vineyard accommodation), **Balgownie Estate** (with beautiful valley views), **TarraWarra** (adjacent to a national museum of modern Australian art), **Rochfords** (popular for outdoor summer events), and **Domaine Chandon** (serving its famous sparkling wine from a spectacular cellar door).

And if you are not a wine lover then there is a winery that has a special place in their hearts for the amber brew –with there very own fleet of accomplished home brewers and beer fanatics at the **Innocent Bystander**. And whilst on the topic of the golden drop the **White Rabbit** brewery located in Healesville needs a mention as it is sure to intrigue you with the complex flavours and handsome character of their White Rabbit Dark Ale.

Buckley Brewery must get a mention here as a fine example of small scale craft beer-making business. It has also recently steered its operation towards a more environmentally-aware direction including direct

solar water heating in the brewery. If travelling through Yarra Glen you must turn into **Hargreaves Hill Brewing Company**, a family operated microbrewery and restaurant. Enjoy one of their ales or lagers or even taste one of their delicious Abbey Dubbel and Stout!

For those who prefer cider to beer there is plenty on offer. For a truly refreshing experience drop into the **Cold Stream Brewery** and try a Coldstream Cider, handcrafted from Yarra Valley apples using a traditional rack and cloth cider press. To experience a less traditional cider head to **Punt Road Wines** and taste one of the Napoleone family's unique pear ciders which has been hand-crafted using fresh Yarra Valley pears. Enjoy the unmistakable pear aromas of this cider which has been made from estate grown fruit.

Those that want to tuck into something sweet the **Wickedly Delicious Patisserie** must get a mention! Situated in the heart of the beautiful Dandenong Ranges in Monbulk this specialty cake shop will amaze and tempt you to try delicious cakes and superb coffee.

For the savoury types take a visit to **De Bortoli** renowned as one of the Yarra Valleys best wineries. The property has a twist with their custom built Cheese Maturation Room. Drop in to the De Bortoli's Cheese Room, relax with a bottle of wine and a platter of perfectly matured cheeses.

For the entire dairy experience call in to **Yarra Valley Dairy** which just won two major awards at the Grand Dairy awards in February. The first was for the Innovation in Dairy Manufacturing Award which will enable Jack Holman the cheesemaker at the Yarra Valley Dairy to travel to France to research and purchase new equipment and gain further knowledge and skills in the development of a white mould lactic curd style cheese such as Saint-Paulin and Saint-Marcelli. The second award was for Yarra Valley Dairy's multi award winning Persian Fetta, for Champion Flavoured Cheese.

For a different perspective of the region, hot-air balloon specialists like **Global Ballooning** take to the skies, providing stunning and peaceful views over the Yarra Valley, before gently descending into a vineyard and taking in breakfast at a winery with glass of sparkling Yarra Valley wine.

Parks, forests, wildlife, nature trails and flowering gardens define the adjacent **Dandenong Ranges** where Australia's oldest steam train, **Puffing Billy**, winds its way through the thick forests and lush fern-filled gullies, stopping at historic towns in the hills.

For a magnificent view head to Mt Dandenong's **Sky High**, this romantic destination was awarded the Melbourne's Favorites award for best tourist attraction in 2009. SkyHigh has something for the whole family including, an exquisite English garden, adventurous SkyHigh Maze and links to trail walks in the Dandenong Ranges National Park. For an unforgettable adventure head to **Trees Adventure**, an obstacle

course in the sublime surrounds of Glen Harrow Gardens, which features some of Australia's rarest and most remarkable trees. Participants adventure from tree to tree, taking on thrilling mid-air challenges up to 15 meters high.

The Dandenongs are a favorite romantic retreat and are also famous for the spring flowering Rhododendron Gardens and **William Ricketts Sanctuary** with its beautiful aboriginal sculptures in a hidden forest setting. At the foothills of the Dandenongs is the **Warratina Lavender Farm**. The property offers visitors a real lavender experience with the opportunity to walk amongst the lavender rows, enjoy a lavender scone & taste real lavender tea.

When it comes to accommodation in the Yarra Valley & the Dandenongs the choice is overwhelming - this is a romantic destination after all! From five star opulence to family friendly cottages, each bed and breakfast, self-contained cottage, farm stay and fine hotel is uniquely 'Yarra Valley' in charm, hospitality and attention to detail.

Chateau Yering Historic House, **Susan's in the Valley** and **Ainsworth Estate** all offer world-class boutique accommodation, with the **Sebel Heritage Yarra Valley** providing over 100 rooms, a Jack Nicklaus designed golf course and day spa.. **Amarant Yarra Valley** has recently been refurbished also offering unique boutique B&B hosted guesthouse elevated with magnificent views of the Yarra Valley.

The height of luxury and elegance awaits you at the **Casa Valeri**, a newly constructed unique villa, built and furnished in impeccable taste located in Warburton. For an authentic feel of what pioneer life was like in the region visit **Mont De Lancey Historic Homestead & Museum** where a 1880s Homestead and gardens have been fully restored.

Right in the heart of the Yarra Valley is **Healesville Sanctuary**, where Australian Wildlife is showcased in a natural setting. The Sanctuary is also home and very famous for its onsite a platypussery.

Yarra Valley & the Dandenongs Marketing has also recently launched a new Tourism iPhone Application where businesses in the region have the opportunity to list their products on the world's most popular device, the iPhone.

This ground-breaking iPhone application allows the region to become leaders in the development of a location-aware application which will deliver useful Yarra Valley & Dandenongs Tourism Data and on-location to those who are interested.

Only a short drive from Melbourne yet a whole world away.....Melbourne's Yarra Valley.....you'll never want to leave.

www.yrrml.com.au

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