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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO SOUTH AUSTRALIA'S
CELLAR DOORS AND BEST WINE EXPERIENCES

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220+
CELLAR DOORS EXPLORED

The Advertiser

region run-down

Born of an ancient and magical geology, the Limestone Coast is a rare union of climate, site and soil. Legendary ridges of terra rossa have been weathered and broken down by the elements over 25 million years of successive ice age and retreating shorelines to create the ultimate vineyard environment. Running along the lip of the Great Southern Ocean to the Victorian border, the interesting stretch comprises a number of smaller regions. The red heartland of Coonawarra is joined by eucalypt-swathed Padthaway in the north, the cave-riddled crest of Wrattobully and rugged coastal regions of Mount Benson and Robe. Traditional cabernet sauvignon hails from the soon-to-be-recognised Penola district and emerging vineyards near the Blue Lake city of Mount Gambier are on the radar with exciting pinot noir, chardonnay and sauvignon blanc.

coonawarra

When I think of Coonawarra, I see the rich red soil running through the veins of vigneron who have worked the land for more than a century. Celebrated for Australia's

greatest cabernet sauvignon, the region boasts more than 6000ha of vine. Warmed by the sun under protective cloud cover and sustained by a basin of artesian water, they enjoy one of the longest ripening periods in the world. Tiny purple berries packed with flavour produce vibrant, elegant wines filled with cassis and dustings of cedar, mint and herbs. Leafy regional accents, impeccable balance and long, fine-grained tannins are hallmarks of great Coonawarra cabernet; sometimes blended with merlot, malbec and petit verdot. Sophisticated shiraz is the other champion, smacking of raspberry, spice and freshly cracked black pepper.

mount benson

Situated between Kingston and Robe, these wines have lifted aromatics and soft velvety tannins from the cool maritime climate off Cape Jaffa. Regional heroes include dark-berried cabernet sauvignon and spicy, medium-weight shiraz. Citrusy sauvignon blanc reveals sea-spray minerality. Pinot gris is a rising star.

padthaway

This is classic chardonnay country. Cool styles of shiraz and cabernet have characteristic minty notes and quality reds are often used as blending components by larger companies. Local producers include Browns of Padthaway, Henry's Drive and Padthaway Estate.

robe

Extending between Robe and Beachport, this young region is making waves with elegant, supple wines underpinned by taut natural acidity and fine tannin structure. A reputation for raspberry-peppered shiraz and earthy cabernet sauvignon is coupled with refined chardonnay and zesty, tropical sav blanc.

wrattobully

To the north, this undulating ridge of vineyards was first planted in the 1960s and yields rich, complex cabernet sauvignon, high-quality shiraz and soft merlot. Cool-climate chardonnay is the primary white, while new plantings of Spanish and Italian varieties like tempranillo and sangiovese show promise.



must-see wineries

Highbank Wines Handcrafted biodynamic wines are compelling expressions of provenance and visiting the cellar door (by appt) is an intimate experience. *Riddoch Hwy Coonawarra, 8737 2020, highbank.com.au.*

Majella Wines Some of the finest and best-value wines in the region. *Lynn Rd, Coonawarra, 8736 3055, majellawines.com.au.*

Parker Coonawarra Estate A testament to the ideal of absolute quality and a mecca for collectors. *Riddoch Hwy Coonawarra, 8737 3525, parkercoonawarraestate.com.au.*

Wynns Coonawarra Estate The winery's distinctive triple gables are a regional landmark, the flagship reds are from the longest established vineyard in the area. *Memorial Dr, Coonawarra, 8736 2225, wynns.com.au.*



Parker Coonawarra Estate First Growth Cabernet Merlot

Balnaves The Tally Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Highbank Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot Franc

Petaluma Coonawarra Cabernet Merlot Malbec Petit Verdot

Leconfield Cabernet Sauvignon

Majella The Musician Cabernet Shiraz

Bowen Estate Shiraz

Wynns Coonawarra Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

Zema Estate Cluny Cabernet Merlot Franc Malbec

Kidman Wines Coonawarra Riesling