



THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO

# HUNTER VALLEY WINE

**AUSTRALIAN WINE  
MADE OUR WAY**

With local winemakers exploring new varieties, styles and techniques, discover why this historic region, like its famed Semillon, is only getting better with age.

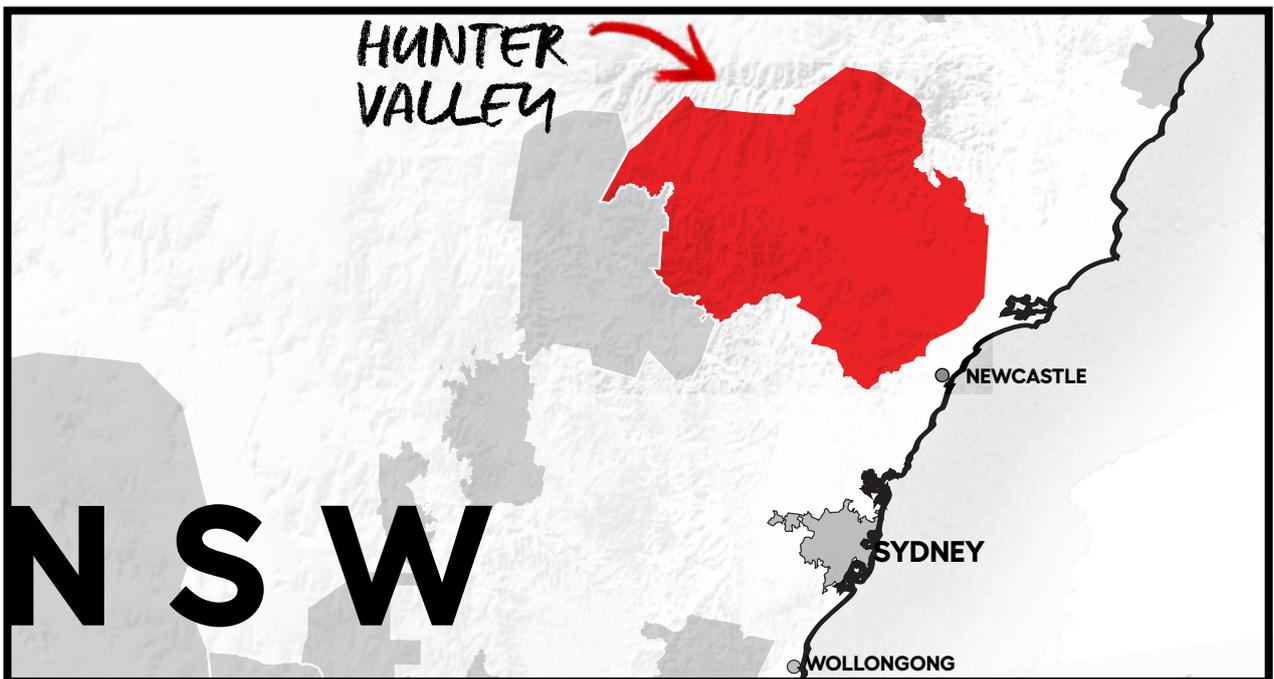


# C O N T E N T S

- 
- The history of the Hunter Valley
  - Geography, climate and soil
  - Viticulture and winemaking
  - Old vines
  - Prominent varieties

Cover: Aaron Mercer and Mark Davidson, Tamburlaine, Hunter Valley

# A U S T R A L I A





# HUNTER VALLEY: THE BIRTHPLACE OF AUSTRALIAN WINE

One of Australia's oldest wine regions, the Hunter Valley remains a star of the Australian wine community.

- Warm, humid climate
- Producing world-class Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz
- Home to some of the world's oldest vine stock
- Popular tourist destination

## HUNTER VALLEY: THE BIRTHPLACE OF AUSTRALIAN WINE

The Hunter Valley is one of Australia's best-known wine regions and home to some of its oldest vines. Located approximately 160 kilometres north of Sydney in New South Wales, and with a backdrop of UNESCO World Heritage National Parks, it's an incredibly popular destination for visitors who come to sample its outstanding wines, particularly Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz. Today, this unique region is defined by its rich historical lineage coupled with an exciting new generation of innovative winemakers.

- **One of Australia's earliest wine regions:** The first vines were planted by 1823, with commercial grape growing beginning soon after. When James Busby returned from Europe in 1832 with vine cuttings, he helped establish the Hunter Valley as a key wine region.
- **Rich in natural wonders:** Green rolling hills are dotted with iconic vineyards, and the Hunter River meanders through the northern parts of the valley. It is bordered to the north, west and south west by the Great Dividing Range and surrounded by national parks.
- **Warm, humid climate:** Growers and winemakers produce distinctive styles suited to the climatic conditions.

- **Old vines:** The Hunter Valley is home to some of the oldest vine stock in the world, with vineyards dating back to the 1860s.
- **The crown jewel:** The region produces some of the world's top Chardonnay and Shiraz, but in Semillon it has created an icon. Hunter Semillon is known for its character-driven, unoaked style with outstanding cellaring potential.
- **Popular tourist destination:** An easy drive from Sydney's CBD, the Hunter Valley has become an attractive getaway destination for Sydneysiders and tourists, offering some of Australia's best restaurants and wineries.



#### DID YOU KNOW

Thanks to Australians' love of abbreviating names, the Hunter Valley is commonly referred to as simply 'the Hunter'.





# THE HISTORY OF HUNTER VALLEY: AN AUSTRALIAN WINE PIONEER

## 1830s

Among the early pioneers is Scottish immigrant James Busby, who helps establish the Hunter Valley after introducing vine cuttings from Europe.

## 1820s

Early European settlers begin planting vines.

## MID 1800s

Dr Henry Lindeman moves to Australia and quickly earns a reputation for exceptional wines. He becomes president of the local vineyard association and helps establish key varieties including Semillon, Verdelho and Shiraz.

## LATE 1800s

The Hunter Valley gains a reputation locally and globally as a prominent wine region. Early pioneers pave the way, including the Tyrrell, Tulloch, Wilkinson and Drayton families.

## LATE 1900s

Penfolds establishes a 600-acre site at Wybong Park, beginning a new chapter in viticulture in the Upper Hunter area. The Hunter Valley's wine industry flourishes and the region becomes known for superb Semillon.

## TODAY

Hunter Valley is one of the most visited wine regions in Australia. It continues to impress with world-class Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz.

## EARLY 1900s

Tyrrell's HVD vineyard is planted, today one of the oldest Chardonnay vineyards in the world. Pokolbin begins to make its mark as a reputable wine-producing area. Maurice O'Shea and his family purchase the historic Mount Pleasant property.



## HISTORY OF HUNTER VALLEY IN THE BEGINNING

The area now known as the Hunter Valley began as an ancient seabed, which took shape as a lush green valley over millions of years. The Wonnarua ('people of the hills and plains') group of Indigenous Australians were the first inhabitants and occupied the Upper Hunter Valley for at least 30,000 years.

### Late 1700s

Sydney and the New South Wales region were colonised by the British Empire, and after early settlers made a chance discovery of the Hunter River (it was first sighted by Lieutenant John Shortland during a search for escaped convicts), the region became a valuable source of timber and coal.

### 1820s

By 1823, around 20 acres of grapevines had been planted along the northern banks of the Hunter River, and in the years that followed, successful commercial grape growing began. While there is no record of who planted the first vineyard, the region's early pioneers included James Busby, commonly referred to as the father of Australian viticulture, along with George Wyndham (Dalwood), William Kelman (Kirkton) and James King (Irrawang).

### 1830s

In 1830, George Wyndham planted a vineyard at 'Dalwood' on the banks of the Hunter River and produced his first commercial vintage in 1835. When he died in 1870, Wyndham owned one of the largest vineyards in New South Wales.

One of the most significant moments in the Hunter Valley's history was the return of James Busby in 1832 from four months travelling the wine regions of France and Spain. He brought back more than 20,000 vine cuttings, distributing these to 50 or so winemakers. It was at this time that Semillon arrived, one of the region's most famous grapes.

## LAYING VARIETAL FOUNDATIONS Mid-1800s

By 1840, the Hunter Valley had more than 500 acres of registered vineyards and was growing steadily. Dr Henry Lindeman, one of the pioneers of Hunter Valley wine, emigrated to Australia in 1840. Before long, he had set up as a doctor in the region and planted vines on his 'Cawarra' property. Despite trials and tribulations, including an arson attack on his cellar and wine stocks, by 1850 Lindeman had earned a reputation for wines of exceptional quality.

His real legacy, however, was his work in promoting the fledgling wine industry as president of the local vineyard association, along with his love for the varieties that would become beacons of the region. Lindeman's work with Semillon, Verdelho and Shiraz paved a path for others to follow.

### Late 1800s

The Hunter Valley had established itself as a prominent wine region both locally and internationally. Famous Australian wine names like Audrey Wilkinson, Maurice O'Shea, Murray Tyrrell, and famous wine families like Drayton and Tulloch are all borne of the Hunter Valley and its winemaking traditions.



### DID YOU KNOW

Throughout its history in the Hunter, Semillon was mislabelled as Hunter River Riesling (or Rhine Riesling), Shepherd's Riesling (in NSW and Victoria), Hock, White Burgundy and even Chablis before it was labelled and valued as a single varietal.

## A REVOLUTION IN WINE STYLES

### Early 1900s

Tyrrell's HVD vineyard was planted in 1908, making it today one of the oldest Chardonnay vineyards in the world. In 1930, the subregion of Pokolbin began to make its mark as a reputable wine-producing area, led by Maurice O'Shea of Mount Pleasant.

One of Australia's most famous winemakers, O'Shea persuaded his mother to purchase the historic Mount Pleasant property at Pokolbin in 1921. He had a passion for Semillon as a single-varietal wine (uncommon at the time) and in 1946 planted the famous Lovedale vineyard. O'Shea made thrilling table wines at a time when the vast majority of wine produced and consumed was fortified, and he helped spark a revolution that continues to shape Australia's wine community today.

### Late 1900s

Penfolds established a 600-acre site at Wybong Park in 1960, beginning a new chapter in viticulture in the Upper Hunter area. In the late 1970s, Tyrrell's won the Gault-Millau in France, one of the highest accolades in wine, with its 1976 Vat 6 Pinot Noir.

Towards the end of the century, the Hunter Valley's wine industry was flourishing and the region became well known for superb Semillon, referred to as "Australia's gift to the world" by Master of Wine Jancis Robinson.

## A NEW GENERATION OF INNOVATION

### Today

The Hunter Valley is one of the most visited wine regions in Australia, with around 150 wineries producing a range of exceptional wines. With its iconic Semillon, award-winning Chardonnay and savoury, long-lived Shiraz from some of the world's oldest vines, the region continues to impress.

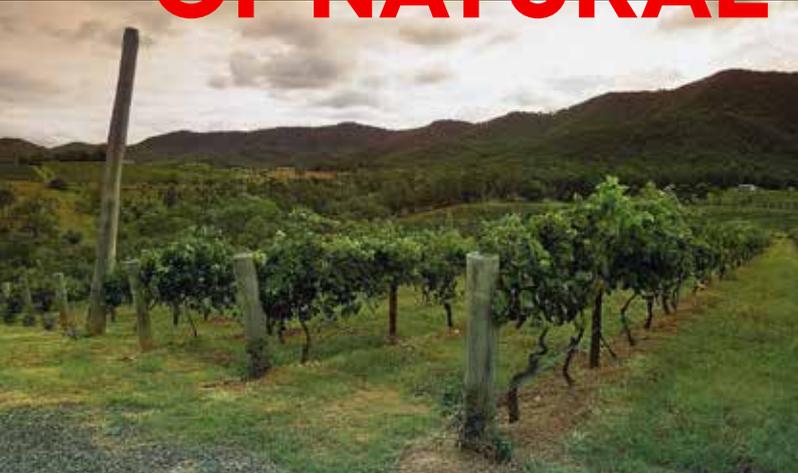
Today, a new generation of winemakers with a typically Australian approach to experimentation are keeping the region fresh and exciting. While they respect tradition, they also push boundaries with new styles, varieties and techniques, such as minimal intervention, preservative-free wines and vibrant alternative varieties like Tempranillo, Fiano and Barbera. Thanks to them, the Hunter Valley has maintained its reputation as a classic fine-wine region that refuses to rest on its laurels.

## FUN FACT

IN 1855, A SPARKLING WINE FROM JAMES KING'S IRRAWANG VINEYARD IN THE LOWER HUNTER WAS SERVED TO NAPOLEON III AT THE PARIS EXHIBITION IN FRANCE. THOSE WHO TASTED IT COMMENTED THAT IT HAD A "BOUQUET, BODY AND FLAVOUR EQUAL TO THE FINEST CHAMPAGNES".



# A WARM-CLIMATE REGION OF NATURAL WONDERS



Hunter Valley is classified geographically as a zone encompassing:

- Hunter region
- Broke Fordwich subregion
- Pokolbin subregion
- Upper Hunter Valley subregion

## A WARM-CLIMATE REGION OF NATURAL WONDERS

Located approximately 160 kilometres north of the New South Wales capital of Sydney, the Hunter Valley rests in the foothills of the Brokenback Range, part of the stunning Great Dividing Range. Its rolling hills are home to rich farmland and bordered by UNESCO World Heritage National Parks. The Hunter River flows through the region, beginning its journey at Barrington Tops, north of the Hunter Valley, and making its way to the coastal city of Newcastle.

The Hunter Valley sits on an ancient seabed, and over time the top layer deposits compressed into rock, shale and coal, forming the terrain and diverse rich soils of today. Vines typically grow on gently sloping hills and modest gradients, to quite flat terrain.

Under the Australian Geographical Indication (GI) system, the Hunter Valley was officially classified as a zone in 1996, encompassing the region of Hunter and the subregions of Broke Fordwich, Pokolbin and Upper Hunter Valley. Sitting within the Hunter Valley zone, the Hunter region is almost as large, and encompasses the majority of the wine-producing areas. The Lower Hunter Valley area is not an officially defined region, but generally includes the Pokolbin subregion, along with the districts around Wollombi, Mount View, Cessnock and Lovedale.

- **Broke Fordwich subregion:** Broke Fordwich sits in the Lower Hunter area, between the Upper Hunter Valley subregion to the northwest and Pokolbin to the east. It is one of the warmest areas in the Lower Hunter with some continental influences, due to being partially protected from sea breezes by the foothills of the Brokenback Range.

# CLIMATE



## SUBTROPICAL

WITH MARITIME INFLUENCES

# ALTITUDE



## HUNTER VALLEY

22–254M (72–833FT)

## VERY HIGH

>1000M  
>3280FT

## HIGH

750–999M  
2460–3279FT

## MEDIUM

500–749M  
1640–2459FT

## LOW

0–499M  
0–1639FT

- **Pokolbin subregion:** Most vineyards in the Lower Hunter Valley area are situated in Pokolbin, a subregion in the centre of the valley packed full of wineries and restaurants. Some of the first vineyards in Australia were planted here and it continues to be a premium grape-growing region. The summer heat is alleviated by the surrounding ranges, which collect cloud cover over the valley and draw in cooling afternoon sea breezes.
- **Upper Hunter Valley subregion:** Lying northwest of Newcastle and south of Tamworth, the Upper Hunter attracts outdoor enthusiasts with its wilderness areas and native wildlife, as well as wine lovers who follow its winding winery trail. Positioned further inland than Pokolbin, it is generally warmer, missing the cooling sea breezes and experiencing a higher number of heat degree days.

### Latitude

- 32° 34'S

### Climate

The climate is characterised by warm and humid days in spring and summer, and cold nights in autumn and winter. The rain, humidity, cloud cover and gentle sea breezes mitigate the warmth. The summer-dominated rainfall can occur during harvest in some years.

### **Growing season rainfall**

- 527mm (20.7in)

Calculated from October to April in Australia, growing season rainfall is a good indication of how much water is available to the vine. Rainfall in the Hunter Valley is medium, with the Lower Hunter area typically receiving more rainfall than the Upper Hunter.

The region can experience early summer rains and thunderstorms, sometimes with the threat of hail, which can damage or reduce crops. The positive outcome of the summer rain is that high humidity and afternoon cloud cover reduce the impact of high temperatures.

### **Mean January temperature (MJT)**

- 23.1°C (73.6)°F

Mean January temperature refers to the mean temperature of the warmest month.

Please check the Wine Australia website for up-to-date information. Altitude refers to the highest and lowest vineyard in the GI region, not necessarily the highest or lowest point within the region and is calculated using the National Vineyard Scan and state contour datasets. Latitude is taken at the central point of the GI region. Meteorological data is taken from the national climate data bank of the Bureau of Meteorology: the Australian Data Archive for Meteorology (ADAM). Climate indices have been calculated across the whole GI region by the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem CRC as part of a research project co-funded by Wine Australia. Growing season rainfall (GSR) and mean January temperature (MJT) based on 1991–2017 averages from the Bureau of Meteorology (2018). GSR is calculated from October to April.



# SOIL

- Varied across the region
- Shiraz typically does best on friable red duplex and loam soils
- Semillon typically does best on sandy alluvial flats



## SOIL

The soils vary across the region, with soils in the Lower Hunter Valley area ranging from sandy alluvial flats to deep loam and friable red duplex soils, while in the Upper Hunter the rivers and creeks contribute to the area's black, silty loam soils often overlaid on top of alkaline clay loam. Shiraz typically does best on friable red duplex and loam soils, while Semillon prefers the sandy alluvial flats.



**VITICULTURE AND WINEMAKING  
IN THE HUNTER VALLEY:**

# SUCCESS AGAINST THE ODDS

## **VITICULTURE AND WINEMAKING IN THE HUNTER VALLEY**

The Hunter Valley accounts for a small proportion of Australia's total annual grape crush. However, with its focus on quality over quantity, it consistently produces premium wines. It also plays a significant role in Australia's winemaking reputation and wine tourism, with more than 100 vineyards and 150 wineries. A little over half of the wine produced is white, and the region's signature varieties are Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz.



# CHALLENGES AND REWARDS FOR GRAPEGROWERS

- A history of skilled grapegrowers adapting to climate and market changes
- Quality over quantity
- Signature varieties: Semillon, Chardonnay, Shiraz
- Subtropical climate, heavy rains and summer storms present a challenge

## CHALLENGES AND REWARDS FOR GRAPEGROWERS

The Hunter Valley is among the warmest wine regions in Australia. Its warm climate, humidity, heavy rains and risk of summer storms present a challenge to Hunter Valley growers who have a long tradition of adapting to both climate and market changes. On paper, what might seem like a difficult area to produce quality grapes has built a reputation as one of Australia's top wine regions, thanks in large part to the skills of its grapegrowers.

## VINEYARD MANAGEMENT AND TRELLISING

The two main viticultural challenges in the Hunter are sun and the risk of summer storms. Canopy management techniques that promote shading of the bunches can be used to ensure the optimal degree of fruit-sun exposure. This will vary according to grape variety, and canopy management techniques must be tailored accordingly. In the Hunter, it is important to ripen the fruit and produce a desired fruit quality, without the canopy being so dense to inhibit airflow in and around the vines. Techniques include irrigation management, pruning, shoot and bunch thinning, shoot and leaf removal and shoot positioning. More permanent canopy management techniques include the choice of trellis system, the use of rootstocks and row spacing.



# HARVEST



- Early January to mid-February
- Earlier than most other Australian regions



## IRRIGATION

Hunter vineyards benefit from relatively high annual rainfall and low evaporation rates compared to other wine areas, so not all vineyards are dependent on irrigation. However, some vineyards use supplementary drip irrigation when the winter and early growing seasons are relatively dry. This also allows vignerons to adjust grape yields, the timing of harvest and wine characteristics.

## HARVEST

Harvest typically occurs from early January to mid-February, ahead of most other Australian wine regions, as the Hunter Valley's warm climate tends to ripen grapes faster. However, while Hunter Semillon is also picked early, this is done for stylistic reasons. With summer rains that can threaten fruit, growers keep a careful eye on the weather in the lead-up to harvest for the best time to pick. They must be ready to pick at the optimal moment among the heat, rain and – at times – hail.



- Long winemaking tradition
- New breed of innovative winemakers
- Minimal intervention, preservative-free Semillon, alternative varieties, Shiraz and Pinot Noir blends

# WINEMAKING: AN EMPHASIS ON PREMIUM



Peter Windrim, winemaker, Krinklewood

## WINEMAKING: AN EMPHASIS ON PREMIUM

While there is no argument that the Hunter Valley can confidently claim itself as a producer of classic fine wines, it is also a region exploring new possibilities. Today's winemakers take inspiration from the past while embracing new trends and experimenting with innovative techniques. Underpinning these trends, however, is a consistently high standard.

## SEMILLON: THE JEWEL IN THE HUNTER'S CROWN

The warm, humid climate of the Hunter Valley arguably shouldn't be capable of producing Semillon with any great character. Yet Hunter Semillon is one of the region's most-regarded varieties. Meticulous winemaking with attention to detail is key. Grapes are generally picked early while they have a low sugar content (usually around 10%–11% alcohol) and high natural acidity. They are gently handled in the winery and crushed with minimal skin and seed contact. The juice is fermented at cold temperatures, stabilised, left to settle and then bottled.



## COMPLEMENTARY READING

### **A PRICELESS AUSTRALIAN WINE LEGACY IN SAFE HANDS**

Tyrrell's is a famous family name in the Hunter Valley, where strong tradition meets a restless spirit of wine innovation. It is a winery dedicated to handcrafted, minimal-intervention wines while never ignoring the evolution of wine styles. This philosophy has been handed down from generation to generation and renewed with vigour with each passing of the baton.

The founding father of Tyrrell's Wines, Edward Tyrrell, purchased land for his first vineyard in 1858. Edward worked hard in establishing his property – then known as Ashmans – as one of the most renowned in the region. In the late 1800s the baton passed from Edward to his son, Dan. You could say Dan was born to work amongst the vines and in the winery, having worked in the vineyards from the age of fourteen when his father's health started to decline.

Dan expanded upon his father's legacy right up until his passing in 1959. The grapes he grew in his 70 vintages were renowned in the Hunter Valley and across Australia. Grapes grown by Dan Tyrrell made their way into the legendary wines of Australia's first great winemaker, Maurice O'Shea.

In 1959, Murray Tyrrell took the reins. Previously, almost all Tyrrell's grapes and wines were sold to other wineries. Murray changed this, bottling the best wines under his family's own label. Before long, names like 'Vat 1' Semillon and 'Vat 47' Chardonnay became part of the Australian wine lover's vernacular. Murray also introduced new wine styles and revolutionised wine tourism in Australia, setting a new standard of excellence in innovation that his son Bruce built on from the turn of the millennium.

Today, Bruce's son Chris – a fifth-generation Tyrrell – is preparing to take over. Like Bruce, Chris isn't blindly following the path others before him have forged – he wouldn't be a Tyrrell without an ambition to innovate and evolve. Chris has been a key influence on processes in the vineyard and in reviving minimal-intervention traditions in the winery. He has also been recognised as one of the best young winemakers in Australia.

With an illustrious history and a bright future, the Tyrrell's name will remain synonymous with fine Hunter Valley and Australian wine for many years to come.



# A GROWING HISTORY: OLD VINES

- Vineyards dating back to the 1860s
- The oldest Chardonnay vines in the world
- Significant acreage of old vines, mainly Shiraz growing on its own roots

## **A GROWING HISTORY: OLD VINES**

With vineyards dating back to the 1860s, the Hunter Valley has some of the oldest and rarest vine stock in the world. Heritage plant stocks of international value, such as Shiraz from 1867 and Semillon from 1899, are still nurtured.

Old vines can produce wines with characteristics different from vines with less age, although that's not to say old vines always create better wines. While the evidence is mostly anecdotal, grapes from older vines typically have higher acid and lower pH, and can produce wines with a unique depth. Low-yielding old vines typically produce grapes that are full of intensity and flavour, and contribute to great complexity, structure and balance.

### **Semillon**

As with many European grape varieties, Semillon was imported by James Busby in 1832 and then propagated and distributed by Thomas Shepherd of the Darling Nursery near

Sydney. From its earliest days in Australia, it proved a popular vine with winemakers. Its vigour, ease of propagation, high yields and resistance to disease made Semillon an easy vine to like. Today, the Hunter Valley has old Semillon vines dating back to the early 1900s.

### **Chardonnay**

While the exact origins of Australia's first Chardonnay vines are subject to debate, we know it arrived on our shores as a humble vine cutting in the early 1800s. The Hunter Valley has a number of old Chardonnay vines, including Tyrrell's HVD 'Old Vines' vineyard, planted in 1908.

### **Shiraz**

Along with Rutherglen, McLaren Vale and the Barossa Valley, the Hunter Valley has one of the largest acreage of old vines, mainly Shiraz, growing on its own roots. Some Shiraz vines are more than 120 years old and still produce excellent wines.

## HERITAGE VINES AND HISTORIC WINE FAMILIES

The Hunter Valley is home to a number of multigenerational wine families steeped in the region's winemaking traditions, and many have a connection to some of Australia's oldest vines.

### Mount Pleasant

Famed winemaker Maurice O'Shea founded Mount Pleasant in 1921. Now part of the McWilliam's winery (a six-generation winemaking family with more than 140 years' experience), Mount Pleasant features four very special vineyards:

- **Old Paddock:** This Shiraz vineyard was planted in the 1920s; the fruit goes into Mount Pleasant's premium reds.
- **Old Hill:** O'Shea purchased this block in 1921 from the King family. Charles King planted Shiraz here in 1880, making these some of the oldest vines in the Hunter Valley.
- **Rosehill:** Purchased during the Second World War (March 1945) from Emily Dunn, O'Shea renamed the property and had the area planted to 'Hermitage' (as Shiraz was known in those days). It proved a massive success.
- **Lovedale:** Purchased by O'Shea in 1939 but not planted until after the war in 1946, the first Mount Pleasant 'Lovedale' Semillon was made in 1950.

### Drayton's Family Wines

The Drayton family is one of the oldest wine families in Australia, with more than 160 years of winemaking expertise. They have some vineyards that date back to the 1890s, the grapes from which inspire their range of 'Heritage Vines' wines. This pioneering family of the Hunter is now in its sixth generation.

### Tyrrell's Wines

Family-owned since 1858, Tyrrell's has identified six 'sacred sites' – blocks across four vineyards that are over 100 years old and still producing fruit and growing on their own roots. They represent some of the rarest vines in the world and include:

- **4 Acres Vineyard:** This 1.05-hectare (2.6-acre) Shiraz vineyard dates back to 1879. In a typical year, 4 Acres produces a little more than one bottle per vine.
- **Johnno's Vineyard:** Planted in 1908, this site was originally named the Long Flat vineyard but was renamed in 2002 after fifth-generation family member John Tyrrell. Semillon (2.06 hectares/5.1 acres) and Shiraz (0.73 hectares/1.8 acres) are planted here.
- **HVD Vineyard:** The Hunter Valley Distillery Company planted this vineyard in 1908, making it the oldest continually producing Chardonnay vineyard in the world. Famed Penfolds leased it in 1933 and then bought it in 1948. Murray Tyrrell bought it in 1982. HVD is home to 4.29 hectares (10.6 acres) of Semillon and 1.1 hectares (2.7 acres) of Chardonnay.
- **Stevens Vineyards:** Neil Stevens owns two iconic Hunter Valley vineyards: Glenoak and Old Hillside. On the Old Hillside block, a 3.3-hectare (8.2-acre) patch of Shiraz is home to the oldest still-producing vines in the Hunter. This 'Old Patch', was planted in 1867, making it more than 150 years old. In the 1990s, Bruce Tyrrell struck a deal with the Stevens family to make the wine with grapes from this vineyard. Then in 2017, the Tyrrell family purchased the Stevens Shiraz Vineyard, which includes the Old Patch block, from Neil and Bernadette Stevens. The Hunter Valley has 11 blocks of vineyards with more than 100-year-old vines on their own roots, and the Tyrrell family now has seven of them.

# HUNTER VALLEY TOP 5 VARIETIES



**SEMILLON**

**27%**

**SHIRAZ**

**24%**

**CHARDONNAY**

**23%**

**VERDELHO**

**15%**

**TEMPRANILLO**

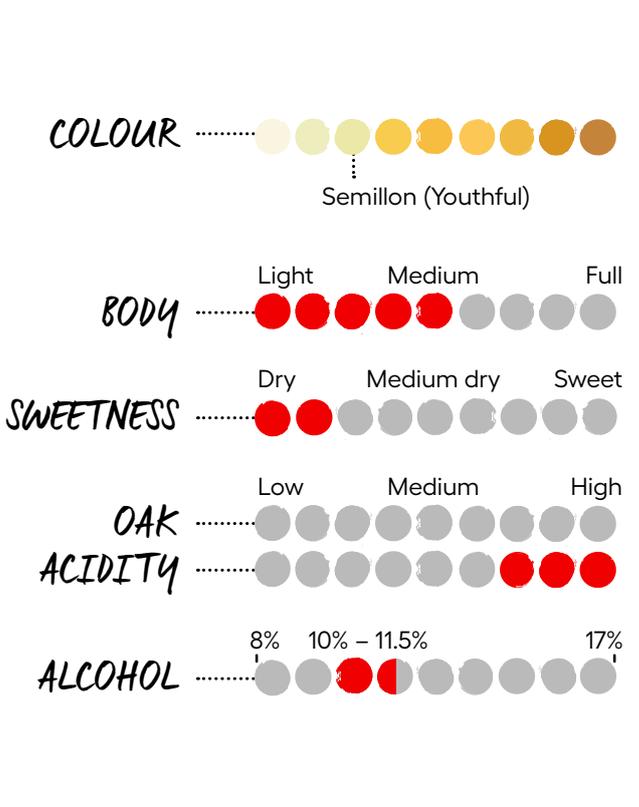
**2%**

Source: Wine Australia National Vintage Survey. Variety share based on average tonnage from 2015–2019

## TOP VARIETIES

The Hunter Valley is known for creating some of the best and most unique Semillon in the world, alongside outstanding Chardonnay, Shiraz and a growing list of emerging varieties suited to its warm climate. Regardless of variety, the Hunter Valley's wines are distinctive, telling of the history and evolution of the region.

# CHARACTERISTICS



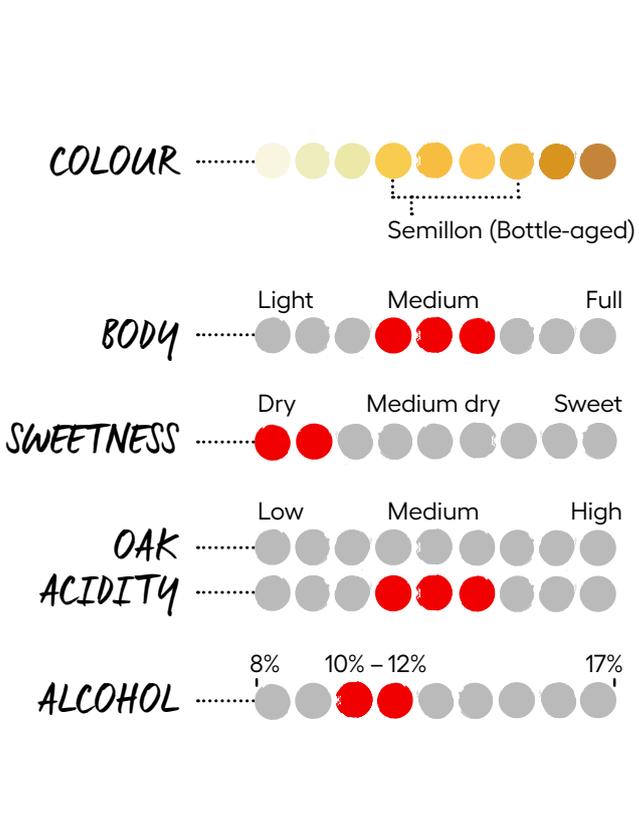
**FLAVOURS**

**TYPICAL FRUIT FLAVOURS**

- Lemon
- Green apple
- Quince

**TYPICAL SECONDARY FLAVOURS**

- Herbs
- Grassiness



**FLAVOURS**

**TYPICAL FRUIT FLAVOURS**

- Lemon
- Apple
- Quince
- Fig

**TYPICAL SECONDARY FLAVOURS**

- Toast
- Straw
- Honey
- Honeysuckle
- Vanilla

## SEMILLON

A world benchmark wine, Semillon is the stellar white variety in the region. When first bottled, Hunter Valley Semillon is almost water-white in appearance with aromas of citrus, grass, straw, lanolin and subtle green herbs. It's crisp and delicate with a chalky minerality. Patience pays great dividends, however, and the finest examples with high acidity and low alcohol transform after as little as five years in bottle, revealing honeyed, toasty, grilled-nut characters – almost as if the wine has spent time in oak (even though it hasn't).

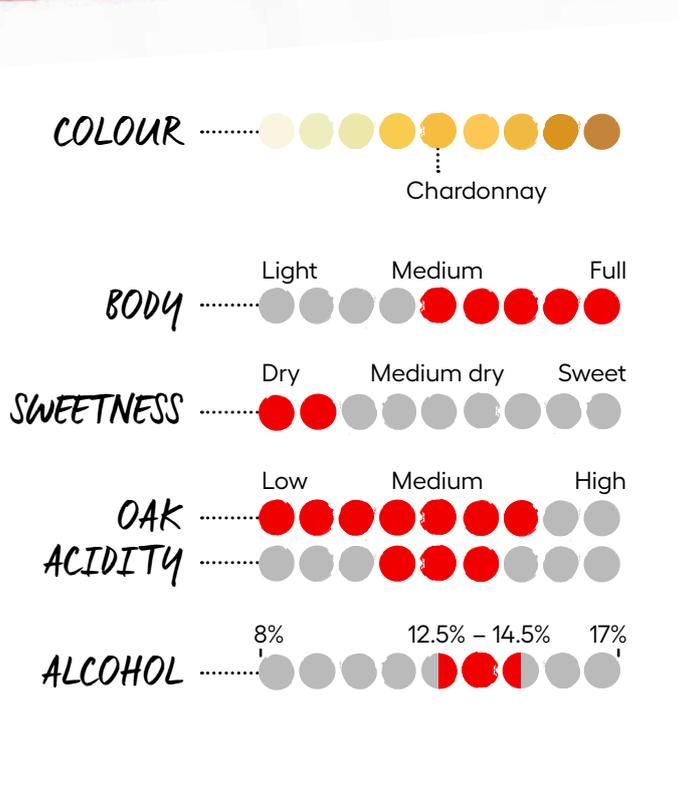
These wines are capable of ageing gracefully for well over 20 years. The key point of difference in aged Hunter Valley Semillon is that the best examples will retain an identifiable stamp of primary fruit and a nucleus of lemony acidity even after decades in the cellar.

Early on, this iconic white wine was misleadingly labelled as Hunter River Riesling (or Rhine Riesling), Hock, White Burgundy or even Chablis. Today, a growing number of styles are produced in the Hunter Valley, and in a twist on the traditional style, Bimbadgen Estate creates a unique non-vintage sparkling Semillon, giving the bright citrus flavours a boost of delicate bubbles from secondary tank fermentation using the Charmat method.

### Notable producers include:

- **Brokenwood Wines 'ILR Reserve' Semillon** – zesty lime and toasty beeswax, and a consistent award winner.
- **Mount Pleasant 'Elizabeth' Semillon** – a lively and fresh citrus palate, and a multi-award winner.
- **Tyrrell's 'Vat 1' Hunter Semillon** – consistently named one of the best in the world. It shows a honeyed, toasty complexity beyond its citrus characters with ageing.

# CHARACTERISTICS



**FLAVOURS**

- Lemon
- Apple
- Ripe peach
- Citrus
- Toast
- Vanilla
- Butter
- Toffee
- Honey
- Crème brûlée
- Nectarine
- Melon
- Mango
- Pineapple
- Cinnamon
- Coconut
- Nougat
- Toasted almond
- Spice

TYPICAL FRUIT FLAVOURS



TYPICAL FLAVOURS WITH OAK MATURATION



## CHARDONNAY

One of the first regions in Australia to grow Chardonnay, the Hunter Valley helped establish the variety as an Australian wine icon. Hunter Chardonnay used to be represented by the 'sunshine in a bottle' style, with big, oaky, rich and buttery drops. But the region has enjoyed a renaissance over the past 15 years, with producers still crafting full-flavoured Chardonnays but with less heavy-handed oak treatment. Flavours tend to range from ripe peach to citrus.

**Notable producers include:**

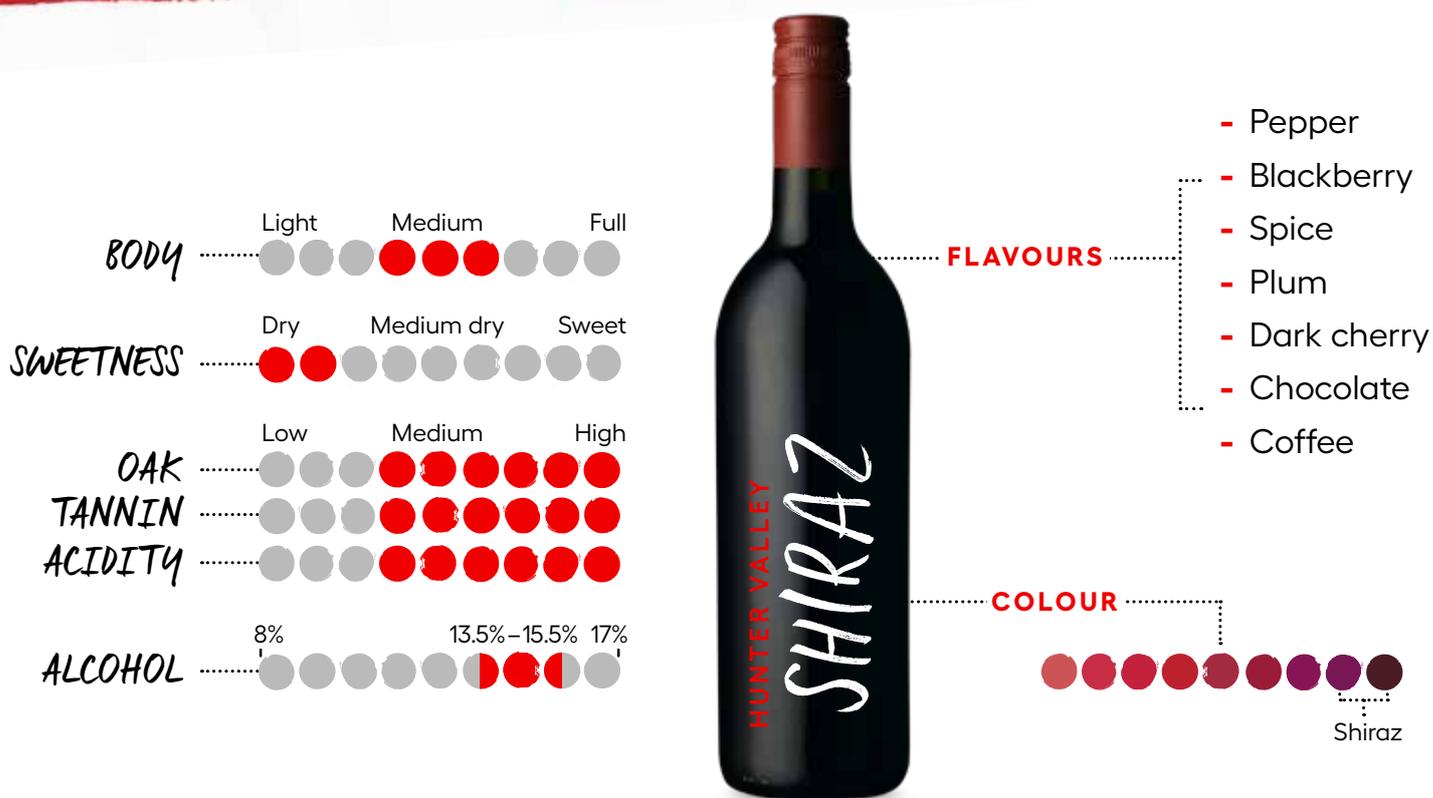
- Brokenwood Chardonnay – fruit-driven, modern example.
- Harkham Wines 'Aziza's' Chardonnay – a natural wine and preservative-free producer.
- Lake's Folly Chardonnay – low-yielding, estate-grown, single-site Chardonnay.

- Scarborough 'Yellow Label' Chardonnay – a hugely popular oaked style.
- Tyrrell's 'Vat 47' Chardonnay – the pioneering style that launched Chardonnay's Australian success.

## FUN FACT

WHILE THE REAL TRUTH MAY NEVER BE KNOWN, LEGEND HAS IT THAT MURRAY TYRRELL JUMPED THE FENCE TO GRAB SOME CHARDONNAY VINES FROM PENFOLDS' EXPERIMENTAL VINEYARD TO PLANT IN HIS FAMILY'S HUNTER VALLEY VINEYARD, NOW HOME TO THE FAMOUS VAT 47 CHARDONNAY.

# CHARACTERISTICS



## SHIRAZ

Shiraz is undoubtedly the Hunter Valley’s standout red grape. In years gone by, Shiraz wines from this warm, humid region were mostly big and bold. Today, winemakers are producing medium-bodied wines that are savoury, complex and food friendly. Young Hunter Shiraz can show red and dark berries, spice and plenty of soft, fine tannin, but as they age they become more complex, with earthy, leathery overtones and a beautiful perfume. It also acquires a silkiness and grace, becoming a smooth, wonderfully complex and multi-layered flavoured wine.

## Notable producers include:

- **Mount Pleasant ‘Maurice O’Shea’ Shiraz** – an iconic Hunter Valley wine drawing on rich winemaking heritage dating back to 1921. Great balance, intensity and length.
- **Brokenwood ‘Graveyard’ Shiraz** – quality Hunter Valley Shiraz from an iconic single vineyard, supple palate and juicy acidity.
- **Tyrrell’s ‘Vat 9’ Shiraz** – flagship Hunter Valley Shiraz with a classic earthy, savoury nose.
- **Thomas Wines ‘Kiss’ Shiraz** – Thomas’s flagship from a vineyard planted in 1969. Medium-bodied and intense.



# BEST OF THE REST

## BEST OF THE REST

Other notable varieties coming out of the Hunter Valley include:

- Verdelho.
- Pinot Noir.
- Tempranillo.
- Cabernet Sauvignon.



# EMERGING VARIETIES

## EMERGING VARIETIES

Local producers are experimenting with emerging and re-emerging varieties, often with positive results. This exploration is one of the most exciting aspects of Hunter Valley wine today.

- Pinot Gris/Grigio.
- Fiano.
- Gewürztraminer.
- Cabernet Franc.
- Barbera.
- Sangiovese.



# ICONS AND INNOVATION

A historic wine region  
that's only getting better  
with age

## ICONS AND INNOVATION

The Hunter Valley's wonderfully rich history and old vines set a strong foundation for the future of this unique and much-loved region. Though small, it has established itself as a key player in the Australian wine community thanks to the unrelenting dedication of growers and winemakers to produce quality above all else. With today's winemakers exploring new – and old – varieties, styles and techniques, the Hunter Valley, like its famed Semillon, is only getting better with age.

### KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER:

- Located approximately 160 kilometres north of Sydney, the Hunter Valley is home to some of Australia's earliest commercial vineyards.
- It's a lush region surrounded by natural wonders and packed with wineries, restaurants and a variety of accommodation options, making it

a hugely popular tourist destination and one of Australia's most visited wine regions.

- The Hunter Valley provides a challenging environment for growers and winemakers, but through skill, innovation and almost two centuries of experience, local producers have established the Hunter as a renowned region.
- Some of the world's most ancient vines grow in the Hunter's fertile soils, including Shiraz vines dating back to 1867.
- Semillon is the region's crown jewel, producing crisp, dry, delicate wines that are among the world's best, and which can age gracefully for well over 20 years. Shiraz and Chardonnay are the other signature varieties.
- Winemakers are exploring a string of emerging varieties suited to its warm climate, with Verdelho and Tempranillo leading the charge.

# AUSTRALIAN WINE MADE OUR WAY

Australia's unique climate and landscape have fostered a fiercely independent wine scene, home to a vibrant community of growers, winemakers, viticulturists, and vigneron. With more than 100 grape varieties grown across 65 distinct wine regions, we have the freedom to make exceptional wine, and to do it our way. We're not beholden to tradition, but continue to push the boundaries in the pursuit of the most diverse, thrilling wines in the world. That's just our way.

Discover more about Australian wine  
at [www.australianwine.com](http://www.australianwine.com)

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