



**July 16, 2019**

**For Immediate Release**

## **Wine Media Conference: Friday Wine Country Excursions**

Each year at the Wine Media Conference we cooperate with the local industry to organize five-hour wine country excursions into the local wine region. Below are the six planned excursions for Friday, October 11 in the Hunter Valley of New South Wales, Australia.

These excursions have traditionally been “mystery” excursions in which conference attendees have no idea where they are heading when they board a bus. This year we are making a change by publishing the host venues and other details in advance. Attendees will be able to choose their destination on a first come, first served basis upon checking in to the conference on October 10.

These five-hour excursions are mini media tours complete with tastings of unique and award winning wines, education, dinner, beautiful scenery, and opportunities to meet local industry players. They are included in the price of the conference, thanks to the generosity of participating wineries and restaurants and the organization of the [Hunter Valley Wine and Tourism Association](#).

**Degen Wines & Estate:** The [Degen Wines](#) & Estate is the smallest commercial wine producer in the Hunter Valley, featuring single vineyard Semillon, Chardonnay and Shiraz wines. Your hosts Tom, Jean and Sasha Degen will welcome you to their estate and share their passion for single vineyard wines. Then, in what will be a first for the Wine Media Conference, digital media expert [Guy Degen](#) will guide attendees through exploring audience development, wine experiences, and storytelling through the Lego Serious Play method.

Participants will experience a delicious three-course dinner inspired and created by talented local Hunter Concierge chef. The chef will prepare a scrumptious meal with Degen Single Vineyard wines and 100% Hunter produce with a menu designed to allow the tasters to travel through each of the Degen’s single vineyard varieties. We will learn why each varietal is grown in the Hunter and its response to Degen terroir.

**Around Hermitage:** The [Around Hermitage Food & Wine Trail](#) encompasses over 20 wineries along with breweries, distilleries, restaurants, and accommodations in the area of Hermitage Road near Pokolbin in the Hunter Valley. We’ll first shuttle to Mistletoe Lane for an introduction to the topography of the area, enjoying the view towards the Brokenback Mountains. You’ll then have the option to use an electric bike or hop in a horse-drawn carriage (weather permitting) to travel to the private residence of owners Bob and Mary Lusby of [Tintilla Estate](#).

We will do a tasting of member wineries, with the opportunity to chat with locals who live and breathe the Hunter Valley. Dinner will then be served, with the theme Hunter and Gatherers of the Around Hermitage Wine & Food Trail, with dishes such as rabbit terrine, kangaroo Thai salad, and spit roast suckling pig created and served by some of the seven restaurant partners of the Around Hermitage Food & Wine Trail.

**Mt Pleasant/Brokenwood/De Iuliis/Margan:** This excursion is a cooperation of four nearby wineries: [Mt. Pleasant](#), [Brokenwood](#), [De Iuliis](#), and [Margan](#). We’ll start with a visit to the Mt. Pleasant Old Hill Vineyard for an introduction to the area by Chief Winemaker Adrian Sparks. We’ll then transfer to Brokenwood Wines for a Semillon Masterclass with Managing Director & Chief Winemaker Iain Riggs and Owner and Winemaker of Thomas Wines, Andrew Thomas. Our

next stop is the top of the De Luliis Wines' Steven Vineyard for refreshments, canapés, and a vineyard tour with Owner and Winemaker, Mike De Luliis.

We will then transfer to [Margan Restaurant & Winery](#) for dinner. Margan Restaurant is now in its tenth year and as the pioneers of agri-dining in the Hunter Valley are committed more than ever to their 'estate grown, estate made' ethos. The visit will include a discussion from the Head Chef at Margan Restaurant with Lisa Margan (@lisamargan) about the history of the restaurant and its commitment to both sustainable and ethically sourced foods. The focus of this dinner will be Shiraz and "other red varieties", with an emphasis on the exceptional 2017 and 2018 vintage as well as a bracket of rare and aged Hunter Valley red wine.

**The Magic of Mount View:** The Magic of Mount View excursion is presented by Briar Ridge Vineyard, Carillion, and Bistro Molines, all of the Mount View region of the Hunter Valley. We'll first travel to [Briar Ridge Vineyard](#) to meet our hosts Jaclyn Davis, Owner & Alex Beckett, Winemaker. Participants will be split into groups of five and challenged to craft a premium Hunter red wine by blending select barrel samples of Briar Ridge wines. Each team will then have the opportunity to test their creativity by designing a Briar Ridge label for their new Hunter Red blend, with the blends and labels being judged by Alex and Jaclyn with prizes awarded.

We will then journey through the picturesque vineyard valley connecting the Briar Ridge and [Carillion](#) cellar doors and hear from Carillon Vigneron Tim Davis about the Mount View terroir, plantings and vineyard practices that shape the distinct wine styles of Briar Ridge and Carillion. Hunter Valley living legends Robert and Sally Molines will then provide a culinary experience you will long remember at their restaurant, [Bistro Molines](#), in one of the most beautiful parts of the Hunter Valley, accompanied by a selection of premium Briar Ridge and Carillion wines.

**Tyrrell's Wines:** [Tyrrell's Wines](#) is one of the most iconic family-owned vineyards in Australia, with a history dating back to 1858. We'll travel to the winery and start our experience with a tour of some of the oldest and most historic ungrafted vines in the Hunter Valley, dating over 100 years old. We'll then enjoy a four-part "Verontal" tasting: a vertical of Vat 1 Semillon from 2019, 2009, 2005 & 2003; a horizontal of 2014 Stevens Semillon, Belford Semillon & HVD Semillon; a vertical of Vat 9 Shiraz from 2017, 2014, 2011 & 2009; and a horizontal of 2017 Stevens Shiraz, Old Hut Shiraz & Mother's Shiraz.

Dinner will be catered by Muse restaurant, one of the most awarded restaurants in the Hunter Valley. Experience an exquisite menu curated by chef/proprietor Troy Rhoades-Brown matched perfectly with some of our finest Museum wines.

**Wine House Hunter Valley:** [The Wine House](#) is a unique facility that showcases the talents of five leading Hunter Valley wineries: The Little Wine Company, Silkman Wines, Thomas Wines, David Hook Wines, and Hart & Hunter. These five are all well-established, family owned, boutique winemakers with an incredible track record of awards and accolades. The evening will be a series of mini-masterclasses hosted by the winemakers from each brand. At the conclusion of each masterclass you will be invited to taste a blind bracket of wines in the enomatic machine followed by a game of "options".

We will then be seated on the terrace seated amongst the winemakers at a long table (or inside if inclement weather) with a beautiful selection of share plates paired with museum wines from each winemaker. Chef Ros Baldwin has created a menu at the restaurant full of share plates, mezze, and charcuterie boards.

The Wine Media Conference is taking place in the Hunter Valley, NSW, from October 10 – 12, 2019 with over 120 people registered to attend predominately from the USA and Australia. Pricing will go up 1 August, so there is no better time to register than now.

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## About the Wine Media Conference

The Wine Media Conference, founded in 2008 as the Wine Bloggers Conference, is the preeminent annual gathering for wine media. The conference attracts wine bloggers, wine writers, and wine influencers who write, photograph, and video about wines and the wine industry. It is also designed for Wine Industry Communicators who wish to interact with the attending media and learn from the exciting content at the conference, most of which is applicable or exclusively oriented to wineries and other wine industry companies. The 2019 conference is the first event being held outside North America and is supported by the Australian Government's International Wine Tourism Competitive Grants program, administered by Wine Australia as part of the \$50 million Export and Regional Wine Support Package, along with local support from Destination New South Wales, and cooperation from Wine Communicators of Australia.

## About WCA

Wine Communicators of Australia was established as a national not-for-profit company in December 2010 growing out of the well-respected Wine Press Clubs of NSW, Victoria and South Australia. It aims to be Australia's pre-eminent organisation connecting business professionals working with wine and currently has more than 500 members.

WCA's annual program includes networking events, webinars and its prestigious lunches in association with three major capital city wine shows – Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide. It also runs the annual Wine Communicator Awards and Legend of the Vine Awards. In addition to its regular schedule, in 2019 WCA will be hosting two major international wine conference events. In April, the China-Australia Wine Marketing Summit will visit Sydney providing attendees insight into how to better tailor their marketing activities to attract the ever growing, important Chinese wine market. Then in October, the Wine Media Conference will convene in the Hunter Valley attracting wine bloggers and wine media from all over the world. For more information on these and other events visit [www.winecommunicators.com.au](http://www.winecommunicators.com.au).

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