

H O T O N



T H E T R A I L

A themed food and wine trail – whether you drive, cycle or stroll – can give your travels a whole new flavour. By **Anne Fullerton**.



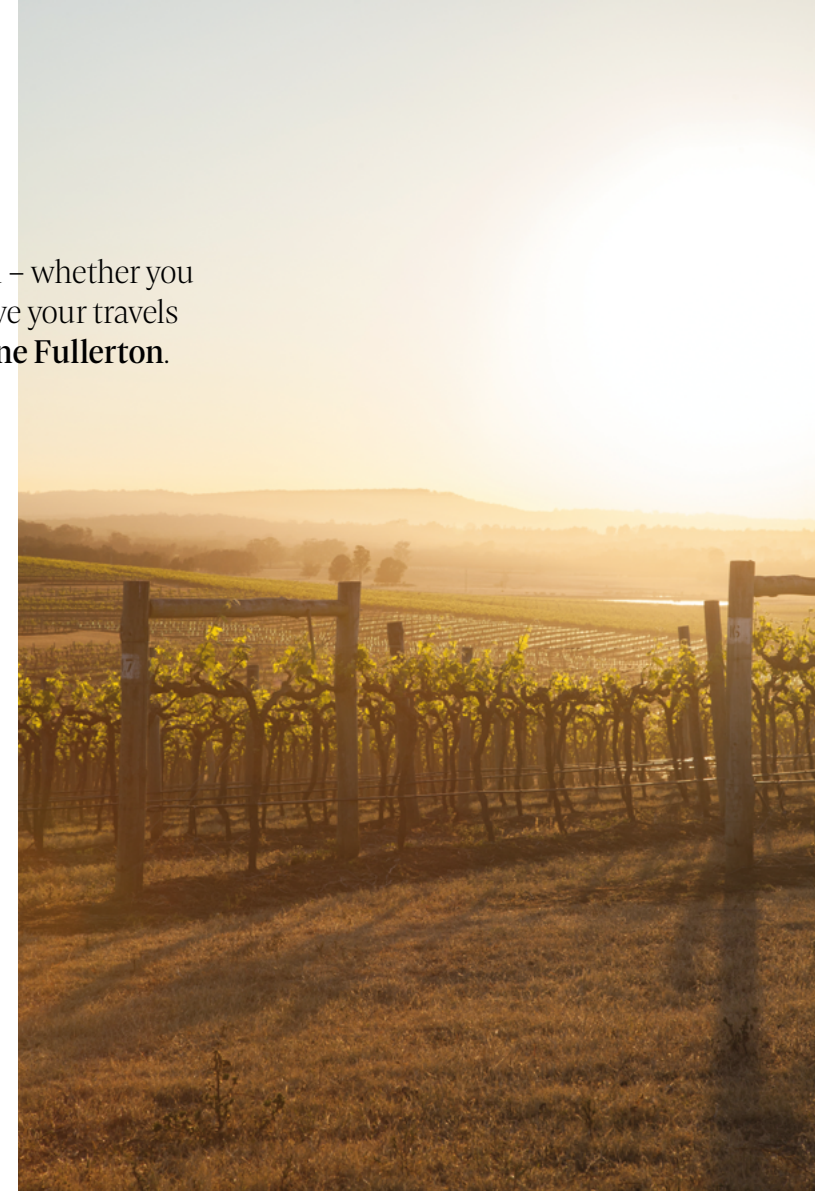
FOR ACTIVE TYPES Around Hermitage Wine & Food Trail, Hunter Valley, NSW

Some people like their indulgence with a side of adventure. Enter cycling trails. The Hunter Valley has its own, allowing visitors to soak up the beautiful landscape while sampling the region's world-famous produce. In 2017, a cycleway of more than 10 kilometres opened along the most winery-dense stretch of Hermitage Road, running from the New England Highway in the north to Broke Road in the south and connecting more than a dozen vineyards. Family-owned Tintilla Estate (tintilla.com.au) grows olives you can try along with wine and Ironbark Hill Brewhouse will keep beer lovers happy (ironbarkhillbrewhouse.com.au), while the acclaimed menu at Restaurant Botanica (spicersretreats.com) will satisfy even the most discerning diner. Want to pick up a couple of bottles to enjoy later? No problem – many vineyards can have them delivered to your bike-hire location or accommodation.

📍 aroundhermitage.com.au

Samuel Shelley, Clare Farrelly, Adam Bruzzone

(From left) Shene Estate & Distillery's roadside stall; Ironbark Hill Brewhouse; Clare Valley



ALSO TRY...

Clare Valley Riesling Trail, SA

For those feeling intrepid, the Clare Valley's Riesling Trail follows a former railway line through idyllic hillsides dotted with gum trees, offering a perspective that's most rewarding on two wheels. The 33-kilometre car-free route runs between Clare and Auburn, with cellar doors focused on renowned local whites. Stop in at Pikes (pikeswines.com.au), Tim Adams (timadamswines.com.au) and Clos Clare (closclare.com.au), among others. The road isn't sealed but is well signposted and storyboards along the track illuminate the area's Indigenous history.

📍 southaustraliantrails.com



FOR A GOURMAND'S GETAWAY

Paddock to Plate Dining Trail, Margaret River, WA

This region in Western Australia's south-west could easily make a claim to being Australia's wine capital but it offers far more to delight the senses than just vino. In fact, there's a local dining scene that may give vintners a run for their money. Eat your way through 70 kilometres of fine produce, from Arimia (arimia.com.au), a solar-powered restaurant growing everything served onsite, down to Glenarty Road (glenartyroad.com.au), a boutique fifth-generation family farm that raises sheep and grows fruit, vegetables, macadamias, 17 different cultivars of hops and 12 varieties of grapes. With eight stops along this route, the hardest part might be getting your seatbelt back on at the end.

📍 margaretriver.com

Margaret River's Insta-worthy produce and residents, including a rustic feast at Glenarty Road farm (above)



↓ ALSO TRY...

Indigenous food tour, Kakadu, NT

For a different spin on a trail, follow an Indigenous guide through the pristine Top End to learn about native bush foods. Running from June to September, with seasonal opportunities to see water buffalo and one of the nation's largest bird gatherings at the Gindjala wetland, Kakadu Animal Tracks' safari also gives guests the chance to savour traditional flavours such as magpie goose, wild duck, barramundi and crocodile around a camp fire as the sun sets. Tours depart from Gagudju Lodge Cooinda.

📍 northernterritory.com

FOR WHISKY LOVERS

Tasmanian Whisky Trail

The Sullivans Cove Distillery (sullivanscove.com) caused a stir in 2014 when it beat rivals in Scotland and Japan for best single malt at the World Whiskies Awards. But it's not the only drop worth discovering here. This trail, stretching across the state's north, Cradle Mountain and south-east, reveals other innovators putting their stamps on the dusty world of whisky. You can tick off 10 all within 100 kilometres of Hobart. Lark, on the city's waterfront, is credited with reinvigorating the Apple Isle's whisky scene (larkdistillery.com), while Nant Distilling Company in Bothwell (nant.com.au) warrants a visit for its setting in a historic convict-built mill house alone.

📍 taswhiskytrail.com

↓ ALSO TRY...

Whisky Wander, Melbourne, Vic

For a more urban spin, head to the Second City, where top distillery Starward (starward.com.au) is just a 10-minute drive or a short tram ride from most of Melbourne's leading tasting rooms and bars. Starward Nova has been named best Australian single malt two years in a row – sample it among the bubbling copper stills of its Port Melbourne home. North, in the CBD, you'll discover the moody Boilermaker House (boilermakerhouse.com.au), Whisky + Alement (whiskyandale.com.au), an intimate bar with a changing menu of more than 1000 whiskies, and the upstairs Melbourne Whisky Room, along with speakeasy-style cocktail bar 1806 (1806.com.au).

📍 visitmelbourne.com

FOR BEER ENTHUSIASTS

High Country Brewery Trail, Vic

Hops have been part of Victoria's High Country since the 1890s, when William Panlook saw its potential. This meandering trail covers eight breweries, many offering family-friendly outdoor dining areas and gourmet menus. King River Brewing serves wood-fired pizzas along with the brews it showcases via six changing taps (kingriverbrewing.com.au), Black Dog Brewery (blackdogbrewery.com.au) eschews preservatives, while Bright Brewery (brightbrewery.com.au) enjoys scenic views of the Ovens River.

📍 feasthighcountry.com.au



ALSO TRY...

Beermuda Triangle, Brisbane, Qld

That's not its official name but it's one that's stuck. Brisbane's first beer precinct, in Newstead and Fortitude Valley, has a brewery to suit every palate. Start in the north at Range Brewing (rangebrewing.com), which serves an ever-changing line-up, before heading south to Newstead Brewing Co (newsteadbrewing.com.au), Green Beacon Brewing Co (greenbeacon.com.au) and Tippler's Tap (tipplers.com.au).

📍 visitbrisbane.com.au



(From above) The industrial-chic look of Four Pillars; Bright Brewery



FOR GIN CONNOISSEURS

Yarra Valley, Vic

Four Pillars (fourpillarsgin.com.au) is already on the map for its Rare Dry, Navy Strength and Spiced Negroni gins, each of which has a cluster of awards, but the acclaimed distillery produces other gin-based products including marmalade made from gin-steamed oranges. It's just one stop you can make in this region. Check out Alchemy Distillers (alchemydistillers.com), which also has accommodation and a bar, cellar door and café; Coombe Farm (coombefarravalley.com.au), whose Dame Nellie Melba Gin puts a twist on London Dry with native Australian botanicals; and The Melbourne Gin Company (melbournegincompany.com), which applies a winemaker's approach. Some vineyards now also make gin – try Zonzo Estate (zonzo.com.au) and Rochford Wines (rochfordwines.com.au). No stop is more than half an hour from the last.

📍 visityarrawalley.com.au



ALSO TRY...

Hobart, Tas

There's something in the water here, with gin distilleries popping up to complement the whisky boom. Shene Estate & Distillery's (shene.com.au) unfiltered gin took the top award at the 2019 San Francisco World Spirits Competition, Lark Distillery (larkdistillery.com) crafts award-winning Forty Spotted gins alongside its whisky and Nonesuch (nonesuchdistillery.com.au) is on a pretty sixth-generation working farm.

📍 discovertasmania.com.au



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