

# FOOD & WINE

## India

150

February-April 2017

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RUSTIC PESTO

RICOTTA

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- Farzi Cafe
- Masala Bar
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GOURMET  
escape

*Margaret River,  
Australia*





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# Wine & Spirits

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- » DISCOVERING SAN FRANCISCO & CALIFORNIA



# GOURMET ESCAPE *in Margaret River*

BY NIKHIL AGARWAL

*A visit to Australia for anyone is almost certain to be about food and wine. And it should be, Australia offers a diverse range of wine styles and culinary experiences that will render you speechless in awe inspiring natural beauty. Luckily for me, I have been on a wine scholarship before where I travelled throughout Australia discovering their wine and this time for Gourmet Escape in Margaret River, Western Australia.*





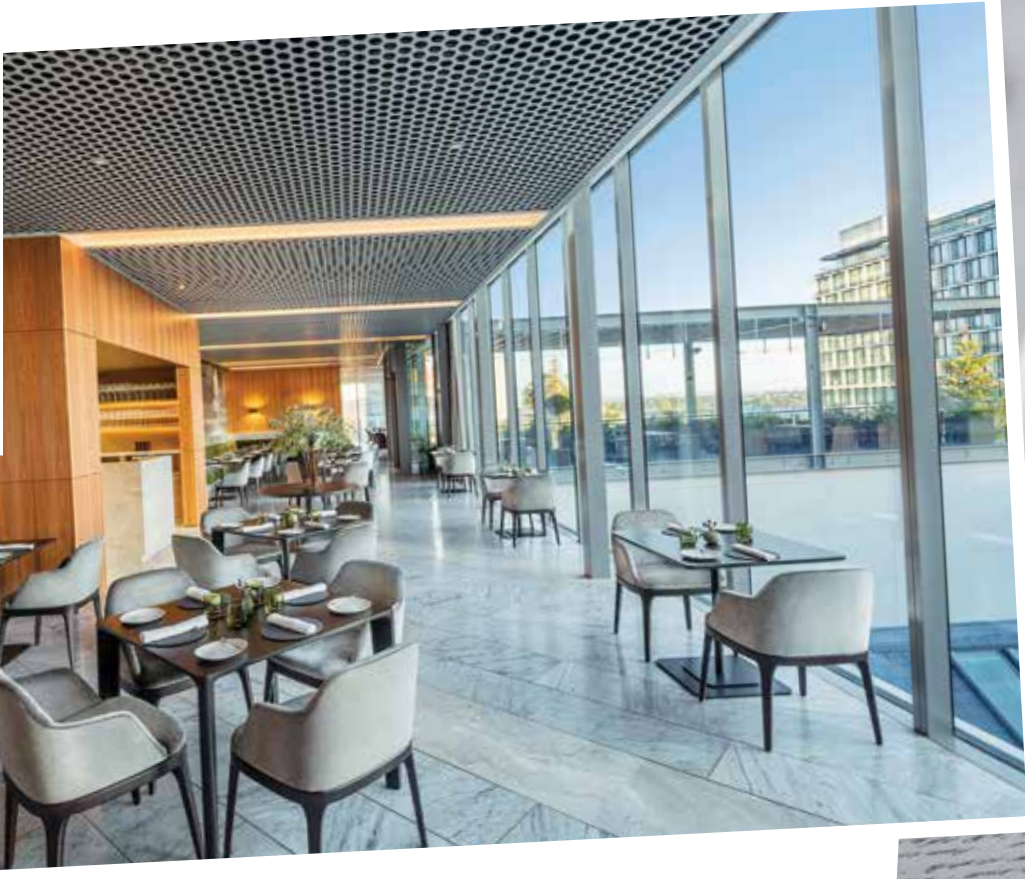


*Chef Jed Gerrard,  
Executive Chef,  
The Wild Flower*

To get there I flew Business Class courtesy Qantas from Singapore to Perth. The 5-hour flight went by in a luxurious jiffy as I drank glass after glass of Penfolds Bin 28, a full bodied indulgent wine from Australia's most iconic producer and ate multiple courses for dinner before nodding off to kingly sleep.

Northbridge an area in Perth where I stayed is casual and relaxed with enough wine bars, microbreweries and restaurants to keep you busy for a few days and nights. I particularly liked Shadow Wine Bar and the always-busy Northbridge Brewing Co. Their Al Fresco area is perfect specially just before an hour or two before sunset.

In the Central Banking District you have a lot more restaurants and bar options. I visited Como The Treasury a relatively new hotel. The Wild Flower, their flagship restaurant will give you a dose of just how innovative and hedonistic Australian Chefs are getting. Here the menu changes as per the indigenous six seasons and Executive Chef Jed Gerrard creates magic with his farmer and forager driven menu. The view, if you manage to get your eyes of the food is spectacular too. A short ride out of Perth in the Swan Valley where you can visit wineries and a host of artisan producers of everything from chocolate, honey to gin. I think the key word here would be artisanal, everything produced is done so with utmost care.



*This spread:  
interior and  
food images from  
the Wild Flower Restaurant*





biggest food and beverage festivals attracting people from all over Australia and the world. Held in mid November the festival not only takes place in one location – the Gourmet Village at the famous Leeuwin Estate but also has numerous events at wineries, breweries, gardens and beaches for a period of three days. These smaller happenings, termed satellite and fringe events, are all ticketed. Chef's from Australia's best restaurants and celebrity Chefs from around the world fly in to host pop up dinners, tasting and master classes in collaboration with the regions best wineries and microbreweries bringing together international and home grown talent.

The international names included the likes of Celebrity Chef Nigella Lawson and Ashley Palmer Watts of Dinner by Heston Blumenthal to name a few. Honestly the numbers of events are far too many to attend

them all and I would recommend booking early to get ticket to the ones you want to go to.

Gourmet Escape's launch party at Castle Bay Beach was quite an evening. Star chefs from Australia, winery owners and wine and food media descended for an evening of revelry. I had it easy - cool sand, crystal clear water in astonishing colours of blue and green, teepee tents on the beach lit with warm lights and the temperature kept dropping as the evening went on. With an array of food being cooked on a barbeque right in front of you by some of Australia's best Chefs and wines from



some of the best wineries of the region in free flow it was just impossible to not have a great time.

The Gourmet Village in Leeuwin Estate will baffle you with its sheer enormity. The space is filled with large tents that house multiple producers of food, wine, craft beer and cheese. The list of what you can consumer is endless. Once you're in, you walk around and eat and drink your way throughout the day. There are live bands playing music in various nooks and corners. I particularly liked the idea of setting up a picnic spot next to the vineyards adjacent to where the village was set up.

I had access to the platinum lounge (you can buy access at AUD 250) and my ticket got me two glasses of Leeuwin Estate wine that I washed down with copious amounts of oysters that were being shucked on the spot. The lounge is good if you want a more relaxed time.

One highlight of the trip would have to be

◀ *Celebrity Chefs Nigella Lawson and Adam Liaw*



the tasting I attended at the historical Vase Felix. I sampled their full range with their Head Sommelier who knew the wines from the estate inside out. I was blown away, especially with their sparkling, the Cabernet Sauvignon from their premier range and the icon Heytesbury blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Petite Verdot. Another great tasting I attended was with the gloriously energetic Amy Burch who owns Howard Park wines.

Margaret River is famous for producing fantastic Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay. Producers like Vase, Felix, Mosswood, Cullen, Howard Park, Woodlands , Voyageur and so many more have given the Margaret River region a serious reputation, one that can compare with other famous regions across the globe.

One of the satellite events I attended was called the The Long Lunch at Fraser Gallop Estate. They produce excellent Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay from their vineyards in Wilyapabrup, whichwere paired with a four-course grand lunch with Chef Guillaume Brahimi at the helm.The menu included King fish and eel paired with Chardonnay, Wagyu beef paired with three vintages of Cabernet Sauvignon and dessert comprising of Raspberry, pistachio, white chocolate and blackcurrant paired with ice-pressed Chardonnay, all of which put me into a very gentle food-and-wine coma.





I would recommend staying in Margaret River town if you like some action. The town centre is small but has a few great restaurants, bars and even a microbrewery and is a great place to spend your evening. On this trip however I stayed forty odd minutes away at the luxurious Bunker Bay Resorts, which is right on Bunker Bay beach which offers a more peaceful yet luxurious accommodation.

Hire a car and visit the regions winery cellar doors and their fantastic restaurants or head to the beach and set up a barbeque or just simply enjoy a glass of vino or two as the sunsets. Margaret River is a beautiful part of the world and the region should be on your list of must visit places for food and wine especially during Gourmet Escape.

## WRITTEN BY NIKHIL AGARWAL, SOMMELIER & CEO, ALL THINGS NICE

*Nikhil Agarwal, is a trained Sommelier who received his degree in London is the brainchild behind All Things Nice. All Things Nice is India's leading wine and spirits consultancy that offers specialized services for the wine and spirits industry as well as creates a platform to introduce and educate Indian consumers on wine, spirits and gourmet food by extension.*

*He won the Wine Australia scholarship in 2012 and in 2013 Wine Australia made him their A+ Wine Educator in India and was one amongst five contenders short-listed by the International Wine and Spirit Competition 2015 (IWSC), for The Julian Brind Award for Outstanding Achievement in the Wine and Spirits Industry from contenders from 90 countries.*

*Nikhil lends his written expertise to eminent publications, has been covered by most publications and has been featured on TV channels such as NDTV Profit, Times Now, Bloomberg TV and ET Now. CNBC did a feature on Nikhil as part of the show 'Young Turks' in 2013. Currently, Discovery Channel features Nikhil in the show The Flying Wine Maker.*

*Nikhil has been invited by Trade organizations from around the world like to speak about the Indian wine and spirits industry and is considered a thought leader and major influencer in India's wine and spirits story.*

