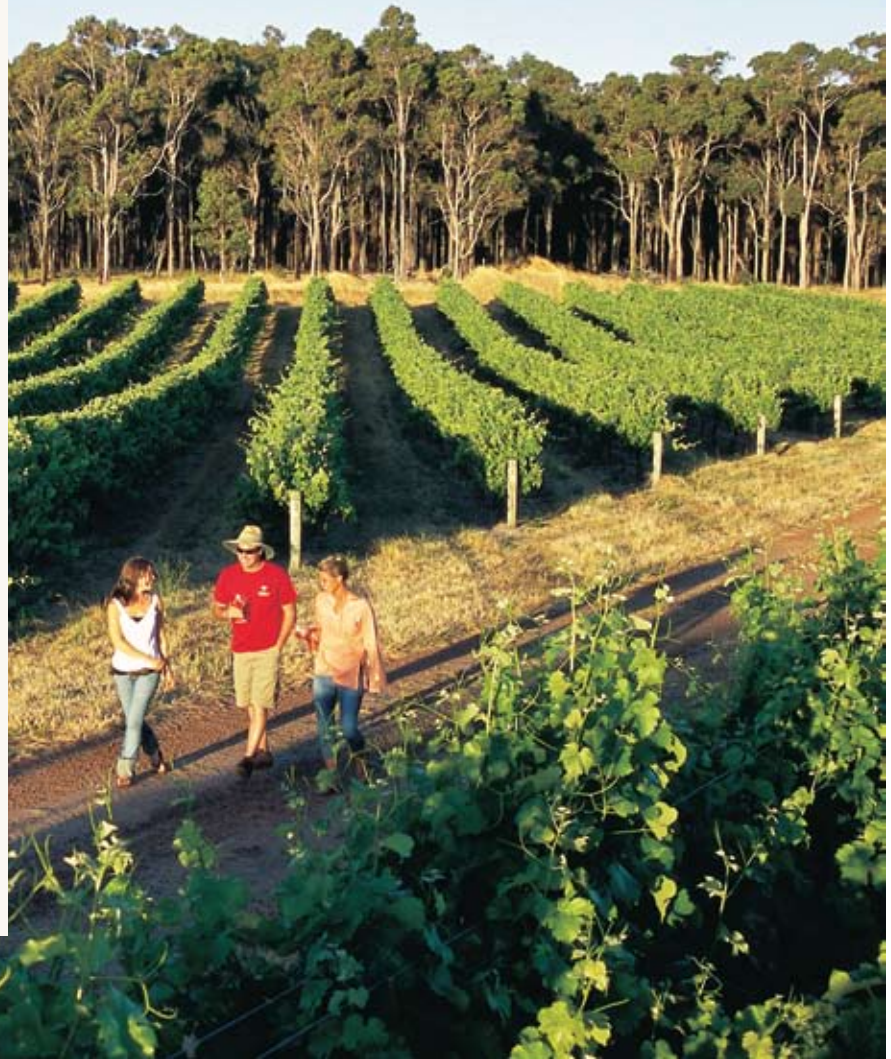


# Drinking the Margaret River Dry

Text by Isobella Knight

Vintage wines, gourmet foods, weekend road-trips to Lancefield and romantic getaways to Paris - my partner and I make a great effort to spoil ourselves with the finer things this world has to offer. As the anniversary approaches, how can we possibly resist a gourmet safari through the Margaret River?



Amberley Estate

The Margaret River region is famous for its wild and remote beaches, magnificent karri and jarrah forests, stunning vineyards and mouth-watering food and wine. What could be better than taking a weeklong luxurious tour with a small group of fellow idealists?

Approaching their fourth year operating the Margaret River tour, Gourmet Safaris takes pride in straying away from the typical tourist trail. Don Hancey, a well-known Western Australian chef and winner of two gold plate awards, and fellow culinary celebrity Maeve O'Meara lead the tour. Both have great connections with many of the locals in the Margaret River region, enabling partakers in the safari to actually meet and talk with the masterminds behind a number of renowned wineries and restaurants. The tour meets in Perth and heads to Margaret River by coach. The deluxe base is at the five star Bunker Bay Resort, set on a perfect beach at the edge of a National Park. Guests stay in individual villas, are free in the morning to have amorous strolls

along the beach before a champagne breakfast and at night, to fall asleep to the sound of surf gently hitting the sand. Escorted by two chefs, expectations regarding the cuisine should be high. From feedback in previous years, they do not disappoint. The Goose delivers what is claimed to be one of the best meals of the trip with everything served in a private room that opens out onto the deck at the head of Bussleton Jetty. Meals are also devoured at various wineries and at the base itself. No doubt the cupboard will be stocked up from visits to the Margaret River Chocolate Factory and the Margaret River Berry Farm, which sells to David Jones and exports to Harvey Nichols and Selfridges in the UK. The Margaret River Venison store offers a huge range of deer products: deerskins, deer antler powder medicinal products and small goods such as cabana.

What would a tour be to the region without overindulging ourselves at some of the most prominent wineries in Australia? The Safari includes exclusive outings to the Leeuwin

Estate, the Voyager Estate and Vasse Felix to name a few. Most stopovers include a tour of the facilities, a course or two of the fine cuisine and numerous samples of the wine collections. All these wineries are remarkably striking and will no doubt offer a feast for the eyes.

The Voyager Estate has a Rose Garden with over 1,000 roses and a landscape architect is flown in from South Africa twice a year to make sure that the grounds are in order. The winery also boasts Australia's largest underground barrel cellar. The Vasse Felix is the oldest vineyard in Margaret River, now owned by the Holmes-a-Court Family and houses Janet Holmes-a-Court's extensive indigenous art collection of over four thousand pieces.

For more visual delights, the Safari offers spectacular views of the coast at Hamelin Bay, Cape Leeuwin and you even have the chance to watch the surfers conquer the break at the Mouth of the Margaret River. Notably, Bussleton Jetty is one of the most picturesque places to visit in the region.



Vasse Felix



Voyager Estate

The jetty is the longest one in the southern hemisphere. The pier stretches out to sea for almost 2-kilometres. At the end of the pier there is an aquatic centre where one can view sea life in a submerged viewing platform.

Hancey writes, "I promise to give you a cook's tour of the wonderful eateries, wineries and stunning coastal and forest scenery that is the Margaret River region. I will introduce you to some of the leading chefs and winemakers, who share their insights into why the region produces stunning foods and wines. It is their passion and knowledge that really make this part of the world the magic place it is. I look forward to you joining me to provide a unique snapshot of one of the most beautiful parts of Western Australia".

The week ahead is to be a self-indulgent experience, the main aim: to pamper the senses. With champagne breakfasts, tailor made meals at top quality restaurants, endless tastings of the region's elite wines, strolls through vineyards and along remote beaches... this is going to be one tough anniversary.

**Tel: +61 2 9960 5675**  
**[www.gourmetsafaris.com.au](http://www.gourmetsafaris.com.au)**



Cullen wines, Wilyabrup



Vasse Felix Winery Restaurant

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