

DESTINATIONS

FOOD & DRINK | WESTERN AUSTRALIA

POSTCARD

Western Australia

Savour the food and wine of the Swan Valley, a culinary region within easy reach of Perth, writes **Katie McGonagle**

Anyone who's been following *Gary Barlow's Food & Wine Tour: Australia* will need no convincing about the quality of Aussie ingredients. Watching the *Take That* star explore a foodie scene that ranges from quirky coffee spots and locally run restaurants to sprawling vineyards is sure to tempt the taste buds. But if clients don't have days to spare or the appetite for a full-on foodie adventure, there are delightful day trips that are easy to squeeze into a wider trip.

That was how I discovered Swan Valley, a region half-an-hour from Perth but ripe for exploration by gourmet-loving guests. Start the day at Yahava KoffeeWorks, which was established in the better-known foodie region of Margaret River. It's far more than a quick coffee stop – the attached workshop is filled with beans and offers live roasting demonstrations along with a 'coffee safari' (£38) that will explain the difference between blends and single-origin varieties. In a country that takes its coffee seriously, this elevates the beans to an art form.

Local honey is no small matter either, if the array of sweet treats in The House of Honey is anything to go by. It's a combination of a flower-filled cafe, a bar serving mead made using their own honey and a shop where staff offer tasters of the many different varieties. These include honey made from bees grazing on wildflowers and cherry trees, through to more medicinal types such as melaleuca and jarrah honey, which have antibacterial and antioxidant properties.

Swan Valley also lays claim to being Western Australia's oldest wine region with a vine-growing heritage that dates back to 1829, known for whites including chenin blanc and verdelho, which thrive in the dry climate, and reds such as shiraz and grenache.

Among the many wineries across this region, the Nikola Estate combines a cellar and tasting room, with heritage wine-making machinery and vintage photos charting the area's viticultural history. The on-site Woodcutters Restaurant adds creative culinary flair and panoramic views over the estate. If clients are looking for a relaxed day to acclimatise at the start or end of their trip, the fresh food and wine of the Swan Valley offers a tasty escape from the city. **TW**



BOOK IT

Anzcro can include a full-day Swan Valley Gourmet Wine Cruise as part of a Western Australia trip, sailing along the Swan River from Perth with Captain Cook Cruises to enjoy a wine estate visit, wine-tasting and grazing lunch, followed by desserts and wines on the return cruise, from £140. anzcro.co.uk



TOP: Vineyards, Swan Valley

ABOVE: Yahava KoffeeWorks

PICTURES: Tourism Western Australia