

Go by Express WINE TRAIN to the Hunter Valley

No need to rent a car to visit Hunter Valley... One or two night packages...

The Hunter Valley Wine Country is just a three hour journey by express train from Sydney Central Station. The modern trains are very comfortable and feature an on board café and toilets. Large windows offer views of the stunning scenery throughout your journey.

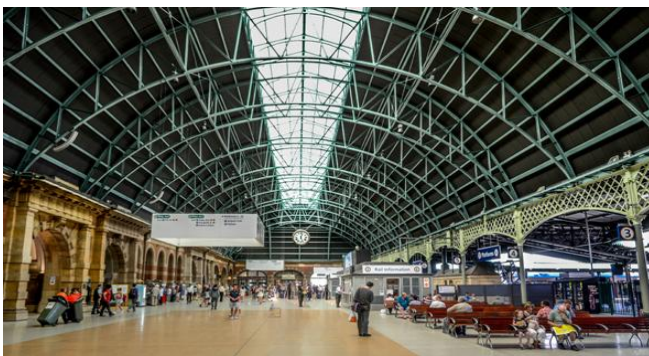
Best selling itinerary

Return train tickets from Sydney's Central Railway Station to Singleton Station

- Transfers to and from Singleton Railway Station (Meet & Greet)
- Accommodation in a choice of guestrooms or cottages.
- Onsite Vineyard Tour followed by a private tasting with our Cellarmaster
- Hunter Wine Theatre experience showing the onsite winery in action followed by a private tasting with our Cellarmaster
- Buffet continental breakfast every day

Day 1.

09:29 Depart Sydney Central Railway station (3 hours) – Cafe & toilets on board train (included) it heads north from Sydney. The WINE TRAIN is not a city train. Only 7 stops and this express train will have you alighting in the Hunter Valley at lunchtime. No need to show your eTicket prior to boarding, just go to your pre reserved carriage and seat. The conductor will come through the train when underway. Enjoy food and beverages from the Café Car, and of course there are toilets on board too. The best part of the journey is the scenery from the large windows.

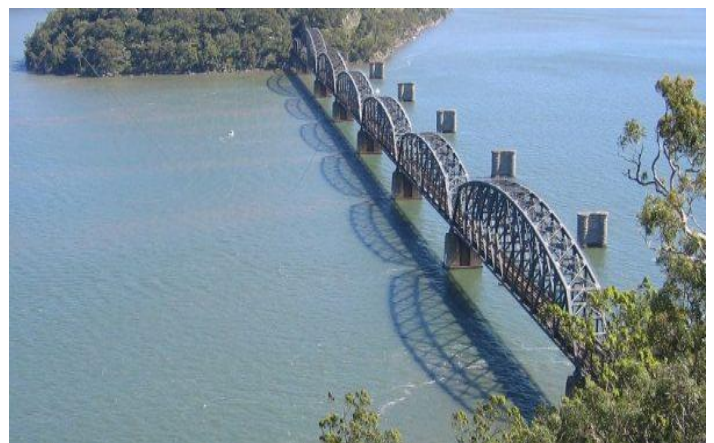




10:00 Hawkesbury River scenery – After departing the suburb of Hornsby, enter Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park.

The 40,000 acre park was declared in 1894 and is the second oldest national park in Australia. It is 16 miles north of the Sydney Central Business District and generally comprises the land east of the Sydney-Hunter Valley Freeway, south of the Hawkesbury River.

This area is also where much of the sandstone used for Sydney's Harbour Bridge and the many heritage buildings around the city was sourced. On many of the Hawkesbury sandstone outcrops throughout the area, rock engravings can still be seen which reflect the traditional spiritual and totemic beliefs of the local Aborigines. By the 1820s settlers had taken up land around the Hawkesbury River, growing small plots of maize, onions, potatoes and hay.



You will cross the Hawkesbury River over one of Sydney original bridges. It was constructed long before the road bridges north. The Hawkesbury River Railway Bridge completion in 1886 saw the linkage, not only of the significant Sydney to the Hunter Valley Railway link, but also in effect the railway systems of South Australia, Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland were joined by continuous rail with the opening of the bridge. The bridge was a major technical achievement at the time: it was the fourth largest bridge constructed in the world, one of its caissons reached 49m, had the deepest bridge footing in the world and it was the longest bridge in Australia, pushing bridge design and construction techniques to the limit. You will see a second set of piers on the right hand side. These were for the this original 1886 bridge. Due to over 100 heavy freight trains every day throughout World War II, damage caused by these excessive loads meant construction of the current new bridge in the 1940's.



The journey now continues past the many oyster farms/beds in the river through the Woy Woy tunnel and onto the Central Coast, then west into the Hunter Valley.

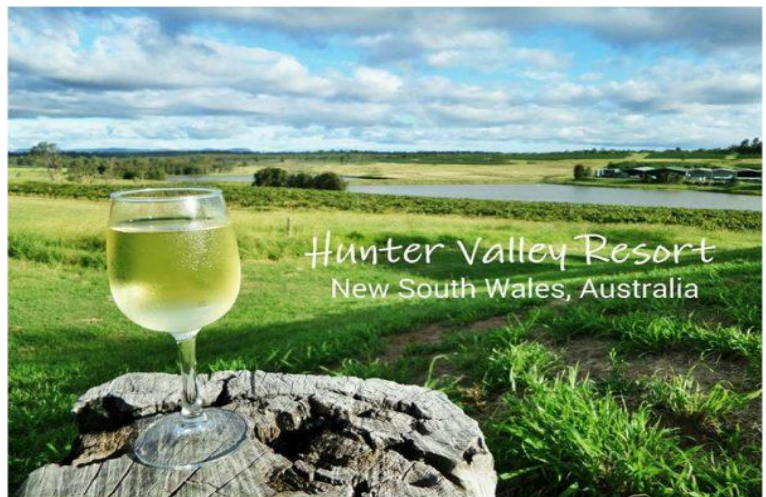
This is the original home of the famous Sydney Rock Oysters!



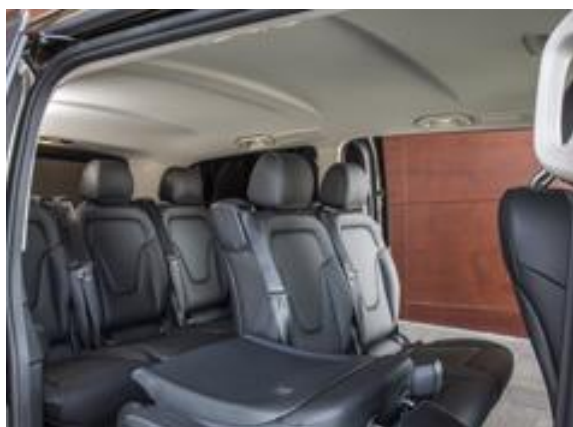


10:45 Central Coast region scenery

11:45 Hunter Valley scenery



12:40 Arrive Singleton Railway station (Hunter Valley) with Meet & Greet and return transfers from station to Hunter Valley Resort included (included)



13:00 Arrive at Hunter Valley Resort

Hunter Valley Resort is not one of those 'big' international chain resorts. Rather a 4 star country inn, or lodge, with only 35 rooms and cottages nestled on 70 secluded acres within their own 55 year old shiraz vineyards.

The owners (Helé family) have been in the hotel business for 4 generations. It's their home with two generations still living onsite working in the business every day. This is why Hunter Valley Resort is like no other...



What is there to do without a rental car??

There is also a large selection of day tour options including iHop (Hop On/Hop Off buses) where you can experience cheese factories, chocolate factories, local heritage, the famous Hunter Valley Gardens (largest in Australia), and during Nov- Jan, each night see their Christmas Light display (Over 2 million lights!)

Hunter Wine Theatre experience (included) – 10:00am and 15:30pm daily.

The fun side of seeing a winery in action is when the grapes are being picked and put through the crusher at the winery – which for The Hunter Valley happens only in January and February. For the rest of the year action at in winery is generally pretty quiet. Not so with the new Hunter Wine Theatre...

So we have condensed a whole year of winemaking into a short 15 minute visual presentation.

You will experience up on the big screen:

1. The Hunter's wine heritage, Australia's oldest wine area.
2. How grapevines are maintained
3. See the annual grape harvest
4. The grape crusher in action
5. The actual winemaking process:
 - Fermentation (Conversion of fruit/sugar into alcohol)
 - Filtration of the 'new' wine
 - Racking and barrel fermentation/storage
 - Blending of wines
 - Bottling process

Then – on with the lights and a 15 minute wine tutorial with the Cellarmaster.

There is a big difference between a wine tutorial and a wine tasting.. A wine tasting is where you taste various wines and hopefully like them, and purchase a few to take home with you.

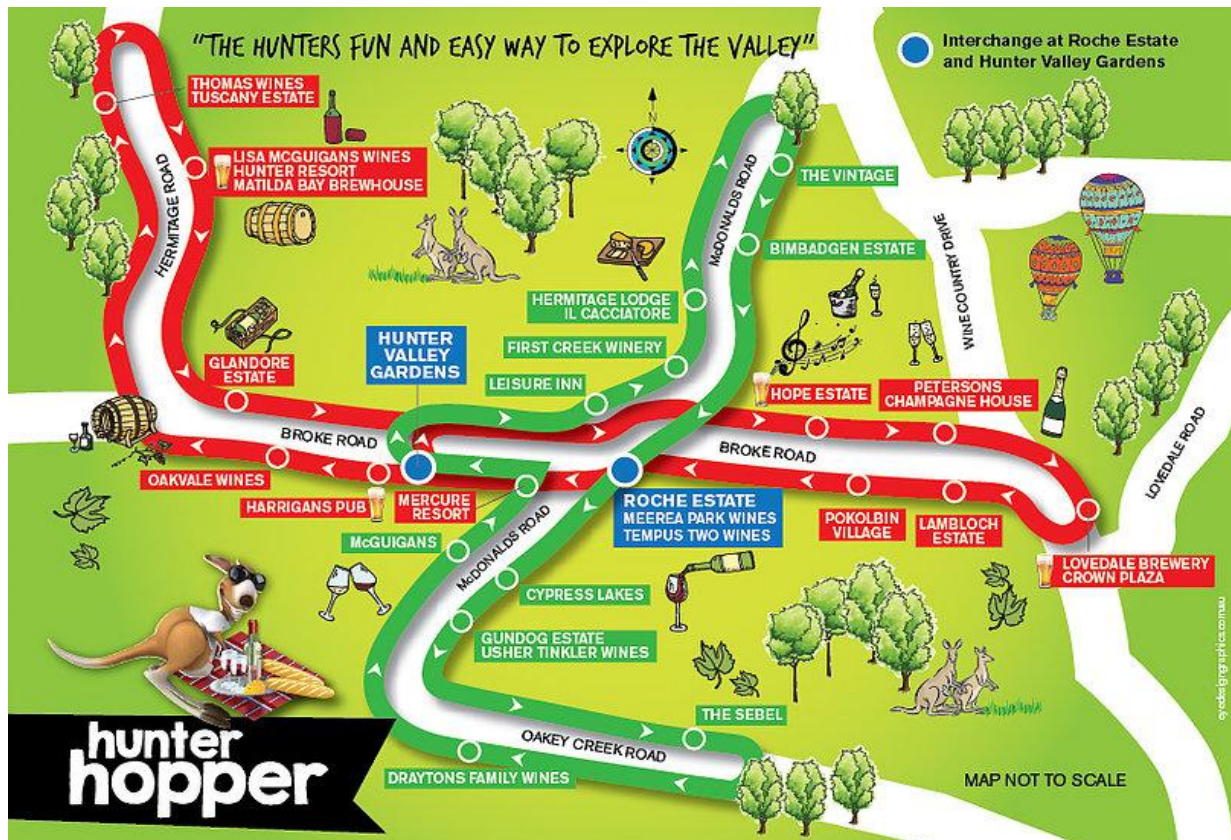
A wine tutorial is where we take you on a learning experience with a bracket of 4 wines. Here we teach you how to taste front palate sweetness, acidity, and back palate tannins, and most importantly exercising your nose to appreciate the bouquet of wine. It's that simple...



16:00 Time for rest – Onsite at Hunter Valley Resort is electric bikes hire, Segway back country tours to see Kangaroos, or Horseback riding, visit the Brewhouse and try the 12 craft brews, enjoy a relaxing massage in Heavenly Massage Centre, take a carriage ride, play tennis, swimming.... Or just finish that book!

18:00 Optional Dinner onsite at Matilda Bay Brewhouse Hunter Valley Resort (own cost)

20:00 Accommodation at Hunter Valley Resort



Day 2 or 3.

Next morning, go on an optional **Hot Air Balloon ride** over the Wine Country, enjoy your Continental buffet breakfast at the hotel (included), tour the **onsite vineyard inspection** followed by wine tasting with resort's cellar master.

Also within easy walking distance are five Winery 'Cellar Doors'. The Chocolate Nip shop, Sculpture Garden and Gallery feature at some of these Cellar Doors. Also several restaurants...

09:00 Onsite vineyard inspection followed by wine tasting with resort's cellar master (included)

Optional Day Tour – Hop on Hop off Bus, or Gourmet Lunch Tour, pick up from Hunter Valley Resort to tour the region (*departures may vary – not operated by us)

Or Free Time to do onsite optional activities eg: Segway, riding horse, riding electric bikes or enjoy the 3km walking track...





12:00 Back to the reception, and wait for the transfer to Singleton Railway Station (included)

13:24 Train departs Singleton Railway Station to Sydney (included)

16:38 Arrive Sydney Central Railway Station

