

Uncorking another Port Fairy winter weekend



South Africans Michelle and Pieter Badenhorst recently moved to the south-west and are behind the new Suffoir boutique vineyard near Macarthur. Suffoir's first vintage of pinot noir will be showcased during the Port Fairy Winter Weekends. Image: Supplied.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]H[/dropcap]aving blown winter right out the door with the dachshund dash, art exhibitions and great music, the [Port Fairy Winter Weekends Festival](#) is gearing up for its second instalment with a focus on fabulous local food and wine.

The second weekend runs across **July 4-5**, during which many of the gourmet food and wine producers around the Port Fairy area ([Gourmet Port Fairy](#)) will be opening their doors, together with some of the top restaurants and eateries around town.

The feature event is a six-course gourmet lunch prepared by

Penshurst-born chef **Matt Dempsey** from the two-hat Inverleigh restaurant Gladioli, to be served at the historic Royal Oak Hotel, Port Fairy, on the Saturday. Matt will be using delicious locally sourced produce including crayfish, Skipton eel and buffalo cheeses from Shaw River Buffalo at Yambuk.

The lunch also includes an opportunity to try some delicious small-vineyard wines from Basalt, at Killarney, Napa Merri, at Woodford, and the new, Suffoir winery at Macarthur.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]T[/dropcap]he couple behind [Suffoir](#), **Michelle** and **Pieter Badenhorst**, are originally from South Africa but have recently made south-west Victoria their new home.

As Michelle explained via email, the boutique winery has just launched its first vintage of Pinot Noir which is not only available for tasting at their cellar door, which is just 7km from Mt Eccles National Park, but will be among the wines on offer at the winter weekend's luncheon.

"We are very pleased with our first vintage," she said.

"Our Pinot Noir grows on two distinct soil types, which creates a remarkable difference in the taste profiles of the wines."



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"]W[/dropcap]hile the name Suffoir has a distinct Frenchness to it – and the Badenhorsts have just returned from a trip to the French wine growing regions – the name is actually a blend of two interests: the Suffolk sheep and Pinot Noir vines on their property.

“We tried to capture local elements and incorporate these when we were designing the wine labels,” Michelle explained.

“One label features one of our Suffolk sheep and for the other label, we worked with a well-known artist, Portchie, to capture some of the region’s iconic elements such as the Macarthur windfarm nearby.”

Pieter has a background in biochemistry and plant breeding and

has applied these skills to his new profession of winemaking.

"We only have 2.5 acres to work with, but hope to offer more varieties in the future when we are more established," Michelle said.

The Port Fairy Winter Weekend will also include high tea on Saturday and Sunday at The Pantry Door, which sits alongside the Basalt Winery at Killarney.

Pastry chef **Andrew Hall**, who has worked at two Michelin-starred restaurants during his career, has recently introduced the sumptuous high teas as part of an expanding repertoire at the popular cafe.

[box]You can follow updates on the Port Fairy Winter Weekends program via its [website](#) and [Facebook](#) page. [Click here](#) for further details and bookings for the Matt Dempsey lunch.[/box]

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