

PINOT COAST ITINERARY: WINE & WILDERNESS

Where:

Head south-east from Melbourne and you will enter pinot noir country, located between the Mornington Peninsula and Gippsland (75km to 200km from Melbourne).

What to expect:

You'll sip world-leading pinot noir and eat fresh seafood on the wild, windswept beaches that skirt the rugged coastlines. It's a raw and untouched landscape, perfect for growing the ever more popular cool-climate grapes.

DAY ONE - MORNINGTON PENINSULA

9:30AM Depart Melbourne and head down the Mornington Peninsula Freeway. A short hop at about 60 minutes.

11:00AM Pull off the freeway for **YABBY LAKE CELLAR DOOR** at Tuerong for your first taste of the peninsula's acclaimed pinot noir. Here, the focus is on single-vineyard pinot. Soak up the vineyard views and take a stroll through the sculpture park.

NOON Drive to **PARINGA ESTATE** in Red Hill South for lunch. This two-hatted restaurant's menu champions locally sourced seasonal produce and indigenous ingredients.

2:30PM After lunch head to **STONIER WINES**. Here, you'll taste cherry and raspberry-scented pinot created from some of the peninsula's oldest vines.

3:45PM Make your way to your accommodation for the night at **JACKALOPE HOTEL**, one of Australia's best hotels. It's just a 10-minute drive from Stonier.

5:00PM Once you've settled into your room, take a plunge in the infinity pool, book a treatment at the spa, or partake in a DIY room service spa ritual. The 'Soak' involves a soak in goat's milk, magnesium and rose water while enjoying a glass of wine.

7:00PM You're spoilt for choice when it comes to dining, with two one-hat restaurants on-site. Enjoy casual shareplates at Rare Hare Wine and Food Store. At the high-end Doot Doot Doot, you can indulge in a five-course tasting menu.

DAY TWO – MORNINGTON PENINSULA & PHILLIP ISLAND

9:30AM Start the day with an Asian-influenced artisan breakfast at Jackalope's Doot Doot Doot.

10:30AM Check out and drive to **PORT PHILLIP ESTATE** in Red Hill. This architectural marvel offers vast views over the vineyards and coast. Look out for pinot noir from the Kooyong and Port Phillip Estate labels.

11:45AM It's time to head to **POLPERRO WINERY**, for a casual lunch. Grab a spot on the terrace or on the lawn under the trees. Order from the sharing menu and make sure to include a glass of local pinot.

1:00PM It's time to head to Phillip Island. It'll take 90 minutes to drive around Western Port Bay.

3:00PM Your first island stop is **PURPLE HEN WINES** – one of the most maritime-influenced vineyards along the wine route. The vines are just 500 metres from the edge of the water. Experience a relaxed tasting at the cellar door.

4:00PM Drive to your accommodation for the night, **GLEN ISLA HOUSE** in the village of Cowes. This historic guesthouse is nestled beneath 100-year-old oak trees, just a short walk from restaurants and cafés in Cowes.

5:00PM Take an evening stroll and eat at **GRENACHE WINE BAR**. Sample a wide range of local Gippsland pinot noir alongside a selection of small plates, such as slow-cooked pork ribs and fried zucchini and chickpea fritters.

6:15PM It's time to drive to the famous Penguin Parade where 4000 of the world's smallest penguins will migrate to Summerland Beach around sunset (around 5pm in autumn/winter and as late as 8.30pm in summer).

9:00PM Drive back to your accommodation to rest up for tomorrow.

DAY THREE – INLAND GIPPSLAND

8:30AM Check out and head to **THE CAPE KITCHEN** in Newhaven for breakfast. Soak up the spectacular waterfront views and tuck into free-range bacon and eggs sourced from Phillip Island producers.

9:45AM It's time to wave goodbye to the island and depart for the charming and historic Gippsland village of Loch.

10:45AM Explore Loch's antique stores and galleries. Duck into popular café **OLIVE OF LOCH** for a coffee. You can also pick up local jams and honey to take home as gifts.

11:30AM Make your way to the **GIPPSLAND WINE COMPANY** cellar door, where you'll discover a pristine small batch, cool-climate pinot noir, influenced by the Bass Coast winds.

12:30PM Pop into the **LOCH BREWERY AND DISTILLERY** to purchase local whisky or gin, all made on site. The cellar door and some of the distillery's stills are housed in a century-old building that was once home to the village's bank.

1:00PM Head to the village of Korumburra. Have lunch at the **BOROUGH DEPARTMENT STORE**, where a range of local producers have come together to create a unique food, coffee and wine destination.

2:30PM Drive to the village of Inverloch to visit one of Gippsland's well-known wineries, **DIRTY THREE WINES**. Here you'll taste winemaker Marcus Satchell's distinctive cool-climate pinot noir.

3:30PM After a day of gourmet delights, it is time to stretch your legs with a bracing seaside walk at either Venus Bay or along the Bunurong Coastal Drive. Both offer excellent coastal views with plenty of photo opportunities.

5:00PM Check into the **CHURCH HOUSE** in Fish Creek. The accommodation, and its distinctive architecture, is perched on the South Gippsland hills. Put your feet up in a suite and look out over views of Wilsons Promontory.

7:00PM Dinner at the Church House is a social affair – gather with other guests in the lounge for drinks and canapes before enjoying a gourmet dinner paired with pinot around the communal table. For those seeking more privacy, a table for two can also be set.

DAY FOUR – WILSONS PROMONTORY

8:30AM Tuck into a generous breakfast on the Church House’s veranda – choose from a continental-style brekkie or a full cooked breakfast complete with eggs from the hotel’s chooks and homemade sausages.

9:30AM Depart and drive 45 minutes to Wilsons Promontory.

10:30AM Check in at Tidal River for the 11am cruise around ‘The Prom’. Over the two-and a-half-hour voyage, you’ll see rugged landscapes carved by the Southern Ocean. Keep an eye out for fur seals, sea eagles, dolphins and whales.

1:45PM Depart for **HARMAN WINES** in Wattle Bank, a sustainability focused winery just a few minutes outside of Inverloch.

3:15PM Have a late lunch at Harman Wines. Choose from a generous cheeseboard, or woodfired pizzas, paired with pristine pinot.

4:30PM After lunch, leave for Melbourne and enjoy a leisurely drive home.

ALTERNATIVE DAY FOUR

If you are continuing on to Sydney along the Melbourne–Sydney coastal route, head east from Harman Wines and on to Bairnsdale. From there, you’ll easily be able to visit **LIGHTFOOT & SONS WINES** and **NICHOLSON RIVER WINERY**.

ALWAYS BE SURE TO ENJOY VICTORIA’S WINE REGIONS SAFELY WITH A DESIGNATED DRIVER.