

LOWE WINES HIGH ON *quality*



Mudgee, just 282 km north-west of Sydney, is an elegant and rustic historic country town set in the scenic and natural setting of the Cudgegong Valley boasting a population of around 9,000 and growing. For the weekend traveller it is just under a four hour drive from Sydney and

a favourite short-break destination for the foodie and wine lover.

One the most popular and sought after wineries to visit is the Lowe Winery under the management of David Lowe who is also the Managing Director and Head Winemaker. Apart from being an outstanding winemaker, David is a raconteur and a true champion of wines and winemaking in Australia.



David Lowe

David is also a prominent wine industry advocate and holds several key positions, including President, NSW Wine Industry Association; executive member of the Winemakers Federation of Australia; member of the strategic NSW Ministers Wine Advisory Council, and was previously President of the Mudgee Wine Grape Growers Association.

Mudgee's red earth, clay-based soils, with varying amounts of quartz and shale, is ideal for grape vines. Lowe vines, without irrigation or artificial fertilizer, draw their seasonal expression of flavour from this type of earth (terroir). The vines are planted untrellised and unirrigated to produce a naturally low-yielding and self-adapting growing system.

David takes a very non-interventionist approach to winemaking adds little to the wine but uses the best oak possible, whilst minimising handling and fining before bottling.

Once referred to as 'Mudgee Mud' in the early 1970s, winemaking in Mudgee has come a long way with first rate vines, vineyards and winemakers such as Huntington Estate, Robert Stein, di Lusso Estate, and many more.

Mudgee's macroclimate is extremely well suited to reds, particularly varieties occurring towards the south of Europe - Spain, Southern France and parts of Italy. The varieties chosen by David also reflect the suitability of the area for reds, so Shiraz, Merlot and the variety which has become synonymous

with Lowe wines – Zinfandel, dominate the vineyard.

There are two outstanding wines that will reward those willing to take the time to track them down and these are the 2006 Reserve Shiraz and 2006 Zinfandel.

My favourite, the Lowe Zinfandel is an outstanding wine and David's Zinfandels managed to outscore, to the amazement of the judges, the Californian Zinfandels some years back, so for me the Lowe 'zins' are a must cellaring proposition from each available vintage.

Join the homesguide Wine Club

The homesguide Wine Club has proven very successful and we want everyone who has been considering joining a wine club to consider our club. It works just like every other wine club in that members receive a regular delivery of a special select boutique dozen bottles of wine every three months but we specialize in boutique wines. You can choose from a Mixed, Red or White dozen.

How do I join the Wine Club?

Just send an email to greg@redhousegroup.com.au and we will send you a Membership Form - it's that easy.

Greg Bondori

Food and Wine Editor

WINE OF THE WEEK



2006 Zinfandel

With a long dry vintage the dry land bush vine zinfandel is highly demanding of David's time and requires endless thinning and fussing but the results are well worth it. The fruit was hand picked and fermented in their usual non-interventionist manner in open vats, before maturing in 2250 litre American oak casks and bottling unfiltered. Showing a densely aromatic nose cramming in fruitcake, allspice, cinnamon, black olive and cedar this wine is a true 'zin'. The palate is rich and chunky, with the oak nicely in tune with the palate. Whilst not a monster it is surprisingly elegant when it decides to open up. A truly lovely wine and well worth all the effort!
www.lowewine.com

a yearly ritual

AT LEAST

The Ritual Restaurant on the Central Coast is one of the most creative speciality restaurants I have ever come across.



For me it was a wonderful experience and I loved every part of the 'ritual' - all of it. The experience will leave any diner with a new outlook on food and dining. This is no ordinary dining event or food given that there is this creative effort made in relying on matching foods according to their chemical composition, often employing unusual combinations, but without exception resulting in out of this world but delightful results. Diners will need to come here with an open mind and be prepared for new textures, unusual flavours and different serving styles.

Husband and wife Chefs make a unique experience and all this found in an ordinary suburban shopping area in Nelson Bay. This is no meat pie and mash potato experience – it is truly creative, different experimental and just superb in both quality and presentation – a visual and gastronomic experience indeed.

Diners need to note that this is a set menu type affair with a start and finish point- it is continuous and follows a set theme resulting in a stunning dining experience - an experience. If you love dining as an experience (not just a fuel), this is a must.

Whilst it is licensed the cuisine can best be described as being avant-garde with an average cost of around \$85 for a 10+ course experience or a tasting journey for

about \$115 with matched wines (tasting glasses). The produce used is local meats (game) cheeses, fruit and vegetables. Organic and biodynamic products are also mainly used for the various dishes and dinner is by reservation.

Ritual Restaurant was the Winner of Best New Restaurant, 2008 (Newcastle and Surrounds) and in 2009 the NSW Restaurant and Catering Awards as the Best Speciality Restaurant for Regional NSW which was just repeated in 2011.

A sample only of the Ritual Menu includes the following as the full list is too extensive to repeat here so just try it for yourselves:

- Amuse Bouche
- Garlic fairyfloss on rosemary
- Our Antipasto Plate
- Olive gel with fetta sauce,
- Roasted capsicum bomb with roast garlic surprise
- Crispy artichoke shell with artichoke sorbet
- Celery chips
- Tintilla Sangiovese Rosato 2008 (Hunter Valley)

The Ritual Restaurant
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 Nelson Bay.
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Greg Bondar
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