

Local Food Innovators: Firescreek Winery



Pop the rosé back in the fridge - this summer, it's all about passionfruit wine. If you're new to the fruit-and-flower corner of the beverage world, we've got just the place for your first tipples. We follow **Nadia O'Connell** into the garden oasis of **Firescreek Winery**, and learn about its wide-ranging vintages, the new 'Scenic Sips' trail, and how they're running one of Australia's most popular produce-sharing events.

Firescreek Winery is now a really popular destination for food and beverage-lovers from around NSW. How did the winery first come to be?

The winery was established 16 years ago with the philosophy of making wine that is both intriguing to the senses, and delightful on the palate. We wanted to create a wine experience that was totally unique, and we do this by making wine from a wide variety of fruit, flowers and other botanics.

Beautifully landscaped, organic gardens were also a large part of the original concept. We wanted to create an oasis where guests could wander through the vines and fruit trees, and see where the botanics come from.

They're now a reality, and we really hope people enjoy their time in the serene space; it feels like being in the countryside, yet we're only a few minutes' drive from Erina [CBD].

Some people might never have thought to try a fruit, flower or botanical wine. What variety would you suggest for someone just entering this exciting world?

That's an interesting question. At the on-site cellar door, we offer complementary tasting of the current season's wine, which provides people with a variety of unique wines to try. Most wouldn't be aware of the huge breadth of wines that we are currently making at anyone time; currently, there are 26 different kinds being made!

I would suggest people sample all of our currently bottled vintages, which is usually around five different wines. They might be surprised and fall in love with something they weren't expecting.

I also find that people's palates change with the season, as well as what they crave.

In summertime, the passionfruit, guava or lime options become very popular, whereas in spring, wines such as lemon and elderflower, rose petal and pear, or nectarine tend to be the favourites.

Once autumn comes, the fig and date or blueberry and lavender wines are the choice, and then in winter, I find palates change again - for example, on to coffee and blackcurrant, or the chilli citrus. Luckily, there are usually five new wines to explore each season.

You're located in picturesque Holgate [on the NSW Central Coast]. What makes the area - and the wider Central Coast - so attractive for your business?

There are lots of reasons, and I totally agree - the Holgate and Matcham areas are very beautiful. You feel like you're in the countryside, and yet you're only five minutes from Erina Fair Shopping Centre, and 10 minutes from stunning beaches like Terrigal and Wamberal.

The community in Holgate, Matcham Valley and the surrounding suburbs is very special. For example, every second Sunday of each month, there's a very popular produce-sharing event held at our winery. We usually have between 80 and 100 people come to share the produce that they grow or make, and I believe this makes it Australia's most popular produce-sharing event.

I often also go and pick people's excess fruit from their trees in the [Matcham] Valley, and we turn it into wine in return.

Overall, the Central Coast is just such a stunning place to living. Stunning beaches and national parks surround us, and it's thriving - yet it's not really in the 'rat race'. It's relaxed yet upbeat, and cool, but not too 'try hard'.

I get a lot of customers who come in and tell me they've just moved to the Central Coast, and I can totally understand why. It has so much to offer.

A new artisan beverage trail, called 'Central Coast Scenic Sips', has just launched, and Firescreek Winery is one of the stops along the way. What do you hope people will learn about our local beverage industry when they visit you?

We're very excited to have launched the trail with the talented **Distillery Botanica** and **Six String Brewing Co**. We're all located within about six minutes of each other, so people can enjoy three very interesting and unique artisans products in one day. The trail has really taken off, and this summer, we have seen many groups come through to learn how all three beverage producers are pushing the boundaries in their craft, and experimenting with a wide variety of botanics to make award-winning beer, wine and spirits... that also taste amazing!



FIND OUT MORE

Web: firescreek.com.au

Instagram: [@firescreekwinery](https://www.instagram.com/firescreekwinery)

Facebook: [/firescreekwinery](https://www.facebook.com/firescreekwinery)



**Regional
Development**
Australia
CENTRAL COAST NSW