



MARGARET RIVER

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Situated in the Margaret River region in Western Australia, Clairault is in one of the original wineries in the area. Its first vines were planted in 1976. On a recent holiday to my home country I was taken on a guided tour of the winery that culminated in lunch that is situated in the heart of the estate. It was one of those Aussie days where the weather was perfect – hot but not sweltering. The philosophy behind Clairault is to produce inspiring wines, work with inspiring people and produce inspiring results and over the years they have certainly achieved very encouraging results. Specialising in Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon, Clairault wines have won major awards including the gold medal [and trophies] at the London International Wine Challenge for the Reserve Cabernet [Estate Cabernet Sauvignon] and Clairault Cabernet Sauvignon.



clairault wineries

Along with the rest of the staff, head wine maker Will Shields is passionate about the environment and Clairault is leading the way in the region for environmentally sound vineyard management. Using biological farming techniques means that there is a significant reduction in the amount of chemicals used at the vineyard. This technique relies on the natural occurring biological processes of the environment and includes crop rotation, green manures and compost and biological pest control.

Jake Drachenberg is the Head Chef at Clairault and after the tour of the vineyard I sat down and ordered the degustation menu for lunch. I took a peak at the menu when I arrived and was happy that I had skipped breakfast as the five courses with paired wines would ensure that my hunger pangs would be kept at bay. The highlight on the menu for me was the twice cooked duckling leg served with king oyster mushrooms, young ginger and a master stock served with the 2007 estate chardonnay and the dessert which was spiced date baklava, rose petal infused watermelon, cardamom yoghurt and pink granite served with the a 2009 cape pink. I met Jake after lunch and congratulated him on preparing what was one of the **most outstanding lunches that I had eaten for quite some time**. It was obvious that each item on the menu was prepared with great attention to detail and cooked by chefs who were masters of their craft.



Duckling leg served with king oyster mushrooms, young ginger

I spoke to Jake after lunch and found out more about the philosophy on the food that is served at Clairault. The menu is dictated by the wines and Jake is also passionate about ensuring that all of the herbs, vegetable and fruits that are grown on the vineyard are used in each recipe. The best locally sourced ingredients are also used including seafood that is caught only a stone's throw away from the estate. I sat outside on the terrace of the restaurant, the atmosphere was sophisticated but relaxed. **I can highly recommend a visit to Clairault estate** if you are in Western Australia. This was my first time in the Margaret River region and lunch at Clairault has definitely set the highest bench mark for further visits to the area.



Spiced date baklava, rose petal infused watermelon, cardamom yoghurt and pink granite served with the a 2009 cape pink

About the author: Danny McCubbin is the website editor for JamieOliver.com

<http://www.jamieoliver.com/news/clairault-wineries>

Clairault Winery | 3277 Caves Road, Wilyabrup, Margaret River, Western Australia 6280
Telephone | 08 9755 6225 Fax | 08 9755 6229
Email | clairault@clairaultwines.com.au
Web | www.clairaultwines.com.au

