

2026 D’Vine Festival Planning

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Purpose

The purpose of the D’Vine Festival is to bring greater awareness to Around Hermitage as a destination. The festival aims to encourage guests to return and more thoroughly experience Around Hermitage at a later date. All participating businesses are encouraged to:

- Put forward quality promotional offerings that can be redeemed on a guest’s next visit
- Build their databases with guest information for future contact
- Encourage club signups at the festival

Goals

Our communications and marketing aim to elevate the reputation of Around Hermitage and its businesses as being:

- Premium producers of handcrafted wines & produce
- A worldclass gourmet destination with the highest levels of customer service
- A lifestyle destination with rounded offerings including cycling, nature, art & entertainment (more on offer = longer stays, more frequent trips and more wine sold)
- Likeable – (we want guests get to know the people behind the brands and feel a sense of connection/trust and desire to spend money with them)
- A sustainable destination (no ideas here. Maybe we bring in the water stations or reusable drink bottles?) push to 2027?
Singleton Council to provide additional suggestions around this.

Theme & Vendor Criteria

The theme is ‘Meet the Maker’.

- Every venue must have the ‘maker’ present at their event and cannot provide other staff on a ‘stand in’ basis.

- Each venue must offer an event that is UNIQUE to D’Vine. Please put together a tasting or experience that is not available every other weekend.
- Each venue must offer
 - Tastings (accept tokens) (not applicable to unlicensed venues)
 - Food offering
 - Entertainment, tour, talk or activity

Tickets

We wish to firm up event registrations in 2026 by bringing back a paid ticket which includes:

- 3x75ml Wine Tasting vouchers redeemable at any participating venue.
- Transport, (at least for Saturday and evening events, Sunday is in question due to people driving.)
- \$25 off a six pack of wine
- Accommodation offers
- Souvenir tasting glass to take home
- Program & map

Attendee Flexibility:

For 2026 we will be incorporating more flexibility for attendees by

1. Removing prebooked times. Attendees may prepay for experiences so that venues have an idea of numbers, but events will be asked to run at regular intervals rather locking guests into one timeslot (wherever safely possible).
2. Removing the troublesome bus timetables in favour of having 4 busses operating on a loop at roughly 15-minute intervals.
3. Allowing pick up and drop off at accommodation which is located on the loop during the day rather than only prior to 10 and after 4.

Proposed Scaffold

Day	Event	Possible Ideas
<p>Friday Night</p> <p>Venue - The Beltree?</p>	<p>Opening Night Celebration – Winemakers’ Showcase</p> <p>The ‘red carpet’ event of the weekend Ticketed event to kick off the festival and likely include as many as 14 Winemakers.</p> <p>Ticket price covers all food and drink. Fundraiser for hospitality scholarship like last year. Silent auction? Auction?</p> <p>Fundraising liquor license, all wine from one bar only. No sale of alcohol at this event. Welcome event only.</p> <p>Looking into potential catering options</p>	<p>Live music & entertainment</p> <p>Winemakers’ blind tasting of AHA wines?</p> <p>Some sort of funny tongue in cheek competition for our winemakers. This is a great opportunity to build personalities and exposure for the makers behind the labels. Open to ideas.</p> <p>2 minutes with a maker? The audience asks their burning wine questions?</p> <p>Sponsor thanking</p> <p>Official opening & welcome. Reps from council. Traditional welcome?</p> <p>Nathan Earl or other local funny personality as MC?</p>

Saturday Morning	1-2 Breakfast options	Mimosa station? Great coffee van Chilled outdoor breaky vibe to kick off the day
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<p>Saturday 10am-4pm 8-12 Venues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Glandore</i> • <i>De Juliis?</i> • <i>Oakvale?</i> • <i>Thomas Wines</i> • <i>Mercer Wines</i> • <i>Keith Tulloch</i> • <i>Latitude 32</i> • <i>Tintilla</i> • <i>Mc Caffreys</i> • <i>Ironbark? /Wildstreak?</i> • <i>Piggs Peak?</i> • <i>Hunter Wine Lab</i> • <i>Wombat Crossing Vineyard</i> <p>Sunday 4-6 Venues, slower pace, less options</p>	<p>Gourmet events, tastings, tours and master classes Venues to have 3 things available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food • Tastings • Entertainment, tour or activities <p>All licensed venues to accept tasting tokens</p> <p>Wineries encouraged to partner with other producers/chefs/food vans/olive producers</p>	<p>Suggestions include:</p> <p>Winery tours, barrel tastings, vertical tastings, Wine matched small plate lunches Unique wine matching experiences Blind tastings (not just wine, choc, cheese etc) Cocktail making masterclass Wine blending garden and vineyard tours & talks Disgorging Something to do with beer production? Label your own cleanskin?</p> <p>Cooking demonstrations Sourdough demonstration Yogurt making demonstration Cheese demonstration Spices, sauces, rubs Vinegars, oils, olives</p>
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<p>Saturday & Sunday Including 4 pet friendly and 4 family friendly venues would be ideal</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Hunter Adventure Centre</i> • <i>Mc Caffreys</i> • <i>Hunter Valley Horses?</i> • • 	<p>Inclusive Events</p> <p>Pet friendly</p> <p>Kid focussed events</p> <p>Physically active events</p>	<p>A pet focused event? Dog show?</p> <p>Segways, horses (physical activities)</p> <p>Kids cooking, arts etc</p>
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<p>Saturday & Sunday 2-4 venues to include hands on/artsy events</p> <p>Sunday morning is perfect for slower crafty events as people may be drinking less and preparing to head home.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<p>Hands on events</p> <p>‘Browsing’ events to generate linger time</p> <p>Hands on events</p>	<p>Paint & sip/art or pottery</p> <p>Art show</p> <p>history of winemaking in the Hunter Display</p> <p>Indigenous theme – basket weaving? Singleton Council has suggested partnering with their art gallery</p>
<p>Saturday late afternoon/evening</p> <p>Community style event 4-8pm?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Thistle Hill Guesthouse? 	<p>Casual, Family Friendly Saturday Sundowners</p>	<p>food trucks, wine, live music, stalls?</p>
<p>Saturday Night</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Botanica 	<p>A More formal offering (King’s Table is gone) Seated, curated, intimate</p>	<p>Botanica has put forward plans to do a 5 course wine matched degustation</p>

		with appearances from chef and 1 or more winemakers.
<p>Sunday</p> <p>An evening venue or two for those who stay Sunday night</p> <p>1 casual and 1 more curated dinner option</p>	<p>Slower pace Family Day</p> <p>Markets from 8am</p> <p>Main event from 11 – 4? Winemakers’ Barrel Cart Races (PENDING APPROVAL AND PLANING TIME)</p> <p>After Party 6 – 8? Live music, Gourmet BBQ?</p> <p>An elevated event?</p>	<p>lawn games, pet friendly picnics with music</p> <p>Council was extremely positive about the idea. Waiting on info re traffic management plan.</p>

Proposed Vendor Requirements

D’Vine Participant Businesses to commit to:

- Having the Maker Present
- Including each of the following in their event
 - Tastings (accept tokens at \$2.50 each) (not applicable to alcohol free venues)
 - Food offering
 - Entertainment, tour, talk or activity
 - An event unique to the D’Vine Festival
 - Flexible ticketing
- (Some evening and non-winery events may have slightly different criteria)

All participating businesses must commit to the following:

- Only selling tickets via the D’Vine channels
- Enforcing and upholding the ticketing terms set out by the D’Vine committee for the event
- Sending a minimum of 3 EDMS (electronic newsletters) to their contact list
- Sharing a minimum of 3 social media posts
- Having a functioning clickable link on their website to the D’Vine Website (media supplied)
- Meeting all licensing, insurance and compliance requirements for their event
- Providing a case of wine for prizes and promotion of the event (or a produce hamper/experience tickets/accommodation offer if not a wine brand)
- Accepting tasting vouchers at a price of \$ per 75mm tasting
- Offering a \$25 discount on purchase of 6 wines to any attendee (only one per attendee)

Costs

We are proposing the following costs for the 2026 Festival

Host Venues: \$350 Marketing Contribution

Host venue gets a pin on the printed map and in the NW double page spread + a tile on the D’Vine website & a boosted (paid) reel on the AHA social media. All participants to receive a digital and printed media pack to promote the festival and their event/s. (media partnership not yet confirmed, but we are working towards it)

Collaborator Fee \$150

Covers any AHA business to be included in the Opening night, as a popup at a host venue or any other type of participation. Collaborators may be included in multiple opportunities for the one fee. Young Winemakers can participate for the collaboration fee?

**Collaborators will receive marketing collateral but won’t be directly featured in the double page spread map*

Attendee Tickets \$35

Includes shuttle bus for Saturday, 3 x 75ml tasting tokens, \$25 off a six pack of wine (or similar value offer pending feedback), Accommodation offers, Souvenir tasting glass to take home, printed program & map

Discussion around locals ticket & travel wholesalers tickets to be finalised

Key Dates

- Businesses must register an EOI saying if they are in or out by March 2 [HERE](#)
- Businesses to register their events by March 12
- Tickets to go live April 17
- Signage and collateral to be available May (pending sponsorship and logo printing)