

Grape vines soak up the abundant sunshine at the McLaren Vale vineyards.

Story: Sheryl Allen

<b>LOCATION:</b>	McLaren Vale 40 minutes south of Adelaide
<b>POPULATION:</b>	2,500
<b>INDUSTRIES:</b>	Viticulture, wine production and sales, tourism
<b>CLIMATE:</b>	Mediterranean Summer: 11.6°C – 26.9°C Winter: 4.3°C – 12.6°C Rainfall: 761mm

If wine is the “nectar of the gods” then surely McLaren Vale is a slice of heaven on earth.

Home to more than 100 vineyards and an age-old tradition of quality wine production, McLaren Vale is where the vines meet the sea and where tourists enjoy world-class, award-winning wines where they taste best – at their source.

“McLaren Vale is all about wine,” confirms Landmark’s Tim Megaw. “It’s a scenic town nestled between the Mount Lofty Ranges and the Gulf of St Vincent but it’s the vinerows in every direction that make up the real character and the economy of McLaren Vale.”

The undulating, striped patchwork of vines stretches the imagination back to 1838 when John Reynell made the first plantings. Famous names like Hardy and Seaview were operating here as early as 1850. Today they are joined by Rosemount, Scarpantoni Wines, d’Arenberg Wines, Di Fabio Estate and a diverse legion of commercial and boutique viticulturists and vignerons.

“The Foster’s Group has significant holdings in the district and a large grape crushing plant,” adds Tim. “The Landmark team was thrilled to recently help sell three of the group’s regional vineyards – Roscor, Blewitt Springs and Tamar – as part of the divestment program.”

These three vineyards exemplify the diversity of the enterprises here – from large, highly-mechanised commercial operations to smaller, lifestyle set-ups. The Foster’s Group remains a big player in the industry here, which is fairing reasonably well despite the challenges in the current market.

Tim explains. “McLaren Vale has the advantage of a cool, coastal climate and ideal wine-growing topography within close proximity to a capital city. Our biggest plus in comparison to many other regions is the reliable water source which gives a level of certainty to growers.”

The properties are generally considered to be tightly held, with many boasting second and third generation family ownership.

While luscious, fruity shiraz is undeniably McLaren Vale’s signature variety, grenache, merlot and cabernet sauvignon get a look-in and crisp chardonnays and full sauvignon blancs make the list too. Many of the award-winning wines produced in the region today come from 100-year old vines.

More than 75 cellar doors attract a constant stream of visitors, some who purely seek the McLaren Vale experience and others enjoying the wider offerings of the ever-popular Fleurieu Peninsula.

June’s Sea & Vines Festival is a showcase for McLaren Vale food, wine and music, drawing more than 30,000 visitors on each of its three days.

They are all superbly catered for with a multitude of fine vine-side restaurants, street-side eateries and road-side produce.

Bed and breakfasts just seem to go with wine country and it’s no different in McLaren Vale where city escapees can choose from a bevy of hosted and self-contained accommodation options.

The typically Mediterranean climate – warm, sunny days and fresh sea breezes – is as enticing to residents as it is to grape-growers. Locals enjoy a year-round relaxed, rural lifestyle with a discernible European influence.

The vibrant wine-driven economy extends the financial catchment area well beyond the local district into national and even international arenas, creating unique opportunities for those who choose to live, work and do business here.

#### CONTACT:

Landmark Strathalbyn (08) 8536 2555

Tim Megaw 0427 889 900

#### PROPERTY GUIDE:

**Residential:** three bedroom, two bathroom home on standard allotment \$375,000 – \$420,000

**Rural:** vineyard land \$35,000 – \$45,000 per hectare