

Elevated Taste

QUEENSLAND'S PREMIER WINE REGION

- High altitude Australian wine region, producing award-winning, cool climate wines
- Producers of proven classic wine styles plus exciting alternative grape varieties
- Meet the people who craft the wine at more than 50 cellar doors
- Dozens of seasonal events
- Home to the Queensland College of Wine Tourism

Images courtesy GBWT members



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granite belt
wine country



The northern wine capital

Queensland is one of Australia's most exciting wine states, and the Granite Belt is Queensland's premier wine region.

Of the 10 regions currently producing wine within Queensland, the Granite Belt is one of two that holds official Geographic Indication status, which was achieved in March 2002.

The Granite Belt is situated high on the western spine of Australia's Great Dividing Range. The main town is Stanthorpe, which is three hours drive southwest of Brisbane on the New England Highway. Despite its northerly latitude, it is the area's high altitude that makes this a cool climate wine region. It actually snowed on a day when James Halliday made a whistle stop tour of the region in July.

At approximately 1000 metres, the vineyards of the Granite Belt are among the highest in Australia. The decomposed granite soil is similar to the coarse sandy soil of the Northern Rhone. In fact, the Granite Belt is unique in Australia for its combination of cool weather and decomposed granite soils, creating the conditions which produce Queensland's most awarded wines.

Some of the vital statistics for the Granite Belt include:

Altitude: 800 – 1020 metres;

Summer temperatures: Average for December, January, February: 15 – 17 C;

Winter temperatures: Average for June, July, August: 1.8 – 15.4 C;

Rainfall: approximately 750 mm per annum.

The Granite Belt's mean January temperature is 21.5 degrees C, which is the same as the Clare Valley in South Australia and the Rhone in France.

Grapes were first planted in the Granite Belt in the 1860s, the founding father considered the local catholic parish priest to use the grapegrowing skills from his native Italy to produce wine for his congregation.

The local wine industry enjoyed a second burst of growth in the 1980s, although it is within the past decade that the greatest strides have been achieved in



Image courtesy GBWT

Fast Facts

The Granite Belt is Queensland's Premier Wine region because it:

- Produces the most awarded wines in Queensland;
- Has the greatest area under vine in Queensland;
- Has the largest number of cellar doors (50+) open to the public;
- Is home to the Queensland College of Wine Tourism (the first of its type in the world); and
- Hosts a number of wine and food events throughout the year.

recognition and commercial success.

Of Queensland's 1,100 hectares planted to winegrapes, about half of these are on the Granite Belt. In 2006, when Queensland's vineyards were surveyed, it was found that Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay and Merlot make up 64% of the total area grown on the Granite Belt. Other varieties with

increasingly impressive track records include Verdelho, Viognier and Tempranillo.

Nearly half of all Granite Belt winemakers have planted alternative grape varieties. These include Barbera, Chenin Blanc, Colombar, Durif, Gewurztraminer, Malbec, Marsanne, Mourvedre, Nebbiolo, Petit Verdot, Pinot Gris, Sylvaner, Tannat, Tempranillo and Viognier.

These alternative wines are marketed through the Strange Bird Granite Belt Alternative Wine Trail which was launched last November.

Visitors to the region can wander the Strange Bird trail, sample and purchase from 16 alternative winegrape varieties that are currently produced in vineyards across the Granite Belt. Building on its strong agricultural and horticultural production, the region is rapidly developing food tourism with a new food trail to be launch at this year's Brisbane Good Food & Wine Show.

To learn more visit

www.granitebeltwinecountry.com.au .

In 2007 the 530 hectares in the Granite Belt were responsible for 61.6% of all Queensland's red wine grapes and 62.5% of all Queensland's white wine grapes.

The Granite Belt is also home to the Queensland College of Wine Tourism, the first of its kind in the world and many of the state's most established and successful wine producers.

This multi-cultural region is rich in the depth and breadth of diversity in its produce, events, attractions, accommodation and its climate.

Visitors have long been attracted to the region's high quality orchard fruit, magnificent national parks (including the iconic Girraween National Park), spectacular views and crisp winter conditions.

Today, outstanding local wines can be enjoyed with excellent accommodation, popular events, good food and country hospitality in a fresh, clean environment. Combine this with the trend to the short break holiday; the Granite Belt is increasingly a destination of choice within South-east Queensland country.