

Coal River Valley

Dianne and Graeme Lofts left no corner uncovered and perhaps no wines upsampled in researching our itinerary.

We leave Hobart for the delights of the Coal River Valley. At Riversdale Estate, vigneron Rainier Roberts offers us a formal seated tasting in front of a sea of regally monogrammed glasses. Large windows showcase gently undulating land that provides a unique maritime influence for creating exceptional wines. Many of us check out the Bridgertonesque-style high tea room, which is stunningly decorated.

Only 15 minutes away, Puddleduck Vineyard is a tourist staple. Darren and Jackie Brown established their boutique family-owned winery in 1997. This seated tasting is a lively and relaxed affair. We try their Fumé Blanc, Pinot Noir, and flagship Bubbleduck made from a blend of 60% Pinot Noir and 40% Chardonnay. Their amusing Ducky Duck Shop stocks everything ducky. As if on cue, a flotilla of fluffy ducklings passes us in the pond below.

Lunch is in the historic town of Richmond at the Richmond Bakery. Some opt for the curried scallop pie—plump local scallops in a creamy curry sauce.

Every Man & his Dog Vineyard is a much-loved stop. Maurice and Helen Curtis, owners of Federation Artisan Chocolate, purchased the property late last year. Their friendliness and good humour make for outstanding hosts. Chocolates are paired with matching wines. Tasked with nibbling the chocolates before sipping the wine, there is complete silence from our normally rowdy group. Everyone has gone to heaven.

Our last stop Frogmore Creek is the largest ultra-premium cool-climate winery in Southern Tasmania. The home of Frogmore Creek and FortyTwo, Degrees South wines offering stunning architecture overlooking the Coal River Valley. Roving experts serve us an extensive list of premium wines in a function reminiscent of a cocktail party. All this, and we've only just begun.

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