

# FOODIES GET FESTIVE

SWAP TASTING NOTES WITH OTHER FOODIES AT THE AVON VALLEY GOURMET FOOD & WINE FESTIVAL THIS JUNE LONG WEEKEND, WRITES **EMMA WHEATON**.

**WA produce will** be in the spotlight at the upcoming Avon Valley Gourmet Food & Wine Festival. With an abundance of culinary delights coming out of the state, it's no wonder the festival, which has been heaving with increased visitors in recent years, has grown out of its former venue in the town of York.

Taking up residence in picturesque Northam, the 2013 festival will be hosted by a new venue of the town and promises a weekend of gourmet-inspired activities.

"The festival is all about food and wine," says event organiser Tanya Richardson, "so visitors can expect to sample fine gourmet food, wine and other types of alcohol. Whether you're a budding master chef wanting to learn a thing or two from Don Hancey on the cooking stage, a foodie eager to enjoy the Long Table Degustation Dinner with

Australian *Iron Chef* winner Herb Faust, a parent trying to keep the kids entertained (there will be rides and an animal farm) or a visitor on a gourmet weekend getaway, the festival caters for everyone."

A festival returnee, Herb will host his degustation dinner on Saturday, June 1. "I'll be partnering with Barton Jones Wines once again this year to present a five-course degustation designed especially for the festival. I love using local produce to inspire new ideas for my dishes and I'm really excited to be a part of the event for the second year," Herb says, adding that he's looking forward to sharing his menu with people who are passionate about good food and wine.


Food lovers will be able to treat themselves to a diverse range of flavours at the festival markets, with about 60 gourmet food and wine stalls expected to showcase tasty wares ranging from cheese and chocolate to yabbies and chillies.

**Below and right:** Visitors enjoy WA produce at the Avon Valley Gourmet Food & Wine Festival; WA local chef Herb Faust.



It's the producers' passion for quality food that has Herb excited, too. "I love the dedication and energy of the people behind WA's produce. I think their love for what they do is transferred to what they have on offer," he says.

"There is just so much to be excited about," says Tanya. "We have some really interesting stallholders and I'm looking forward to Don Hancey's cooking demos. He is so entertaining and knows everything about food."

"I guess I'm most excited about the degustation dinner with Herb. He's an amazing chef and people just loved the dinner last year. The food is not the sort of thing you can just get in any restaurant." 

*The 2013 Avon Valley Gourmet Food & Wine Festival will take place in Northam from June 1–2. Visit [www.avoneventsandmarketing.com](http://www.avoneventsandmarketing.com).*



## MEET THE CHEF

*Iron Chef winner and WA local Herb Faust will be on hand at this year's festival once again. We catch up with the celebrated chef.*



### Tell us about your involvement with the festival.

My involvement with the festival started in 2012 when I presented two food events at the picturesque Laurelville Manor in York. I had such a great time and I'm looking forward to being a part of it again.

### Where are we likely to find you when you're not in the kitchen?

If I get some time away from the kitchen, I'm keen to check out the stallholders showcasing their produce and I'm looking forward to seeing Don Hancey back on stage hosting cooking demonstrations.

### Are there any stand-out producers for you?

I'd have to say Barton Jones Wines. I'm partnering with them for the second year in a row for the degustation dinner and I've had the chance to sample their fabulous wines as well as hear directly from Jackie [Barton, winery co-owner] about the drive and passion behind the product.

### How does this event compare with other events on the culinary calendar in WA?

The Avon Valley Gourmet Food & Wine Festival is a fantastic event. It is family-friendly, is less than 90 minutes from Perth and has a great sense of community.

*"I love the dedication and energy of the people behind WA's produce."*

## DON'T MISS

If food and wine is your thing, here are three other great WA events to add to your culinary calendar this year.

- Head to Manjimup for the **Truffle Kerfuffle** festival (June 22) to taste the treasured fungi and learn how it's sourced.
- A gastronomic pleasure, the **Gascoyne Food Festival** (August 15–17) is three days of fine food by the Gascoyne River in beautiful Carnarvon.
- Join acclaimed chefs and food critics for the **Margaret River Gourmet Escape** (November 22–24) when the region's natural beauty provides the backdrop to a host of food and wine events with a reputation for quality.