

HEADING WEST: TO THE MARGARET RIVER

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Over the weekend I found myself in a stunning part of Australia that I'd never explored before... a truly special place where isolated beaches stretch into exquisite grape vines...where it's natural to slow your car down for a passing kangaroo...and a region synonymous with great food and great wine. The natural beauty from the bush to the sea alongside the solitude was like a sucker punch to the soul (in the best way possible) and I can't wait to share with you some of my highlights – so this week the S Blog goes west! We'll come back to part two of #BondiLife another week.

Flying from the east to the west coast of Australia is no hop, skip and a jump... it takes approximately 5 hours to fly from Sydney to Perth, which is a little longer than flying from London to Moscow. Yes it's a big continent! Needless to say it's not every day those in the east head over to the west, but in our case we had the best excuse ever to make the trip... a big family wedding [...]

After hearing great things about the Margaret River for years, we decided to carpe diem and make a road trip down to Margie (everyone and everything has a nickname in Oz) after the wedding. The drive is 3 hours from Perth and 4 hours from where we were staying at beautiful Moondyne retreat (the wedding location). Because of work commitments we only had a couple of days to spare for our little adventure, so recommendations came in very handy and we ended up with the best plan that allowed for both zen & zest. Here's the highlights: [...]



WINE TASTING FROM THE BACK OF A UTE

Here's the thing... if anyone offers you a private wine tasting definitely consider it. If anyone offers you a private wine tasting from the back of a ute (AKA pickup truck) parked in the middle of a vineyard, definitely take it! This is how we met Will, owner and master vintner of CLOUDBURST Wines.

Will is not only a super cool guy who makes incredible wines, he's a guy that doesn't really do anything the conventional way or for money – he follows his instincts, listens to his heart and certainly doesn't follow the crowd. For example, when he first planted his vines in 2008 (with no background in winemaking) many of the locals thought he was crazy because he planted four rows of vines into the same width that conventionally you would only plant two. This means he has to pick all of his grapes by hand (tractors and machinery won't fit between the rows) and apparently the roots of the vines have less room to “breathe”. But when CLOUDBURST took home three prestigious Margaret River Wine Show awards with their very first vintage... people started to second guess if he was crazy at all (I really love this story!). Now years later CLOUDBURST is considered one of the best wines in the region and proves that breaking the rules can yield great results.

Regardless of the wine and how good it is, Will seems to move through life with an easy smile and an air of wisdom that far surpasses that of age and knowledge... maybe I'd call it a 'spiritual wisdom' I don't know... but whatever it is, it's really nice to be around and within 2 minutes of meeting him, we knew we were in for far more than a regular wine tasting! After what felt like 20 minutes (but was closer to two hours) my husband and I walked away knowing that what we experienced with Will was less about an education on wine and more about an education on life (and the way to live it).

