

MEDIA RELEASE

For Immediate Release

The changing face of authentic tasting experiences for the Hunter Valley set to open May 2026.

A new wine experience is set to open in Wollombi this month - but SIP Wollombi Village at Grays Inn is positioning itself as more than a retail launch.

Arriving at a time when the Hunter Valley is rethinking its visitor economy, SIP Wollombi Village has been designed as a curated tasting collective responding to changing consumer expectations and regional tourism strategy.

While parts of the Hunter have evolved into high-volume cellar door destinations, industry data and regional planning increasingly point to a demand for more intimate, story-led experiences - places where visitors can connect directly with producers and place.

SIP Wollombi Village answers that shift.

Located within the historic Grays Inn building in Wollombi, SIP Wollombi Village brings together boutique Hunter producers under one roof. Rather than operating as a traditional bottle shop or single-brand cellar door, it functions as a rotating showcase. Producers host tastings of wine, spirits and craft beer in person, visitors are encouraged to linger, and the experience prioritises conversation over throughput.

The model aligns with priorities outlined in the Hunter Regional Economic Development Strategy, which highlights the need for:

- Diversified tourism offerings
- Activation of heritage assets
- Increased overnight visitation
- Support for smaller producers
- Higher-value, experience-driven travel

SIP Wollombi Village delivers on each of these pillars in a single site.

Upstairs in Grays Inn, three heritage accommodation rooms offer guests the opportunity to stay within the building itself - encouraging longer visits and contributing to Wollombi's growing appeal as a slow-travel destination rather than a day-trip stop.

Pop up events occur in the ground-floor restaurant space within Grays Inn. This space is also available for lease, presenting an opportunity to complete the offering and create a fully integrated food, wine and accommodation destination in the village centre; an integrated lifestyle hub.

Owner Michael Noyce says the concept was developed in response to both market behaviour and broader economic direction.

“We’re seeing visitors wanting something more personal. They’re looking for authenticity, for connection, and for places that feel grounded in the region rather than scaled for buses. SIP Wollombi Village is designed to be part of that next chapter for the Hunter.”

As tourism bodies, including Destination NSW, continue to promote premium regional travel and experience-led visitation, Wollombi is emerging as a complementary alternative to the larger commercial cellar door clusters elsewhere in the valley.

SIP Wollombi Village has its official launch on Saturday, May 2nd, as part of the Heart of Wollombi Street Party.

SIP Uncovered open event - 4 pm May 2nd, Grays Inn Wollombi

Phoenix Distilling Co. will partner with SIP Wollombi Village to deliver an immersive, sensory-driven gin masterclass - offering a behind-the-scenes look at the craft of distilling, as SIP is transformed into a working flavour lab.

Sydney Brewery Hunter Valley Craft beer tasting - from 11am to 2pm.

Founding Producers

Wine: Beckels Vineyard (Broke), Milsons Estate (Broke) Noyce Brothers Wine (Wollombi), Peter Drayton Wines (Pokolbin), Two Rivers Wines (Denman), The Little Wine Company (Broke), Binet Family Wines (Lovedale)

Spirits: Phoenix Distilling Co. (Rutherford), The Kawal Rock Distillery (Broke), Wildstreak Distillery (Pokolbin)

Craft Beer: IronBark Hill Brewing Co. (Pokolbin), Modus Brewing (Newcastle), Sydney Brewery Hunter Valley (Lovedale)

Cider: Incy Wincy Cyder (Wollombi/Orange)

About Wollombi Village

Wollombi is one of the Hunter Valley’s oldest villages, with a history dating back to the early 1800s when it was an important stop on the Great North Road. Many of its sandstone buildings still stand today, forming an intact streetscape that reflects its past as a rural trading hub. Now recognised as a Heritage Conservation Area, Wollombi has retained its scale, character and connection to place.

Today, Wollombi remains a true working village - home to a small, close-knit community that welcomes visitors without losing its authenticity. Its historic buildings are lived in, its

businesses are locally run, and its creative culture continues to grow through galleries and collectives. Surrounded by bushland and dotted with nature-based and heritage stays, Wollombi offers a genuine experience of village life - shaped by history, but very much alive in the present.

MEDIA CONTACT

Euan Wilcox 0409 988 457 - euanwilcox@gmail.com (image requests)

Daniela Riccio 0407 224 150

Michael Noyce 0416 245 655 - noyce@me.com (business founder)

