

CLARE VALLEY FACT SHEET

Information thanks to Wine Australia and the Clare History Group unless otherwise stated.



HISTORY OF CLARE VALLEY

- The traditional custodians of the land are the Ngadjuri (Nad-jeur-ree) people.
- Penwortham was the first settled town in 1839 by John Horrocks.
- Clare was founded in 1842 by Edward Gleeson and named after his hometown in Ireland.
- The local railway line was decommissioned after damage from the 1983 Ash Wednesday fires. It was reopened as the 33km Riesling Trail in 1993.

CLARE VALLEY TODAY

- The population of Clare township is 4,178*.
- The population of Clare & Gilbert Valleys Council area is 9,336*.
- Agricultural crops produced in the region include cereals (wheat, barley, oats), pulses (beans, lentils, peas), and oils (canola).

CLARE VALLEY ROCKS

- Terroir, a combination of geology, soils, topography, and climate, defines the sense of place in Clare Valley.
- Sediments were first deposited in Clare Valley 800 million years ago.
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- The region has 11 recognised soil types, predominantly including terra rossa red topsoil over limestone (Watervale) and broken slate (Polish Hill River). The soil significantly influences the final product, particularly in rieslings.

DIURNAL TEMPERATURE VARIATION

- Diurnal temperature variation refers to the difference between the daily maximum and minimum temperature.
- The large diurnal temperature difference in Clare Valley contributes to its wine style. Warm days ensure ripe varietal character, while cool nights preserve natural acidity, especially beneficial for producing rieslings.
- Temperature ranges from 40°C during the day to 1°C at night.

HISTORY OF CLARE VALLEY WINE

- The first vines planted were likely Grenache by John Horrocks and Edward Gleeson in 1840.
- Sevenhill Cellars, founded by the Jesuits, produced sacramental wine from 1851.
- Wendouree vineyard, established in 1893 by Alfred Percy Birks, still thrives today.
- Clare Valley winemakers spearheaded the adoption of Stelvin screw-cap closures over cork in 2000, revolutionizing the wine sealing industry globally.

CLARE VALLEY WINE TODAY

- The Clare Valley wine region is made up of five distinct sub regions: Auburn, Watervale, Sevenhill, Polish Hill River and Clare. The styles produced in each region reflect the influence of climate, soil and geography.
- Clare Valley features 39 cellar doors, two breweries, and one distillery.
- The region is home to approximately 50 wine producers and 100 growers.
- The most planted grape varieties are Shiraz (38%), Cabernet (20.8%), and Riesling (20.5%)
- The region is known as the Heart of Australian Riesling.
- The total vineyard area in the region is 5,189 hectares**.

CLARE VALLEY'S GEOGRAPHY

- Clare Valley is located 130 kilometres north of Adelaide and is part of the Mount Lofty Ranges.
- The highest vineyards in the region are situated at an elevation of 550 meters above sea level.

CLARE VALLEY'S CLIMATE

- The region experiences a continental climate moderated by cold nights and afternoon breezes.
- The average annual rainfall in Clare Valley is 546.4mm***, with average rainfall of 228mm during the growing season (October to April)***.

*ABS, 2021

**Data from Vinehealth Australia Clare Valley Crush Survey Report 2022

***Data from Elders Weather