

## BUILDING A NEW FUTURE

THE Mornington Peninsula is set to enhance its food and wine tourism with two major hotel building developments planned. The RACV, which already runs one of the larger resorts on the Peninsula at Cape Schanck, has received council permission to go ahead with a \$135 million redevelopment of the site. The new five-storey development includes 120 hotel rooms, a 140-seat restaurant and a large conference centre. The Mornington Peninsula Shire Council expects the centre will create many new jobs, keeping young people on the Peninsula longer and inject \$117 million into the regional economy. At Willow Creek Winery in Merricks North, which was purchased by Chinese real estate development company Kunming Construction Company (KCC) in 2013, a high-end, 39-room hotel is coming together. The \$10 million project is expected to create 30 local jobs. The boutique hotel and restaurant will launch in January.

## CELEBRATING PINOT

THE biennial Mornington Peninsula International Pinot Noir Celebration returns in February, with pinots featuring from Australia and around the world. The 2017 Celebration will showcase important Burgundy producers Meo Camuzet and Comte de Vogue, together with producers from leading Australian makers and an in-depth look into the 2015 vintage for pinot on the Peninsula. Keynote speaker will be English wine writer Matthew Jukes. Tickets and more information is available from the Mornington Peninsula Vignerons Association. [www.mpva.com.au](http://www.mpva.com.au).

## TOP PERFORMERS IN TOP END

The top performers in Australia's tourism industry are set to be recognised in the Top End, with The Qantas Australian Tourism Awards (QATAs) touching down in Darwin for the first time next year.

The premier event will draw more than 800 travel industry sponsors, partners and state/territory tourism award winners, and will be held at the Darwin Convention Centre on February 24, 2017.

Chief Minister and Tourism Minister Adam Giles says: "This is very exciting news for the Territory and members of our tourism industry who now have a chance to shine on the national stage right here in our own backyard."

The awards will feature 25 categories, with the winners of each State/Territory Award competing for Gold, Silver and Bronze recognition at the national level.

Chair of the Australian Tourism Awards, Daniel Gschwind, says: "This is our industry's marquee event of the year and attracts wide media coverage so it is always an exciting time for the host city. We're looking forward to taking the event to the Northern Territory for the second time; and first time in Darwin, after Alice Springs hosted the Awards in 2004."

Tourism Australia Managing Director, John O'Sullivan, adds: "We've just had Chris Hemsworth and his family visit the Red Centre as part

of his ambassadorial role with Tourism Australia, we've seen huge international interest in Kakadu following the 30th anniversary of Crocodile Dundee, and of course, our current aquatic and coastal campaign not only promotes the spectacular Nitmiluk National Park but also provides an exciting platform for local tourism operators with the Northern Territory Government's Million Dollar Fish campaign." #NTAustralia



## GRAHAM NORTON RETURNS TO HIS ROOTS

He's trod grapes on the set of his famous show and blended Marlborough sauvignon blanc into an award-winning wine in a London apartment. This year, though, top talk show host Graham Norton and winemakers Invivo headed to Graham's own back yard to work their winemaking magic: Bantry House in County Cork, Ireland.

Invivo cofounder Tim Lightbourne and winemaker Rob Cameron travelled over 20,000 kilometres to Norton's summer home – complete with their precious cargo of six distinctive Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc pressings. Then, over an afternoon blending session the trio created Graham's 2016 Sauvignon Blanc and new for 2016 a Graham Norton SA Shiraz, due to consumer demand for a Graham Norton red.

Norton was well pleased with the result, but surprised the Invivo crew by inviting a lucky handful of Cork locals to pass judgement on the blend. Their verdict? "Very drinkable...I could drink a lot of that" and "absolutely lovely".

Graham Norton's Own Sauvignon Blanc has been a great success for the winemaker and production has increased by 50% since 2015 to meet expected demand. Last year, the wine sold over 500,000 bottles in Ireland, the UK, Australia and New Zealand. The UK's Independent newspaper named the vintage number three in the top 15 sauvignon blancs in the UK. Marie Claire magazine declared it, "One of the most successful celebrity wine collaborations ever".

Speaking about his new 2016 Sauvignon Blanc; "It is easy drinking. It's got all the grassiness and zest you expect from a new world sauvignon blanc but I like to think it has a bit of an old world finish. - Oh, and it's affordable!" And Norton adds after blending his new South Australian shiraz, "I'm thrilled!".