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PRESS RELEASE

2nd December 2013

MARGARET RIVER GOURMET ESCAPE EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS IN DELIVERING A FOOD AND WINE EXTRAVAGANZA LIKE NO OTHER

Margaret River Gourmet Escape saw an attendance of 15,475* across the three-day culinary festival and experienced unique events set in the most picturesque of locations showcasing the region as a world-class food and wine destination.

11,951 food and wine enthusiasts visited the hub of the festival, the Gourmet Village at Leeuwin Estate over the weekend while 3,524 attended the various Satellite Events including gourmet beach BBQ's, foraging events, collaboration dinners, pop up restaurants and panel discussions.

"Honestly, I don't think that there is any other food event on this planet like this!" said Heston Blumenthal of this year's Margaret River Gourmet Escape which is supported by the Government of Western Australian through Eventscorp and the Royalties for Regions program.

Recently winning "Best New Event" at the 2013 Australian Event Awards, Margaret River Gourmet Escape aims to deliver a program unlike any other which incorporates a lauded international and local line up of food and wine talent, this year including the likes of Heston Blumenthal, Rick Stein, Alex Atala, Tetsuya Wakuda and Matt Stone. Margaret River Gourmet Escape also attracts significant national and international media exposure with journalists from the UK, Germany, Singapore, New Zealand, USA and Indonesia attending the event.

"The feedback we have received from visitors, sponsors and talent so far has been incredible," says Margaret River Gourmet Escape event director, Naomi Wilson. "We are so fortunate to have the opportunity to create this event which we truly believe is one of a kind worldwide. The access to the best produce, wine and stunning locations sets Margaret River Gourmet Escape apart from other events on the food and wine calendar."

Key highlights included:

- A sundown Welcome Party at Castle Bay Beach with over 150 guests where the acclaimed talent rubbed shoulders with other VIP guests, savouring the exquisite food and wine with the sand between their toes and the setting sun.
- Gourmet Beach BBQs – Castle Bay Beach was transformed as guests kicked back under luxury tepees in the sand and enjoyed amazing food cooked by chefs including George Calombaris, Guillaume Brahimi and Matt Stone and sipping on the finest Margaret River wine.
- Gourmet Village at Leeuwin Estate – With over 60 wineries, 17 restaurants and over 100 producers, this was the culinary hub of the weekend where in one beautiful location visitors explored and indulged in the finest WA produce and wine and were a part of masterclasses, wine tastings, intimate Q&A's, cooking demonstrations and got up close and personal with the international and Australian food and wine stars.

- Sundown soiree at the stunning private Fraser Gallop Estate where guests enjoyed award winning wines and canapés by Hadleigh Troy of Restaurant Amusé whilst listening to a very entertaining Q&A with Heston Blumenthal facilitated by the one and only A.A. Gill.
- The Forager, a uniquely Australian experience, set in the forest, hosted by Wardandi man Josh Whiteland and Jock Zonfrillo, gave diners the chance to eat from a rare menu celebrating native ingredients. International and Australian talent including Sat Bains, Alex Atala, Miles Irving, Al Brown and Darren Robertson, all of whom are passionate about using native and locally sourced ingredients shared stories and showcased the edible plant and animal species unique to the West Australian bush
- The Godfather of seafood Rick Stein held his intimate Catch of the Day masterclasses at the Gourmet Village. Guests got up close and personal with Rick and heard first hand his tips for cooking the perfect seafood dish before tasting his culinary creations.
- The beauty of the landscape, the allure of incredible regional produce and plethora of world class wineries saw leading chefs eager to soak up as much of the South West as possible as some visited Manjimup to explore the wonderful world of truffles, whilst others independently visited producers and wineries across the region.

“Obviously we want to deliver an exceptional festival for the visitors,” says Wilson. “However just as important is that we showcase the best of WA and the Margaret River Wine region to world class food and wine experts so they too can experience the unique offerings of the South West and communicate this message to an international audience.”

Famous for its exceptional food and wine, Margaret River is the only wine region in Australia that boasts beautiful beaches, spectacular tall tree forests, cave systems, incredible surfing, whale watching and wildflowers, making it an extraordinary holiday destination. It is also the perfect base to explore the natural beauty, unique attractions and fresh produce of the South West corner of Western Australia.

Margaret River is a 3.5 hour drive south of Perth. Virgin Australia operates flights from Perth to Busselton, which is approximately 45 minutes drive from Margaret River township. International flights operate to Perth Airport.

For more information on holidaying in Western Australia, visit www.westernaustralia.com.

For event information: www.gourmetescape.com.au

For full media kit and images please visit

<https://www.dropbox.com/home/Gourmet%20Escape%202013%20Media%20Kit>

*Includes people attending more than one event. Does not include Gourmet Village extra events such as Catch of the Day, Premium Wine Tastings and Adriano Zumbo’s Kids Masterclass

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