



Made with love

The Deck Cafe Lovedale is a fitting addition to the classy wine country dining scene, writes **Kate Tarala**.

WHILE it might be most famous for its long lunch, Lovedale attracts visitors to the Hunter Valley year round to sample some of the best food and wine the area has to offer.

In the heart of wine country, Lovedale has long been home to wineries, restaurants, cafes and even a smattering of craft and art galleries. Whether you're on a day trip or visiting for a longer stay, be sure to visit a winery, taking your pick from a number of Lovedale estates including Allandale Winery, Wandin Hunter Valley, Tatler Wines, Emma's Cottage Vineyard, Gartelmann Hunter Valley, Saltire Wines and Sandalyn Estate.

The area is also bursting with options for breakfast, lunch, dinner or a snack to go, while several producers also sell their wares – wines, olive oil, olives, vinegar, chocolate and more – so you can take some of the Hunter Valley back to your own kitchen.

Learn more about the wineries, restaurants and cafes of the Lovedale area at lovedalehuntervalley.com.au and visitnsw.com/destinations/hunter/hunter-valley/lovedale.

The Deck Cafe Lovedale at Gartelmann

Wines (701 Lovedale Road, Lovedale) is chef Matt Dillow's third venture in the Hunter Valley with wife Monika and one of the newest additions to the Lovedale dining scene.

More than six years ago the duo opened The Verandah Restaurant at Calais Estate (151 Palmers Lane, Pokolbin) before going into partnership with mate and fellow chef Adam Ireland at Twine Restaurant at Wynwood Estate (310 Oakey Creek Road, Pokolbin). Now Dillow has added Lovedale to his stable with the opening of The Deck Cafe Lovedale at Gartelmann Wines.

The cafe opened in recent weeks with chef Nathan Clarke and floor manager Samantha Oxford also on board, joining Jan and Jorg Gartelmann at their cellar door at the beautiful Lovedale site.

For Dillow, opening his third restaurant in the Hunter Valley only cemented his love of the wine and food region.

"I love the area, I've been here for 6½ years now. It's an iconic area, I'm proud to have three restaurants on three beautiful wineries," Dillow told GT.

Dillow's first venture in the region (his "baby") The Verandah Restaurant is what he

describes as "smart food with smart service" in a casual relaxed environment.

Twine Restaurant opened next, offering outdoor catering for events, as well as a restaurant offering lunch and dinner, seven days. It also hosts Fireside Sundays which embrace cooking over an open fire.

The next piece of Dillow's puzzle, The Deck Cafe Lovedale, offers a modern Australian menu in a beautiful setting, complete with a deck overlooking a dam, with birds in the trees and ducks on the water.

Think breakfasts such as fluffy pancakes with a choice of toppings including rhubarb compote and honey vanilla yoghurt, and Belgian chocolate with hazelnut and whipped cream, eggs benedict with house-cured salmon gravlax and one of Dillow's favourites – grilled sourdough, smashed avocado, sauteed wild mushrooms, smoked vine-ripened tomato, grilled haloumi and herb oil.

The lunch menu includes The Deck's mezze plate, beer-battered snapper, house-cut chips and house-

made tartare, and pork belly spring rolls with spicy plum sauce and Asian salad.

Top it all off with a glass of Gartelmann wine or a Piazza Dora coffee.

The Deck Cafe is open Saturday to Wednesday for breakfast and lunch, 8.30am to 3.30pm. Visit deckcafelovedale.com.au or for bookings phone 4930 9007 or email bookings@deckcafelovedale.com.au.



MODERN TWIST: The Deck Cafe's corn frittas with house cured salmon gravlax, smashed avocado, baby caper and Spanish onion salsa and citrus cream.
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