



# VOCO<sup>TM</sup>

## Kirkton Park





# Lavish OPULENCE

## Abounds at Prestigious Estate

**WORDS** Michelle Meehan

More than 30 years after it was first built, one of the Hunter's pioneering upmarket guest houses is entering a luxurious new era.

The historic Kirkton Park property on Oakey Creek Road in Pokolbin has been refreshed, rebadged and reopened by the InterContinental Hotels Group (IHG) under the banner of their upscale new hotel brand, **voco™**.

IHG took over the management of the elegant Colonial-style property in the heart of Hunter Valley Wine Country in 2017. After successfully launching their **voco™** brand globally in June 2018 with the conversion of the former Watermark Hotel & Spa on the Gold Coast, **voco™** Kirkton Park was chosen as the site of only the second **voco™** destination in Australia.

Renowned as one of the Hunter Valley's most prestigious estates, the 70-acre property now embodies the bold characteristics of **voco™**, with exclusive features from its bright yellow accents to onsite beehives and distinctive hallmarks, setting it apart for a memorable stay.

Featuring 70 beautifully-appointed rooms, the vibrant **voco™** experience extends to multiple facilities available onsite, including tennis courts, an indoor heated pool, sauna and spa, and gymnasium.

Sales and marketing director for **voco™** Kirkton Park Hunter Valley, Caleb Morris, said the property offered a "charmingly different" destination built on the three distinctive hallmarks of the **voco™** brand:

*Come on in, Me time and voco™ life.* Each hallmark is embodied in a trio of quirky "mascots" which are subtly integrated throughout the hotel.

"The mascots are the owl, the finch and the flamingo," says Caleb.

"Each mascot personifies an experience within the hotel. The finch represents the host - making sure that each and every guest enjoys a really welcoming experience.

"The bold and interesting flamingo is all about connecting with people and creating memorable moments over meetings or socialising in a truly great restaurant or bar. A key feature for the **voco™** brand is to offer a restaurant that can essentially stand on its own two feet with a reputation that stands apart from the hotel it is part of.

"Finally, the tranquil and serene owl represents *Me-time* – inviting guests to sink into luxurious beds complemented by luxurious amenities and seamless in-room technology."

“ The word ‘**voco™**’ derives from a Latin word that means ‘to welcome in.’ It’s appropriate then that the whole ethos of the **voco™** brand is to make guests feel like they have come home.

Renowned interior designer Greg Natale was engaged to create the property's transformation, tasked with the job of reflecting the **voco™** design concept through the inventive use of colour and thoughtful consideration of artwork and textiles.

The hotel's lavishly comfortable rooms have each undergone a **voco™** refresh, including upgrades to luxury Aveda amenities and various creature comforts. From high-speed Wi-Fi to cosy bedding, each little luxury underpins the **voco™** relaxation hallmark of *Me-time*.

This was not the first time Greg had been given the opportunity to make his mark on the hotel, having been commissioned in 2016 to transform the property from a classic country manor into a chic, contemporary hotel fit for the 21st century.

The multi-million dollar refurbishment fused elegant, traditional elements with luxurious, modern fittings, using bold monochrome patterns, inky blues and pops of gold to create a layered, decadent style.

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This foundation style was further updated by Greg in the most recent facelift to incorporate the hotel brand's signature elements, including incorporating the voco™ yellow, into the property.

"In mid-2016 Greg Natale was engaged to transform the property from a typical, colonial styled interior with a traditional maroon, cream, and green colour palette to a modern design with a completely bespoke, luxurious look and feel," Caleb said.

“When the voco™ brand became established, it seemed the perfect time to re-engage Greg Natale to instil the new brand hallmarks into the design.”

"And so that's where we worked with him, on some of those styling changes that we now see in the property, like the voco™ yellow which reflects a kind of chirpiness, celebrating that we are fresh, young and different."

Another hallmark that has become embedded into the voco™ brand is a focus on sustainability across its various properties.

At voco™ Kirkton Park, that has been encapsulated in a variety of ways. From the 370-panel, the 100-kilowatt solar farm installed on the property that provides up to 80 per cent of their electricity needs, to the extensive kitchen garden and on-site beehives that promote a true paddock to plate ethos in the kitchen.

Vegetable scraps from the kitchen are also fed to the various farm animals that live on the estate, ensuring there is practically zero food waste.

Caleb said sustainability underpinned the property's world-class dining experiences, which offer a taste of 'voco™ life'.

In addition to this, all rooms will be introducing sustainable bedding with soft, high-quality duvets made from recyclable plastics, while large



bottle amenities from Australian-owned Aveda have been welcomed to successfully reduce the volume of plastic waste traditionally associated with the industry.

The recent appointment of a new head chef will take the hotel's various dining options to a whole new level, with a strong commitment to creating solid connections with local producers and suppliers.

Locavore Dining and Epoche Lounge Bar offer lunch and dinner, while The Conservatory is home to the iconic high tea experience overlooking the rose garden. The interactive vegetable garden is utilised daily and celebrates the connection between farmer, gardener and chef,

## Stay at the voco™ Kirkton Park Hunter Valley

Discover boutique accommodation, tailored experiences plus, the best Hunter Valley food and wine.

Relax and unwind, experiencing everything the newly refurbished voco™ Kirkton Park Hunter Valley has to offer.

Get a head start and enjoy great value – book early and save up 20% off of your voco™ accommodation.

Enjoy the little things in life, your way – eat, sleep and everything in between at voco™

## Get cosy. Get social

Play a game of pool or sit by our glowing open fire in the Winter months. Epoche Lounge Bar Kirkton Park, the Hunter Valley's new home of cocktails, local wines and craft beer.

Dine for less with Epoche mid-week specials.

To Book call 02 4998 7680 or search Epoche Bar in Opentable.com



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with several beehives onsite to produce honey for various uses in the restaurant and bar.

Guests can choose to sit by the open fire and drink local craft beers with a crispy wood-fired pizza or indulge in the seasonal degustation menus with perfect wine pairings.

At *Locavore Dining*, guests can experience a delectable menu that features the best of seasonal and regional produce, including estate garden grown produce. With all ingredients sourced from within 100 miles of voco™ Kirkton Park, Lochinvar Dining is not only a food lover's destination, but a restaurant with a focus on sustainability entwined into every dish presented.

The *Epoche Lounge Bar* offers a cosy, more casual atmosphere, with dinner and drinks by the open fire including seasonal salads, wood-fired pizzas, craft beers and expertly mixed cocktails.

voco™ Kirkton Park is also well-known for its indulgent high tea served in the sun-filled Conservatory, which can be enjoyed while overlooking views of the rose garden, with the Brokenback Ranges cascading in the distance.

Sample petit tarts, French pastries, fresh scones and finger sandwiches made from regional ingredients and paired with soft, fruity and crisp bubbly or a glass of Peterson Gateway Sparkling.

Aside from its permanent dining experiences, voco™ Kirkton Park is also embracing a local community focus, with a series of events throughout the year that encourage Hunter residents, and not just tourists, to come and enjoy the glorious surrounds and amenities of Kirkton Park.

This includes the annual *Picnic in the Park*, with a date for this year's event still to be set, as well as a new series of *Long Lunch in the Park* events from July to November. These will allow visitors to enjoy a three-course banquet of seasonal and locally-sourced produce, paired with a selection of wines from a local estate.

The first long lunch will be held on **Saturday, July 13** from 1pm to 4pm, with wines provided by Brokenwood Estate.

Other wineries taking part in future themed lunches will include Drayton's Family Wines, Leogate Estate, Iron Gate Estate and Hanging Tree Wines.

Caleb said the long lunches and *Picnic in the Park* events were designed to signify that Kirkton Park was "back and supporting the community", while also making the property more accessible to residents.

To find out more about voco™ Kirkton's Park's calendar of events, superb restaurants or glamorous accommodation offerings visit [huntervalley.vocohotels.com](http://huntervalley.vocohotels.com) ■

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## TASTE *Inspired By* PASSION

ASCELLA is the largest organic vineyard in the Hunter Valley. Barb and Geoff welcome you to enjoy tastings under the Silk Tree, or by the fireside or under the stars. Stay at the vineyard, enjoy the pristine environment, meander along the laneways. Listen to the greatest music since the world started to rock!

We are committed to the health and well-being of our Ascella friends, partners, our vineyard family and to respecting the traditional caretakers of our land.

*Come Share the Passion!*

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## VINEYARD Kelman Boutique Hunter Wines



**Kelman Vineyard has been producing high quality classic Hunter varietals since 1999. It has been awarded numerous medals in the past year and has been recognised by wine critic, James Halliday, for the winery and the individual wines.**

This zesty, crisp field blend is the result of a careful wine-making process. Both varieties were handpicked on 25 January 2018 and were pressed and matured together. They have a wonderful balance and fruity characteristics enhanced by 8 months in seasoned French oak. The perfect wine to accompany summer BBQs and dinner with friends.

*This is the first wine in 2019 to show our new Kelman label. Inspired by bud-burst the image reflects the winery philosophy of relying on the best grapes the vineyard and nature can produce.*



**2 Oakey Creek Road, Pokolbin**  
Cellar Door open for tastings 7 days 10am - 4pm  
Phone 4991 5456  
[www.kelmanvineyard.com.au](http://www.kelmanvineyard.com.au)