

Jamie Oliver Falls in Love with NSW's Southern Highlands

World-famous chef Jamie Oliver was wowed by NSW's Southern Highlands on the weekend, visiting the region to meet the artisans behind some of the State's finest produce.

In Australia to raise awareness for Jamie's Ministry of Food Australia project, Jamie took time out of his busy schedule to dine at some of Sydney's best restaurants before day-tripping to the Southern Highlands.

Jamie began his regional visit foraging for fungi in Li-Sun Exotic Mushrooms' disused railway tunnel in Mittagong, guided by Dr Noel Arrol – a local microbiologist who has been harvesting mushrooms since 1987.

Afterwards, Jamie visited two-hatted restaurant Biota Dining in Bowral, with chef and owner James Viles showing him around the grounds, including the extensive vegetable and herb garden, and his duck and yabby-filled pond.

Jamie then enjoyed a stunning lunch at Biota Dining, featuring fresh local produce and ingredients picked that morning by James and his team.

Jamie said: "I've been to Sydney and NSW many times now, but I've never visited the Southern Highlands – what an amazing place! Local makers and beautiful fresh produce everywhere you look. The people are so passionate about their food and wine – I found it really inspiring."

Destination NSW supported Jamie's visit to the region, with CEO Sandra Chipchase delighted the celebrity chef could include a day trip to regional NSW during his visit.

"NSW is home to some of the best fresh produce and world-class wines Australia has to offer. We were thrilled to introduce Jamie Oliver, one of the world's biggest advocates of fresh, local food, to the Southern Highlands – a great example of a regional NSW food and wine hub," Ms Chipchase said.

"Jamie instantly fell in love with the Southern Highlands, applauding the diversity of fresh produce and excellent wines, which is testament to the passionate people who make up the local food and wine scene in the region."

During his NSW visit, Jamie also hosted an interactive event, *Kitchen Talk with Jamie*, at Carriageworks in Sydney's Eveleigh on 23 March, featuring some of Australia's top chefs cooking with fresh produce from Woolworths.

On the back of the visit, Jamie is running a competition on his Jamie's Ministry of Food Australia website, promoting the Southern Highlands and featuring highlights from his visit to the region.

Open to Australian residents, the competition offers the chance to win return flights, two nights' accommodation and a foodie tour in the Southern Highlands. To enter, visit www.jamieoliver.com/competitions/gourmet_escape_nsw.

For more information on food and wine experiences around NSW, go to www.visitnsw.com and www.sydney.com.

ENDS

For images, go to <http://images.destinationnsw.com.au/>

Media contact:

Jasmine Cook, Destination NSW, 02 9931 1426, jasmine.cook@dnsw.com.au