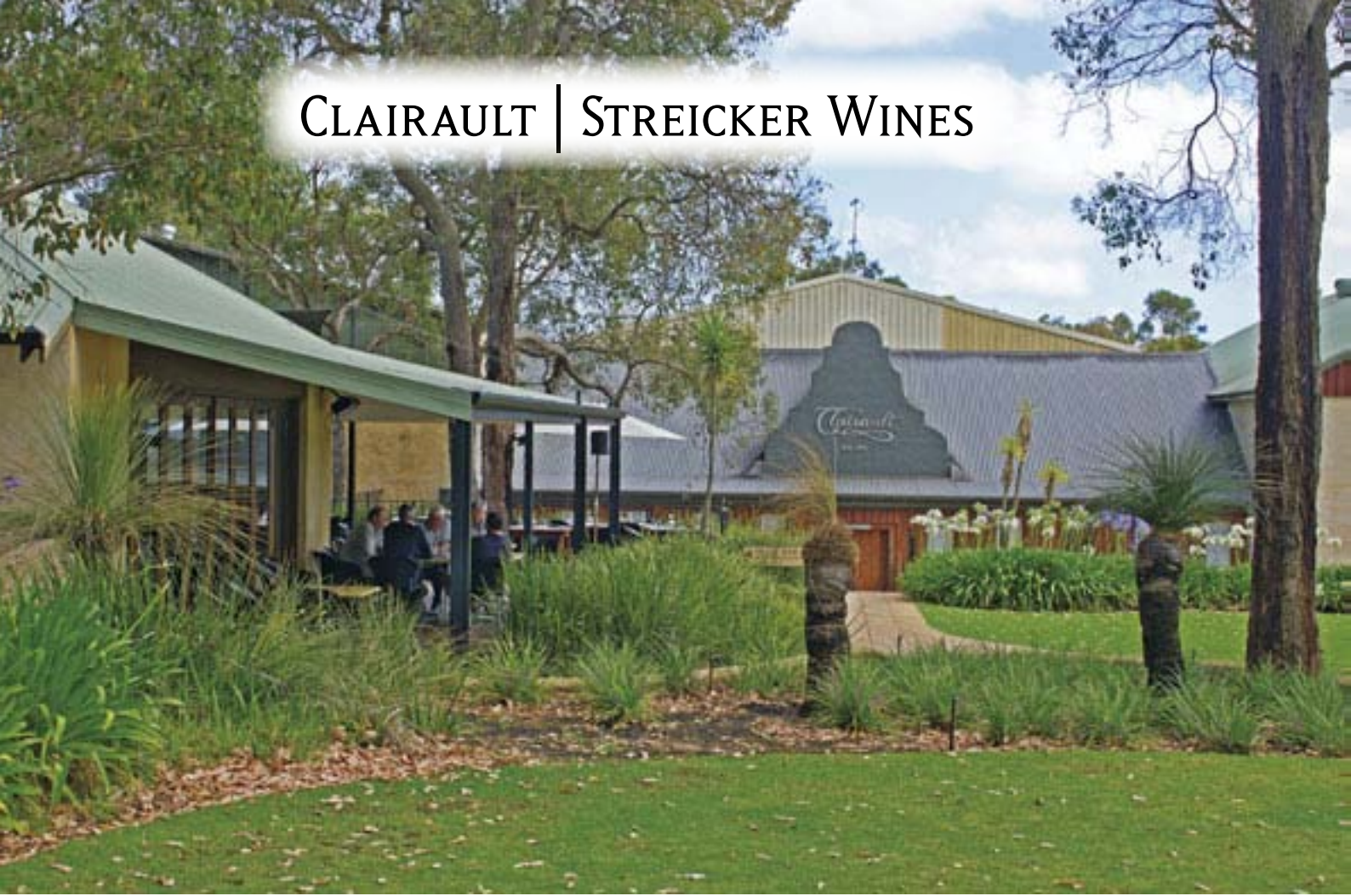


CLAIRAULT | STREICKER WINES



Established: 1976

What does a French mathematician have to do with a Margaret River winery?

In the late 18th and early 19th century, several French voyages were made to explore and survey the coastline of the mysterious ‘Great South Land’ as Australia was then known. From 1801 to 1803, Captain Nicholas Baudin commanded a scientific expedition to chart its coast with two ships, the *Geographe* and the *Naturaliste*. At that time it was not even clear whether Australia was one large landmass or if there was an inland sea dividing the continent in two. At the same time, during this period of frenzied exploration, a British expedition, led by Matthew Flinders, was also charting the coast of Australia, and it was he who first successfully circumnavigated the continent. The two nations jostled for supremacy through their respective expeditions, but eventually it was Great Britain that laid claim to the whole of Australia. However, the French

named many prominent features around the south west coast of Western Australia, including Cape Clairault, which lies 10 km south of Yallingup.

Baudin named this cape after Alexis Claude Clairaut (1713 – 1765). He was a renowned French mathematician who, among other things, had helped to calculate the length of the meridian of Paris. He had also calculated the perihelion of Halley’s comet, successfully predicting its return in 1759. The difference in spelling – the Cape is ‘Clairault’ – was an error made later by the French cartographers. The Cape’s location didn’t fare too well either, as the original spot chosen for the name was a few kilometres further north between Canal Rocks and Smiths Beach. Here high granite cliffs are clearly visible, whereas Cape Clairault itself is too low to be distinguished from out at sea. However, with its steep, north-facing sand