



Our first residents...belonged to the Dja Dja Wurrung tribe and there is still evidence of their presence in the district. The explorer and surveyor ... Major Thomas Mitchell was the first recorded European to travel through Avoca and he recorded that the area was more temperate and better watered than inland NSW. He named the river 'Avoca' after the Vale of Avoca in County Wicklow, Ireland in 1836.

The discovery of gold...at Four Mile Flat near Homebush in 1853 enticed prospectors to the area and a few months later the main lead at Avoca was discovered. By the beginning of December 1853 the population had increased from 100 to 2200 and by June the following year the population had grown to 16,000, making Avoca one of Victoria's most important gold rush districts. Avoca was one of the first goldfields in the north western area of Victoria that produced some of the richest finds anywhere in the world.

Avoca soon established itself as the centre of the gold mining region with the building of a police station, court house, post office, schools and churches and when the miners moved on to new claims, Avoca continued to serve the region's commercial and administrative life. The Court House and Police residence became template designs for future police precincts throughout colonial Victoria.

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Some of the unlucky miners began to take up land for farming and others such as the French recognised the suitability of the soil for grapes. Edwin Mackereth established a vineyard and later a winery to the west of Avoca and it operated between 1887 and 1929. The altitude and the latitude reflected the conditions in France's Bordeaux region. Long, cool ripening periods and a disease free environment prompted the planting of several vineyards, but the preference for other types of alcohol than wine meant profits were low. The vineyard ceased operation in 1940.

Gold continued to play a major role in the district when deeper leads were discovered at Homebush, but at this time, larger mining companies took over and employed miners to work the deep leads. Towards the end of the century the depression and drought hit hard and by the late 1890s most of the larger mines had closed. By then agriculture and forestry were the main activities in the district.



The re-emergence of grapes...occurred in 1963 when Chateau Remy Winery was established at the foot of the Pyrenees. This vineyard later became known as Blue Pyrenees Estate and it has been joined by six other boutique wineries that operate in the immediate vicinity of Avoca. Today... our wineries continue to attract visitors to the region and provide employment for many in the townsfolk, but it is still our love of the land and peaceful, rural lifestyle that makes Avoca a great place to live, work, play ... and visit.

The National Trust has classified the old Avoca Lockup, the Powder Magazine and the Police residence. The Avoca Primary School has been educating students since 1878. In Avoca you will find the oldest operating Chemist shop in Victoria. Lalor's Chemist was established on the goldfields in 1854. At the other end of town you will also find the remains of the oldest continuously operating butcher shop in Australia. It also opened in 1854 and eventually closed in 2010.



*Police Lockup 1859*



*National Bank*



*Longest operation butcher shop in Vic.*

