

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

EXETER HOTEL

246 Rundle Street, Adelaide.
(08) 8223 2623.

Located in the heart of Adelaide's East End precinct, the Exeter Hotel is a convivial grungy hub for the legion of South Australia's wine folk. Shelves are festooned with spent bottles of Krug Grande Cuvée Champagne, still an all-weather bargain at only \$250 a bottle. The rest of the wine list is chalked above the bar and reads like a who's who of local identities. Stalwarts like Rockford and Wendouree have been up there for years and are still offered at prices that happily ignore their current cult status. Same for Charles Melton and Chris Ringland. The place brims with warmth and colour in the winter months, and the rich grenache-based wines from the nearby Barossa Valley and McLaren Vale regions are the perfect foil to the hotel's hearty home-cooked curries.

Guests select their own wine from the cellar

VICTORY HOTEL

Main South Road, Sellicks Beach.
(08) 8556 3083.

Perched in the foothills overlooking McLaren Vale, Doug Govan's Victory Hotel is a landmark for all the right reasons. The cellar is stacked with iconic Australian wines, a comprehensive collection of the region's best producers and some of the world's greatest bottles. Govan invites guests to descend the stairs to peruse and select their own wine from the cellar shelves. As if he hasn't got enough wine inside and beneath his pub, Govan has surrounded it with two hectares of carefully planted vines. The shiraz, malbec, graciano, mataro and grenache are all destined for bottling under his Rudderless label, a few bottles of which you'll find already stashed below deck.



Town and country: the Exeter (top) and Royal George Hotels

VICTORIA

ROYAL GEORGE HOTEL

24 Piper Street, Kyneton.
(03) 5422 1390.

If you subscribe to the theory that the best pubs have unique personalities, then you'll love the Royal George. The wine list is a regional homage par excellence, reaching further afield where appropriate and tipping the scales at about 120 wines. There's plenty of action in the \$40-\$70 range and that's where most visitors tuck in. The 2004 Sutton Grange Estate Syrah (\$56) is typical of the region's potential for soulful, food-friendly reds that suit this pub's personality. ➤