

RESTAURANTS



WA UPDATE

KNEE DEEP

Lot 61, Johnson Road, Wilyabrup.
(08) 9755 6776. www.kneedeepwines.com.au

New winery restaurant slots into Margaret River's top flight. The "Trust the Chef" degustations are deservedly popular.

BAR ONE

QV1, Retail Plaza, 250 St Georges Terrace, Perth. (08) 9481 8400. www.bar1.com.au

One of the best weekday lunchtime diners in town with a pleasing array of small plates available in the evenings.

ANDALUZ BAR & TAPAS

Basement Level, 21 Howard Street, Perth. (08) 9481 0092.

Great food and an extensive range of drinks; open until late six days a week.



ACT UPDATE

NICO'S @ KOONABURRA VINEYARD

44 Summerhill Road, Bywong, NSW.
(02) 6236 9019.

Dine among the vines on the outskirts of Canberra in this European-style restaurant/cellar door where Nico Duynhoven serves an eclectic menu with Dutch/Indonesian and Asian influences.

TONGUE & GROOVE

Genge & Bunda Streets, Canberra City.
(02) 6230 4455. www.tandg.com.au

Hot new bar with an urban-chic feel, live entertainment, great drinks list and nicely presented food, including wood-fired pizzas, tapas-size dishes, steak and ribs.



Decant, Adelaide

the Westin. It takes its name from the Spanish word for postcards, and that's pretty much what you get here: glimpses and flashes of Spain. Chefs Iwao Yamanishi and Ben Pichon aren't Spanish, but they're channelling their inner *tapeadors* (the folk who wander from tapas bar to tapas bar) in presenting a range of small dishes feisty with the sweetness of saffron and punch of smoked paprika. There's jamón, octopus and fried potatoes in good measure. Grilled chorizo is paired with garlic confit, the meatballs are made with hare and the salt cod croquetas arrive with aioli for dipping. There are main-sized courses for those who have no truck with tapas: pan-fried cod fillet crusted with olive and tomato, say, or the (dinner-only) paella for two.

Open: lunch Mon-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. Licensed. Mains \$29-\$34.

ETCH

InterContinental Sydney, 62 Bridge Street, Sydney.
(02) 9247 4777.

It's pretty much all about the corn and crab soup. A light, golden, almost frothy cloud of sweetcorn cooked in a corn stock, enriched with blue swimmer crab meat and no small amount of cream. Should crab, corn or, indeed, cream not be your cuppa, though, you won't find Etch wanting. The menu doesn't exactly sprawl, but there's substance and variety aplenty. The prawn

cocktail and sardines on toast may sound tame, but they come to vibrant life in their execution; Etch is the more casual, dare we say funkier, sister restaurant to Clarence Street's more grown-up Bécasse, and the weight of talent in the kitchen and on the floor is palpable. It's definitely the most exciting eating seen at the InterContinental for many a year – and that's even before you get to the mango trifle.

Open: lunch & dinner Mon-Fri, dinner Sat. Licensed. Mains \$22-\$38.

SOUTH AUSTRALIA

DECANT

Clarion Hotel Soho, 264 Flinders Street, Adelaide. (08) 8412 5666.

www.clarionhotelsoho.com.au

There's a fair bit about Decant and its Clarion Hotel Soho host that is impressively smart and savvy, from the slick feature lighting to the Kartell chairs and Italian Aribiscato marble bar, not to mention the Missoni linen and fashionable electrical gadgetry in the rooms upstairs. Chef Jonathan Kemble has cut his teeth cooking similarly fashionable but straightforward, flavoursome food at places such as Star of Greece on the southern coast. At Decant, he's using his local knowledge to run a locavore-focused menu, with all main ingredients sourced within 100km. In Adelaide that's not such a difficult chore and it enforces a strictly seasonal menu – you won't find mango or pineapple here. But you will find venison from the Adelaide Hills as a carpaccio with cranberry sorbet, beetroot chips and dark chocolate sauce; or Spencer Gulf bug thermidor (similar looking to the Moreton Bay variety); and Hay Valley lamb rack. The place is tiny – just 22 seats – so booking is essential. The wine list is small, well-priced and interesting.

Open: breakfast daily, lunch Tue-Fri, dinner Mon-Sat. Licensed. Mains \$24-\$33.

VICTORY HOTEL

Main South Road, Sellicks Beach.

(08) 8556 3083. www.victoryhotel.com.au

At first sight, the Victory is a pretty traditional pub with a million-dollar view over Gulf St Vincent, about a 45-minute drive south of Adelaide. But it's just had a multimillion-dollar makeover, which has given this traditional 1850s watering hole a new sense of stature. It always was a great place for King George whiting and chips, and an exploration of owner Doug



RESTAURANTS

Konoba, Barton



Govan's legendary cellar. The cellar has tripled in size with a separate area just for some 100 cases of Burgundy – this is a seriously thought-out collection that would do a Michelin-starred restaurant proud. What's on show is only about a fifth of Govan's total collection, most of which is stored off-site. Chef Todd Steele's menu still provides unfussy pub food such as a beef burger with chilli onion jam, but also aims to showcase local produce such as local snapper and school prawns; perhaps an escabeche of Cape Jervis tommy ruffs; Goolwa cockles with chorizo and risoni; or a Coorong Angus eye fillet with a McLaren Vale shiraz glaze.

Open: lunch and dinner daily. Licensed & BYO (\$7.50 per bottle). Mains \$18.50-\$32.50.

AUSTRALIAN CAPITAL TERRITORY

KONOBA

Hotel Realm, 18 National Circuit, Barton, Canberra.
(02) 6163 1818. www.hotelrealm.com.au

Executive chef Anthony Fullerton declares he believes in sourcing the highest-quality ingredients and certainly succeeds with outstanding products such as Cape Grim beef, Petuna ocean trout and West Australian Q lamb. All speak for themselves, with the menu largely confined to simple grills served with roasted kipfler potatoes and a choice of bearnaise sauce, chilli jam or red wine jus. There are half a dozen pasta and rice dishes, and a similar number of "short plates" suitable for entrees or light mains. The charcuterie plate, with an assortment of cold meats, veal and pistachio terrine, beetroot chutney and house-made grissini sticks, is enough for two or three people as a starter. The Cape Grim rib-eye is cooked a touch longer than requested, but is nevertheless tender and flavoursome, with the sauce conveniently served in a jug on the side. All the desserts are tempting, but it's hard to go past the chocolate and caramel fondant pudding.

Open: breakfast, lunch & dinner daily. Licensed & BYO (\$8 corkage). Mains \$19.50-\$39.50.

DU JOUR

Diamant Hotel, 15 Edinburgh Avenue, Canberra.
(02) 6162 4588.

www.diamant.com.au

The casual, relaxed feel comfortably caters for everything from hotel breakfasts to high tea, light meals, coffee and pastries, or a full dining experience. The modern fit-out blends effortlessly into the hotel's Heritage surrounds, and cosy banquettes along some of the walls add to the European cafe feel befitting the name.

The lunch menu offers some of the dinner menu options, but also boasts a good choice of light meals, pasta and risotti, and mains with European and Asian influences. Most impressive is the oven-roasted lamb rump served with a delicious mint and pistachio crust, and a nicely contrasting green olive and tomato salsa.

Dream of the tropics with the coconut bavaroi dessert, served with mango coulis and rum-infused lychees, or put aside the guilt and choose from the inviting selection of cakes, pastries and tarts. Along with the bread, these are all made in-house and displayed in a cabinet, adding to the cafe ambience.

Open: daily from 7am. Licensed. Mains \$16-\$27.

QUEENSLAND

THE WALNUT RESTAURANT

Royal On The Park, Alice Street,
Brisbane. (07) 3112 1650.

www.royalonthepark.com.au

Elegantly arrayed in warm tones of nut brown and maroon in expensive fabrics, the Walnut is at once inviting and attractive. A pianist in the bar adjacent creates intimacy, especially when muzak isn't softly piping in unwanted dissonance. Although the restaurant has attracted attention for its occasional dinners in the dark, an experiment that enhances the other four senses, the talents of the chef are evident without gimmickry. Flavours in combination create full-on tastes, from baked scampi risotto to ➤