

TRAVEL INSIDER

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**DINE
DISCOVER
INNOVATION**

THE BEST RESTAURANTS IN THE BAROSSA
28 SHORT BREAKS IN AUSTRALIA AND BEYOND
FROM SMALL BUSINESS... TO BIG BUSINESS





Discover what happens
when a luxury lodge
turns it up a notch



The Louise, Barossa Valley, South Australia

By Dilvin Yasa

Day drink and daydream

Sitting in a sunny courtyard overlooking the celebrated grapevines of the Barossa, a glass of Tscharke grenache in hand, it's easy to imagine you're in Italy. Until you spot the curious kangaroos and are reminded that you've checked in at the best possible time in The Louise's 18-year history (hotel.qantas.com.au/thelouisebarossavalley). After a \$3-million modern "glamover", there are plenty of opportunities to indulge at the home of laid-back Barossa luxury. Feast in front of the fireplace in one of 15 refurbished villa-style suites, grab a drop from the new 800-bottle glass wine cellar in the guest lounge or watch the sunset from the infinity pool.

Ask and you shall receive

Request a unicorn ride to a vineyard picnic and within seconds, guest experience coordinator Nathan Gudsell would be making calls to riding schools and researching equine-safe glitter paints. "Legality and ethics come into play but

outside of that, I will move heaven and earth to make every indulgence yours," says the man responsible for creating exclusive "backstage-pass" itineraries. Bespoke Barossa experiences aside, there are lots of ready-made activities on offer: hot-air balloon rides over the vines, private wine tastings and pasta masterclasses at The Farm Eatery Cooking School under the tutelage of chef Tim Bourke.

Eat at an unstuffy hatted restaurant

It may offer a daily-changing four-course dégustation menu of premier local produce but don't expect self-important service at award-winning Appellation restaurant. Truth is, it's a talk-loudly-with-guests-at-all-the-other-tables kind of relaxed. Behold the likes of goat's cheese and truffle éclairs, torched avo with cured egg yolk and striploin with tarragon emulsion – alongside enchanting vineyard views. And when the waitress tells you, "I would *love* to get that for you", it's as if she's been training for this moment all her life. ●