

BAROSSA VALLEY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Best Italian

Casa Carboni

Matteo Carboni's legendary cooking classes book out months in advance but stop by this charming enoteca for lunch on Thursday or Friday and you can enjoy his handiwork without lifting a finger. Even the decision-making is easy, with just two pasta options that might include lighter-than-air gnocchi with a hearty ragù to keep it from floating off the plate or fluffy parcels of ravioli filled with local pumpkin, butter and sage.

○ 67 Murray Street, Angaston; 0415 157 669; casacarboni.com.au

Best dégustation

Hentley Farm

Served inside a glass-walled atrium overlooking Greenock Creek, the aptly named Discovery Menu is a three-hour tour through this fertile region. A selection of freshly plucked garden leaves drizzled with Jersey cream, honey and chives sets the scene for a procession of ever-changing dishes that let the ingredients sing. Each course is presented by the chef who prepared it and pairings include estate wines and glasses from further afield.

○ Corner of Gerald Roberts and Jenke roads, Seppeltsfield; (08) 8562 8427; hentleyfarm.com.au

Best atmosphere

Fino Seppeltsfield

A sun-drenched courtyard with a bubbling fountain shaded by palms and citrus trees lends this favourite a decidedly Balearic feel and chef Dan Murphy employs an appropriately light touch on the seafood- and veggie-forward menu. Finish with a serve of crèma catalana all to yourself; the heavenly silken custard hidden beneath a layer of brittle caramel has been on the menu since day one for good reason.

○ 730 Seppeltsfield Road, Seppeltsfield; (08) 8562 8528; fino.net.au

Best Asian

Ferment Asian

If you think an ice-cold beer is the only match for spicy Vietnamese fare, this unassuming spot on the main street of Tanunda will open your eyes. Parcels of fiery caramelised Barossa Hampshire pork wrapped in fresh betel leaves and zingy squid and finger lime salad find their match in a voluminous (and well-priced) 100-page drinks list that also includes sherry and sake.

○ 90 Murray Street, Tanunda; (08) 8563 0765; fermentasian.com.au

Best brewery

Ministry of Beer

For the best balance of sweetness, oak and acidity, head to tiny Lyndoch, where brewer Brett Reimann specialises in tart, barrel-aged beers with vinous complexity that will convert even the most reluctant beer drinker. His seasonal golden apricot and ruby cherry sours are designed to be sipped at the timber-clad bar, while lighter styles are better suited to a session in the sunny courtyard.

○ 1 Lyndoch Valley Road, Lyndoch; 0402 572 229; ministryofbeer.com.au

Best French fare

Le Mas

The lavish breakfast spread of flaky croissants, baked apples, golden omelettes and freshly squeezed grapefruit juice is reason alone to book a stay at this delightful Provençal-style farmhouse. But dinner in the guests-only restaurant is an even more opulent affair, featuring escargots flambéd in cognac, meaty soupe aux champignons and decadent duck à l'orange with Billecart-Salmon champagne and grenache from the estate. If you stay for a weekend, you might have room for both.

○ 1929 Barossa Valley Way, Rowland Flat; (08) 8524 4488; lemasbarossa.com.au

Farmers and fine-diners find common ground in this iconic wine region, where peerless local drops and produce are always on the menu.

Best local produce

The Farm Eatery

Maggie Beer gained fame in the kitchen but her daughter, Elli, shines on the restaurant floor and the generous portions at this airy spot overlooking a turtle-filled pond are indicative of the family's superb hospitality. The five-course Feast menu takes its cues from the bucolic surroundings, with fluffy olive focaccia alongside a pot of sweet pickled fennel, cucumber and celery a fitting start to the proceedings.

○ 50 Pheasant Farm Road, Nuriootpa; (08) 8562 1902; thefarmeatery.com

Best brunch

El Estanco

A visit to this South American-leaning café the morning after overindulging in red is a rite of passage for Barossa visitors and locals. Colombian chef Julian Velasquez mans the Argentinian grill and sends out plates piled with chorizo, tomatillo, roasted pepper and piquant Peruvian aji amarillo that boast magical reanimating powers. The on-site roastery guarantees the coffee is always fresh.

○ 18-22 Murray Street, Greenock; 0438 006 552; elestanco.com.au

Best casual dining

Contour Bar & Kitchen

Fine-diner Appellation is one of the swankiest spots in the region and the elevated comfort food at Contour, its more casual sibling, gets the same level of care. Housemade nitrate-free guanciale with celeriac leaves is as healthy as pork jowl will ever get, while the fresh salsa verde, peri peri, aioli and smoky barbecue sauces that accompany the fries pop with as much colour as the fiery sunsets beyond the picture windows. ●

○ Corner of Seppeltsfield and Stonewell roads, Marananga; (08) 8562 2722; thelouise.com.au



(Clockwise from above) Matteo Carboni at Casa Carboni; purple congo mash with crab, quail egg and aji amarillo dressing at El Estanco; Le Mas

