

# OUTthere

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**Emma Snowsill**



**Driving to  
the Snow:**

Sydney to Jindabyne,  
Thredbo and Perisher

**Stopover:**

Beautiful Ballina

**Top Stays:**

New Tasmanian Hotels

**Southwest  
Rocks:**

Lighthouse Retreat

**Food & Wine:**

King and  
Alpine Valleys



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**34-PAGE REGIONAL BUSINESS MAGAZINE INCLUDED INSIDE**



# BACK TO THE FUTURE

What's old is new in Tasmania, with several smart tourism operators making full use of a range of historic buildings and the great outdoors. WORDS: WINSOR DOBBIN



PICTURESQUE STRAHAN





From historic Peppers Calstock in the north-west to Tarraleah in the remote Midlands to The Henry Jones Art Hotel in Hobart, Tasmania's old buildings are being used in imaginative ways – and boosting the already impressive quality of accommodation available on the Apple Isle.

French chef Daniel Tourancheau and his Australian wife Linda took over historic Peppers Calstock, outside Deloraine, 18 months ago and have maintained the genteel country house atmosphere while adding their own touches to the décor, food and wine.

The Georgian-style mansion, built in 1837, is one of Tasmania's oldest manor houses – designed in the grand style of its day with marble mantelpieces, fine

plaster mouldings, lofty ceilings and intricate tile designs.

All nine guest rooms have been individually designed and feature a blend of antiques and modern luxuries.

Guests are immediately aware they are living in luxurious surrounds, but there is also a lovely relaxed atmosphere.

Daniel, who has worked at leading restaurants in France and the United States, uses local produce wherever possible while Linda, a trained sommelier, sources wines from Tasmania, the mainland and Europe for the impressive wine list.

Dining is, as you'd expect, a splendid experience – with guests enjoying a three-course set dinner menu of dishes that may include lemongrass-marinated Tasmanian scallops with crisp julienne

vegetable stir-fry; locally grown eye fillet on a sweet and binyte potato fondante; baby carrots, grilled asparagus, snow peas and a Cognac and green peppercorn jus; or cherry clafoutis with a plum sauce shot, peach and apricot compote on a French meringue.

Linda's wine choices include leading Tasmanian labels such as Providence, Stefano Lubiana and Bay of Fires while the house rosé is grown at the Three Willows Vineyard, just down the road. There's also an excellent selection of French vintages.

A gourmet picnic can be prepared for enjoyment in the formal gardens, while Daniel also hosts regular cooking classes, which have proved extremely popular.

One of the most exciting new developments in Tasmania has been





PEPPERS CALSTOCK AND GARDENS

re-birth of The Lodge at Tarraleah, 90 minutes west of Hobart on the road to Strahan.

Luxury suites and guest rooms have been created in a striking 1930s Art Deco mansion that was once used to house senior management of the giant hydro-electric scheme on the Nive River.

The rooms are spacious and luxurious with king-size beds, silk doonas, mohair throws and a range of spa baths – and the Lodge has been garnering award after award.

There are over 120 malt whiskies to choose from in The Library Bar, while the Wildside restaurant offers set four-course dinners and boasts an excellent wine list with over 300 choices.

One of the major attractions is a cliff-top hot tub, in which you can soak away the stresses and strains of city life while taking in some spectacular views – the setting is dramatic with plenty of chances to see local wildlife, fish for brown trout, walk in National Parks, go mountain biking, kayaking or explore a range of lakes, rivers and streams.

As at so many upmarket destinations, the quality of your experience depends to a great extent on that of the staff; each guest is allocated a 'butler' for the duration of their stay.

For those on a tighter budget, Tarraleah also offers stays in restored original cottages on the property, or in apartments in the converted Scholars House. The pub grub at the Highlander Arms is outstanding.

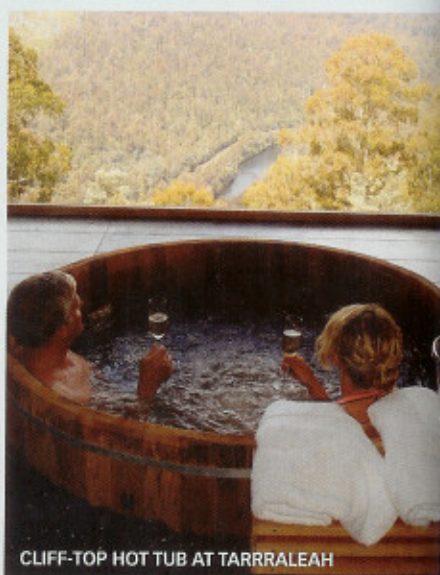


INSIDE THE HENRY JONES ART HOTEL

Guests are immediately aware they are living in luxurious surrounds, but there is also a lovely relaxed atmosphere.



TARRALEAH



CLIFF-TOP HOT TUB AT TARRALEAH

Hobart's two hippest hotels are The Henry Jones Art Hotel and the Islington.

The Henry Jones, located in an old jam factory that dates back to 1852, boasts a superb ambience and has garnered international acclaim since opening on the waterfront in late 2004.

The old sandstone warehouses have been superbly refurbished with classy furniture and fittings and many overlook either the water or a stunning glass atrium. The rooms (there are 50 in a range of styles) and public areas all feature striking works of art. ►





ISLINGTON HOTEL



HENRY JONES ART HOTEL FOYER

The service here is, as you'd expect, largely top-notch.

Plush Islington, meanwhile, was built in 1847 in the Regency style and is set amid an acre of gardens.

While the modern Peppers Seaport complex is the best downtown hotel in Launceston, two old buildings that have been artfully converted offer interesting boutique alternatives.

Hatherley House, listed on the National Register, is a grand 1830s-style mansion that has been re-born as a stylish hotel with just nine rooms.

Across town, newcomer Auldington, which was a convent from the 1800s, opened

as a private hotel in 2005 and is in a quiet location just a short walk from the urban hub.

The décor is artistic shabby-chic with artworks dotted around the rooms and corridors, while the bathrooms are modern and the bedrooms spacious.

Meanwhile, Hamers Hotel, part of the Strahan Village resort complex, a traditional workers' pub that was rebuilt in 1936, is the place to meet the locals and warm up in front of the log fire.

It is the ideal spot for a drink or meal while staying in one of Strahan Village's spectacular replica cottages or terraces overlooking the quiet fishing harbour on the remote west coast. ■

## TRAVELtips

### WHERE TO STAY:

**Peppers Calstock:**  
[www.peppers.com.au/calstock](http://www.peppers.com.au/calstock)  
[Calstock@peppers.com.au](mailto:Calstock@peppers.com.au)  
 (03) 6362 2642

**The Lodge at Tarraleah:**  
[www.tarraleahlodge.com](http://www.tarraleahlodge.com)  
[info@tarraleahlodge.com](mailto:info@tarraleahlodge.com)  
 (03) 6289 1199

**The Henry Jones Art Hotel:**  
[www.thehenryjones.com](http://www.thehenryjones.com)  
[info@thehenryjones.com](mailto:info@thehenryjones.com)  
 (03) 6210 7700

**Hatherley House:**  
[www.hatherleyhouse.com.au](http://www.hatherleyhouse.com.au)  
[info@hatherleyhouse.com.au](mailto:info@hatherleyhouse.com.au)  
 (03) 6334 7727

**Auldington:**  
[www.auldington.com.au](http://www.auldington.com.au)  
[info@auldington.com.au](mailto:info@auldington.com.au)  
 (03) 6331 2050

**Hamers Hotel / Strahan Village:**  
[www.puretasmania.com.au](http://www.puretasmania.com.au)  
 1800 084 620



Ezio Minutello smiles ruefully when asked what made him plant grapevines in the foothills of Mount Beauty in Victoria's remote Kiewa Valley. "A lapse of sanity," he offers with a smile.

The Alpine Valleys are not the easiest spot to make fine wines. Last year's vintage was destroyed by smoke taint caused by the bushfires that swept across north-east Victoria.

At other times Minutello has had to cope with cyclonic winds and frosts. In winter it often snows.

The setting, however, is beautiful. Minutello's Annapurna Estate winery and cellar door lays in the shadows of Mount Beauty and Mount Bogong – the land is verdant, the views spectacular.

"The soil types and the climatic conditions here are like where my family came from in northern Italy," Minutello says. "We are tucked away here – if it wasn't for the gum leaves you could be somewhere in Europe."

# Valleys OF PLENTY

The Alpine Valleys region is, as Minutello describes it, "out of the mainstream". There are only a handful of wineries – others include Gapsted, Boyntons Feathertop, Ceccanti, Michelini and Mount Buffalo Vineyard.

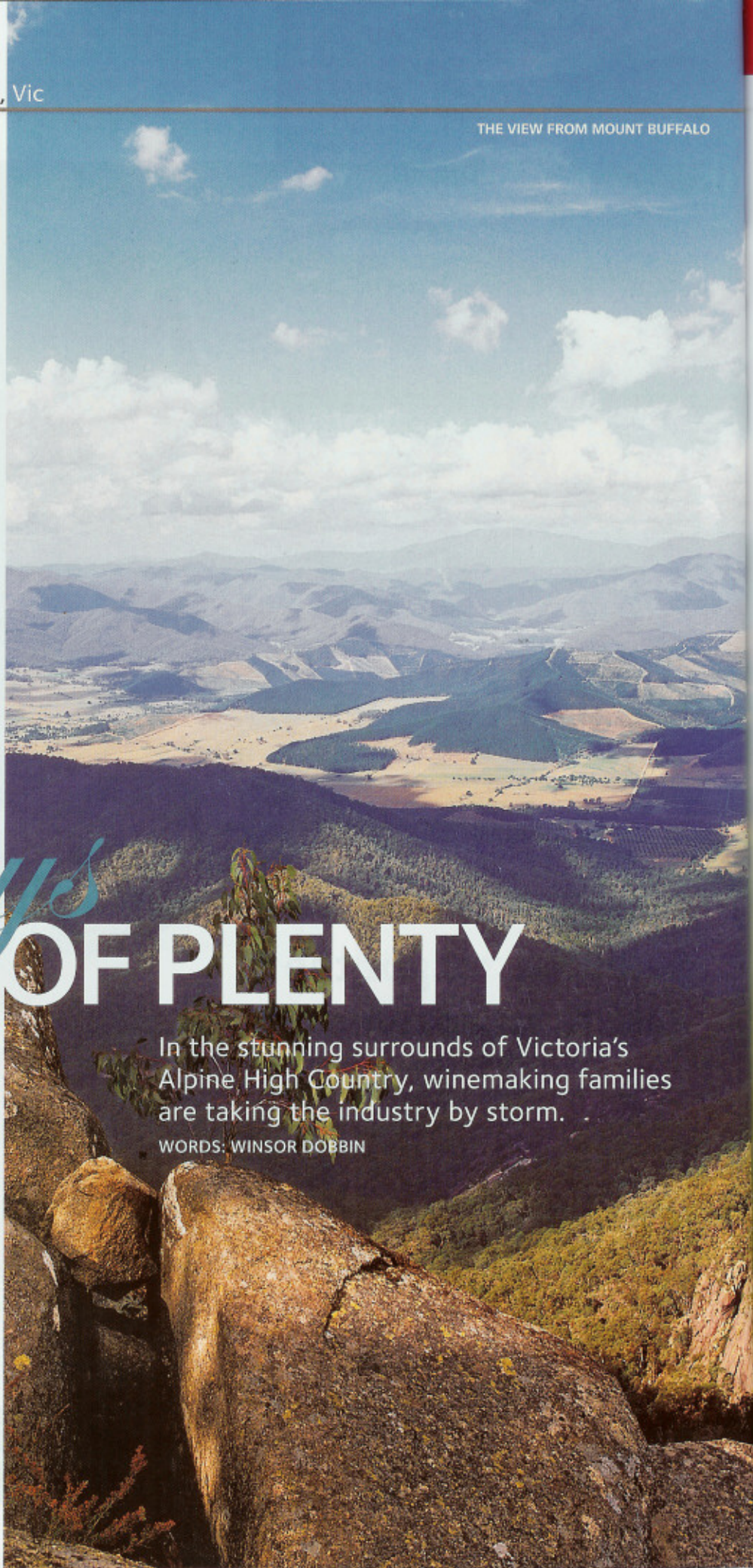
An hour or so away, the King Valley is far better known – a former tobacco-producing region that made its name with Italian varieties but now produces a range of styles in several different micro-climates, from fortifieds at Oxley to sparkling wine material at the high-altitude Whitlands.

"This is arguably the prettiest and best grape-growing region in the country," says Fred Pizzini, patriarch of the winemaking family, of which there are several branches.

"It's the most dynamic region and the most diverse. There is a strong commitment throughout the region to producing a range of varieties and styles and no one is making big, fat, stewed wines. We are making wines that are meant to be enjoyed – not talked about." ►

In the stunning surrounds of Victoria's Alpine High Country, winemaking families are taking the industry by storm.

WORDS: WINSOR DOBBIN





There are dozens of boutique food producers in the Ovens and Kiewa Valleys (berry farms, nut groves and orchards) whose wares are worth sampling.

People are, however, talking about Pizzini's new premium wines like Rubacuori, a reserve sangiovese that retails for \$110 a bottle, and the stunning Coronamento nebbiolo (\$135). Fred's son, Joel Pizzini, a talented young winemaker, makes both and the prices underline the quality of wine the region is now producing.

"One of our aims is to produce classic Barolos of the New World," says Joel. [Barolo is one of the most highly regarded Italian reds, made from nebbiolo grapes.]

Versatility, though, defines the region.

"This is not just an area for Italian varieties," says Arnie Pizzini at his Chrismont winery cellar door in Cheshunt. "Wines like riesling and cabernet sauvignon are also very stylish."

#### ALPINE VALLEYS

The name 'Alpine Valleys' accurately conveys the often spectacular and beautiful mountain scenery with which this diverse region has been blessed.

The area comprises four river basins or valleys, created by the Ovens, Buffalo, Buckland and Kiewa rivers. Nowhere are the views better than at the Annapurna Estate cellar door and café.

Try dishes including a range of platters; perhaps sushi kingfish and egg noodle salad with sesame dressing (\$27.50) or Szechuan pork rib eye with apple and chilli sauce (\$28).

Outside Bright, Gapsted Wines offers a wide range and the terrific cellar door that



ANNAPURNA ESTATE

has a selection of tasting options, serving excellent lunches and frequently hosting jazz concerts and open-air movies. The wine quality matches the sweeping views.

In Bright, Simone's restaurant has long been a favourite with locals and serves upmarket Italian-influenced food using regional produce (including venison and rabbit). Newcomer Poplars delivers impressive French-influenced cuisine in a cosy atmosphere, while there are also several good cafés.

Villa Gusto, outside town, is one of the leading luxury boutique retreats in the country. Set in two acres of Tuscan-style gardens, it is built in the tradition of the great villas of Italy, with marble bathrooms and all luxuries, fountains, tasteful antiques, even its own cinema. Think gourmet breakfasts and degustation dinners.

There are dozens of boutique food producers in the Ovens and Kiewa Valleys (berry farms, nut groves and orchards) whose wares are worth sampling.

There are also two local boutique breweries; Boynton's Brewing at Porepunkah and the Bright Brewery in downtown Bright.



MILAWA CHEESE COMPANY TASTING

#### MILAWA AND THE KING VALLEY

Brown Brothers, at Milawa, is by far the longest-established producer in the region, and boasts one of the most impressive cellar door operations in Australia; friendly, informed staff offer up to 46 different wines for tasting, including a range of unusual varieties that includes pinot grigio, gracio, roussanne and tempranillo.

Among the new varieties you should try to sample are: albariño, carmenère and schioppettino (no, I'd never heard of it either but the grape has recently been rescued from near extinction).

The Epicurean Centre, next door, does great lunches.

The Milawa Cheese Company is home to a bakery/café and a bistro that's open for





BROWN BROTHERS WINERY

lunch. Visitors are welcome to sample a wide selection of Milawa cheeses (more than 20 on my most recent visit), along with various other delicacies from around the region.

Half an hour away in the King Valley, several families of Italian tobacco growers have turned their hands to winemaking with immense success. As well as Pizzini, the Chrismont and Dal Zotto operations also turn out wines that are outstandingly good value, including some made from Italian varieties like sangiovese and nebbiolo.

Rieslings, bone dry and very fresh, from the King Valley are currently proving extremely popular with savvy drinkers although there were none from 2007 due to the aforementioned bushfires.

Both Pizzini, at its recently renovated Lana Trento bed and breakfast, and Chrismont, at its upmarket guesthouse, offer overnight accommodation surrounded by vines.

Other wineries well worth visiting include the tiny Boggy Creek set up at Myrrhee, where owner Graeme Ray has plans to open a café; rustic Gracebrook, which serves regional platters and gourmet pies and offers weekend entertainment at cellars in 120-year-old stables; and Ciccone, which recently opened a cellar door in an old butcher's shop.

Avalon, Ciavarella and the Moyhu Wine Company, which has a new cellar door and café and a couple of pretty rental cottages, should also be on your itinerary, but the current standout has to be the new architect-designed Sam Miranda winery.

Not only does Miranda make some terrific wines under the Sam Miranda, Symphonia, High Plains and Snow Road labels, there's also a funky cellar door (check out the stylish Vespa scooter in situ) as well as an excellent on-site restaurant.

Choose from antipasti or charcuterie platters, or main dishes such as smoked lamb with peas and potato rosti (\$20) or calamari fritti with green salad (\$18).

Aside from the delicious wine and cheese, there's plenty of gourmet shopping to be done in the tiny hamlet of Milawa.

You can sample a huge range of mustards and condiments at Milawa Mustards, while Milawa's Olive Shop is another favourite, selling a wide range of olive products. At EV Olives at Markwood you can see how the oils and tapenades are produced, before sampling them. ■

*Please turn over for '6 of the best wines' of the King & Alpine Valleys.*

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DAL ZOTTO CELLAR DOOR

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SAM MIRANDA CELLAR DOOR

## 6 OF THE BEST

### BROWN BROTHERS

#### 2004 Patricia Shiraz

The wines in the Patricia range are the Brown Brothers flagships, released only in an excellent year to pay tribute to the family's late matriarch. This is a big, bold wine, intensely flavoured, with dark berry and spice characters to the fore, but also blessed with fine tannins and some elegance. One for the cellar, if you can resist.



Match it with braised oxtail. \$45.



### ANNAPURNA ESTATE

#### 2005 Blanc de Noir Sparkling

Ezio Minutello produces some outstanding wines from his cool-climate vineyards in the shadow of Mount Bogong. This is a stellar sparkler, made from 100 per cent pinot noir grapes. It's crisp and fresh with citrus fruit flavours on the long, intense palate, along with yeasty nuances. An elegant aperitif style.



Enjoy with hors d'oeuvres. \$36.



### SAM MIRANDA SYMPHONIA

#### 2006 Las Triadas Tempranillo

Sam Miranda is now branching away from his winemaking family. Small portions of cabernet and merlot have been added to the tempranillo, a Spanish grape from the Rioja region. There are some delightful dark berry fruit flavours and delicious fruit sweetness.



Try it with roast goat. \$25.



### PIZZINI

#### 2006 Sangiovese

An outstanding wine from a very good vintage – a classic sangiovese with great style. Dark cherry in colour with a funky, spicy nose. Oak plays a supporting role to dark berry, coffee and cherry flavours on the palate. A powerful, intense, food-friendly wine with mouth-filling flavours.



Great with spaghetti bolognese. \$25.



### CHRISMONT

#### 2004 Chardonnay

Arnie Pizzini's Chrismont team produces some excellent Italian varietals under the La Zona label, but also has a deft touch with more traditional styles. This is a delicious chardonnay with a touch of age, displaying some ripe fig flavours on a well-rounded classic palate that also reveals plenty of spicy oak and stone fruit characters.



Try it with roast chicken. \$20.



### DAL ZOTTO

#### 2004 Barbera

The Dal Zotto family produces a range of Italian varietals, including Australia's only prosecco. Barbera is the most widely planted grape in Piedmont, Italy – and a favourite at the Dal Zotto cellar door. There are some savoury/spicy and dusty characters to be found here. To savour at its best, enjoy this wine with food.



Try with veal parmigiana. \$22.



Please turn over for 'Travel Tips' to the King & Alpine Valleys.



## TRAVELtips



BROWN BROTHERS, MILAWA

### GETTING THERE:

**Regional Express (Rex)** Australia's largest independent regional airline, has regular services from Sydney and Melbourne to Albury Wodonga. 13 17 13 [www.rex.com.au](http://www.rex.com.au)

### WHERE TO EAT:

**Rinaldo's of the King Valley** is based next door to the Dal Zotto cellar door in Whitfield and talented chef Adam Pizzini serves up interesting but informal dishes with an Italian accent. Dishes include the likes of quail stuffed with pancetta and pine nuts on an eggplant *parmigiana* (\$16.50) and homemade tagliatelle with wild rabbit sauce (\$13/24) or Black Range trout topped with chorizo sausage on a green bean and bocconcini salad (\$27). Serious food in a relaxed atmosphere. (03) 5729 8000 [www.rinaldos.com.au](http://www.rinaldos.com.au)

The residents of Bright are well served with Simone's serving stellar Italian cuisine and newcomer **Poplars** offering a very close approximation of a Parisian bistro. Dishes like traditional French onion soup topped with chives and Gruyère croutons (\$12) sing, while the char-grilled eye fillet with wild mushroom sauce and *pommes frites* (\$31) is mouth-wateringly good. (03) 5755 1655 [www.poplars.com.au](http://www.poplars.com.au)

**Range** may be located in a small-town motel at Myrtleford and look uninspired from outside, but chef Michael Ryan is a star – having picked up two chef's

hats and the award for best regional restaurant in the 2008 *The Age Good Food Guide*. The service is slick and the food sublime. Ryan uses local produce when ever possible. Try dishes like prawn dumplings with sautéed lettuce, hazelnuts, chilli and prawn oil ((\$20) or Catalan seafood stew with black rice pilaf (\$30). (03) 5752 2885 [www.range.net.au](http://www.range.net.au)

**Brown Brothers Epicurean Centre**, next door to the Brown Brothers cellar door, serves lunch seven days and is designed to showcase the family's wines at their best and each dish is matched with a different variety. Any two dishes with a glass of wine per dish costs \$42. Try a glass of viognier with oven-baked local figs and Milawa White and Capricornia cheeses wrapped in prosciutto, or a glass of sangiovese with grape-marinated Milawa chicken roasted in olives, grapes, pine nuts and rosemary. (03) 5720 5500 [www.brownbrothers.com.au](http://www.brownbrothers.com.au)

### WHERE TO STAY:

Stylish and elegant **Casa Luna at Myrrhee** offers superb country and vineyard views and has just two luxury suites. Host Gwenda Canty was previously a caterer in Melbourne and serves sumptuous three-course dinners (think osso bucco Milanese, Sicilian spaghetti with eggplant, basil and pecorino (delicious) or local free-range poussin with preserved lemon, fresh mint and pistachio). For breakfast try goat curd and sage omelette or a full English breakfast with sourdough toast.



POPLARS RESTAURANT, BRIGHT

Expect a warm, friendly welcome and be prepared to eat like a king. (03) 5729 7650 [www.casaluna.com.au](http://www.casaluna.com.au)

**Centenary Peaks Townhouses** are situated in the heart of the attractive town of Bright. The sparkling new two-level townhouses are an excellent base from which to explore north-east Victoria with comfortable beds, modern bathrooms, flat-screen TVs and full kitchens making them ideal for longer-term stays. (03) 5750 1433 [www.cpbright.com.au](http://www.cpbright.com.au)

**Lindenwarrah Country House Hotel** is situated directly opposite the Brown Brothers cellar door at Milawa. Nestled among the vines and the only five-star property in the region, it also home to Restaurant Merlot. (03) 5720 5777 [www.lindenwarrah.com.au](http://www.lindenwarrah.com.au)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION:

**Mount Beauty Visitor Information Centre**  
1800 111 885  
[www.visitpinevictoria.com.au](http://www.visitpinevictoria.com.au)