

Eating and staying in and around Adelaide

18 Feb 2005 by JR

Adelaide is Australia's wine capital and therefore many of you are likely to be looking for somewhere to lay your weary head and stuff your greedy face nearby. I recently based myself in a brand new hotel in the city and made day trips to each of the wine regions, including Clare which is well over 90 minutes away in each direction, and would thoroughly recommend the **Majestic Roof Garden Hotel**.

It's a keenly priced hip hotel – my room rate was less than Aus \$150 (about £60) a night and my room could hardly have been more comfortable: vast, very comfortable bed and large, well- designed and well- appointed bathroom with broadband access for less than Aus \$20 a day. The staff were all young but not, as so often in hip hotels, too cool to be helpful. The only shortcoming might be said to be the pretty perfunctory café/ restaurant on the ground floor, but since the hotel is just round the corner from Rundle Street with its myriad restaurants and cafes (Cibo for breakfast is practically next door) this is hardly a drawback. Car parking no problem and apparently there's a gym.

Although I was served some fantastically successful dishes as part of Cheong Liew's creative fusion menu at the **Grange** in the Adelaide Hilton, my best meal in Adelaide was at **The Melting Pot**, which sounds like an ethnic student hangout but actually turned out to be very sophisticated, apart from the outdoor loo. The wine list was excellent but it was the food that really shone. A lemongrass and spring onion cream arrived first in a tiny shot glass and both my savoury courses were exceptional. Caramelised pork belly is obviously a fashionable dish on Australian menus at the moment but this one, with seared pearl meat green mango salsa and citrus dust, was beautifully judged and made a usefully tart, lightly spicy first course. For my main course I had the 4 Ps – pigeon (beautifully moist slices of carpaccio thickness), porcini (sautéed and rich), polenta (comforting) and parmesan (incorporated into the polenta) – and loved the overall rich solace of it. An inter- course sorbet was, as usual, otiose but the passionfruit soufflé was a triumph. To give you an idea of prices, a six course tasting menu including all three of these dishes plus three more is just Aus \$90 a person, or \$Aus140 with a glass of six different wines. I have only just discovered, on looking it up online, that the chef Anil Marwaha is English. Wish they'd stayed here. (31 mar: I have just been told by an Adelaide resident that the Melting Pot's website needs updating and that the current chef is Jordan Theodoros.)

Food in Australia is generally pretty damn fine at the moment, with very clever handling of often- Asian- inspired sweetness, sourness and spice plus top quality raw ingredients. But the food I ate cooked by Nigel Rich, chef at **d'Arrys Verandah** in McLaren Vale with Pete and Jo Reschke, the restaurant attached to d'Arenberg winery, was quite exceptionally good.

A much newer wine region restaurant, in the Barossa this time, is **Barr- Vinum**, jointly owned by the McLeans lately of St Hallett and Chris Ringland of Three Rivers fame who has recently caught the restaurateur bug. This is a beautifully decorated, single- storey Victorian cottage, the old station master's house, with garden at the back and the food is arguably more sophisticated and metropolitan than one would expect of this corner of the Barossa Valley. Needless to say, the wine list gets due attention but it is the high standard set by chef Sandor Palmi who began 1918 at Tanunda that distinguishes the place. I had Sunday lunch there with a group of wine people including the owner of rival Vintners restaurant who seemed perfectly happy to enjoy the competition.

Majestic Roof Garden Hotel, 55 Frome Street, Adelaide, SA 5000 tel +61 8 8100 4400 roofgarden@majestichotels.com.au www.majestichotels.com.au

Grange restaurant, Hilton Hotel, 23 Victoria Square, Adelaide, SA 5000 tel +61 8 8217 2000 www.hilton.com

The Melting Pot, 160 King William Road, Hyde Park, Adelaide, SA tel +61 8 8373 2044

d'Arrys Verandah, Osborne Road, McLaren Vale, SA tel +61 8 8323 8710

Barr- Vinum, 8-10 Washington Street, Angaston, SA 5353 tel +61 8 8564 3688

Adrian Bennett, Adelaide:

Congratulations on your fine website!

As an Adelaide, South Australian resident I was interested to read [in [Eating and staying in and around Adelaide](#)] that The Melting Pot was your best dining experience while here. The recent change in kitchen (February/ March 2005) has led to some real gems (4 Ps) and disasters (snapper on squid/ lemon casserole).

If you'd like to read my 26 year old, amateur attempts at a review of the restaurant, please visit: www.rooview.com.au and click the 'Melting Pot Restaurant' link.