

SPIRIT

Tuck in

The sweetest oysters, crunchiest chicken schnitties and tastiest food trails to try right now



MENU

Myrtle Coffee (any)	2.50
Espresso \$4	
Latte \$4.50	
Hot Chocolate \$4.50	
Smoothie \$5.50	
Hot Chocolate \$4.50	

2.50 Toss \$4.50	
Salad - Large \$4	
Salad - Small \$3.50	
Chicken Schnitzel \$12.50	
Beef Schnitzel \$12.50	
Steak Schnitzel \$12.50	
Chick'n - Santa Claus \$12.50	
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Chick'n - Santa Claus \$12.50	

EAT ME

- Home-made Sausage Rolls - All Butter Pastry
- #1 Five Cheese Pork + Fajita (Ranchable Pork)
- #2 Home Grown Veges + Pumpkin + Fajita Onion Balsamic
- \$4.00 ea or \$6.00 with side
- Cheese Platter - all local cheese
- Rangewood sourdough
- serves 2 \$15-



Toast OF

A raft of regional dining stars are putting small-town Australia on the map – simultaneously creating thriving food- and wine-based communities. Set your compass for the nation's top eight restaurant game changers. By Larissa Dubecki.



THE town

PAPER DAISY

Cabarita Beach, NSW

☎ halcyonhouse.com.au

Halcyon House could be the most unlikely high-end hotel in Australia and its restaurant, Paper Daisy, is the dining gem to match. Residents of the tiny northern NSW coastal hamlet of Cabarita Beach – all 103 of them – have witnessed the stunning makeover of the town's tired 1960s motel into a showpiece of Australian-Mediterranean design, while Paper Daisy has become a lightning rod for regional excellence. The restaurant champions Northern Rivers produce with a light, sometimes irreverent, touch – flitting easily from a reimagined prawn cocktail to the signature paperbark-wrapped grilled fish. Even the bar menu has X factor: think a club sandwich made with mortadella and chicken skin on milk bread or pippies with semolina pasta, native pepper and macadamia oil. For all the accolades brought by this four-year-old dining favourite, Cabarita (known as “Cabbo” by locals) remains a sleepy seaside village, thanks in part to large areas of protected wetlands and limits on development that have kept the town resolutely low-rise: the perfect place to indulge your memories of halcyon childhood summers.

→ Where to stay

Book one of Halcyon House's 21 individually styled rooms, which are lavished with antique furniture and a phantasmagoria of floral wallpaper, objets d'art and soft furnishings. Spend your days lazing by the pool or indulging in spa treatments.

→ While you're in town...

It's all about the beach here and Halcyon House is only metres from the sand. The village vibe is bolstered by pit stops such as Pandanus Cafe (pandanuscfe.com.au), which serves a mean coffee and classic menu of eggs. Byron Bay is just 40 minutes' drive away; head to The Farm (thefarm.com.au) for a paddock-to-plate experience or The Bolt Hole (thebolthole.com.au), the best little gin joint in town.



Kara Rosenlund, Jana Langhorst



PROVENANCE

Beechworth, Victoria

☎ theprovenance.com.au

It's Ned Kelly country. The courthouse where the bushranger was tried and the prison where his gang spent time are part of this goldrush town's legacy. But the star attraction inducing Melburnians to take the three-and-a-bit-hours' drive to Victoria's High Country is Provenance, the high-achieving hangout chef Michael Ryan and winemaker partner Jeanette Henderson opened in 2009. This dining hotspot marries the rich produce of the state's north-east and Ryan's obsession with Japan for a unique take on contemporary Oz-Japanese. Snacks include the signature cured garfish with its own fried bones and dishes such as charred kangaroo (above), which takes an international trip with umeboshi. Housed in a historic bank and backed by a drinks list that celebrates the region's viticulture while also nodding to Japan (sake, naturally, and mirin), Provenance defies easy categorisation and is all the better for it.

→ Where to stay

Provenance's own suites keep up their end of the bargain. The stables at the rear of the leafy courtyard have been converted into two king-sized retreats with spa bathrooms and Asiatic flourishes – plus Ryan will cook you a full English breakfast in the morning.

→ While you're in town...

Sample the venues that make Beechworth such a brilliant proposition. There's Bridge Road Brewers (bridgeroadbrewers.com.au), with its 20-tap tasting bar, and café-deli Project Forty Nine (projectfortynine.com.au), which is proudly parochial. And the wine region's chardonnay is just one reason to take a road trip around its cellar doors (beechworthvineyards.com.au).