



Wine and food with altitude

Once Orange was on the way to every where else, its talents hidden under a veil of county modesty but recent events have shown a sophisticated town that has always eaten and now drinks well thanks to its local produce and has enjoyed a good life three and half hours from Sydney.

Story:
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When visiting TV journalists called Orange "the Burgundy of Australia" they were not referring just to the rolling countryside or the excellent local Chardonnay but that remarkable co existence great wines and great food have with hillsides and mountains.

Orange has been simmering in the background of the Sydney food and wine scene since the arrival of Michael Manners in the mid 1990's lured by the local produce and the wines of the pioneers Bloodwood, Rosemount and Canobolas Smith.

Philip Shaw's 1998 victory for Rosemount in France with his Orange Chardonnay being declared the "Best Chardonnay in the World" saw the wine world look up from its glasses and take stock of this remarkable mountain side vineyard area.

At 1,396 metres Mount Canobolas means weather conditions can change quickly giving out doors a distinctive cool climate and great natural diversity, the expressive regionality of rolling hills, satisfying to the eye with large trees make it a stimulating atmosphere. Indoors there is plenty to experience as well with aromatic crisp whites, perfumed silky tasting reds, flavour some meats, fruits and vegetables and mushrooms in season.

As Orange emerges from its rural roots to become the NSW region with the best reputation for delicious wine and food thanks to its consistent quality, the region is fast becoming a wonderful place to visit.

Once there it is an easy town to navigate being built on a grid that makes a straight thinker's paradise.

Don't over look the nearby local centers such as Molong with its Autumn Music festival. The drive takes you past several wineries including Printhe the largest family owned winery in the district. Look out for the fresh produce stand just on the Orange side of Molong where we found the

best quality "straight from the hive" honey we have ever tasted.

Millthorpe hosts Tonic restaurant and gives you the fresh feeling of unhurried country life as it used to be.

Nashdale Store is just a hop out of town surrounded with lovely orchards all sheltering in the lee of Mount Canobolas giving it a picturesque location and offering good hearty local fare.

RED OR WHITE ORANGE WINES SHINE

Orange is NSW most exciting wine region thanks to its high altitude vineyards producing wines with fresh clear, clean flavours. Ask at any cellar door for an explanation about the local climate, the person serving you has most likely made the wine!

Orange is making a strong quality claim for many of the wines you will want to drink. Arguably the best New South Wales Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling, Chardonnay, Merlot and now Pinot Noir are made here on a regular basis.

Orange has two different wine styles within the region. The high altitude wines from vineyards above 750 metres having a delicacy quite different from those down at 600 metres.

All varieties do well up high but Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir get especially delicious flavours while the reds especially Merlot and Shiraz grow in weight and volume of flavour towards 600 metres.

Leading mountain side producers include Philip Shaw with his Cellar Door within his house, Bloodwood, Cargo Road, Logan and Canobolas Smith. On the riper lower slopes are Printhe, Angullong and the more widely available quality wines of Climbing and Rolling.

THE CHANGING NEED FOR DECANTING

Decanting our reds was helpful in the 1970's because they were big and heavy and needed air to soften. Today even though the wines are lighter

ORANGE AND SURROUNDING WINERIES ABOUNDS IN GOOD EATING

Belgravia at The Union Bank wine bar offers hearty food fit for the sometimes snowy weather or in the warmer seasons the courtyard will have you day dreaming you are in Europe.

Leading restaurants are Lollie Redini in Orange township near the Union Bank that offers Italian influenced modern Australian food at a level that would make many Sydney eateries blush.

Fiornis offers delicious Italian food. That will have you thinking you are in northern Italy.

Tonic at Millfield has a modern Australian cuisine that more than justifies the drive from Orange to visit it.



Food and Wine Orange. Image courtesy Tourism NSW

On every 2nd Saturday of the month The Orange Region Farmers Market offers regional fresh food where local farmers and food producers showcase their fresh high quality seasonal and value added produce. Look for the crowds at the back of the visitors centre.

fresh and softer we need to revisit this old habit as a breath or two of air will only help them.

There is something special about red wines from Orange which you will notice on the first sip. They are not the deep dark coloured reds of yesteryear made with lots of mouth drying tannin and intended for long aging. These wines were the style of the time but also because corks allowed some air in and the wines required tannins to protect them for ageing.

Today the use of screw caps is keeping any air out and our red wines have different tannins and are fresher tasting, brighter fruited and look youthful.

The reds of Orange have benefited enormously from screw caps and drink well on opening with perfumed aromas and a scented medium bodied palate yet can be kept for up to 48 hours after opening and improve, just like storing them in a decanter.

Good wines to highlight this are 2006 Climbing Merlot 2006, \$21.00 or Printhe Merlot 2007 \$17.00, both widely available. These wines will become increasingly softer over 24 hours and more flavourful over the next 48 hours. Buy one and drink half a bottle with a friend and leave the rest for the next night, you will be surprised.

ACCOMMODATION

The grand daddy of them all is on the edge of town. Duntry League set in its original grounds is a historic house with a

modern golf course protecting its stately majesty. The high ceiling rooms and peaceful quiet stairways will have you thinking you are in a stately English home.

As befits a regional centre there is a totally modern and totally friendly place to stay. The De Russi suites are ideally located within walking distance of the main street and Lollie Rendinis and the national Bank Wine Bar. The rooms are big and modern and the staff are as kind as any anywhere.

The Old Convent is a little way out of town and is ideal for a group of friends staying for a wine tasting weekend with a warm welcome and the best breakfasts to help you face a strenuous day tasting the local wines,

KIDS

A 50 metre pool remains open year around and the nearby local skate park is impressive and equally so the shop across the road where thirsty skate boarders can quickly refresh before they drop in again on the well designed park. In summer Lake Canobolas offers lovely sailing and swimming in the summer month.

The Botanic Gardens are a lovely location for a picnic or a run with the littles around the beautiful mature trees and gardens.

For information on Orange visit www.visitnsw.com or www.orange.nsw.gov.au or call the Orange Visitor Information Centre on Toll Free: 1800 069 466