

It used to be called the Starlight Room - and for good reason. The dining room at **Windy Point Restaurant** has a retractable roof to let the stars shine in and, if that's not enough, spectacular wall-to-wall views over Adelaide.

For many customers it's still considered to be big-night-out territory. But Windy Point has become less predictable than it used to be, with executive chef **Justin Miles** pushing Windy Point's traditional boundaries with new menus and a very real commitment to local and seasonal produce. His menu, like the wine list and the place itself, has matured beyond being respectable to seriously good. Conservative tastes will welcome excellent versions of dishes such as a classic chateaubriand, while there's more contemporary dishes such as lamb rump with Moroccan cauliflower, puffed rice, compressed cucumber and pomegranate syrup. A recent menu even included Korean pork belly with pineapple chutney and daikon salad. But it's when you get to the vegetables that you really notice a difference. Unlike many chefs, Miles is not "vegephobic" to the extent that not only are his side dishes adventurous - try Korean fried broccoli with rosemary and garlic custard with chilli sauce, for example - but he has a respectable separate vegetarian menu and a newly-introduced seven-course vegetarian degustation menu. And it's not just non-meat eaters who will celebrate because the degustation menu is a tour de force of complex, interesting dishes that would satisfy the hungriest omnivore. It's required Miles to make contact with the most discerning vegetable growers, which he's done via local distributor **AJM Produce**, giving fresh and seasonal real meaning. Menu description is sparse to say the least - the opening course is labelled "mushroom", which leads to a beautiful plate of crumbly mushroom "soil" with baby sweetcorn, tiny pickled beets and radishes, dots of beetroot gel and more. The zucchini dish brings roasted zucchini and a scatter of zucchini flowers, creamy pea puree with drained yoghurt (labneh) and tiny dots of buffalo mozzarella. Decorative, labour intensive and, all up, extraordinary value.



Windy Point Lookout, Belair Rd, Belair. Open for dinner Monday-Saturday; phone (08) 8278 8255.

When **Andre Ursini** opened his restaurant, **Andre's Cucina** and Polenta Bar, there were many who assumed his menu would be all about polenta. How wrong they were. More than three years later Andre's Cucina (the Polenta Bar bit seems now to be an optional addition to the name), is packed most nights, often noisy with enthusiastic customers and putting on a food show that has made it one of Adelaide's most in-demand restaurants. Ursini, who hates being identified as a finalist in a well-known television cooking show, would rather be known for enormous passion for northern Italian cooking. With its walls lined with shelves stuffed with cookbooks and Italian pantry items, you could imagine you'd walked into nonna's kitchen, except that here you might start with meltingly tender Angus beef carpaccio, followed by addictive, chunky white polenta chips with a tomato salsa, then the baked mullet with mussels prawns and roast fennel. If there's gnocchi, freshly made and meltingly tender, then grab it. Yes, the polenta dishes are great, too. To get the best of what's available on the day you have to look beyond the printed menu to the extensive wall-mounted "consigli" menu where the real seasonal treasures will most likely be found, but if you've starved for a day and are up to a full-on treat then the chef's choice Menu Fisso is the way to go. It's also great value for money at \$62 for four-five

courses. 94 Frome St, Adelaide. Open for lunch Tuesday-Saturday, dinner Monday-Saturday; phone (08) 8224 0004.

There can be few more sociable and welcoming restaurants than **Peel St**, where chefs **Jordan Theodorou** and **Martin Corcoran** dispense ravishing, fresh, full-flavoured dishes from an open kitchen that runs the full width of the restaurant behind a long, polished concrete bar. Although now surrounded by the trendy little bars and eateries that pack the Peel-Leigh street precinct, Peel St continues to stand out as one of Adelaide's most interesting, convivial and good value restaurants. The blackboard wall menu tells the story with Mediterranean-Middle Eastern flavours in dishes such as heirloom baby carrots, labneh, haloumi, crunchy cumin, orange dressing and zatar, banana blossom with chicken, chilli jam and coconut salad with crisp shallots, or their signature mullet fish paste. Theodorou's cooking often appears deceptively unsophisticated, but that simply means great ingredients haven't been mucked about with and destroyed. Flavours are punchy and beautifully balanced, the produce exceptional and even the "smaller" servings are generous, which makes sharing dishes a realistic prospect here. The wine list is always interesting, with plenty by the glass. 9 Peel St, Adelaide. Open for breakfast and lunch Monday-Friday, dinner Wednesday-Saturday; phone (08) 8231 8887.

Above: Peel Street.