



LUNCH on the deck at the **Bridgewater Mill** on a fine spring or autumn day is just about as good as it gets, refreshed by fine spray from the 155-year-old mill wheel. But major changes are now under way at this historic former flour mill in the Adelaide Hills, now part of the ever-expanding portfolio of wine entrepreneur Warren Randall, whose love of iconic old properties clearly didn't stop with his earlier acquisition of Seppeltsfield. "As I get older I appreciate these properties more and more; I love their heritage and provenance," says Randall, whose wife Nicolla has taken charge of a complete overhaul of the Mill's renovation following Petaluma's relocation to its new Woodside winery earlier this year. The Mill was bought and renovated in 1986 by a consortium led by former Petaluma winemaker Brian Croser, and since then has operated as a cellar door and highly-regarded restaurant. Now plans have been drawn up by architect Max Pritchard - who also designed the \$3-million cellar door renovations at Seppeltsfield, with Fino restaurant as its centrepiece - which will see the famed deck area expanded to three levels before the end of the year, doubling its capacity for alfresco dining. Former Petaluma executive chef **Zac Ronayne** remains in charge of the kitchen, which now sources much of its organic produce from

the Randall's 1ha home garden in nearby Aldgate. Longer-term plans will see the kitchen relocated and expanded as both deck and function business grows. The central Granary room, the former Petaluma cellar door, is now open daily as a casual dining area - now named the Wine Lounge - where customers can order generous shared platters such as the Miller's Lunch or just a glass of wine while enjoying good music and a wood fire while seated on comfy lounges or at a vast central table. In cooler weather diners have the option of eating indoors in the slate-floored conservatory with linen-clad tables, but on a fine day dining alfresco on the deck (or decks) is unbeatable for sheer bucolic, if not gastronomic pleasure. Ronayne is a young but well-accomplished chef who gives exciting touches to dishes such as rabbit terrine served with quail egg, capers and nasturtium leaves, scallops baked in their shell with Jerusalem artichoke, hazelnut and rosemary, or twice-cooked duck leg with pear, miso and walnut crumble. Adding to the good news is that for the first time in its history, the Mill will be open for dinner Friday and Saturday nights. 389 Mount Barker Rd, Bridgewater. Open for lunch Wednesday-Monday, dinner Friday-Saturday; phone (08) 8339 3422.

Another historic property, North Adelaide's much-revered **The Lion**, has also taken on iconic status since being taken over by current owners **Andrew Svencis** and **Tim Gregg** almost 20 years ago. Svencis and Gregg were key figures in Adelaide's earlier restaurant revolution in the late 1980s and '90s, when their Oxford restaurant was a gastronomic leader. Since taking over The Lion in 1998 they've had only three exec chefs, the latest of whom, **Jason Chalmers**, has been with them for almost eight years and now oversees a kitchen brigade of around 35 covering restaurant, bar and function venues. Although surrounded by a sprawling hotel complex, The Lion still feels very much like a freestanding restaurant, well insulated from the pub hubbub. What once seemed a quite radical design has now mellowed as it's gained some of the patina of a well-used restaurant, with booths, banquettes and intimate corners

that have made it even more appealing. One side of the restaurant is totally exposed to the kitchen. Chalmers' dishes are contemporary in style yet classically based, but they also reflect the current fashion for increasingly complex dishes. The apparent simplicity of his menu descriptions - such as Berkshire pig cheek with soy milk custard, miso mustard and seaweed - hides up to nine cooking processes taking days to complete, starting with the pig cheek, which is rolled and braised for 12 hours in red wine. The end result is incredibly concentrated flavours, meltingly tender pig cheek offset by crunchy seaweed and salty nori paste.

Equally good are his Moreton Bay bugs dusted in turmeric, coriander and smoked paprika, quickly fried with a little pork lardo and wrapped in tendrils of crisp kataifi pastry, then decorated with fat green iceplant leaves, fingers of coastal sea spray and finger lime pearls with a smear of sweet Balinese-style saté sauce. Again, a terrific mix of crunchy textures, colours and vivid flavours. Corner Melbourne and Jerningham streets, North Adelaide. Open for lunch Sunday-Friday, dinner Monday-Saturday; phone (08) 8367 0222.

It's hard to keep up with the welter of new wine and cocktail bars opening almost weekly in every long-neglected side street in Adelaide, finally making up for the decades-long dearth of drinking spots in the city.

While many are centred around the Peel St-Leigh St area, some of the more attractive wine bars are spread further afield around the city centre, with one of the more attractive entrants being **La Buvette Drinkery**. If ever a bar could ooze Gallic charm without actually being in France, this is it. Owner **Dominique Lentz**, many of the staff, much of the wine and all of the food are the real thing in what is one of the city's prettiest bars. Blue tiling, exposed brick and ancient wooden beams combine with close tables and banquette seating to create a setting that is so un-Adelaide that it's no wonder the locals love it. Great wines by the glass ... and absinthe, of course. 27 Gresham St, Adelaide. Open Wednesday-Saturday from 4pm. 

*Above:* The Lion restaurant.