

adelaidegrapevine

NIGEL HOPKINS

ADELAIDE super-chef **Jock Zonfrillo** has won national recognition for his unique Orana restaurant, where he and his kitchen team have created exquisite dishes featuring native Australian produce. That's the upstairs restaurant, but at ground level - and at a level probably more approachable for many customers - Zonfrillo has opened **Blackwood**, less formal in style but one where the quality of the cooking is taken just as seriously. Blackwood is not exactly a "little Orana" because it has its own distinct style and personality, busy and casual, dominated by the large central bar, big tables and wide-open street access. Although most dishes still feature native ingredients, like Orana, here they are almost taken for granted, without fuss, and much more accessible as a result. Moist, succulent steak tartare is given a flavour boost with mountain pepper, scallops seared over coals are given fresh citrus bite with ice plant and beach succulents, while grilled ling fish is brushed with Geraldton wax and served with burnt leeks and smoked potato mash. There are surprises, too, such as a snack that looks rather like rice crackers - puffy, white and crunchy - are actually deep-fried kangaroo tendons, made to sound more enticing as kangaroo crackers. Nothing faddish about any of this - just great food. It's as though the most popular dishes that have been experimented with and tried and tested upstairs at Orana have filtered down to Blackwood, but dressed in more sedate clothes. The wine list, though much smaller than that of Orana, is just as original and adventurous, with a focus on small, innovative South Australian winemakers. Blackwood, 285 Rundle St, Adelaide. Open for lunch Tuesday-Friday, dinner Tuesday-Saturday; phone (08) 8227 0344.

When a city restaurant has been going strong for 36 years and remains as popular as ever it has to be doing something seriously right, and that's the case with the multi-award winning **Jasmin**, which can rightfully claim the title of Adelaide's leading Indian restaurant. Started in 1980 as a small, unlicensed restaurant, its founder **Mrs Singh**, now in her 80s,

remains as Jasmin's guiding light and culinary controller, though she's largely had to relinquish her place at the stoves to her well-trained kitchen team. Its discreet basement location has helped make it a favourite of both captains of industry and politicians alike, with one former state premier once declaring that he would be happy to eat his last meal there. Not surprisingly it's especially popular with visiting Indian cricket teams, which helps account for the extraordinary cricket bat collection on its walls, along with a collection of Tom Gleghorn paintings hanging above a splendid dining room featuring glossy mahogany tables, low lights and sumptuous style. Mrs Singh continues to keep an eagle eye on key details such as the spicing, evidenced by her outstanding beef vindaloo and even more fiery chicken tindaloo. Watch for daily specials such as the pan-fried garfish dusted with masala spices. Side dishes and breads are unfailingly good, and the wine list is the best of any Indian restaurant in town. Less well known is that Jasmin has an even more discrete private dining room tucked behind the main restaurant. Jasmin, 31 Hindmarsh Squ, Adelaide. Open for lunch Thursday and Friday, dinner Tuesday to Saturday; phone (08) 8223 7837.

Alain Ducasse-trained chef **Tarik Marco** had big shoes to fill when he and partner **Sandrine Maltret** took over the much-acclaimed Fino premises at McLaren Vale and renamed the restaurant **Le Mistral**. However, he's done so with cooking that has even his French customers feeling as though they're at home. Nothing else has changed much in this simple and spare cottage restaurant, strategically located next to one of the country's best farmers' markets, other than a menu that now starts with classics such as duck rillettes with pickled shallots and cornichons, or foie gras with house-made brioche, and a very fine, buttery rough flamenkuch-style tart piled with creme fraiche, pickled onions and lardons. The house specialty bouillabaisse revels in the wealth of seafood from the nearby gulf, while the black Angus beef fillet served with duck fat potatoes and a slice of seared foie gras is utterly indulgent.

There are more French classics on offer such as duck a l'orange glazed with Grand Marnier sauce, even a snail pie with mushroom fricassee, and of course you can finish with desserts such as creme brulee with a glass of Muscat de Beaumes de Venise, or profiteroles with chocolate sauce. Tarik explains his cooking style is influenced by his early culinary memories growing up in Provence and says he and Maltret seek to share a taste of the French lifestyle through their restaurant. Le Mistral, 8 Hill St, Willunga. Open for lunch and dinner Wednesday-Sunday; phone (08) 8556 4488.

Despite its proximity to the city, on the foothills overlooking Adelaide's eastern suburbs, it took a while for the locals to cotton on to what was offered by the **Magill Estate Kitchen**, rather like a little sister to the adjacent and much acclaimed Magill Estate Restaurant where head chefs **Emma McCaskill** and **Scott Huggins** hold court. Huggins and McCaskill remain in charge of the menu and maintain a quality of cooking just as fastidious as the main restaurant, but here the style is more upmarket cafe though, in its own way, just as elegant. Intending diners in search of an exemplary brunch or lunch are now well advised to book ahead for a table in this long, ultra-contemporary space, with wall-to-wall windows overlooking the heritage shiraz vineyard in the foreground. Fortunately this section of the vineyard remains for the time being, while its neighbouring section has been pulled up for replanting. The menu reflects a level of sophistication rarely found at this level of dining, with brunch dishes such as home-made crumpets with ham hock, poached egg and bearnaise sauce, or main course lunch dishes such as corned beef cheek with butter poached turnip and roasted onion. You can step up a level with charcoal grill dishes such as waygu ribeye, perhaps with a glass of Bin 389 or even Grange. Magill Estate Kitchen, 78 Penfold Rd, Magill. Open for brunch and lunch daily; phone (08) 8301 5943.

Top: Magill Estate Kitchen interior.
Left: Interior of Jasmin restaurant.

