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IT has a new name and its menu is constantly evolving, but **Maxwell's** - formerly known as Ellen St - continues to display the same outstanding quality and value.

Nor has there been any change to the panoramic views over the vineyards of McLaren Vale from this elegant stone and glass-encased winery dining room, one of the most beautifully located restaurants in the region.

German-trained chef **Fabian Lehmann** has the unique advantage of having his own limestone cave in which to grow mushrooms, with delicate pine mushroom and chicken croquettes prettily served in a box with pine needles and bark. Lehmann's light touch shows through with dishes such as steamed mussels with dill oil, iceplant and chopped granny smith apple, or pan-seared Murray cod on parsley sauce with crisp Jerusalem artichokes. The slow-braised saltbush lamb shoulder, pulled and reassembled, served with shaved celeriac and charred broccolini goes exceptionally well with Maxwell's Ancient Earth shiraz. It's also worth mentioning that Lehmann's crisp, olive-flecked bread rolls, served with house-made butter, are a highlight in themselves. The wine list, not surprisingly, is a showcase of owner Mark Maxwell's finest. Maxwell's, Olivers Rd, McLaren Vale. Open for lunch daily; phone (08) 8323 8200.

With around 90km of beachfront you'd expect Adelaide's coastline to be packed with great seaside fish and chippers, but that's far from the case, making newcomer **Sea Salt** a rare but very welcome addition.

It may look like a bright and breezy diner, but that's just a little deceptive, and although its menu does include exemplary fish and



chips - tempura battered or chargrilled bream or flake with house cut chips - the focus is more on its inventive fish and seafood menu. Early menus paid homage to old classics such as a prawn cocktail, but that's been replaced with Coffin Bay oysters, with either a shallot vinaigrette or tempura-style with wasabi mayo, chilli and lime. Starters that have stood the test of time are the Ortis anchovy soldiers, prettily decorated with salted egg yolk, or the Hiramasa kingfish sashimi with shallots and lemon dressing. A plate of confit tuna atop a salad of white beans, green olives, capers and shallots, lifted with a lemon and kewpie mayonnaise vinaigrette, is a breath of summer freshness. More elaborate dishes include crisp nanagai with Singaporean black pepper sauce, coriander and savoury donuts. At the top end of the scale there's mudcrab, to be ordered in advance, served with Singapore chilli or black pepper sauce. If you sit at the outside tables there's not much between you, the jetty and the beach, or on a cool day sit inside at the window bench for great views over Gulf St Vincent. Sea Salt, Beachfront, 269 Seaview Rd, Henley Beach. Open daily for lunch and dinner; phone (08) 8465 5005.

Spaghetti Crab was supposed to be open for only six weeks, in transition from Beach Bum to something new from serial restaurateur **Walter Ventura**, but within days that idea has been tossed out, such was the customer response.

This is the first restaurant in Adelaide to feature just one dish - spaghetti in a gorgeously thick tomato sauce with chunks of whole crab on top, a bowl of chopped fresh chilli and more sauce on the side. Messy in the extreme, though plastic bibs are provided, along with a succession of finger bowls, napkins and scented towels, but so delicious it's every bit worth it.

One dish, although there is an unlisted non-crab alternative - spaghetti aglio olio, the spaghetti aficionado's favourite. Good oil,

garlic, fresh chilli, grated parmesan and very good, locally-made pasta. There's just one dessert - no fuss, no choice, no frills, just a Peter's Drumstick. The wine list is similarly spare - one red (a Montepulciano from Abruzzo), one white (pecorino, also Abruzzo), one sparkling (a Veneto prosecco), all at modest mark-ups. It's a brave way to run a restaurant but everybody seems to win, which is not surprising given that the team behind it is also responsible for hit restaurants such as Ruby Red Flamingo around the corner and Tony Tomatoes pizza joint up the road. At least you won't have to spend a lot of time working out what to eat and drink. And November being an "r" month, you can expect the crabs to be at their best. Spaghetti Crab, 47 O'Connell St, North Adelaide. Open for dinner Tuesday to Saturday; phone (08) 8361 8714.

Adelaide hasn't had many restaurants featuring Russian cuisine, so the welcome mat was well and truly out for **Red October**, whose name has nothing to do with the submarine movie of that name. This new addition to Adelaide's CBD was inspired by a Moscow chocolate factory of that name, now a creative hub, and features modern versions of some of Russia's best dishes, many featuring in-house picklings, ferments and baking - notably the most delicious Borodinsky sour dough rye.

Start with crisp deep-fried chebureki pork and sauerkraut dumplings with sour cream or shaved venison carpaccio with pickled mustard seeds and narsharab pomegranate sauce, while larger dishes include Ajika pork, a terrific Georgian-style dish of crisp-skinned pork belly laced with a fiery spice mix served with julienned celeriac and fennel with fresh herbs and caramelised turnip puree.

Downstairs there's a somewhat secretive bar that boasts around 450 whiskies - and a few lesser known vodkas, of course. Red October, 22 Gilbert Place, Adelaide. Open for dinner Tuesday to Saturday; phone (08) 8212 2938.



Top: Sea Salt restaurant exterior, Henley Beach.
Left: Mussels from Maxwell restaurant.