

Having a Wine Time.

The wine bar, as a place to talk with friends over a glass of good wine and a plate of something tasty, has come of age. Here are our favourites



EUROPEAN FLAVOURS

Tony Bilson's new venture Number One Wine Bar at Sydney's Circular Quay has the feel of a brasserie, with French doors opening onto Alfred Street and a whimsical fountain taking centre court in the alfresco dining area. We ask the veteran restaurateur about his latest project.

Why a wine bar?

It gives us the chance to cook the sort of rustic, provincial dishes we love to eat and match them to a range of contemporary and classical wines.

Why now?

At our fine dining restaurant Bilson's (in Sydney's Radisson Plaza Hotel), we concentrate on gastronomy as art, but our loyal customers have a great nostalgia for dishes from our previous restaurants and Number One gives us the opportunity to revisit old favourites as well as introduce cutting-edge new dishes that wouldn't fit on the Bilson's menu.

Tell us about the wines featured?

The cellar gives a nod to the classic Old World regions as well as drawing from Australian's iconic wineries, some of which will be bottling a selection exclusively for Number One, such as a Chardonnay and Shiraz Cabernet from Elderton in the Barossa Valley.

What's on the menu?

As well as tasting dishes such as *moules marinière* and pork *rillettes* with grilled sourdough, we'll have also a range of *plats du jour* that will change on a regular basis, including *pot au feu*, *tripes Lyonnaise*, *bouillabaisse* and other provincial specialities.

1 Alfred St, Circular Quay, Sydney, tel: +61 (2) 8252 9296.

TOP DROPS



HOBART

Grape Bar and Bottle Shop in historic Salamanca Place is a modern temple to all things vinous. Roam the cellar of around 600 vintages or enjoy one of 30 wines by the glass with an antipasto plate, wood-fired pizza or freshly shucked local oysters. 55 Salamanca Plc, Hobart, tel: +61 (3) 6224 0611.



MELBOURNE

Gertrude Street Enoteca is modelled on the *enotece* (wine bars) of Italy – neighbourhood wine shops serving glasses of wine with a plate of something simple but beautiful to eat. In this case, think house-made tarts, panini, terrines and a range of cheeses, as well as bistro-style dishes made with artisanal foods sourced from around Victoria. 229 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, Melbourne, tel: +61 (3) 9415 8262.

Photo: Visions of Victoria



BRISBANE

The cosy cru bar + cellar offers a touch of Europe with an antique Parisian Baccarat crystal chandelier above a solid onyx bar top. At least 20 wines are poured by the glass each week, including the likes of Billecart-Salmon Champagne and interesting imports. Perfect with sugar-cured salmon, veggie *pakorras* or barbecue duck spring rolls. 1/22 James St, Fortitude Valley, Brisbane, tel: +61 (7) 3252 1744.



HONOLULU

Over 50 wines by the glass from Old World to New, including California, Chile, New Zealand and Australia; some of the best thin-crust pizza, pasta and panini in town; and cool live music, makes Formaggio Wine Bar one of the best places in Honolulu to unwind. It's big city sophistication with a fun and flirty island vibe. 2919 Kapiolani Blvd, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA, tel: +1 (808) 739 7719.

CAIRNS

The new Bellavista on the pier provides a much-needed oasis for vinophiles, with over 30 wines by the glass and bottles spanning the globe from New World through to Alsace, Spain and Italy. With recycled 100-year-old pier pylons and sleepers, this comfortable space is perfect for a glass of wine alongside a steak sandwich, linguine marinara or pizza. Pier Point Rd, Cairns, tel: +61 (7) 4041 3991.

