



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT Appellation's Hutton Vale lamb dish; Bendooley Estate; Hotel Royal Mail's eggplant with smoked goat's cheese, katsubushi and sesame; ducks in the Royal Mail Hotel's kitchen garden.

NSW

Bendooley Estate

Located in Berrima, part of NSW's picturesque Southern Highlands, Bendooley Estate offers the perfect weekend getaway for food and wine buffs.

Book a table for lunch at the estate's restaurant, situated inside the Berkelouw Book Barn, and feast on roasted spatchcock with corn puree, and rhubarb and ginger trifle for dessert. After lunch, wander through to the cellar door to taste the estate-grown cool-climate wines with a cheese plate to share.

When it's time to fall into a food coma, return to your on-site cottage, complete with fireplace and views of farmlands and vineyards. 3020 Old Hume Hwy, Berrima; www.bendooleyestate.com.au.

VIC

Royal Mail Hotel

Originally established in 1855, Royal Mail Hotel is located three hours' drive west of Melbourne. The hotel has been given a makeover and now provides the perfect long weekend away; with a dining room, wine bar and on-site accommodation, as well as a sister property, Mount Sturgeon Estate, offering guests a homestead and cottages.

Executive chef Robin Wickens heads up the dining room with a paddock-to-plate ethos — eggs and herbs are sourced on-site, and the hotel

even farms its own snails. The restaurant offers eight- and five-course tasting menus, all with matched wines chosen from a collection of about 2300 local and imported bottles.

To work off all that eating, the hotel offers nature walks; ranging from strolls to adrenalin pumping mountain climbs. 98 Parker St, Dunkeld; www.royalmail.com.au.



Eat Inns

Luke Mangan shares his favourite places to indulge in a gourmet weekend away.

TAS

Saffire Freycinet

With views over the Freycinet Peninsula, Great Oyster Bay and the Hazards mountain range Saffire Freycinet is one of Australia's most luxurious resorts.

Saffire's restaurant, Palate, is headed by Hugh Whitehouse and prides itself on showcasing Tasmania's premium local ingredients and wine.

Guests can enjoy pre-dinner drinks and canapés in the lounge, before moving to the intimate 40-seat dining room, which is set over two tiers to allow each diner to take in the spectacular views.

The resort offers plenty of foodie experiences, from cooking demonstrations to guided tours of Wineglass Bay, complete with gourmet picnics. 2352 Coles Bay Rd, Coles Bay; www.saffire-freycinet.com.au.

SA

The Louise

Fancy blending your own Penfolds wine and having a chef design a menu to match? Drive an hour from Adelaide to The Louise — a vineyard retreat for guests to stay, dine and explore.

Other activities include hot-air ballooning and market tours. But if you're just here to eat, dine at the famous Appellation restaurant. 375 Seppeltsfield Rd, Marananga, Barossa Valley; www.thelouise.com.au.

ACT

Hotel Hotel

Situated in the hip NewActon precinct, Hotel Hotel's 68 rooms are filled with restored furniture and curated artworks. The hotel's Monster Kitchen and Bar offers breakfast, lunch and dinner — think house-made crumpets with Hotel Hotel honey or pulled lamb shoulder with yoghurt.

There's also an outdoor cinema in summer, as well as bike hire and private yoga classes. 25 Edinburgh Ave, Canberra; www.hotel-hotel.com.au.