

WESTERING AT LAKE GEORGE WINERY

There are three items Lake George Winery co-owner Sarah McDougall will never take off the menu at Westering, the property's restaurant, which sits on a hillside between Canberra and Collector: the beef carpaccio with black garlic aioli ("everyone who tastes it raves about it"); the pavlova topped with cherries, mulberries or whatever is in season in the orchard; and the hot chips. The third is the perfect salty, carb-filled accompaniment to the Canberra wine region's signature varietal, riesling, and McDougall says she's yet to meet a customer who's regretted putting the two together. For visitors who decide to stay longer, self-



contained tiny house Little George sits a little higher up the hill overlooking the shimmering flats of the dry lake. It's a charming place to spend the night. lakegeorgewinery.com.au

PAVILION DINING AT PIALIGO ESTATE

When a restaurant's kitchen garden is home to 35 varieties of tomato, you can assume its owners take the art of growing, cooking and serving food seriously. At Pialigo Estate, a few minutes' drive from Canberra's CBD, the term "kitchen garden" is something of an understatement. It sits on 22ha of farmland that produces everything from olives and grapes to its own smoked meats. Pavilion Dining, which has views to Parliament House, is one of six places to eat on the property, and head chef Mark Glenn, formerly of Cumulus in Melbourne, is a maestro at turning the homegrown fruit and



vegetables into exceptional dishes. Groups of six or more can opt for a garden-to-plate experience in which diners pick produce and turn it into something delicious (relish made from freshly harvested beets, for instance) to take home, before sitting down to lunch. thepialigoestate.com.au



Canberra winery lunch spots

Dine well and long at these capital vineyards

ALEXANDRA CARLTON

POACHERS SMOKEHOUSE AND VINEYARD

Lunch works two ways at this charming country estate, a 30-minute drive north of Canberra. Visitors can either sit in the 1930s weatherboard cottage of the Smokehouse Restaurant or grab a patch of lawn for a picnic beneath the eucalypts and pine trees. Those who choose the picnic option are given a basket of house-smoked ham, antipasto, a block of Tilba Real Dairy cheese, flatbread and condiments, plus a lovely embroidered Poachers Pantry tea towel to keep, and can choose a spot that suits. It's an experience owner Sue Bruce began offering diners to give them more space at



the height of COVID-19 restrictions; it proved such a hit she's made it a permanent fixture. Many guests stay for hours, wandering around the gardens and vegetable patches and visiting the Wily Trout cool-climate vineyard and cellar door. poacherspantry.com.au



VINEYARD CAFE AT BRINDABELLA HILLS

The beauty begins even before entering the driveway of this pretty winery in the Brindabella Ranges, 25km north of Canberra. In fact, find a place to pull over on Woodgrove Close, the only road leading to the property, and take in vistas as bucolic as a John Constable painting. From a table on the terrace at the rear of the winery, gaze down at the winding

Murrumbidgee River, or settle in beside the broad lawn and grapevines hemmed with roses out the front. The cafe serves a two-course, set-menu lunch for \$60, with a worthwhile extra \$16 for wine pairings. If you're only having a glass or two, ask for the estate riesling, the pick of the cellar. brindabellahills.com.au



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