

**FOOD FOR THOUGHT** (clockwise from below) Explore the grounds of The Agrarian Kitchen; a dish from Rodney Dunn's new cookbook; enjoy Scandi treats at Franklin.



# TASSIE TASTER

*In a garden near Hobart, culinary traditions are being lovingly revived*

Remember a time when people grew and raised nearly everything they ate in their own gardens, from apples and corn to pigs and goats? I do. It was last weekend. Down a lane outside a village in deepest, darkest Tasmania (OK, it's a 45-minute drive from Hobart), a 19th-century schoolhouse nestles in five acres of land that's not only productive, but beautiful, too. It provides the food for owners Rodney Dunn and Séverine Demanet and their family, as well as the cooking school they run from the converted schoolroom's vast kitchen.

Dunn, who trained as a chef in Sydney under Tetsuya Wakuda, moved to Tasmania with Demanet to set up The Agrarian Kitchen back in 2007. His classes (which cover everything from simple,



seasonal menus to bread making, vintage baking, braising and butchery) have been booked out ever since. In fact, Dunn's class on cooking with truffles proved so popular that his new cookbook is wholly devoted to the precious fungus.

I visit The Agrarian Kitchen on a crisp, bright day, when the property is still strewn with golden and russet leaves from trees planted by long-gone schoolchildren to mark Federation. Practically everything I eat and drink all day – from morning tea's rhubarb cake and herbal infusion to the Berkshire pig that provided the pork roast and the goat's cheese in the salad – is produced on-site. Dunn leads me on a pre-lunch stroll round the garden to pick the salad greens, and I gorge on fresh-picked apples, raspberries, strawberries and tomatoes. The flavours are the most intense I've ever tasted, and Dunn

gestures at the neat rows of vegetables, fruit-laden orchard and overflowing greenhouses as he says, "This is the secret to my cooking. I knew if I wanted my food to be better, I needed better ingredients. So we grew them." The purpose of his classes, he says, is "to get people to think differently about their food. We want them to go home and either produce their own, or support others who produce it in the right way."

The growing paddock-to-plate movement is championed by an abundance of restaurants in Hobart, the base for my weekend of glorious gluttony. The winter sun still shines as I stroll along the waterfront towards Aloft, a bar and restaurant atop Brooke Street Pier, from where I watch the sun set across the Derwent



**LOVE AT FIRST SIGHT** (from left) Rest your weary head at The Henry Jones Art Hotel; a picture-perfect cottage in Battery Point; the Museum of Old and New Art (MONA).



River and sip a local pinot. Dinner is at Franklin, a Scandi-inspired spot that's all concrete, blond wood and sculptural lights, with fresh, flavoursome fare that sings from the locally sourced hymn sheet.

Later, I retire to my wood-panelled room at The Henry Jones Art Hotel, housed in an old jam factory built in 1804 and full of artworks, and watch the lights sparkle across the harbour from my window until I fall asleep.

It's an early start to visit the Farm Gate Market next morning, before a flat white from Pilgrim Coffee and pastries from Pigeon Whole Bakers. Next, it's off to MONA – where the food also ticks all the local and tasty boxes – for an art fix. (Dark Mofo, the museum's popular midwinter arts festival, starts on June 10.) The afternoon holds a leisurely stroll along Salamanca Wharf and around historic Battery Point where the

streets of perfectly preserved 19th-century cottages are a delight. As rain sprinkles, I retreat to the cosy Hope & Anchor, arguably Australia's oldest pub, for a local cider. The deluge worsens, so I return to my home away from home (that is, if my home were glamorous, historic and had local wine and attentive service on tap), beside Henry Jones's flickering fire. It's a winter weekend wonderland... **HANNAH JAMES**

*The Truffle Cookbook by Rodney Dunn (Penguin, \$59.99) is out tomorrow.*

**FOLLOW HANNAH ON TWITTER @HFJAMES\_**

## SNOW DOWN *With a glass of red by a fireplace* BY ALLEY PASCOE

### BURNT HUT, MT BULLER



Ski straight from your front door at this luxury chalet on the "Shaky Knees" run, then warm up in your private sauna or in front of the open fire, \$2100 per night. Visit [burnthut.com](http://burnthut.com).

### ROCKPOOL LODGE, THREDBO



This Snowy Mountains ski lodge offers privacy, a gourmet kitchen and a claw-foot tub. Explore the surrounding bushland or retreat to the lodge, from \$700 per night. Visit [rockpoolodge.com.au](http://rockpoolodge.com.au).

## GOURMET GETAWAY

### FEAST AT THE FAIRMONT RESORT



Join Colin Fassnidge for a weekend in the Blue Mountains as he hosts a nose-to-tail cooking masterclass and four-course dinner. From \$259 per room, per night. Visit [fairmontresort.com.au](http://fairmontresort.com.au).

PHOTOGRAPHY: ANDREW RAILTON/MT BULLER, ROCKPOOL LODGE, WOODBRIDGE, TOURISM AUSTRALIA

# THE SIMPATIO CONFERENCE

## CREATING A WORLD OF BRAVE AND AMBITIOUS WOMEN

The Simpatico Conference is thrilled to bring Reese Witherspoon as our headline speaker to Australia.

Opening in every city with Naomi Simson, and with four content rich workshops, delivered by educators who are experts in their field, this immersive professional development conference will be a life changing experience.

Conference Packages and Gala Dinner Tickets on sale now

Brisbane July 12 • Sydney July 14 • Melbourne July 16

We are on a mission to educate, develop, and inspire emerging leaders. Isn't it time you gave yourself permission to be brave enough to be a little more ambitious?

Visit [www.simpaticococonnect.com](http://www.simpaticococonnect.com) or call 1300 793 326 to secure your ticket.