

AUGUST 2020

Kia Ora

The Best of Winter Wanderlust
Time for a cool change

A-List Adventure
Luxury escapes in the Wairarapa

City Life
An urban tour of Christchurch



**Do something new
New Zealand**

Rediscover Aotearoa



ON THE MENU

Central Otago

Feast your eyes on rugged landscapes and drink in views of lakes and rivers while you enjoy what the eateries and bars this beautiful, bountiful southern region has to offer.

BY SHARON STEPHENSON



Eat

CARRICK

It's practically law in Central Otago that you must eat at least one meal while overlooking a river or lake. At this Bannockburn cellar door and restaurant, you do so while surrounded by 24ha of organic vineyards. Head chef Gwen Harvie acquired her impressive skills at a Michelin-starred London restaurant, before coming home to do adventurous things with local produce. You could dive into lamb shoulder slow-roasted with wild thyme, or a superfood salad with ingredients picked not far from where you're sitting. Then enjoy the richness of Harvie's apple pie that's served with vanilla-bean ice cream and apple jelly. carrick.co.nz

THE COURTHOUSE CAFE

There are cafes in churches, boats and sheds, so why not one in an old courthouse? Chef Rebecca Farrell honed her craft working at London's Harvey Nichols cafe and on superyachts. It's where she met her Irish husband Baz and the pair now runs this eatery in the former



Clockwise from top left: Creme brulee French toast with a frozen custard 'cigar' from The Courthouse Cafe; inside the cafe; al fresco dining at Carrick; Carrick's cellar door manager Sol Felix de Souza (left) and head chef Gwen Harvie.





Alexandra courthouse, built in the 1870s. This is food with character, such as beef fillet with white-bean puree and confit egg yolk flecked with gold (and served in a gold-panning dish), the golden crayfish gnocchi and the creme brulee French toast, which is served with a 'cigar' of frozen custard – a flourish that elevates this classic dish. thecourthousecafealex.yolasite.com

OLIVERS RESTAURANT & BAR

In an 1860s former general store in Clyde's main street, executive chef James Waite turns out big, bold flavours from ingredients that only make it onto the plate by being the best (many are sourced from Waite's nearby property). When we visited, there were seared scallops with charred cauliflower, crispy-skin salmon on a bed of kina risotto, and porcini-dusted venison strip-loin. Would we like dessert? Yes we would. Both the cherry creme brulee and the Eton mess lemon meringue with lemon-curd cream hit the spot. The adjacent cafe stocks Waite's range of preserves and condiments and bread baked in-house. There's also The Victoria Store Brewery, which makes a range of pilsners, IPAs and golden ales. olivers.co.nz



From top: Olivers Restaurant & Bar in Clyde; chargrilled beef striploin with onion and garlic rouille, perla potatoes and tomato and bean salsa; executive chef James Waite in action.





Clockwise from top left: Armando Varlotta outside Armando's Kitchen, Cromwell; Varlotta's version of a Caesar salad with eggs, smoked salmon and anchovies; The Office in the Heritage Precinct, Cromwell; Blackberry and Rosemary Champagne Cocktail (left) and Roasted Blueberry and Basil Margarita Cocktail served at The Office.



ARMANDO'S KITCHEN

Armando Varlotta serves up honest, generous Italian-style cuisine and hospitality at his Cromwell restaurant. It features many of his family recipes, as well as produce from his partner's herb business. Varlotta, who hails from Northern Italy, knows his stuff – his London eatery was once named the city's best Italian restaurant by *Time Out*. Nosh on creamy risotto with porcini mushrooms or tortellini filled with home-made ricotta and the best cavolo nero you've ever tasted. There's sweet stuff too: tiramisu, of course, as well as a white-chocolate and lemon-curd cheesecake that's a game changer. armandoskitchen.com

Drink

THE OFFICE RESTAURANT & BAR

Gail Allison-Harris and her husband, architectural designer Grant Harris, once worked out of this building in the Cromwell Heritage Precinct. But they realised there was nowhere to have a drink after work so they turfed out Harris' practice and turned the space into a cool bar/eatery located next to the Lake Dunstan cycle trail. There are three tap beers (and a cider) from Wānaka brewery Ground Up Brewing, as well as local and international bottled brews. The wine list skews towards local drops, although if you feel like an Italian, Australian or Portuguese



wine you're in luck. The Blackberry and Rosemary Champagne Cocktail is a must, as is a visit to the bathroom to check out the imported safari wallpaper. theofficebar.nz

BANNOCKBURN HOTEL

Andy Mackintosh started his career as a tour-manager for bands such as The Rolling Stones and the Spice Girls. But then he met his Kiwi wife Anna in Melbourne and, after running a pop-up burger joint there, they came home to breathe new life into the Bannockburn Hotel. Not only have they modernised the dated interior, they've also revamped the food and beverage menu. This now runs to 51 pages and includes 200 wines (more than 60 are available by the glass), along with Andy's often amusing descriptions. There are wines made a few hundred metres away, to as far away as Israeli and Russia. When your tummy rumbles, there's a range of delicious tapas-style sharing plates. bannockburnhotel.com

MISHA'S VINEYARD TASTING ROOM

Australian Misha Wilkinson met her Kiwi husband Andy in Sydney and the pair spent 18 years in the IT industry in Singapore. But a love of wine was always with them, so in 2004 they came to Central Otago and planted grapes. They also turned this former cafe in Cromwell into a tasting room where visitors can sample their 11 wines. These include the 2012 Verismo pinot noir and the 2019 rose which was last year named New Zealand's top rose by Bob Campbell. They're big on education here, and will gladly talk you through their wines' subtleties. If you're lucky, you might also meet vineyard dogs Bogart and Harlow. mishasvineyard.com

From above: Enjoying food, drinks and views at the Bannockburn Hotel; Andy and Misha Wilkinson from Misha's Vineyard; Feinerman's in Roxburgh.



Shop

FEINERMAN'S WHOLE FOOD STORE

Sally Feinerman used to run a gym in Auckland but she and her builder husband Carl were in search of the quieter life so they relocated to Roxburgh. They bought an historical schist building on Roxburgh's main street and turned it into a gym and health-food store where Feinerman, a personal trainer, runs classes. Not surprisingly the food side of the business focuses on healthy eats sourced

from around New Zealand. It's often organic, low-carb, gluten-free, sugar-free and Paleo. They also stock craft chocolate, bone broth, hemp products, nuts, honey, ready-made meals and appropriately named Dr Feelgood frozen pops. feinermans.shop

Air New Zealand operates daily non-stop flights to Dunedin and Queenstown from Auckland, Wellington and Christchurch, with connections across the domestic network.