



## Paringa Estate

CONTEMPORARY 15/20

**W** A compact tasting area and dining room give way to an expansive view of vines, gentle slopes and wandering geese which, after the first sip, all add up to a bucolic idyll. Everything is well in hand: the service is crisp and accommodating, the wine is excellent, and the food is pleasing. Snapper fillet is baked and served with plump mussels, crisp fried prawns, quinoa and samphire in a clever play of textures and sea-salty flavours. Pumpkin rotolo, topped with a colourful tangle of zucchini flowers and herbs, has an exuberant cottage garden air while a jammy dollop of mustard fruits acts as anchor. Carrot souffle is the hidden jewel in an entree that balances earthy and ethereal, and desserts are layered adventures, local berries tucked under shards of meringue, perhaps, or a coconut and chocolate extravaganza that offers plenty of excuses to delay the drive home.

**AND ...** Occasional cellar nights encourage diners to raid their own wine stashes.

**VIBE** Relaxed and confident.

**BEST BIT** Sunny days on the deck.

**WORST BIT** It's so hard to choose between cheese and dessert.

### RED HILL SOUTH

44 Paringa Road **03 5931 0136**

**Open** L Wed-Sun; D Fri-Sat **Average main** \$39 **Cards** MC V eftpos

**Drinks** The focus is on the estate wines, but emblematic wines from elsewhere make an appearance

**Owner** Lindsay McCall **Chef** Julian Hills **Seats** 65; outdoors [www.paringaestate.com.au](http://www.paringaestate.com.au)



## Polperro

CONTEMPORARY 14/20

**NEW** This newcomer to the peninsula's exciting winery scene might not share the million-dollar sea views of some of its counterparts, but it does have its fair share of understated style. It's a warm and inviting bistro, with a sleek charcoal-coloured bar and big windows overlooking magnificent gum trees. Andrew Doughton from the Long Table is in charge of the kitchen, and his eclectic, global-roaming stamp is evident on the menu. The food is designed to share, though you may want to keep creamy, smoked fish croquettes all for yourself. A slow-cooked, gelatinous ox cheek on a creamy parsnip puree is a good example of a classic done well. Less conventional, but equally satisfying, are crisp-battered chicken pieces paired with pickled beans. Some minor service missteps were likely due to the just-open wobbles. Come dessert, little chocolate and Pedro Ximenez eclairs are surefire crowd-pleasers, but a creamy passionfruit tart dotted with passionfruit caviar pearls and served with coconut sorbet is a highlight.

**AND ...** Seek out the intimate wine-tasting room, which doubles as a private dining room.

**VIBE** Relaxed yet sophisticated.

**BEST BIT** An exciting new kid on the peninsula block.

**WORST BIT** Closed Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

### RED HILL

150 Red Hill Road **03 5989 2471**

**Open** L Thurs-Mon; D Thurs-Sat

**Average main** \$34 **Cards** MC V eftpos **Drinks** A solid wine list with local and international options by the glass and bottle **Owner** Sam Coverdale **Chef** Andrew Doughton **Seats** 80; outdoors; bar [www.polperrowines.com.au](http://www.polperrowines.com.au)

## Port Phillip Estate

CONTEMPORARY 15/20

**W** With one of Australia's great architectural reveals as a greeting, Port Phillip Estate promises much. And with new chef Stuart Deller in the kitchen, the food delivers on the pledge, with outstanding ideas wrought into tasty and satisfying dishes. A breathtakingly pretty blue-eye dish almost outdoes the view towards Western Port: classic technique shines through in the golden crisped skin, pearly flesh and shimmering onion consommé, while a meandering eye for local bounty sees samphire and nasturtium scattered over the plate. A duck dish is a similar balance of light and shade, with carved breast blushing over a melange of shredded leg meat, pert peas and sticky jus. Desserts do a clever dance of textures and flavours: a parfait of caramelised white chocolate plays off an almond tuile and frisky fennel sorbet. White tablecloths, weighty cutlery, proper glassware and confident, well-drilled service further signal that this is a classy operation.

**AND ...** The cellar door offers bistro lunches from Saturday to Tuesday.



**VIBE** Luxurious.

**BEST BIT** The view.

**WORST BIT** With so many wines to try, you'll need a designated driver.

### RED HILL SOUTH

263 Red Hill Road **03 5989 4444**

**Open** L Wed-Sun; D Fri-Sat **Set**

**menus** \$68 (2 courses), \$85

(3 courses) **Cards** AE MC V

eftpos **Drinks** A showcase of

Sandro Mosele's house wines

complemented by relevant

outsiders **Owner** Gjerjia family

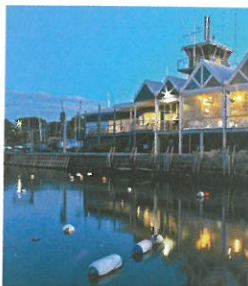
**Chef** Stuart Deller **Seats** 85 [www.portphillipestate.com.au](http://www.portphillipestate.com.au)

## The Rocks Mornington

SEAFOOD 14/20

Dig, if you will, the picture: a light breeze, sparkling ocean views and you and your loved one perched on a sunny deck with appetites piqued by the salty air. For more than a decade, the Rocks has charmed its patrons with ocean treats and a relaxed vibe that pervades both the covered deck and the nautical-inspired dining room. The globe-trotting menu could have you slurping freshly shucked oysters with a fiery sambal dressing or munching mini tostadas topped with dollops of smooth crab, avocado and zippy jalapeno. On the mains front, charry salmon kebabs come with a (perhaps too) busy quinoa salad popping with pomegranate seeds and corn, while barramundi in super-creamy green curry is enhanced by crushed peanuts and slippery okra. Service is well-intentioned but can sometimes lack professionalism. Finish sweetly with hazelnut semifreddo, or a winning pistachio panna cotta, sitting tremulously with a troll-doll bouffant of Iranian fairy floss.

**AND ...** There's a breakfast menu, too.



**VIBE** Sun, surf and seafood.

**BEST BIT** Stunning views.

**WORST BIT** The service sometimes slips.

### MORNINGTON

1 Schnapper Point Drive

**03 5973 5599**

**Open** B L D Daily (closed Sun nights

in winter) **Average main** \$32 **Cards**

AE MC V eftpos **Drinks** Wines

spotlight the Mornington Peninsula;

plenty by the glass and carafe

**Owner** Robert De Santis **Chef** Xavier

Nalty **Seats** 130; outdoors [www.therocksmornington.com.au](http://www.therocksmornington.com.au)