



Travel

Travel Editor Sarah-Kate Lynch

5 wine regions of SOUTH AUSTRALIA

Blokes tend to like big gutsy reds and there's plenty of them on this trail

When the Ginger (my own personal big gutsy red) and I found ourselves in Adelaide for a while, we did some serious exploring of this famous grape-growing area.

1 Adelaide Hills

This is the closest to Adelaide of the five well-known wine regions, you can be sipping wine among the vines in less than 30 minutes from downtown. Our favourite was a place called Shaw & Smith, where you pay for your wine "flight", but it comes with a cheeseboard and you can sit and soak up the sun gazing across the vineyard for as long as you like. To stay, you can't go past Cladich Pavilions in Aldgate – perfect for a group getaway as one pavilion has a full kitchen and laundry. Dinner at the nearby Stirling Hotel provides hearty bistro fare and the German town of Hahndorf draws many a weekend tourist.

2 Clare Valley

Heading north towards the Flinders Ranges and the outback, the Clare is a two-hour drive from Adelaide and reminded me of the Wairarapa with lots of little wineries scattered about its leafy hills and green valleys. When we

passed through, it was Easter and most wineries were closed, but we still managed a snifter at Annie's Lane in Watervale, a not-so-little heritage estate with lovely picnic grounds where they have concerts in the summer. We also stopped at Knappstein winery and microbrewery in Clare – in my experience, dads like beer too.

3 The Barossa

I kept my preference for white wine to myself when we headed to the most famous of the South Australian wine regions for a last-minute winter weekend, the highlight of which was lunch at Hentley Farm, just named Australia's best winery. This molecular-style (think dry ice and drama) dining experience makes it into my top five meals of a lifetime – truly something special. That night, we had cheese and crackers for dinner with a glass of red in front of the roaring fire at Jasmine's Cottage in Lyndoch (stayz.com.au is the go-to booking service around these parts) and stopped for a casual lunch (mmm, pies) the next day at Charles Melton Wines. Glass of Father-In-Law shiraz, anyone?

4 McLaren Vale

The Fleurieu Peninsula stretches from Adelaide down to Kangaroo Island and is home to

the McLaren Vale wines. This is a great destination for tourists because you get wine and coast within cooee of each other. When my sisters came to visit, we went for a wintry walk on Maslins Beach (fully-clothed, which is not a prerequisite as it turns out), then had a sumptuous lunch at d'Arry's Verandah, part of the d'Arenberg Winery. More recently, the Ginger and I ventured further down the peninsula to the historic port town area on the east coast where we stayed at Jimmy Smith's Dairy Retreat, a historic rental cottage in Port Elliot. Divine.

5 Coonawarra

This is the only wine region I didn't get to, as it's a four-hour drive from Adelaide towards Victoria and I didn't have my own car and couldn't find a taxi. The real red wine aficionados, however, would run me over to get to this cabernet sauvignon mecca. In one strip, just 21km long and two kilometres wide, there are something like 25 wineries and in October the place is in overdrive for the Coonawarra Cabernet Celebrations. If you're keen and have time, you could tie this in with driving Victoria's Great Ocean Road. Dads will drink to that, I'm sure. (But you might have to drive.)



The Coonawarra is the one I didn't get to, but there's definitely room for me at the table!



It's not all smoke and mirrors at Hentley Farm – there's Aussie's finest food and wine too.



Passionfruit soufflé with a sticky white at d'Arry's Verandah. Yum.

PICTURES: SARAH-KATE LYNCH, SOUTH AUSTRALIA.COM