

Penrith Foodscape Explores Diverse Tastes and Traditions

Tortellini, tandoori, tom yum and the ubiquitous T-bone ... the tastes and traditions of countless cuisines now spice the Penrith foodscape. Not having had to survive a fickle "attack of the Beautiful People" like so many of Sydney's hip dining addresses, Penrith's restaurants are generally sociable places with a reputation for extending the enjoyment of everyday eating.

Names like La Notte, Osso, Three Junction Thai, Tandoori Corner and Madisons Chargrill provide an inkling of the diversity of food styles available. But the unique character and heritage of the district itself also makes a distinctive contribution to the local food experience.

In historic Mulgoa, your dining destination can be Peppercorn Cafe, a settlers cottage steeped in country atmosphere from its sunny verandah to the cheer of its open fire.

Even more historic is Mamre Homestead on Mamre Road at St Marys, built in the 1820s for the son of colonial chaplain, magistrate and pastoralist Samuel Marsden. Today, the Sisters of Mercy operate the property as tea rooms and a luncheon restaurant to develop employment training and support.

King Henry's Court predates even Samuel Marsden in its pursuit of historical character. The former 19th Century church in Henry Street has been transformed into a cosy restaurant with wooden benches and serving wenches. And Peachtree Inn near the Museum of Fire can match it - at least for Australiana. A popular bistro and bar, it also serves as a chaotic gallery of bush memorabilia.

The Nepean Waterside Restaurant at Memorial Avenue, Penrith, is a popular venue for big occasion dining with an impressive riverside location, extensive menu with daily specials, and polished service. It has private dining rooms and is popular for receptions and events. The Beef & Barramundi at Tench Avenue, Penrith, perpetuates that classic Australian culinary coalition - the turf and surf menu.

Procrastinators are particularly well catered for at Penrith. Just head for Panthers World of Entertainment, the largest and most successful licensed club in NSW. Dining at Panthers can mean Memories, a five-star brasserie with international buffet and a la carte menus and Panarotti's, a casual pasta and pizza venue. There is also a Hungry Jack's outlet within the club, and McDonalds, KFC, Silver Spur Steak House, Lone Star and Krispy Kreme Doughnut outlets within the club grounds.