

duck. Don't forego the bread which is dipped in scrumptious La Barre Blood Plum Finishing Vinegar and Yass olive oil. The wine list is also a winner – if you can tear yourself away from the hypnotic sway of the fireplace flames long enough to read it!

Wine buffs have a range of wineries to choose from including Murrumbateman's Clonakilla. Pulling up to cellar door, you're likely to see a sign that reads: *We are in the vineyard, please honk the horn LOUDLY!* but don't let that deter you. Tim Kirk is the family winemaker and their legendary Shiraz Viognier is an idea borne of his visit to France's Côte Rôtie. On the 1st of September, queues form to buy a bottle of this Shiraz Viognier described as 'ethereal'. Closer to Canberra is Mount Majura, a single estate vineyard that pairs their barrel-fermented Chardonnay or their popular TSG (Tempranillo, Shiraz and Graciano wines) with a delicious regional platter.

Looking for somewhere to stay the night? The rooms are comfortable at Murrumbateman's Country Guesthouse Schonegg run by Swiss Australian couple Evelyn and Richard Everson. Wrap yourself in a robe and slippers before dipping in the spa bath. Save room for breakfast served between 8-9:30am which features Evelyn's wonderful homemade jams.

Sydney-siders, don't content yourself with fast food offerings that litter the drive back home. Stop off at Lerida Estate's modern looking cellar door. While you're there, try some wine and order yourself a hot truffle bread (and one to take with you). It is warm, soft as a pillow and drenched in aromatic truffle butter – calories be damned!



PREVIOUS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: The rustic exterior of Grazing restaurant. Lerida Estate offers stunning scenery. Chef Daniel Flatt has a wonderful menu on offer at Lambert Vineyards. THIS PAGE CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: A Poachers Pantry delicacy, the colonial-style Penfolds Wine building. Vines at Dinny Goonan Winery.



The Details
 Clonakilla, clonakilla.com.au
 Country Guesthouse Schonegg, schonegg.com.au Grazing, grazing.com.au Lambert Vineyards, lambertvineyards.com.au
 Lerida Estate, leridaestate.com.au Mount Majura Vineyard, mountmajura.com.au Poachers Pantry, poacherspantry.com.au



Otway Ranges
 Vic

The beautiful Otways Region is home to some of Victoria's best coastline along the Great Ocean Road. But that's not all. Nestled in the hinterland are several small historic and rural towns; tiny places that fall into the 'best kept secret' category – they may be small, but they pack a big punch when it comes to showcasing the region's gourmet treats. Bite off this section of Victoria over a couple of days, and you'll sample everything from local seafood and organic farm produce, to bakery items and top-notch cheese and meats.

If you're driving from Melbourne, you'll be ready for brunch or lunch by the time you hit Aireys Inlet. At A La Greque, the delightful Greek hosts Kostas and Pam Talimanidis serve up modern Greek-Australian delights (plus there's views of the stunning Split Point Lighthouse). After lunch, make your way down the cliff-hugging, winding coastal road to the resort town of Lorne.

Before you let yourself loose in Lorne, take a detour up the Deans Marsh Road. Follow the signs to Gentle Annie Berry Gardens at Pennyroyal to pick punnets of fresh berries – around nine varieties are on offer.

For your evening's kip, travel back to Lorne and snuggle in under the eucalypt trees at Qdos Arts, a stunning gallery with Japanese-inspired, luxury cabins. Its cafe serves fresh scones and breads, baked in a wood-fired oven. For dinner, you can't beat the modern bistro at a 'classic' – the Lorne Hotel. It boasts fabulous views of the beach and serves some great international meals. On hot

nights, you can dine in the attached beer garden.

The next day, head back inland on the Deans Marsh Road and do a circuit via Bamba, Birregurra, Colac, Gellibrand, Ferguson, Beech Forest and Forrest. This route is promoted as the Otway Harvest Trail. In Bamba, stop off for a tippie and chat with Dinny Goonan at the delightful Dinny Goonan winery. He produces his own sparkling Riesling – Proserpina – a crisp, refreshing drop named after the Goddess of Spring. Here, too, is a 'don't miss' gastronomic experience – the long-standing retreat, Sunnybrae Restaurant, run by food icon George Biron. George even holds weekly cooking classes at the restaurant.

Alternatively, skip breakfast in Lorne and make a beeline to The Wye General Store and Cafe at Wye River, 17 kilometres away. Everything here – from top-quality breads to cakes – is made on the premises. (Hint: get there before the cyclists; this is their gourmet stop. The coffee is superb, too).

From here, the road winds to the fishing village of Apollo Bay, where crayfish hauls are the catch of the day. Having said that, you can't beat a good

These tiny places pack a big punch when it comes to showcasing the region's most gourmet treats

old fish and chips on the foreshore. Chris's Beacon Point, set up in the hills behind town offers a more elegant and leisurely dining experience in the bush. If you can't tear yourself away, there's luxury chalet accommodation.

Further west again, chug your way up Lavers Hill. It's not too late for a taste of the hinterland harvest trail – from here, detour onto the C155. On the way, expend some energy at The Otway Fly, an extraordinary 600m-long, 25m-high elevated tree top walk through a rainforest of Myrtle Beech, Blackwood and Mountain Ash. Then settle in at The Ridge Organic Food Store & Cafe in the beautiful rural community of Beech Forest. This showcases the region's tastiest delights – most of the produce is seasonal and sourced locally. Owner Sue Ladewig is renowned for her burger – the tastiest in Australia, according to many – and signature goulash pie (her mother's recipe,). Views from the veranda extend to the Grampians.

It's time to belt up and wind your way slowly westwards to Port Campbell where you can catch your breath at the Twelve Apostles. From here, you wave the Otways goodbye. If you're not yet sated you can do it all again in reverse (we dare you) or – to avoid temptation – return to Melbourne on the B120 via Ballarat. That should give you time to polish off your basket-full of (edible) souvenirs.

TOP TO BOTTOM: Great Ocean Road is one of Australia's most scenic drives. Fresh seafood at A La Greque. The Qdos Arts cente scones.



The Details
 A La Greque, alagrecque.com.au
 Chris's Beacon Point, chriss.com.au
 Dinny Goonan, dinnygoonan.com.au
 Gentle Annie Berry Gardens and Cafe, gentleannie.com.au
 Qdos Arts, qdosarts.com
 Lorne Hotel lornehotel.com.au
 Sunnybrae Restaurant, georgebiron.com
 The Ridge Organic Food Store & Café, theridgecafe.com
 The Wye General Store, thewyegeneral.com