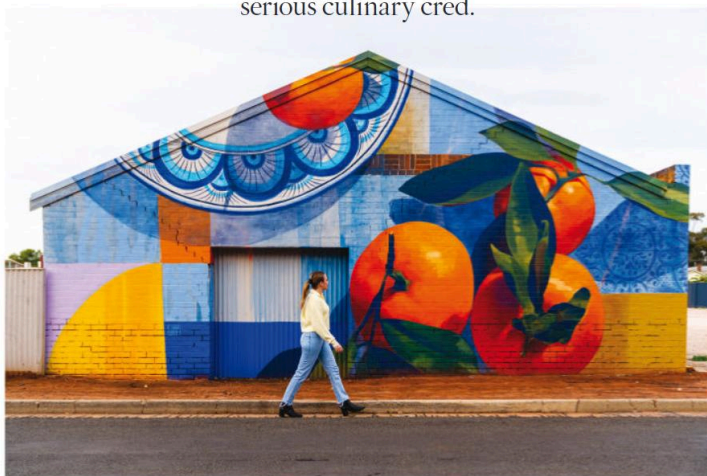


In partnership with Visit Griffith

SMALL TOWN DELIGHTS

With more than 60 nationalities calling it home and a century of Italian influence shaping its paddocks and plates, Griffith is a regional Australian town with serious culinary cred.



FROM FAR LEFT: Griffith offers drops from celebrated family-owned wineries; The foodie culture is on display throughout the region.

It might feel surprising to learn that Griffith is one of Australia's leading food destinations. In-the-know Italians have understood this for generations, drawn to the Riverina region's fertile soils that reminded them of the terrain they'd left behind more than a century ago. These days, Griffith supplies much of the nation's pantry: 95 per cent of Australia's prunes come from here, it's the country's largest citrus-growing area, and it's a leading producer of almonds and walnuts. Even the pickles in every McDonald's burger nationwide are produced in Griffith. This is not just a farming town; it's the food bowl of the Riverina.

Griffith's culinary confidence is rooted in migration. Italian families began arriving from 1913, with a second wave settling after the Second World War. Today, Griffith has the highest proportion of Italian ancestry of any Local Government Area in Australia. Add to that more than 60 nationalities represented across the community and

you have a town where food is driven not by trends, but by tradition. Griffith's motto, 'Taste our culture', isn't marketing spin; it's the reality.

WHERE THE VINES TELL A STORY

The Riverina has long been dubbed the food bowl of Australia, but it's also a wine region that remains largely under the radar. What sets Griffith apart is that every one of its wineries is family-owned.

CALABRIA FAMILY WINES is one of the area's standard-bearers. Beginning in 1945, today the family continues to shape the region's identity while also stewarding the historic **MCWILLIAM'S WINES** brand. McWilliam's was the first winery to plant vines in the area, and its barrel-shaped cellar door – complete with a soaring stained-glass window – remains one of the most distinctive in regional NSW.

YARRAN WINES, which is run by the Brewer family, showcases estate-grown fruit across Mediterranean varietals. Expect bold reds

and textured whites that reflect both heritage and innovation.

Set inside the old ambulance station, **HARVEST HQ** is owned and operated by the Riverina Winemakers Association and pours a rotating selection of local wines.

AT THE TABLE

If the local vineyards tell one story, the dining rooms tell another. Griffith's restaurants are where tradition and next-generation confidence meet.

ZECCA HANDMADE ITALIAN occupies the former Rural Bank building, an imposing Art Deco landmark from the late 1930s. 'Zecca' means money print, and the name is a nod to the Zecca di Venezia in Venice. Here, find the Riverina's only producer of dried artisan pasta and traditional Italian recipes. Importantly, the growers and producers supplying the kitchen are listed on the menu as a transparent expression of the region's farm-to-table ethos.



CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Local orchards grow a variety of produce; Enjoy Zecca Handmade Italian's authentic meals; Feast on steakhouse style eats at Bull & Bell; Bertoldo's house-made gelato is a must-try; Aquina's Murray cod made an impression on royalty.



For a town that helps stock Australia's supermarkets, Griffith has remained curiously absent from the national dining conversation. That's beginning to change.

Established in 1977 and still run by the Vico family, LA SCALA puts authentic Italian cuisine centre stage. Expect handmade pasta, woodfired pizzas, slow-cooked sauces and dishes that follow recipes guarded like family heirlooms.

For something more contemporary, BULL & BELL, found in Gem Hotel, is a shrine to the Euro-style steakhouse. It works closely with local farmers and artisans to showcase Riverina produce.

And then there are the local institutions. BERTOLDO'S PASTICCERIA, now in its third generation, draws locals and visitors alike for cannoli, biscotti, crostoli and house-made gelato, alongside classic sausage rolls and potato pies. Just down the road, LA PICCOLA GROSSERIA feels like stepping into an Italian *alimentari*, its packed shelves lined with continental goods that wouldn't feel out of place in Puglia.

Meanwhile, LIMONE celebrates local and seasonal produce across breakfast and lunch

menus, all enriched by the produce of PICCOLO FAMILY FARM. Here you'll find pastries and sourdough baked daily, as well as an onsite retail pantry that lets you take the tastes of the region home with you.

FROM THE SOURCE

Behind every mouth-watering menu is a local producer. AQUINA SUSTAINABLE MURRAY COD is perhaps Griffith's most high-profile export; the brand's caviar and cod has achieved global recognition, even served to the likes of King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Impressed by the company's sustainable farming practices, the King requested the cod be sent to Buckingham Palace. Not bad for a fish farm in regional NSW.

MANDOLE ORCHARD champions almonds grown on a family-run farm, transforming them into almond milk and more. And over at MORELLA GROVE, olives are pressed into premium olive oil and pantry staples that speak to Griffith's Mediterranean heart.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

For a town that helps stock Australia's supermarkets, Griffith has remained curiously absent from the national dining conversation. That's beginning to change. If you've been searching for a regional food destination with substance, heritage and a clear sense of identity, you'll find it here in the Riverina.

Time your visit to the region to coincide with A TASTE OF ITALY GRIFFITH, held every August. This week-long celebration of Italian heritage and culture offers a wide range of Italian-inspired events and experiences to enjoy. Expect long-table lunches, wine tasting experiences, cooking classes and the popular MAKERS IN THE PIAZZA market. The festival's headline event is a ticketed long lunch, FESTA DELLE SALSICCIE (Salami Festival), where the winners of the best salami are announced.

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