



## HOT IN THE CITY

**Peacock and Jones, Hobart** Plenty of chefs and restaurants talk about local produce these days but in Tasmania it actually means something. Food miles are low, small producers abound and diners are rewarded with meals that really reflect a sense of place.

It's this passion for produce, and the people who nurture it, that drives Ben Milbourne, a high school science teacher turned MasterChef contestant turned produce advocate and TV host. As the new culinary curator of Peacock and Jones on Hobart's Hunter St, Milbourne is working closely with head chef Ishan Acharya to match his relationships with local producers with Acharya's technical expertise in the kitchen to create a menu that's full of the flavours of the Apple Isle.

"It's the story of Tasmania on a plate,"

says Milbourne. "It's real and it's the truth and Tasmania is the only place you can really say the food is local."

The dining room, in the historic former IXL factory that is now the Henry Jones Art Hotel on the waterfront, is full of history, from the thick sandstone walls and timber beams to paraphernalia from the jam production line. Milbourne has tapped into his network to procure items such as Strelleyfield Duck from Breadalbane in the state's north, pink eye potatoes from Rocky Tops Farm in the nearby Cole Valley and Lyndall Farm lamb from the Derwent Valley, served with fermented black barley and renowned goat dairy Leap Farm's unsalted goat's curd.

As tempting as travel is now that borders are opening, when local food tastes this good, it's hard to tear oneself away.

[peacockandjones.com.au](http://peacockandjones.com.au)

**ALIX CLARK**



## COOL IN THE COUNTRY

**Kinglake Distillery, Victoria** Sam Lowe has created an off-the-grid whisky distillery, and it's almost off the map, deep in the forest 75km northeast of Melbourne. That's perfect for Lowe who, while never deviating from the principles of classic distilling, knows his product must still taste of Kinglake. That comes from the unfiltered spring water on the property but also local pollens and natural yeasts. "We

make whisky with the distillery door open," he says. Plus this drink has something rarely found in traditional whisky: the sun.

"The climate has more effect on whisky than any other factor," Lowe says, and an Australian five-year-old would taste like a Scottish 10.

Kinglake Distillery sits next to the flower farm of his wife Chantal Daniels' parents, to which they moved in 2011 after meeting at the bar the British-born Lowe established in the French Alps. The couple love spirits, and when the mineral content of the property's spring proved "spot-on" for whisky, becoming flower growers was forgotten. The distillery opened in 2018.

"The water has a bit of variation in it and sometimes it's a bit funky," Lowe says, "and while we blend all barrels to get consistency, there will always be some variation because of our small size." That allows the couple to power the distillery through solar, and they plan to be carbon-neutral soon. "It's something everyone is going to be looking for in five to 10 years," he says.

Kinglake Distillery's main product is its O'Grady's Stand single malt, augmented by limited editions such as a redgum barrel whisky and private barrels. The rustic tasting room can be visited on open days every few weeks. The next is on February 27.

[kinglakedistillery.com.au](http://kinglakedistillery.com.au)

**JEREMY BOURKE**

