

TOP TABLES

All you need for a chic wedding is a beautiful restaurant with just enough space for a select few loved ones. BY ELIZA O'HARE



Doot Doot Doot at Jackalope hotel.

MORNINGTON PENINSULA

DOOT DOOT DOOT AT JACKALOPE HOTEL

Opened earlier this year, this place has hosted only a couple of weddings so far, but is an exercise in chic from start to finish. The degustation is either four or eight courses of wonder with matched wines, and we love the floor-to-ceiling views out over rolling hills and the property's Willow Creek vineyard, contrasting with the stark black modern building filled with neon, marble, artworks and lighting installations. You can even stage your ceremony on the terrace overlooking the vines. Book for up to 66 guests to dine, 100 for a cocktail party, or go for the entire hotel. 166 Balnarring Road, Merricks North, Victoria, (03) 5931 2500, jackalopehotels.com.



SYDNEY

BANKSII VERMOUTH BAR AND BISTRO

Part of Sydney's new Barangaroo precinct on the western harbour, Banksii has a fast line in vermouth, cocktails and a delicious menu. The space is glass-encased, with a large, bookable waterfront terrace, and can be arranged to accommodate everything from an intimate meal (up to 40 in the semi-private area) to dining for 120 (exclusive use of the restaurant), to a cocktail party across the whole venue for up to 200. Hack: the new ferry terminal at the restaurant's doorstep means a ceremony on the water is on the cards. 33 Barangaroo Avenue, Barangaroo, banksii.sydney.



Banksii Vermouth Bar and Bistro.

PORTEÑO AND GARDEL'S BAR

What was once the headquarters for a festive feast of edgy Argentinean-inspired (specifically Buenos Airean) fare, this inner-city venue, headed up by chefs Elvis Abrahamowicz and Ben Milgate, is now devoted to events, and promises a real wedding party. This place is big, with separate areas including leather booths and a private bar with a dramatic sunken dining area ringed with filigree wrought iron to descend into. The food retains its South American zing and is meant to be shared Argentinean style, so expect lots of wood-fired meats and hearty sides. Top wine list, too. 358 Cleveland Street, Surry Hills, (02) 8399 1440, porteno.com.au.

Porteño (and right).



ADELAIDE ORANA

Owner and chef Jock Zonfrillo has created something special here — it's just been named *Gourmet Traveller's* Restaurant of the Year, after all — with his eye on indigenous ingredients and a real respect for Australia's combined culinary history, meaning wedding guests from overseas will get a meaningful Australian experience to remember. Besides your big day, of course. Upper level, 285 Rundle Street, Adelaide, (08) 8232 3444, restaurantorana.com.



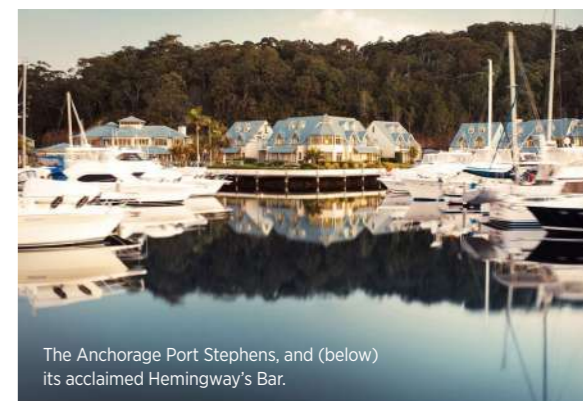
Maggie goose, smoked potato, leek and native currants at Orana (pictured above).



PORT STEPHENS

THE ANCHORAGE PORT STEPHENS

In Port Stephens, New South Wales, famous for its sapphire waters and incredible beaches, The Anchorage is a bit of an icon. This chic marina getaway, two and a half hours' drive north of Sydney, has just undergone a complete renovation to its 80 luxury rooms and Spa Lucca and opens its doors this month, which gives you the opportunity to be the first to throw a wedding here in the brand-new restaurant. Corlette Point Road, Corlette, (02) 4984 2555, anchorageportstephens.com.au.



The Anchorage Port Stephens, and (below) its acclaimed Hemingway's Bar.



BRISBANE

ESQUIRE (AND ESQ.)

Ryan Squires's degustation menu changes daily depending on produce availability, and that philosophy stands when he's creating a wedding menu for you. I guess you just need to leave it to Squires — but you're in very good hands. The space is slick and contemporary, and while it looks out over the Brisbane River, it has a dark and moody feel. Details such as the polished concrete floor and black marble bar make it a great choice for a glamorous city wedding party for a modern bride. You can also stage a takeover of the bar space for a dance floor when your DJ kicks in. 145 Eagle Street, Brisbane, (07) 3220 2123, esquire.net.au.

Lake House. Below left: the restaurant adorned with freshly cut flowers.

Esquire.



DAYLESFORD

LAKE HOUSE

This place, located just 90 minutes' drive from Melbourne CBD, has been around for a long time, and it has two hats from the *Good Food Guide* and a place in Australia's Best Wine List of the Year Hall of Fame. But a wedding at Lake House is about more than its menu. The cottage-style restaurant on a lake is a dreamy setting, and an abundance of freshly cut flowers make up part of that charm — in spring, expect blue gums, magnolia boughs, hellebores, ranunculi and tulips dressing shared feasting tables. 4 King Street, Daylesford, Victoria, (03) 5348 3329, lakehouse.com.au.



CHRIS CHEN; ELISE HASSEY; LUC REDMOND; JONATHAN VAN DER KNAAP; COURTESY OF VENUES