



After our angling lessons we break the hour's drive to Sheffield and stop at Barringwood Park Vineyard, where they are fast selling out of award-winning pinot noir. A tasting reveals a vibrant bubbly, an aromatic, gold medal-winning pinot gris and pinot noir that I buy after one sip.

Barringwood had appeared on the wine list of our accommodation, Glencoe Rural Retreat, near Sheffield, where they know their wines. Glencoe is the latest venture of Remi and Ginette Bancal, who built a mighty reputation for the Calstock property near Deloraine, before taking their French cooking and hospitality a little further west to buy an existing B&B. They spent substantial time and money refurbishing to combine French interior design with a Federation-style family farmhouse. The result is a lunch cafe and four beautiful guestrooms with stylishly appointed sitting and dining rooms. Watercolours by Tony Smibert, whose studio is a few kilometres away, adorn the walls.

The Bancals hope to host small-group tours of their favour-

ite parts of France, exploring food, wine, the arts and culture, and Glencoe is testimony to their taste and knowledge.

Mount Roland from Glencoe's front yard (above) where Remi Bancal (left) pursues his slow-food passions. Right, Grayden Haines tempts a rainbow trout in Upper Natone.

The library in the guest lounge has an eclectic range, liberally dotted with recent and not-so-recent books about the island state. The CD collection also varies from classical to rock and several styles in between. I start flicking through Nicholas Shakespeare's *In Tasmania*; my wife's burrowing into *Mao's Last*

Dancer and we're both listening to Louisiana swamp pop and liking it. It's hard not to feel relaxed and welcome. Glencoe Rural Retreat is a good base for a day trip to Cradle Mountain but the ultimate appeal is that Remi, a chef and sommelier with experience at the Ritz of Paris, Mietta's in Melbourne and Banc in Sydney, will prepare a three-course evening meal for \$45 a person. This "restaurant" is more exclusive than most: dinner by Remi is only for guests. You must let this devotee of slow

food know that you will eat there when you book so he can begin preparations.

For omnivores, this is paradise. On our first night we enjoyed turkey terrine with pear chutney, before a main of slow-cooked veal cutlets on shredded potato with roasted garlic and cream sauce; for dessert we had crepes with homemade vanilla bean ice-cream and poached fig. The next night, tired after a day of driving and fly-fishing, we sat down to a huge bowl of steamed mussels in a white wine and cream broth. The main course was

melt-in-your-mouth herbed lamb and potatoes with a dessert of creme caramel and poached pear in chocolate sauce.

Fast facts

Getting there: Jetstar and Virgin Blue fly Melbourne-Launceston, from \$40 one way. Car hire at the airport and in Launceston. Spirit of Tasmania ferries take you and car from Port Melbourne to Devonport. Passengers from \$114 one way; standard cars \$79 one way. Staying/touring: Glencoe Rural Retreat is 20 minutes from Devonport and 70 minutes from Launceston. Rooms start at \$155 a night including breakfast. Dinner is \$45 a head for three courses. glencoeuraltretreat.com.au or 6492 3267