

# ORANGE BLOSSOMS

Celebrate the produce of the Central West,  
now or any time of the year

## SAMANTHA TOWNSEND

**T**here is a warm burst of red, yellow and orange as the maple trees in the heart of NSW start to change colour. They're putting on a show just like the food and wine producers who call Orange in the NSW's Central West home.

While the residents here use the 10 days of F.O.O.D Week (Food of Orange District), starting this week, to promote the region's produce, they stand by the motto "every week in Orange is Food Week" no matter what time of the year you arrive.

From the local Groundstone cafe to the pop-up Italian restaurant Pochi ma Buoni (small but great), there is always an abundance of locally grown produce picked fresh from the garden on the town's menus.

It's this seasonal attitude that has helped cement Orange's reputation for food. Here are some highlights.

### SMALL ACRES CYDER

Long before grape growers arrived, Orange, despite its name, was known as an apple-growing region due to its rich basalt soil and good sunlight. In fact, it's the third-largest apple-producing region in Australia. So it's only fitting to find a cider cellar door among its wine counterparts.

The brainchild of Small Acres Cyder is James Kendell who was

inspired by his wife Gail's childhood in a big cider region in the UK. When they moved back to Australia in 2000, there were not many cider-drinking options so they wanted to change that and create their own brand.

In good news for drivers, there is a

non-alcoholic cider, Golden Knot, named by Kendell's daughter Tillia, now nine, who was inspired by tying the region's history and gold mine together. The cellar is open weekends and by appointment on weekdays.

[SMALLACRESCYDER.COM.AU](http://SMALLACRESCYDER.COM.AU)

### ORANGE MOUNTAIN WINES

Winemaker Terry Dolle makes wine tasting fun but informative. You can

learn about flavour profiles while getting your hands, or toes, dirty.

It's the only cellar door in Orange that has hands-on experiences.

From March to May, harvest time, visitors can hand pick a bucket of grapes, crush them between their toes and prepare a grape juice "vintage".

In June and July there is barrel tasting and at other times of the year Terry and his wife Julie can walk you through the Iha property where you can prune or see first-hand the process of winemaking.

Make sure you sample the Mountain Ice viognier, it's the only one of its kind.

[ORANGEMOUNTAIN.COM.AU](http://ORANGEMOUNTAIN.COM.AU)

### CHARRED KITCHEN AND BAR

Chef Liam O'Brien takes you on a journey around the region in his dishes. First stop is eggs from Auntie Rin's in Millthorpe, pork from Canowindra and Cowra lamb. There are carrots from the Charred local farm and the corn he uses fresh from the garden crunch like popping candy.

O'Brien creates memorable dishes using herbs from the potted plant holders that first greet you when you walk towards the restaurant.

The former family dining venue has been transformed into a relaxed fun dining experience where you can share dishes.

[CHARRED.COM.AU](http://CHARRED.COM.AU)

## WORD OF MOUTH WINES AND FRANKLIN ROAD PRESERVES

There is no sign on the gate and like its namesake, it's literally word of mouth. It's not your typical cellar door either as while you are there tasting its renowned Petit Manseng, the only one of its kind in Orange, you might find Richard Dowling from Franklin Road Preserves working his garden adjacent to the building.

Dowling started making preserves from vegetables grown in his backyard but when word got out how good they were, he moved to Word of Mouth Wines.

If you are lucky you might find Dowling in his garden picking vegetables, he's there every day. He might even give you a try of corn hand-picked from the field or a snow pea that snaps right off the vine. Can't get any better straight from the paddock to your mouth.

[WORDOFMOUTHWINES.COM.AU](http://WORDOFMOUTHWINES.COM.AU),  
[FRANKLINROAD.NET.AU](http://FRANKLINROAD.NET.AU)

## UNION BANK WINE BAR

Orange is steeped in history and the Union Bank Wine Bar, in the town's first bank, oozes plenty of it. The best thing about this place is everything is fresh or literally picked from the apple crate gardens that line the courtyard, and you'll see chefs pop out from the kitchen during service to

pick mint from the garden. Not only do they grow their own vegetables but

they also produce lamb and goats, which are featured on every menu.

[UNIONBANK.COM.AU](http://UNIONBANK.COM.AU)

## BYNG ST CAFE

It's known as the cafe with the red door, and behind that door is great food and coffee. Try the \$12 breakfast roll, "famous and delish", which is a twist on the traditional bacon and egg roll. It uses local produce including Trunky Creek bacon and eggs from Hillside Harvest, all topped with tomato relish. Leave room for dessert in a jar, which changes every week.

[BYNGSTREET.COM.AU](http://BYNGSTREET.COM.AU)

THE WRITER WAS A GUEST OF DESTINATION NSW,  
CABONNE COUNCIL AND F.O.O.D WEEK INC.

## ESCAPE ROUTE

# ORANGE

## GETTING THERE

Orange is a three hour and 40-minute drive from Sydney. If you want a rock-star arrival, Helicruz

Helicopters will pick up and drop you at your accommodation.

While Orange is lovely from the ground, seeing the patchwork of colours from the sky is simply breathtaking.

There might even be time for a quick wine at Highland Heritage Estate when you land.

## STAYING THERE

There are a number of accommodation choices but Orange has really embraced

Airbnb, with 154 options including the gorgeous White Birch Cottage. It's a perfect mix of comfort and luxury with a fabulous kitchen and entertaining area to cook and enjoy the local produce from the region.

F.O.O.D Week is from  
March 31 to April 9.

## MORE

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

Australia's best places to  
raise a glass, only online at  
**ESCAPE.COM.AU**



## FRUIT GROWING DISTRICT

F.O.O.D Week showcases the region's excellent fresh produce and cool-climate wines (main, right); and Union Bank Wine Bar.

PICTURES: BRAND ORANGE



