



WADDINGTONS

The journey to Waddingtons at Kergunyah, 28 kilometres from Wodonga, definitely charms the country girl within me. Dark gum trees stud the surrounding hills that dive and climb on every side of you, and every passing milk-can letterbox is a different, rusted colour. However, as you open the old wrought-iron gate to the nursery surrounding Waddingtons, you truly feel as if you've stumbled on a secret.

As head chef, Jan Waddington coordinates the elegant, delectable dishes at Waddingtons. Her husband, Rod, believes the use of the organic garden is both a key to their success and their inspiration. Everything you will find on your plate is either from their garden or locally produced. Pasta, breads, preserves and more are all made on the premises and the unique selections of wines are all local.

Along with Jan, Natalie Watkins, recipient of the Thierry Marx award, is also responsible for the modern Australian menu. To relax and savour a smoked chicken and mango salad is an easy way to enjoy the best of summer produce. The salad conveys a loosely Indonesian or perhaps Thai direction. The dressing and accompanying chilli jam are hot and lively, composed of fresh lime juice, fish sauce, chilli and ground, dried shrimp. It is similar in a way to a Thai noodle salad, only with the noodles smartly replaced with chicken and mango. Of course the benefit of this is a much cleaner dish with the absence of any potentially oily fried noodles. A squeeze of fresh lime juice over tender, lightly smoked chicken tastes as lively as it looks — bright with a tang. Garnished with a Kaffir lime leaf, the salad is nicely matched to the new-release Christmont savagnin, a wine that is easy drinking and minerally clean. The fact that Jan has travelled and cooked worldwide is made impressively abundant in this dish, world class by any standard.

Walking through the garden of exotic and Australian plants, 800-year-old trees twist into the sky and funky artworks peek out from behind enormous cacti, offering a soulful sense of the property's history and serenity.

It's these experiences that brings people back to Waddingtons. The rustic shed was converted into a restaurant Rod built, a work of art in itself. This complements the expansive grounds, explorative and masterful cuisine and easygoing, professional service.

'It's such a pleasure to serve our food,' Rod proudly reflects.

*Open 12-4pm Thurs-Sun
Bookings recommended, weddings and functions available.
2688 Kiewa Valley Highway, Kergunyah, Victoria
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Jan Waddington and Natalie Watkins.

