

Horse and Camel Wine Bar, Bermagui, NSW

One of the absolute gems of the New South Wales coast is Bermagui. Those who have discovered Bermi love this quiet seaside village for its beautiful views, great surfing and fishing, and sheltered beaches for the kids. It delivers, like so few places do these days, a reminder of what coastal holidays were in our childhood. What could possibly make Bermagui better? A winebar with a list that would flatter a big city! Bermagui has just delivered again.

With the recent redevelopment of the Fisherman's Co-Op into a modern retail complex on Bermagui harbour, a number of new restaurants and bars opened. On the upper level, looking out over the harbour, between Horseshoe Beach and Mt Dromedary (hence the name), is Horse and Camel wine bar. Offering heavenly ambience, with wine an optional extra, the bar is open between 2 and 10 pm every day of the holidays, and the same hours Wednesday-Sunday at other times. Owners Bruce and Janinka say that this gives them the freedom to surf in the morning, and run the bar in the afternoon.

The Horse and Camel is extremely well stocked, with over 500 bottles on the list, and 10-12 open by the glass at any one time at a price between \$6 and \$11. The by the glass offerings change week by week, and on my visit, included a savarino (savagnin), sauvignon blanc, chardonnay, riesling, shiraz, tempranillo, and a cabernet shiraz merlot blend. Wine bars are full of Marlborough sauvignon blanc, and it was refreshing to see that Horse and Camel stocks only one of the best available in Australia - Astrolabe.

There are three main themes that run through the wine list. The first is that Bruce and Janinka support the best of local wineries, such as Rusty Fig, Crooked River and Belgrave Park. The second, and really fascinating, theme is the Tumbarumba, Beechworth, and north eastern Victoria region. In this context, wines of Giaconda, Battely, Dal Zotto and Sorrenberg stand out. Indeed, when I first discovered Horse and Camel I enjoyed a bottle of 2007 Giaconda Chardonnay watching the sunset over Bermagui Harbour with friends - as close to heaven as I am ever likely to get. With backgrounds in the industry, Bruce and Janinka source wines from small local and regional producers themselves, adding a personal touch to the offerings. The third focus is Italian and other European wines,