

Podfood

Pialligo Plant Farm, 12 Beltana Road, Pialligo
Tel 6257 3388 Map 10

Contemporary

Score 13.5/20

We have to love a restaurant with a freshly picked rose on every table, labelled with its full name. What else would you expect in a nursery? Yes, that's where you'll find this delightful weatherboard 1930s cottage, with its wisteria-covered veranda. The food on an appealing contemporary menu hits every benchmark, supported by smart service. A generous serve of pan-seared prawns is tossed with mirin, soy, Asian greens, pickled ginger and soba noodles (though it didn't need rice, too: more noodles would have been better). A perfect pair of figs finds delicious harmony with quality goat's curd and prosciutto. Chef Andrew Haskins's talents are best highlighted in a main of superbly moist ocean trout with avocado and fetta mousse, semi-dried tomato, steamed beans and crisp kipflers. So too the sweet-sour tang of fig relish and lemon thyme-scented yoghurt playing off harissa-crusted free-range chicken breast. The green ginger wine-based syrup lashing a summer stone fruit salad with vanilla gelato is a wonderful, summery surprise.

Hours Wed–Sun 8.30am–4pm

Bill E \$16–\$19 **M** \$23–\$30 **D** \$8–\$12;
10% surcharge on Sundays & public holidays

Cards AE DC V MC Eftpos

Wine Short, functional list, with some unusual choices; 9 by the glass; BYO (corkage \$9 per bottle)

Chef Andrew Haskins

Owners Catherine & Andrew Haskins

Seats 80; wheelchair access; outdoor seating

Child friendly Highchairs; kids' menu; colouring-in
www.podfood.com.au

And...drinks on the veranda, 4–8pm Fridays

Pulp Kitchen

Shop 1, Wakefield Gardens, Ainslie
Tel 6257 4334 Map 10

European

Score 13.5/20

Forget Uma Thurman. Despite the punny name, polished concrete floors, and cool-looking waiters darting around in jeans and black shirts, Pulp Kitchen is all about comfort. The oft-changing menu is a trip around what Europeans wish their mothers still made, from creamy osso buco with saffron and pea risotto to the old-fashioned pleasure of corned wagyu girello with parsley sauce and boiled spuds. We're not sure cubes of cold potato added anything to a baby octopus, asparagus and dill salad, but a light tangle of beautifully house-made spaghetti is lovingly paired with Sicilian meatballs in tomato sauce. Most dishes come in full or half serves, a handy innovation if you can't decide or want to leave room for luscious liquorice ice-cream with a slightly under-caramelised pear tart. Service is friendly and quick – though noise levels can get high – and while there are no adrenaline shots here (for Tarantino fans), the food is reliably addictive.

Hours Lunch Tues–Fri noon–2pm;
Dinner Tues–Sat 6–9.30pm

Bill E \$12–\$18 **M** \$17–\$29 **D** \$9–\$12

Cards AE DC V MC Eftpos

Wine Short blackboard list of wallet- and food-friendly drops; 12 by the glass; BYO (corkage \$5 pp)

Chef/owner Christian Hauberg

Seats 100; outdoor seating

Vegetarian Extensive vegetarian and coeliac-friendly choices

www.pulp-kitchen.com.au

And...plenty of parking in the shopping complex

Rama's

Pearce Shopping Centre, cnr McFarland
& Hodgson crescents, Pearce
Tel 6286 1964 Map 10

Fijian–Indian

Score 12.5/20

Rama's attracts a big cheerful crowd of loyal locals to its suburban shopping centre setting. That's hardly surprising when you find what they've found – smiling service, cheerful red and yellow decor, crisp white tablecloths, good food and very reasonable prices. Owner Minnie Gaundar's generosity and warmth shine through, from the complimentary pappadums with minty yoghurt onwards. From the Indo-Fijian offerings, four fat prawn pakoras are moist and flavoursome, while cooked pumpkin and coconut wrapped in pan-fried roti is satisfyingly different. Choose mild, medium or hot chilli-strengths for lamb, beef or chicken served many ways, including vindaloo, bombay, rogan josh or madras. Otherwise, hit the seafood or one of the dozen vegetarian options. Palak paneer is tops – firm chunks of house-made cheese smothered in a mildly spicy spinach sauce. Mop it up with wholemeal roti. Perfumed mango and almond kulfi, cut into small cubes, makes a great finish. Those locals know they're onto a good thing.

Hours Dinner Tues–Sun from 6pm;
bookings essential

Bill E \$7.50–\$12 **M** \$15–\$20 **D** \$6.80–\$8.50

Cards AE DC V MC Eftpos

Wine BYO (no corkage)

Chefs Daya Gounder & Parsu Ram

Owners Minnie Gaundar, Milton Smith,
Daya Gounder & Parsu Ram

Seats 120; outdoor seating

Child friendly Highchairs; mild dishes

Vegetarian Plenty of good options

www.ramas.com.au

And...they do takeaway and deliver

Rubicon ★

6a Barker Street, Griffith
Tel 6295 9919 Map 10

European

Score 14.5/20



REGIONAL WINE LIST OF THE YEAR

An eight-year-old capital favourite, Rubicon is notable for its carpeted cosiness, each table cocooned in beige privacy. It works well for a business lunch or an intimate dinner (though check where you're sitting when you book: it's airier, lighter – and noisier – in the fairylight-draped rear extension). There is elegance and inventiveness in Owen Kenyon's wordy modern menu. Barbecued octopus with basil, semi-dried tomato and whipped chilli goat's fetta holds boldness and creaminess in perfect accord. A chargrilled field mushroom brushed with salsa verde on chicken chorizo, rocket and parmesan roars with flavours without conflict. You can opt for the simplicity of beer-battered fish and chips, but why would you when there's fork-tender chermoula-spiced lamb fillets with parmesan, rosemary polenta chips and tangerine yoghurt? Accomplished service rounds out a delightful and surprisingly well-priced dining experience that's enjoyable to the last bite of upside-down caramelised apple tart with butterscotch, creme anglaise and vanilla ice-cream.

Hours Lunch Mon–Fri from noon;
Dinner Mon–Sat from 6pm

Bill E \$15.90–\$18.90 **M** \$21.90–\$31.90
D \$12.90–\$14.90

Cards AE DC V MC Eftpos

Wine Superb list, with great range and depth;
22 by the glass; BYO (corkage \$9 per bottle)

Chefs Owen Kenyon & Evan Speed

Owner Owen Kenyon

Seats 60

Vegetarian Separate menu

www.rubiconrestaurant.com.au

And...plenty of free parking