

# Pick of the Lists

■ **Snakepit Basement,  
95 Queen St  
Melbourne,  
Vic, 3000  
03 9600 0900**

Neil Prentice has moved from The Birdcage to establish a new city-located bar and restaurant with a wine list to die for. It's small and manageable, but offers the sort of mix of established limited run classics, interesting new labels and left-of-centre wines that add interest to the selection process. Furthermore, Prentice has adopted a generous pricing formula that sees a flat \$20 mark-up on all wines plus GST. So there's an added incentive to peruse this list, for not only does it challenge your decision-making ability, but chances are you can afford the experience. Examples of this enlightened approach include 2000 Mount Mary Triolet at \$70, 1997 Lagrange at \$93, 2002 Kumeu 'Brajkovich' Chardonnay at \$40, 1999 Leeuwin Estate Art Series Chardonnay at \$77, 2000 Kooyong Pinot Noir at \$51 and 2000 Rebank Sally's Paddock for \$57. Typical Prentice, the culinary fare is light, bright and Asian-influenced. See you there.

■ **Red Lantern  
545 Crown St  
Surry Hills,  
NSW, 2010  
02 9698 4355**

[www.redlantern.com.au](http://www.redlantern.com.au)

Home to some of the best Vietnamese cuisine in Sydney, Red Lantern also has one of the best restaurant websites I've ever visited. The menus pop up simply, showing the a la carte choice and take-away options, and the wine list does the same. The list itself is short and sweet, with all wines included available by the glass as well as bottle. Clearly chosen for their fresh, vibrant and uncluttered flavours, the whites are varied and affordable, presenting a surprisingly diverse spread of varieties. The reds are similarly thoughtful, with a small but imaginative selection of largely Australian wines. Top prices for red and whites go to the Leeuwin Estate Prelude wines, each around \$45 a bottle. Rare to see a good small list that should benefit both patron and the owner alike.

■ **Cibo Ristorante  
10 O'Connell St  
Nth Adelaide,  
SA, 5006  
08 8267 2444**

Cibo has become an Adelaide phenomenon that has managed to replicate itself in various guises throughout the city. Its menu is smart modern Italian, priced at the sort of rate that leaves Sydneysiders green with envy. There's been an obvious attempt to introduce rarer, small maker wines from Australia and around the world, while the Italian selection includes most of the sought-after classics as well as a few outside the beaten track. There's some depth with older Italians, although the price does reflect their fashionability. While it's not a small list it is easy to navigate, although I still can't understand why so many restaurateurs separate their 'straight' cabernets from cabernet blends. In this instance, shiraz comes between them. Prices are fair, and it's easy to see why so many of the locals in Adelaide recommend it. I am particularly looking forward to giving its extensive list of grappas a thorough workout. ■