

# Murdoch Hill's Cellar Door Is Open For Tastings

Drink Michael Downer's award winning wines at the picturesque farm they were made on.



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Michael and Andrew Downer, image courtesy of Murdoch Hill  
Photography: Josie Withers

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Coming up the drive to Murdoch Hill's new cellar door you're struck by a pastoral landscape that at different turns of the season could be the golden expanse it is today, or a verdant stretch of cattle fodder. The tasting room, which opened in December, blends seamlessly with the old barns, sheds and cattle runs on the Oakbank property.

Winemaker Michael Downer brought production back to his family's farm a few years ago after stints at different wineries across Australia. Coming back was about "making wine that shows a sense of place," he tells *Broadsheet*. "[It's] something that is embedded in the European wine culture." Since then he's taken out a few gongs – including the 2017 Young Gun of Wine award for his expressive, skins-y, minimal-intervention drops.

His brother Andrew came on board as a graphic designer a few years ago after stints in London and Melbourne.

Until recently the pair conducted the odd tasting out of a shed while they planned the cellar door with JBG architects and interior designer (and The Stirling Hotel owner) Sarah Matthews in collaboration with Agostino & Brown. The latter has helped revamp a number of Adelaide Hills pubs including the Stirling and The Crafers Hotel. "We wanted to try and keep things as local as possible so being able to have someone build things locally was quite nice, particularly as we do things here as locally as possible," says Andrew.

The wines are sprightly and light: fantastic for drinking on a blanket on the lawn. Opt for a classic Adelaide Hills white or a chilled red out on the deck, or inside at one of the generous central tables. Floor to ceiling windows in front of the sprawling blackbutt timber bench seating bring in plenty of natural light.

There's no counter or bar, just one open space for the Downers to run you through the past couple of years of vintages. Bottles, glasses, or takeaways are recommended after sampling their expansive range. Their small-batch Artisan Series includes fruit sourced from all over the Hills. Each wine is named after a kind of horse-drawn cart – as depicted in a framed black and white photo on the tasting room shelf – in a nod to their grandad who collected them (one of his vehicles was loaned out to the original production of *Picnic at Hanging Rock*).

Weekly "Sunday School" events featuring local sommeliers and guest winemakers will be the perfect opportunity to soak up that light, and good wine. Bookings are recommended. Food is in the works for later in the year, but you can get a bowl of olives to tide you over. In the meantime, guest chefs will pop up for special events.

## **Murdoch Hill Cellar Door**

260 Mappinga Road, Oakbank

### **Hours:**

Wed to Mon 11am-4pm

Tue closed

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