



RAISING THE BAR
Smithward pairs local wines with enticing charcuterie; (inset) *that* raclette.



SMITHWARD

48 SMITH ST, COLLINGWOOD
OPEN Wednesday–Friday, 5pm–11pm; Saturday, 3pm–11pm;
 Sunday, 12pm–9pm **WEBSITE** smithward.com.au

As anyone who has travelled continental Europe well knows, there's a different way to drink than the one we've grown up with. It's not just romanticised notions of Pif on the stereo, a glass of pastis in hand while watching Amélie ride by, that make a Parisian wine bar so, well, romantic. It's the different relationship with drinking Europeans have that strikes such a chord.

It certainly did with Graham Hill and Georgina Russell, who created such a bar on Smith Street. What Smithward lacks in size – 20-odd seats inside – it makes up for in personality and cleverly curated good things to sip and snack. Sit at the bar with a brew from wonderful bayside brewers Wolf of the Willows, or try winter's answer to a G&T, the Portonic made with white port, and snack on excellent smoky almonds that arrive gratis alongside.

Or snuggle into your date around one of the few marble-topped, wrought-iron based tables at the back. Rowdy with Friday night arty Collingwood types (yes, they can still be found on Smith Street, admittedly now less VCA, more Anna Schwartz, but still...), and quietly secluded for a midweek tête-à-tête, it feels fabulously European and intimate, welcoming and warm.

The short, ever-changing, all-Victorian wine list features a lovely line in Euro-centric varietals – perhaps an Alpine Valley prosecco, a Rutherglen marsanne, or King Valley tempranillo. It's the Old World seen through new eyes, and while bottles are around \$60, glasses around \$13, it's a quality over quantity equation aimed squarely at the discerning sipper.

As are the snacks, with none better than their signature raclette – for what could be better with booze than baby potatoes slathered in molten L'Artisan fermier cheese and topped with crunchy cornichons (\$15)?

Perhaps only the anchoa atocha – big fat anchovies swollen with brine that come draped over thin potato crisps for the best hit of crunchy salt and vinegar you'll see all year (\$6).

There's carefully chosen charcuterie and cheese, too, all served with Hill's excellent house-baked sourdough, and if that doesn't show the keen attention to detail that the bar as a whole has been created with, then the cloth napkins, hefty vintage cutlery and quality stemware certainly do.

A little slice of Europe here in Collingwood, Smithward is a class act. A different way to drink indeed. **DAN STOCK**

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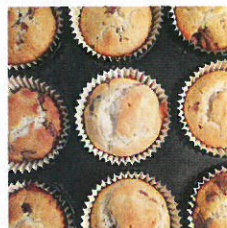
SMITHWARD – AT A GLANCE

WHAT	Homegrown Euro-leaning wines, charcuterie and raclette
WHO	Collingwood's creative class, Smith Street's discerning sippers
TUCK IN	

DRINK UP YYY Y

YOUR PLATE

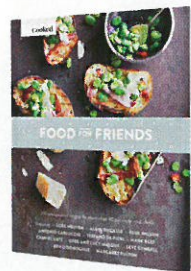
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@annieobryan
 Chocolate-chip muffins fresh out of the oven.

INDULGE

Please even your fussiest dinner guest with 100 recipes from 40 of Australia's favourite chefs. *Cooked: Food For Friends* (Hardie Grant, \$24.99) is out now.



TEAM TIPPLE

Just add sugar syrup and a dash of bitters. Woodford Reserve Bourbon Whiskey, \$59.99 (700ml), danmurphys.com.au



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