

Cooking with fire...

Humans have used fire in their rituals since the dawn of time and that element has such primal power to influence us, to create focus, intention and to help us succeed.

When Homage restaurant was born the name had precise meaning and purpose. We were paying Homage to the land, the people and the produce.

“The land” being the rich soils of the Lockyer Valley the most fertile farming area in the Southern Hemisphere. It was a reference to the 12,000 of acres of land on which the retreat sits, known as “Old Hidden Vale Station”. The land has been rehabilitated for native wildlife, houses the largest wildlife refuge in Australia and now is home to a wildlife breeding and release facility, the first of its kind. This land is productive and has purpose. It gives to us and we give back to it.

“The people” is a reference to the history – the people that had inhabited the walls of the homestead and its surrounding rooms such as the famous Cotton family. Sidney Cotton was an aerial combat pilot in WW1 and a spy recruited to take clandestine aerial photographs of the German military buildup before WW2. A friend of Winston Churchill and Ian Fleming. He was the person that James Bond’s character was based upon . The Cottons were the family that inhabited the property almost exactly 99 years ago when the grand old two story homestead burnt to the ground the first time.

“The people” was also a reference to the local farmers and producers who smother us with their support, show us around their farms, and save the very best of what they have for us. It now takes on an even more special meaning for us as it was the locals who fought the fire in April and showed up in the weeks that followed, offered their hands and anything else they could (cakes, casseroles and even a food truck!) to bolster us in our come back.

“The Produce” is a reference to provenance – a promise that we would only use sustainable, ethical and where possible organic produce on our plates. We took this a step further with the introduction of our 89 bed market garden, bee hives, animal nursery and preserving room, driving toward our goal of zero waste and self-sustainability.

Fire is a force of destruction, purification and creation. To us, it has been all three.

The destruction phase was devastating. An event that no one saw coming, causing trauma, tears and heartbreak for the loss of a building, which to most of us, was more like a family member than a physical structure.

But the destruction phase was short lived.

The purification and creation side was quickly embraced. With list after list of items to be purchased to enable us to create the same experience, it soon became apparent that what we had, still standing, would allow us not only to recreate the Homage experience, but to enhance it and make it more pure.

We still had all the key components that Homage was based around – the market garden, the smokehouse, the coal pits and rotisserie, the preserving room, the historic animal nursery and incredible historic barn which over the years had become a focal point and will now become the new Homage restaurant.



It overlooks the market garden and allows the interaction which Homage diners have always enjoyed, to go to the next level, watching the chefs cooking over the coal pits during dinner. The space is beautiful, ambient and has a sense of place and meaning. The fire started in the roof above the dining room, and the cause may never be known. The ferocious fire of 99 years ago that claimed the original homestead took all of the homestead but the kitchen was saved. Alfred Cotton shot holes in the water tank which ultimately saved it. The kitchen couldn't be stopped then, and it won't be stopped now. There is also significance to the date. It will be on the 100th anniversary of the previous fire, that a new, grand homestead, will open its doors and to carry on this new chapter in Spicers Hidden Vale's life.

Ash Martin
Executive Chef



A LA CARTE MENU

FIRST

emu heated gently over fire, cured emu yolk, spent coal

murray cod baked in paperbark, lemon aspen, preserved bush lemon

Wood oven baked **rabbit** done a bit like rarebit

pork neck roasted over fire, davidson plum, roasted pork fat

Wood roasted **pumpkin** tart, sprouted seeds, flowers

SECOND

grandchester grain-fed **sirloin** baked in hay and milk, potato,
fermented mushroom and something like béarnaise

kangaroo tail lamington, riberry, fermented chilli

barcoo grunter, tomato, fermented grain

coal roasted **hen**, sweet corn, macadamia, native pepper

for two: rosevale **beef brisket** roasted over coals, beef fat potato,
fermented chilli, béarnaise, damper

SIDES \$10

leaf salad, fermented tomato, radish

courgettes baked in the wood oven

roasted potato, smoked butter and scallions

beetroot baked in salt pastry

TWO COURSES \$75 / THREE COURSES \$85 / 7 COURSE TASTING MENU \$115



THIRD

bush lemon, lemon myrtle, pollen
our mulberries and strawberries
white chocolate, sweetcorn and buttermilk
our honey and flowers, bay leaf

LIQUID DESSERT

Lemon martini
berry bramble
white chocolate and passion fruit
our honey and Australian whiskey old fashion

Also, we have an impressive selection of Australian whiskey, sticky's, fortified and digestives to enjoy by
the fire



CONSCIENCE

Homage has taken a dedicated approach to ethical and sustainable practices.

We joined the EarthCheck Evaluate Plus program in 2017 to reduce our waste, water and electricity usage a way of measuring our results, seeking guidance and holding ourselves accountable.

We have a ten person strong “Green Team” onsite and a dedicated Green Team Leader Lianna Holocuk who has worked in the restaurant team for three years.

We grow our own produce in the market garden to reduce food mileage and to verify its origin and freshness. We have bees that pollinate the garden and all of the produce grown on site makes its way to our restaurant plates including the honey from our bees!

As the restaurant produces more organic waste than can be composted onsite we have engaged Mallow Sustainability, a small hobby farm that collects 200L of organic waste per week to produce organic compost. We buy produce from the hobby farm in return to complete the circle.

We pickle, ferment and dehydrate all spent produce or items that are not plate-worthy, such as potato peel, apple cores etc. Anything beyond that goes to our onsite compost or organic scraps to the chickens.

Whatever we can't grow onsite is collected from local farms. Where animals are involved, we make sure we understand the farming practices and ensure ethical and humane treatment. Our chefs are on first name basis with the farmers and are taken behind the scenes regularly. We provide onsite filtered still and sparkling rainwater in our restaurant and guest rooms through our Aquachiarra filtration systems, replacing our use of plastic water bottles. This has reduced our plastic bottled water order by 500 units per month.

Homage is leading the way with reducing plastic and we've banned the plastic straw in our restaurant and joined 'The Last Straw' campaign." We now offer paper straws instead.

Through Soap Aid we have a simple way of paying it forward by us setting up a small collection bin for the bars of soaps that guests leave behind. The soap is sent to Soap Aid for recycling and re-purposing to new bars that are sent to communities lacking this life-saving hygiene commodity we so often take for granted.

The sustainability approach extends to our 12,000 acre property which has been rehabilitated through weed and pest eradication programs, is home to a large nature reserve and koala eucalypt plantation and in 2017 became home to a world class breeding and release facility for native animals.

Thank you for being part of our journey.

