

# appetite



**ROCK RESTAURANT, POKOLBIN**

## vine times

It's a family affair in the new dining room at Poole's Rock winery in the Hunter Valley

It took five years for David and Andrew Clarke to get Rock rolling. "Fine dining was the one piece that was missing from the [Hunter Valley] puzzle for him," says chef Andrew of his uncle, David, owner of Poole's Rock and executive chairman of Macquarie Bank. "Mostly we spent that time designing the building and putting it in the right spot." There were many considerations for the Clarkes and architects Group GSA: first, it had to be situated to take in views of the vineyard's 90-year-old shiraz vines; then it had to be completely changeable from day to evening. For lunch, seven days a week, it's called Firestick Café and has a casual vibe, with

the likes of wood-fired pizza and roasts coming from the kitchen. At night, from Thursday to Saturday, it becomes more elegant, with a dedicated entrance. "The menu is contemporary Australian with classic French influences," says Andrew, who moved here two and a half years ago to immerse himself in the project. "I was ready to leave Sydney and I have a connection to the Hunter Valley. My parents have been involved at Brokenwood for about 20 years, and David's had Poole's Rock for about the same time. And the Hunter Valley is special – it's the oldest grape-growing region in the country." DeBeyers Rd, Pokolbin, NSW, (02) 4998 6968, rockrestaurant.com.au.