

National News

Former chef Jock Zonfrillo attracts Magill Estate staff to Orana and Street

- by: Simon Wilkinson and Tony Love
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Key staff who are leaving Magill Estate include restaurant manager Aaron Fenwick (dark suit, left), sommelier Josh Picken (dark suit, right) and head chef Shannon Fleming (second from right). Picture: Dylan Coker

Source: The Advertiser

NEWLY re-opened Penfolds Magill Estate restaurant has been rocked by the departure of five key personnel who have been lured away by the elite venue's former executive chef Jock Zonfrillo.

The staff include the head chef Shannon Fleming, restaurant manager Aaron Fenwick and sommelier Joshua Picken. Also leaving the kitchen are chefs de partie Ryan Lenzi and Flinton Rowe.

They will all be filling similar roles at Zonfrillo's new restaurant and bar ventures, Orana and Street, scheduled to open in the old Universal Wine Bar premises in Rundle St East in November.

The resignations come after an already-tumultuous transformation of the restaurant that has included a

major refit.



Former executive chef Jock Zonfrillo from Magill Estate. Picture: Matt Turner

Zonfrillo left Magill in controversial circumstances in March, only two months before it was to re-open.

He, along with Fleming, Fenwick and Picken, had been employed by Penfold's while Magill was closed for redevelopment for more than 18 months.

During that time, they spent time working at high-level restaurants interstate and overseas, refining skills in their given fields.

Magill Estate opened only four weeks ago, with new executive chef Scott Huggins running the kitchen, and has received strong bookings.

In a joint statement released by Zonfrillo's UK-based publicist, the five confirmed they had resigned.

"We had an amazing experience at the Magill Estate Restaurant; it has provided an incredible learning curve," the statement reads. "We wish all the best to chef Scott Huggins as this new chapter unfolds for him.

"We were thrilled for Jock when we heard that he had found a premises. When the opportunity presented itself to join him, it was too exciting of an adventure to pass up. We all share similar food philosophies and the same vision of Australian gastronomy."

Penfold's spokeswoman Ildi Ireland said the company was in the process of recruiting replacements for the departing staff.

"We are incredibly pleased with how things are going," she said. "We have a very good team with experienced staff and we will take this in our stride.

"It's a decision the guys have made. They were a great asset and part of the family. We wish them well.

"We want to continue these relationships and support each other."