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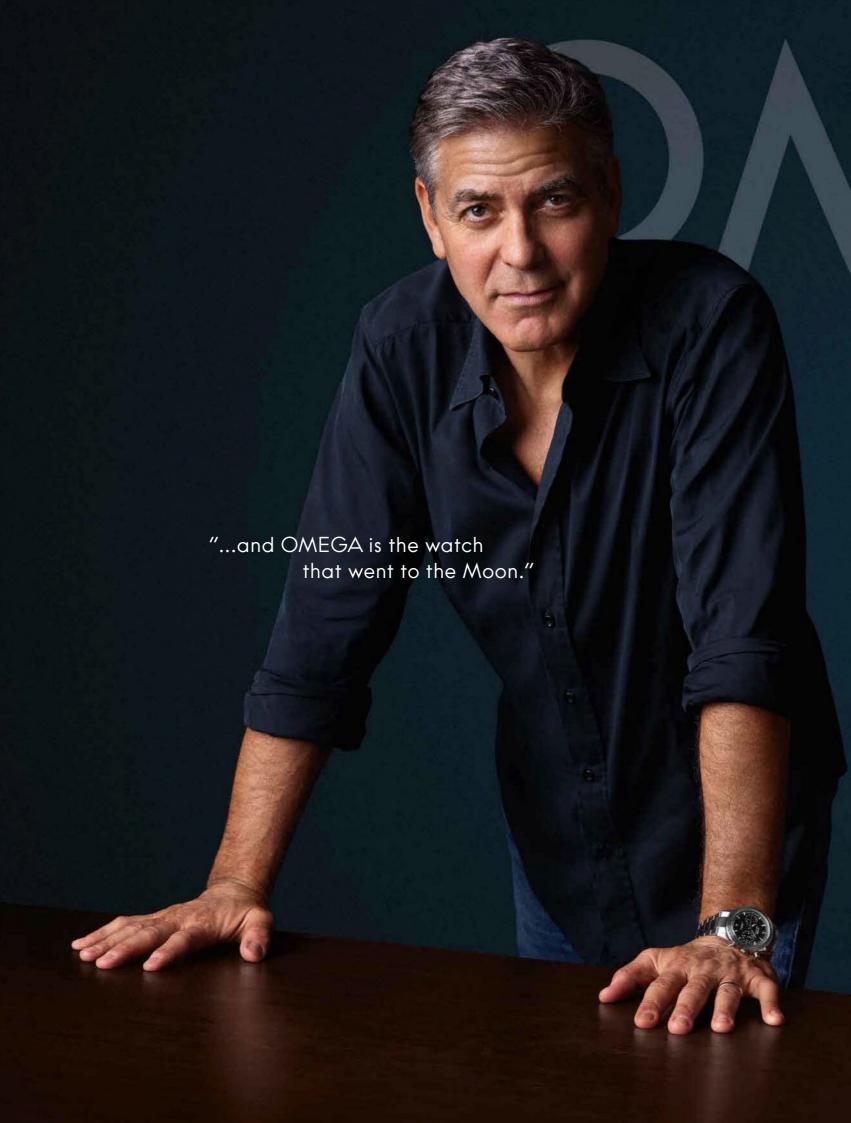
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MACHU PICCHU
EASTER ISLAND





March

FOOD

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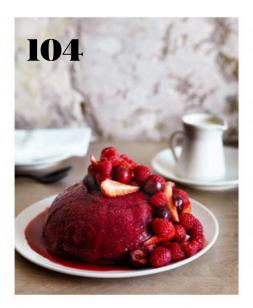
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MARCH 2017 MENUS

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A SPECIAL OCCASION

Mrs Song's thick fish soup

Apricot chicken biryani

Summer pudding
(PICTURED: RECIPE P104)



Match this globetrotting menu with an equally eclectic range of drinks. Pour a rich, strong barley wine for the gutsy soup (or a moderate IPA if you're being more responsible), then switch to a heady white wine made from viognier for the biryani and finish with a chilled glass of strawberry liqueur with the pud.

A CASUAL DINNER

Ethiopian eggplant dip

Gnocchetti Sardi with pork and fennel sausage ragù, anchovy and mint (PICTURED: RECIPE P119)

Blood plum galettes
(RECIPE **P37**)



The rich texture and smoky flavours in the eggplant dip call for a wine with yeasty, toasty characters, such as a *late-disgorged sparkling*. The very southern Italian flavours of the pasta bring to mind a red from Sicily or Puglia. And the blood plum galettes would be lovely with a honeyed young *Sauternes*.

A CHAMPAGNE BREAKFAST

Golden scrambled eggs with prawns (RECIPE P130)

Cured ocean trout, fennel crème fraîche and brioche toast (RECIPE P103)

Apricot and orange-blossom jam (PICTURED; RECIPE **P91**)



Is it possible to drink nothing but sparkling wines throughout a meal and not tire of the bubbles? Why, yes – especially if they're the best you can afford. Kick off with a magnum of rosé Champagne for the frivolity factor, then go for the fuller flavour of blanc de noirs (vintage, preferably), and finish with a moscato.





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Published by Bauer Media Pty Limited. ABN 18 053 273 546. 54-58 Park St, Sydney, NSW 2000, (02) 9282 8000.

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1300 650 666. Australian Gourmet Traveller cannot accept unsolicited manuscripts or photographs. If such materials are sent to the magazine, they will not be returned. Price in Australia, \$995; in New Zealand, NZ\$10.70; digital edition, \$3.99. Subscription rates: 1 year (12 issues) \$69.99 via automatic renewal; 1 year (12 issues) \$79.99 via credit card or cheque; 2 years (24 issues) \$14.999, NZ (airspeed) 1 year, \$120; overseas (airspeed) 1 year, \$180; digital edition monthly, \$2.99; 6 months, \$9.99; 1 year, \$19.99. Vol 17 No 3 ISSN 1034-9006

eed a reason HERE'S 71 JULY OCTOBER Territory Day Fireworks Displays Australian Outback Marathon Lasseters Easter in the Alice MTB Muster **ACO Uluru Festival**

- King Ash Bay Fishing Classic
- Field of Light (extended to March 2018)
- Tiwi Islands Football Final Art Sale
- Circle F Easter Fishing Competition Open Night Mic by the Sea

- Tjungu Festival XXXX Gold Alice Springs Cup Carnival Wide Open Space Festival
- Elliott Mardi Gras
- Mindil Beach Sunset Markets begin
- Territory Taste Festival Kakadu Klash Fishing Competition

- Uluru Camel Cup
- AFL Melbourne Demons V Gold Coast
- Two Cup Race Day
- XXXX Gold NT Barramundi Classic
- Nightcliff Seabreeze Festival
- BASSINTHEGRASS Music Festival

- Tatts Finke Desert Race Alice Springs Beanie Festival
- Brunette Races ABC Amateur Race Club
- Barunga Festival
- Pine Creek 21st Annual Goldrush Festival Borroloola Show Day
- Adelaide River Races
- V8 Supercars Championship Series ■ NRL Parramatta Eels V Nth QLD Cowboys
- Greek Glenti

- Apex Camel Cup
- Alice Springs Show Tennant Creek Show
- Katherine District Show
- Walking with Spirits
 Royal Darwin Show
- AFL Melbourne Demons V Adelaide Crows
- Darwin Lions Beercan Regatta
- Carlton Mid Darwin Cup Carnival

- Rotary Henley on Todd Regatta Alice Springs Running Festival
- The Redback
- Run Larapinta
- Desert Harmony Festival
 Katherine Festival
- Garma Festival
- Darwin Festival
- Darwin Aboriginal Art Fair
- Telstra National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Art Award

SEPTEMBER

- Desert Mob
- Alice Desert Festival
- Red CentreNATS
- Desert Song Festival Jabiru Mahbilil Festival
- Red Centre Bird Festival
- Parrtiima Festival

- Barkly Muster & Camp Draft Kakadu Bird Week
- John Jones Billfish Challenge
- SKYCITY Octoberfest
- Artback NT's Malandari Festival
- Million Dollar Fish Season 3 starts

- Groote Eylandt Billfish Competition
- Gove Game Classic
- Marrakai Mango Festival
- Rugby League World Cup Quarter final

- Alice Springs Christmas Carnival
- New Year's Eve at the Waterfront Top End Mud Racing (November to April)









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PHOTOGRAPHY LUKE BURGESS (PAULETTE WHITNEY) ON THE COVER: STUDIO ARHOJ CUP FROM LUUMO. TEASPOON FROM CITTÀ, HALE MERCANTILE LINEN NAPKIN FROM THE DESIGN HUNTER. ALL OTHER PROPS STYLIST'S OWN. STOCKISTS P183.

The *Land of Flat Whites and Club Sandwiches?*There's something in the poetry around food that I can't resist. In Fuchsia Dunlop's

newest deep-dive into Chinese food, she mentions that the local term for Jiangnan, the focus of her latest exploration (which you can taste on page 124), is *yu mi zhi xiang*: Land of Fish and Rice. Something about the phrasing appealed to me and I've tried to bring a similar poetry to my own cooking habits, with mixed results.

Last month was the Land of Avocados it's Okay to Pay Four Dollars for Because they're Healthy, and April stands a good chance of being The World of Things that Ended Up Covered in Chocolate in Spite of All Common Sense and Reason. Putting it in capital letters definitely seems to give it a certain gravitas, no matter how questionable the activity. Take, for instance, That Semester I Wagged University and Made Nothing But Lasagne, or The World of Things I Grilled and Served with Taramasalata at Dinner Parties. (I was tempted to call our peek behind the kitchen door at Sydney seafood sensation Saint Peter something like The Land of Fish and Fish, but that might be taking things a step too far.)

More broadly speaking, I've dubbed this The Issue of Things I Want to Cook Again and Again, not least for the lamb sausage pasta with mint from Luca, the British-Italian restaurant that's taking London by storm. I'm thinking about making it for a supper club at my place when I join in #CookForSyria, a campaign running this month that aims to bring Australians together around the dining table and in the kitchen to raise money for children affected by the conflict in Syria. Read all about it on page 25.

Happy cooking,



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ON THE COVER Blood plum galettes (recipe p37)
Recipe **Tivoli Road Bakery** Photography **William Meppem**Styling **Emma Knowles** Merchandising **Rhianne Contreras**





OUR FAVOURITE PLATES OF THE MONTH

SAMBAL SELECTION

The quality of the rice – a heritage variety grown in west Bali – and the sensational mixed sambal board point to the ambition and rigour at Kaum: part culinary treasure hunt, part research project drawing on recipes and techniques from across the Indonesian archipelago. Sambal kluwek, for example, is made from a nut that's boiled, buried in ash for a month, then ground with chillies, shallots, sand ginger and tamarind. Kaum Bali, Potato Head Beach Club, Jl Petitenget 51B, Seminyak, Bali, +62 (361) 300 7990 HELEN ANDERSON

GOAT'S STONES

One of the dairies you buy from has just lopped the testicles off its new crop of goats – what do you do? If you're David Moyle at Franklin, you list them on the menu as "goat's stone with pickles and dill". Sold singly (could be a presentation issue), they're the best eight bucks you might spend in Hobart of late. Franklin, 30 Argyle St, Hobart, Tas, (03) 6234 3375. PAT NOURSE

PIZZA MARGHERITA

Just tomato, mozzarella and basil, but it's simply the best pizza we've ever eaten. Its feather-light base was so digestible that the first thing we did after eating it was to order another. Savoy, 3-10-1 Motoazabu, Minato-ku, Tokyo. SUE DYSON & ROGER McSHANE

CONTRIBUTORS



FIONA DONNELLY

Our Queensland editor, Fiona Donnelly, eats her weight in pizze and pasta during a trip to southern Italy in search of the perfect tomato. In her feature on page 144 she discovers the humble

fruit is far more to Campanians than a cooking staple. "It was a Neapolitan cook who first suggested crushing and cooking tomatoes, and another Neapolitan who decided to use them to dress pasta," she says. "No wonder they call Naples the capital city of the tomato."



FUCHSIA DUNLOP

Trained as a chef at the Sichuan Higher Institute of Cuisine in Chengdu, Fuchsia Dunlop has spent two decades researching and writing about Chinese food for the likes of the

Financial Times and The New Yorker. She is the author of five books, most recently, Land of Fish and Rice, an exploration of the food of the Jiangnan region around Shanghai, which she describes as "one of the great centres of Chinese gastronomy". See our extract on page 124.



PAULETTE WHITNEY

The plants that Paulette Whitney and her co-farmer, Matt Deakin, raise as Provenance Growers on the slopes of Mount Wellington south of Hobart are prized by top chefs and market-

goers alike. A columnist for the magazine since 2014, Whitney maintains a popular Instagram account, and has a unique perspective on everything from cucurbit import rules to rooster training. Read about her busman's holiday to the Blue Mountains on page 66.



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ON THE PASS

Jorge Vallejo, Quintonil

Your restaurant in Mexico City is riding high at number 12 on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list. What's Quintonil all about, Jorge? We try to represent Mexican gastronomy from a contemporary point of view using local products, our culture and heritage. Some of our dishes use products that have been marginalised or forgotten, because they're considered food for the poor people. That's where we start – being proud of what we are and what defines us.

What's your favourite dish on the menu?

We have a chia soup with green peas, lard and lettuce. It's so simple, but that's the thing: it's delicious, healthy and it has soul.

How does a renowned locavore plan for a MasterClass at the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival?

I have the good fortune that one of my sous-chefs, Ross McCombe, is Australian, so he has a good knowledge of what's in season.

What Australian produce are you looking forward to cooking with? I'm very interested in the seafood and, in particular, kangaroo. I'll be trying to pair it all with wines, which fascinates me.

Do Australians have the right idea about Mexican food?

We have more and more Australians coming to the restaurant; they're so interested about what's going on in the Mexican culinary scene. Most of the time, people think Mexican food is Tex-Mex, and it's a totally different thing. It's very difficult to export because it uses a lot of native ingredients. It's so broad and diverse – more a collection of regional cuisines.

What else do you plan to do with your time here?

I want to learn as much as I can. I'll be visiting Brae and Attica, and Jock Zonfrillo, of Orana, is a good friend. I can't wait to try this world-class chef's cuisine. Catch Jorge Vallejo's Melbourne Food and Wine Festival MasterClass on Sunday 2 April. Tickets from \$35, (03) 9823 6100, melbournefoodandwine.com.au LARISSA DUBECKI

HAUTE AND COLD After launching at Milan Design Week last April, the first Dolce & Gabbana Smeg refrigerator has arrived in Australia. The limited-edition FAB28 fridge, hand-painted in colours inspired by the lava of Mount Etna and the bold aesthetic of its Italian designers, is on display at Winning Appliances' new store in Kingston, ACT. smeg.com.au

POUR FORMS

Japanese metalsmith company Nousaku began making Buddhist altar fittings in 1916. Circa 2017, elegantly spare





PURPLE REIGN

Esprit de Figues lets you hold on to the sweetest (and shortest) time of the year: fig season. Made with hand-picked Violette de Bordeaux figs in Burgundy, this deep-purple, liquid honey-like tipple is the only fig liqueur in the world made using fresh figs, and it's now available in Australia. Add a splash to your next Champagne or prosecco. \$49.99 for 500ml. espritdefigues.fr



Bar Rochford's Gun Club

An all-season stunner to transport you to the tropics. Need another summer break? The Gun Club cocktail at Canberra's Bar Rochford – an eclectic small bar where share plates and rare records hold their own beside the booze - is a year-round remedy for curing a case of post-vacation blues. "It's based on a fairly tiki-style rum drink, shaken up with spices and fruits," says Rochford's owner Nick Smith. "It's a momentary holiday." Don't be fooled by its '80s rock bandinspired name, which may not immediately conjure the image of clear skies and beach umbrellas. "It was originally the name of the bar," Smith says, "but we decided it might be too aggressive, so we left it to the cocktail list." Bar Rochford, 65 London Cct, ACT, (02) 6230 6222. barrochford.com EMMA HUTTON

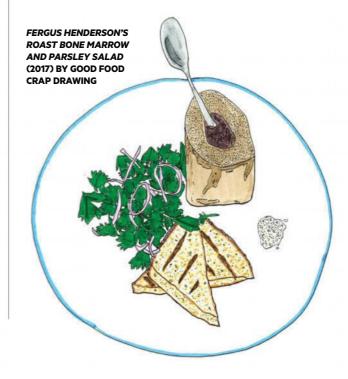
> Combine 45ml Sailor Jerry Spiced Rum, 30ml lime juice, 20ml Heering Cherry Liqueur, 15ml falernum, two dashes of Angostura bitters and the pulp of half a passionfruit in an ice-filled Boston shaker. Shake hard and double-strain into a rocks glass. Add ice, and garnish with a lime wheel and a fresh cherry.

HOT PROPERTY

There's plenty of heat to be had heading into autumn thanks to three new Papua New Guinean-grown spices available at Herbie's Spices: green chilli powder (\$5.75, 30gm), a feisty birdseye chilli powder (\$5.95, 30gm), and, our pick of the range, wild sogeri ginger (\$6.45, 35gm) - for those who like their ginger bundt and bread with a little more burn. herbies.com.au

GOOD FOOD, GREAT ART

Headed to the Melbourne Food and Wine Festival? At the festival's new headquarters, The House of Food & Wine. GT art director Anna Vu, of Good Food Crap Drawing, will host an exhibition of dishes from the festival's 25 years. Swing by for a taste from 31 March to 9 April. melbournefoodandwine.com.au





Westmont Pickles

Hand-picked and hand-packed pickles to upgrade your next ploughman's lunch. WHO In 2014, best friends and pickle fanatics Calvin Lidden and Joel Mevissen put their years of hospitality experience to new use and started Westmont Pickles in the backyard of Lidden's Surry Hills home in Sydney. According to Mevissen, it felt like a natural extension of their friendship and passion for pickles. "I worked at Brooklyn's Five Leaves café and bistro. It's where I realised how diverse pickles can really be," he says. "Calvin has always been experimental with food, too, so a pickle business was the perfect challenge for both of us." Westmont Pickles now supplies its products to restaurants, pubs and cafés across Australia, Sydney's Bistrode CBD, Papi Chulo and Belles Hot Chicken, among them. WHAT The Westmont Pickles selection is inspired by America's Deep South and ranges from a classic dill pickle to the more contemporary chilli, and a sweet and sour bread-and-butter style. "We were keen to create a tribute to the classic American pickle, but with an Australian twist," Mevissen says. HOW Production has now moved to a warehouse in Caringbah, where the pair continue to handle the entire pickling process and work closely with a cucumber farm in Ayr, Queensland, to ensure they're using top-quality cucumbers. "From farming methods to knowing which pickle best complements your Brillat-Savarin, we're trying to deliver perfectly balanced pickles," Mevissen says. WHY More than just the sidekick on a cheeseboard or burger, says Mevissen, pickles are versatile and

exciting. "Calvin cooks pasta or eggs in the brine from our chilli pickle, and I love using the dill brine in a Dirty Martini," he says. "My girlfriend's mum makes a great Bloody Mary with the chilli brine, too, so they're definitely the kind of product you can get creative with."

WHERE Westmont Pickles, from \$6.50 for 500gm, westmontpickles.com LAKSHA PRASAD



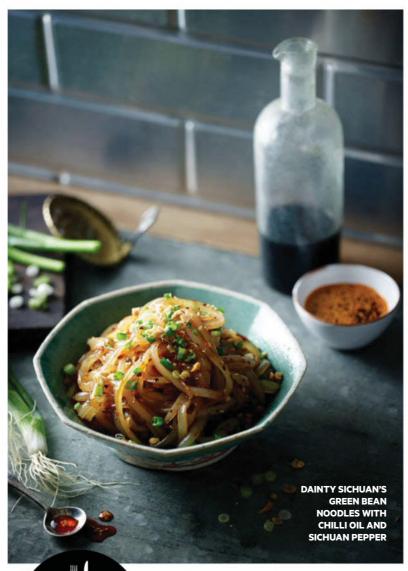
ROU JIA MO

While it's not as ubiquitous as Cantonese sweet and sour pork or Hainanese chicken rice, China's pork burger, rou jia mo, is having its moment in the sun. Rou jia mo (also written roujiamo) is a xiao chi - China's version of a "small eat" or snack. Rou means meat and iia means to place the filling into the mo, or bread. Originally from Shaanxi province in north-western China, the street food is mostly made with longsimmered pork, fragrant from a mix of cardamom, cloves and star anise. There are also lamb and beef versions that are given extra kick with the addition of chillies and cumin. But whatever the protein, you can expect the meat to be topped with coriander and green peppers for freshness. The meat is served on round, slightly chewy, crusty flatbread. Historically, the bread would be baked in clay ovens, but now it's most commonly cooked on a skillet. This burger has yet to grace the hip restaurants around town, but it's popping up in Asian food courts and eateries such as Shaanxi-Style Restaurant in Melbourne's Box Hill, and Xi'an Cuisine in Sydney's Haymarket. TONY TAN



MADE TO MEASURE Take your time the old-fashioned way with Hay's classic hourglasses. In three-minute, 15-minute and half-hour measures, you're covered from soft-boiled eggs to baking. From \$28. hayshop.com.au

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RESTAURANT NEWS

SYDNEY

After seducing Melbourne with their mouth-numbing Chongging flavours, the team behind Dainty Sichuan, a restaurant celebrated internationally for the quality of its Sichuan food, is planting a flag north of the border. Chef Tina Li and her husband, Ye Shao, plan to open a branch of Dainty Sichuan Noodle Express at World Square in the CBD at the end of this month. Dainty fans can expect to see the celebrated bean noodles (above) as well as classic Chongging noodles topped with stewed pork

belly or spicy lamb ribs.

Offal lovers will be in for a treat, too, with the likes of chilled pig's ears in chilli oil and skewers of smoky beef tongue and tripe.

MELBOURNE

Paul Wilson is finally rolling out his Wilson & Market juggernaut at Prahran Market. Fronting onto the market square, the 40-seat Mr Wilson's Tuckshop is opening early March for breakfast and lunch with a menu of slow-cooked barbecue and rôtisserie meat sandwiches. Ottolenghi-inspired salads, and cold-pressed juices with native infusions inspired by Wilson's trips to Latin American markets. "We wish to convey a sense of well-being without becoming a health retreat," he says. May should see the opening of the Wilson

& Market restaurant, designed by Kestie Lane Studio with a glasshouse façade fronting onto Commercial Road – Wilson's fans hope it will reprise the Brit chef's days at Botanical. NEW YORK

A more laid-back version of Manhattan's favourite modern-Mexican, Cosme, is set to open late this month. Atla, a 65-seater on Lafayette Street in NoHo, is the latest from Cosme chef Enrique Olvera and partner Santiago Gomez. The eatery will focus on casual "after-work" share plates and ice-cold micheladas. Punters have their fingers crossed for Olvera's inspired tacos (al pastor with cobia and pineapple, say, or strip tartare with smoked beans). Atla's opening comes at the same time

as Olvera is overhauling the offering at **Pujol**, his Mexico City fine-diner which placed number 25 on last year's World's 50 Best Restaurants list.

Feeling hungry, Brisbane? Rockpool Dining Group, the entity formed last November following the merger of Urban Purveyor Group and Neil Perry's Rockpool Group, has diners in the Queensland capital firmly in its sights. The state's first Burger **Project** was due to spark up at South Bank's new Southpoint precinct late February. Neil Perry, head of culinary at Rockpool Dining Group, says there's plenty more in the pipeline - and not just the three or more additional Burger Projects already in the works for Queensland. Restaurant sites for Spice Temple and Rockpool Bar & Grill are close to being finalised. "We're in negotiations on sites and expect in the next month or so we will have signed on those," Perry says. "Rockpool Bar & Grill and Spice Temple are definitely heading up to Brisbane and should be there early next year."

BALI

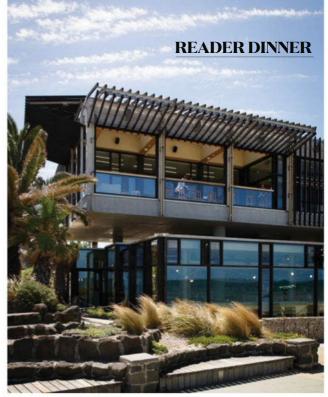
Bali's latest Instagram lure, Bikini. takes its cues from Miami Beach and New York warehouse parties. The luxed-up 120-seat bar and eatery was opened by 8 Degree Projects Group in early February - the same team that brought Sisterfields, Boss Man and Expat.Roasters to Seminyak. Former Rockpool and Longrain chef Kevin Chung is in the kitchen prepping light, seasonal dishes for beachgoers such as venison tartare with ginger and chilli, and tuna and prawn aquachile, alongside sobrasada bruschetta with romesco and "mouthfuls" such as oyster crackers. Melbourne bartender Max Hart (Lui Bar, Vue de Monde) is on the drinks, which put fresh local produce to good use.

BURGER PROJECT









Fully stoked

Join us to celebrate the reopening of St Kilda's landmark Stokehouse. We've saved you a seat.

Stokehouse is reborn. Three years after being destroyed by a fire, it's back and busier than ever – 24 hours after reservations opened in November, the restaurant booked out for weeks on end. But, fear not, we've saved you a seat at the beachfront eatery this April.

You'll see a likeness to the first iteration of the restaurant – designer Pascale Gomes-McNabb has used a similar palette – but there are notable differences, too: the ceilings are higher, for a start, and the ocean-facing windows larger. Chef Ollie Hansford, returned to the Van Haandel Group after briefly heading up the kitchen at Gauge, has also added his own touches to the menu. The new peanut butter parfait, for instance, rivals the group's famed Bombe dessert in popularity. "It's one of the dishes we opened the restaurant with and it just flew out," he says.

At the other end of the meal, the snacks kick off with oysters, then zesty cobia ceviche rolled in pickled daikon, and yellowfin tuna with cucumber and wasabi.

To follow comes smoked duck breast with chestnuts. "We keep the two breasts on the crown and stuff the cavity with freshly cut vine leaves," says Hansford. "Then we coat the crown with an umami-rich oyster glaze, put it in the oven and light the leaves."

The dinner, served with matched wines from Margaret River's Voyager Estate, will be a night to remember, he says. "I hope everyone is relaxed. Look, if people get a bit carried away and want to dance on the tables, we're happy with that, too." Join us for dinner at 6.30pm on Tuesday 11 April at Stokehouse, 30 Jacka Blvd, St Kilda, Vic. The cost of \$150 includes four courses, matched wines and a \$10 donation to the Ovarian Cancer Research Foundation. To book, call (03) 9525 5555. For more on the OCRF, call 1300 OVARIAN or visit ocrf.com.au

STOKEHOUSE

- * Oysters
- * Cobia ceviche and daikon roll
- * Tuna, kefir, cucumber and wasabi 2015 Voyager Estate Project Sparkling Chenin Blanc, Margaret River
- * Grilled arrowhead calamari, salsa verde and bitter leaf salad 2013 Voyager Estate Chardonnay, Margaret River
- * Roast Great Ocean Road duck breast smoked in grapevines, with caramelised oyster glaze, chestnuts and grapes

2013 Voyager Estate Shiraz, Margaret River

* Peanut butter parfait, dark chocolate, candied peanuts and double cream 2014 Voyager Estate Project Cane-Cut Semillon, Margaret River

SURF'S UP

Above, from left: manager Hugh van Haandel with chef Ollie Hansford; the new Stokehouse.



PERONI









CHEFS' RECIPES

The Dolphin Hotel's pasta with mussels and 'nduja is to die for. Would you publish the recipe?

Marco Ricci, Leichhardt, NSW

Trucioli with mussels and 'nduja

At The Dolphin Hotel, chef Monty Koludrovic makes a stock with pan-roasted snapper and tomato paste; here we've used shop-bought fish stock.

Prep time 25 mins, cook 25 mins (plus cooling) Serves 4

- 60 gm crustless day-old Italian bread
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 1 kg mussels, scrubbed, debearded
- 200 ml dry white wine
- 500 gm trucioli pasta (see note)
 - 1 small bunch (200gm) cavolo nero, thickly sliced
- 20 gm drained anchovies in oil, finely chopped
- 80 gm 'nduja, skin removed (see note)
- 160 ml (²/₃ cup) tomato passata
- 200 ml fish stock or water
- ½ lemon
- 1 bunch chives, finely chopped

- 1 Process bread in a food processor to mediumsized crumbs. Sift using a coarse strainer to remove fine crumbs (discard). Heat 2 tbsp olive oil in a frying pan over medium-high heat, add breadcrumbs and fry until golden brown (4-6 minutes). Remove from pan and set aside.
- **2** Heat a large saucepan over high heat. Add mussels and white wine, cover and steam, shaking pan occasionally, until mussels just open (1-2 minutes). Drain, reserving 2 tbsp cooking juices, and set aside until cool enough to handle (1-2 minutes), then remove mussels from shells.
- **3** Cook pasta in a large saucepan of lightly salted boiling water until al dente (14-15 minutes), adding cavolo nero in the final minute.
- **4** Meanwhile, stir anchovies in remaining olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat until anchovies dissolve (1-2 minutes). Add 'nduja and sauté, breaking it up, until collapsed (1-2 minutes). Add passata, stir for a minute, then add fish stock and bring to the boil. Drain pasta and cavolo nero, add to passata mixture and toss to release starch from pasta and thicken sauce (20-30 seconds). Add mussels and reserved cooking juices, toss to

combine and season with black pepper and a squeeze of lemon. Transfer to plates, scatter with chives and fried crumbs, and serve.

Note Trucioli, meaning shavings, is available from select Italian grocers, or online at denigrocer.com. au. If it's unavailable, substitute large shell-shaped pasta such as lumaconi or conchiglie. 'Nduja, a spicy spreadable Calabrian salami, is available from select delicatessens and simonjohnson.com.

I always go to Hello Please when I visit Brisbane, mostly for the bun cha. Could you ask for the recipe?

Jonathan Chen, Byron Bay, NSW

Bun cha

In addition to the pork patties we've got here, Hello Please serves this with pork belly that's been simmered in an aromatic stock, pressed overnight, then pan-fried.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 10 mins (plus cooling)

Serves 4 (pictured p34)

200 gm dried rice vermicelli

- 80 gm bean sprouts
- 1 Lebanese cucumber, cut into julienne on a mandolin
- 1 small carrot, cut into julienne on a mandolin
- ¼ (120gm) small daikon, cut into julienne on a mandolin
- 1 spring onion, thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup (loosely packed) Thai basil
- $\frac{1}{2}$ cup (loosely packed) coriander
- 1/4 cup (loosely packed) mint
- 1 red birdseye chilli, thinly sliced Lime cheeks, to serve

Nuoc mam cham

- 125 ml (½ cup) chicken stock
- 50 ml (2½ tbsp) fish sauce
- 30 ml (1½ tbsp) lime juice
- 25 gm caster sugar
- 2 tsp finely chopped ginger Pork patties
- 500 gm coarsely minced pork
- 60 ml (¼ cup) sriracha sauce
- 50 ml (2½ tbsp) fish sauce
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- **1** For nuoc mam cham, bring ingredients to a simmer in a small saucepan over medium-high heat, then remove from heat and stand to cool (15-20 minutes).
- 2 For pork patties, mix pork, sriracha and fish sauce in a large bowl by hand until well combined and sticky. Roll into 16 balls and place on a tray lined with baking paper, pressing to flatten slightly. Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat and fry patties, turning once, until lightly charred and cooked through (3-4 minutes each side).
- **3** Blanch noodles in a saucepan of boiling salted water until almost tender (1-2 minutes). Drain, refresh in cold water and drain well. Divide noodles among bowls and add a pile each of bean sprouts, cucumber, carrot, daikon and



spring onion. Top with pork patties, dress with nuoc mam cham, finish with herbs, chilli, lime to taste and serve with remaining nuoc mam cham.

The blood plum galettes made with spelt pastry at Tivoli Road Bakery are knockout. I'd love to make them.

Patricia Jones, Fitzroy, Vic

Blood plum galettes

Prep time 40 mins, cook 30 mins (plus chilling) Makes 6 (pictured p35)

- 7 (500gm) small blood plums, halved, pitted
- 25 gm caster sugar
- ½ vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped Finely grated rind of ½ lemon
- 1 egg
- 1 egg yolk
- 75 gm (½ cup) raw sugar Thickened cream, to serve **Spelt pastry**
- 250 gm (1½ cups) wholemeal spelt flour (see note)
- 90 gm white spelt flour (see note)
- 225 gm cold butter, cut into 2cm cubes
- 120 gm crème fraîche
- 1 For pastry, sieve flours and ¾ tsp fine sea salt into a bowl, toss butter in flour to coat and tip out onto a bench. Roll butter into flour with a rolling pin until thin streaks form. Scrape edges of mixture into the centre with a pastry scraper, then roll until thinner ribbons of butter form in mixture. Add crème fraîche, cutting into the mixture with the pastry scraper until a dough just forms (small lumps of butter will remain). Press together firmly, wrap in plastic wrap, press into a disc and place in freezer until firm (30 minutes).
- 2 Divide dough into 6 balls and roll each between 2 sheets of baking paper to 17cm-diameter rounds, then place in freezer, still between paper, until firm (20 minutes). Remove paper and trim pastry to 16cm-diameter rounds, transfer to a tray lined with baking paper, wrap in plastic wrap and place in freezer again until firm (20 minutes).
- **3** Cut 8 plum halves into 4 wedges each. Combine caster sugar, vanilla bean and seeds, and lemon rind in a bowl. Add plum wedges and halves, and toss gently to coat
- **4** Remove pastry from freezer, place a plum half in the centre of each round and surround with 5 wedges (there will be spare), thin sides facing outwards, and leaving a 2cm border. When pastry just becomes pliable, fold it over the thin edges of plums, making 6 folds. Refrigerate until firm (25-30 minutes).
- **5** Preheat oven to 180C. Whisk together egg, yolk and a pinch of salt. Brush pastry with eggwash and scatter with raw sugar. Bake galettes until they start to turn golden (20 minutes). Reduce oven to 170C and bake until golden brown and plums are tender (5-10 minutes). Serve with cream.

Note Spelt flour is available from select supermarkets and health-food shops.



I'd love the recipe for the eggplant dip the wonderful Fatuma Tikuye serves at Blue Nile in Blacktown.

Helena Rosebery, Annandale, NSW

Ethiopian eggplant dip

Prep time 15 mins, cook 1 hr 10 mins (plus cooling)

Serves 4

- 2 large eggplants (1kg each)
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1½ tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 3 garlic cloves, crushed with a mortar and pestle
- 1½ tsp ground turmeric
 - 1 tbsp plain yoghurt
- 1 long green chilli, finely chopped Pinch of hot paprika, torn coriander and mountain bread (see note), to serve

- 1 Preheat oven to 220C. Place eggplant on a baking tray lined with foil and roast until blackened (50 minutes to 1 hour). Set aside until cool enough to handle (15-20 minutes), then halve lengthways and scoop out flesh (discard skin).
- 2 Meanwhile, sauté onion in olive oil in a large frying pan over medium heat until lightly golden (6-8 minutes). Add garlic and stir until fragrant (1 minute). Add eggplant and turmeric, stir until excess moisture has evaporated (2-3 minutes), then remove from heat and cool (10-15 minutes).
- **3** Blend eggplant mixture and yoghurt in a food processor until almost smooth and season to taste. Spoon into a serving dish, drizzle with olive oil, scatter with green chilli, hot paprika and coriander, and serve with mountain bread.

Note Mountain bread is available from supermarkets and delicatessens.





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Quick meals

Whip up midweek meals full of savour and spice in a flash with these recipes by *Alice Storey*.

- 1 Turmeric chicken with cucumber salad
- 2 Stir-fried beef with red chilli and egg
- 3 Cuban mojo grilled pork sandwiches
- 4 Tarte à la tomate
- 5 Lemon saltimbocca with green beans
- 6 Roast radish and potato salad
- Z Carrot, fennel and feta fritters
- 8 Kiwi and ginger mess

Cuban mojo grilled pork sandwiches (RECIPE P40)



Turmeric chicken with cucumber salad

For maximum flavour cook the chicken on the barbecue – coal or wood will give the best result.

Serves 4-6

- 6 garlic cloves
- 2 cm piece turmeric, finely chopped, or 1 tsp dried ground turmeric
- 2 tsp whole black peppercorns
- 1 lemongrass stalk (white part only), finely chopped
- 1 cup (loosely packed) coriander, coarsely chopped, plus extra to serve
- 1½ tbsp fish sauce
- 1 tbsp brown sugar or palm sugar
- 1 tbsp oyster sauce
- 6 chicken thighs, bone in, skin on (about 180gm each)
- 2 tbsp vegetable oil Lime wedges, to serve

Cucumber and herb salad

- 2 tbsp lime juice
- 5 gm (1cm piece) ginger, finely chopped
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 2 tsp olive oil
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, halved lengthways, seeds removed, thickly sliced
- 1 golden shallot, thinly sliced
- 1 long red chilli, thinly sliced
- ½ cup (loosely packed) mint
- ½ cup (loosely packed) coriander
- 1 Process garlic, turmeric, peppercorns and lemongrass in a food processor with ½ tsp sea salt flakes to a coarse paste. Add coriander, fish sauce, sugar and oyster sauce, and process to combine. Place in a bowl with chicken thighs and turn to coat well.
- **2** Heat a barbecue or char-grill pan to mediumhigh heat. Drizzle chicken with oil and grill until browned and cooked through (8-10 minutes).
- **3** Meanwhile, for cucumber and herb salad, combine lime juice, ginger, garlic, sugar and olive oil in a bowl and season to taste. Add cucumber, shallot and chilli, and toss to combine. Just before serving, add herbs, toss to combine and serve with chicken.

TEXT PAGE All props stylist's own.

Stir-fried beef with red chilli and egg

This dish is super-fast and packs a bit of heat. Halve the number of chillies for a gentler adventure.

Serves 4

- 80 ml (1/3 cup) vegetable oil
- 4 eggs
- 4 small birdseye chillies, finely chopped, plus extra, thinly sliced, to serve
- 4 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 350 gm coarsely minced beef
 - 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 1½ tbsp kecap manis
- 1½ cups (loosely packed) Thai basil
- 1 tsp sesame oil Steamed jasmine rice, to serve
- 1 cup bean sprouts
 Thinly sliced spring onion and torn
 coriander, to serve
- 1 Heat 60ml oil in a large wok over high heat, reduce heat to medium and fry eggs one at a time, spooning some of the hot oil on top to cook the yolks evenly (1-2 minutes for soft yolks). Carefully transfer eggs to a warmed plate lined with paper towels, discard oil and wipe out wok.
- 2 Heat remaining oil in wok over high heat, add chilli and garlic, stir-fry for 10-20 seconds, then add beef and stir-fry until browned (3-5 minutes). Add fish sauce, kecap manis and 1 tbsp water, toss to combine, then add half the Thai basil, toss to combine and drizzle with sesame oil. Serve stir-fried beef on steamed rice and top with a fried egg, and scattered with extra chilli, bean sprouts, spring onion, coriander and remaining basil.

Cuban mojo grilled pork sandwiches

A fast take on the meat-loaded Cuban sandwich. Serve them with a little of the marinade on the side for extra zing.

Serves 4

- 180 ml freshly squeezed orange juice
- 60 ml (¼ cup) lime juice
- ½ cup (loosely packed) mint
- ½ cup (loosely packed) coriander, plus extra
- 1/4 cup (loosely packed) oregano
- 5 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 300 gm piece boneless pork shoulder

- 8 thick slices white country bread Softened butter, for spreading
- 2 tbsp Dijon mustard
- 150 gm thinly shaved ham
 - 2 large dill pickles, thinly sliced lengthways
 - 8 slices Swiss cheese
- **1** Process juices, herbs, garlic, spices and half the oil in a food processor until smooth. Season generously to taste. Rub half the mixture over the pork and refrigerate remaining marinade.
- **2** Heat a barbecue or grill to medium-high heat, drizzle pork with remaining oil, season to taste and grill, turning occasionally, until browned and cooked through (6-8 minutes). Rest pork for 5 minutes, then thinly slice.
- **3** Spread butter on one side of all bread slices and mustard on the other side of half the slices. Top the mustard side with ham, pork, pickles and cheese. Season to taste, sandwich with remaining slices butter-side up and toast in a sandwich press or large heavy-based frying pan until bread is golden brown and cheese melts (2-3 minutes). Sprinkle with extra coriander and serve with remaining mojo marinade.

$\underline{+}$ Tarte à la tomate

Make the most of end-of-season tomatoes in this delicious tart – perfect for a picnic spread. Serves 6

400 gm savoury shortcrust pastry (see note)

- 1½ tbsp Dijon mustard
- 100 gm Gruyère, coarsely grated
- 2 small golden shallots, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped thyme, plus extra sprigs
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped rosemary, plus extra sprigs
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped sage, plus extra sprigs
- 2 ripe heirloom tomatoes, thinly sliced Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling Green leaf and shallot salad, to serve
- 1 Preheat oven to 220C. Roll out pastry on a lightly floured surface to a 25cm x 35cm rectangle. Spread with mustard, leaving a 1.5cm border. Scatter with Gruyère, shallot and herbs, then layer the tomato slices on top, slightly overlapping. Fold in pastry edges to form a border, scatter with herb sprigs and drizzle with olive oil. Season to taste and bake until golden brown (20-25 minutes). Cool briefly and serve with green leaf and shallot salad.

 Note We used Carême Sour Cream Shortcrust Pastry, available in select supermarkets and delicatessens >



















5 Lemon saltimbocca with green beans

This classic dish never gets old. If you can't find veal, use chicken instead.

Serves 4

- 8 veal escalopes (about 100gm each)
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped sage, plus about 16 extra leaves
- 20 gm parmesan, finely grated
- 8 thin slices prosciutto
- 80 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 3 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp baby capers in vinegar, rinsed
- 150 ml white wine

 Juice and finely grated rind of 1 lemon
- 300 gm green beans, steamed
- **1** Pound veal escalopes between 2 sheets of baking paper until about 4mm thick. Scatter both sides with sage and parmesan, pressing to stick, then wrap each in a slice of prosciutto.
- 2 Heat 20gm butter in a large frying pan over high heat until foaming (30 seconds to 1 minute), add 4 veal escalopes and fry, turning once, until browned and cooked through (2-3 minutes each side). Keep warm. Wipe pan clean with paper towels, then repeat with another 20gm butter and remaining escalopes.
- **3** Heat remaining butter and garlic until butter is foaming (30 seconds to 1 minute). Add extra sage leaves and capers, deglaze pan with white wine, then add lemon juice and rind, drizzle sauce over veal and serve with steamed green beans.

6 Roast radish and potato salad

This take on potato salad is best served warm – the butter solidifies if it's left to cool.

Serves 4

- 400 gm small radishes, halved, quartered if large
 - 2 tbsp olive oil
- 500 gm chat or small new potatoes, scrubbed, halved
 - 2 cups (loosely packed) rocket
 - 1 cup (loosely packed) flat-leaf parsley, torn
- 4 spring onions, thinly sliced into rounds
- 60 gm soft goat's cheese, crumbled **Lemon-butter dressing**
- 60 gm butter, coarsely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 tbsp thyme
 - Finely grated rind and juice of 1½ lemons
- 1½ tsp Dijon mustard

- 1 Preheat oven to 220C. Toss radishes in olive oil, season to taste and roast, turning occasionally, until golden (15-20 minutes). Meanwhile, cook potatoes in a saucepan of boiling salted water until tender (15-20 minutes). Drain well and place in a large bowl.
- **2** For lemon-butter dressing, melt butter in a frying pan over medium heat, then stir in garlic, thyme and lemon rind. Remove from heat, whisk in mustard and lemon juice, season to taste, then pour dressing over potatoes. Add roasted radishes and toss to combine.
- **3** Serve salad warm scattered with rocket, parsley, spring onion and crumbled goat's cheese.

/ Carrot, fennel and feta fritters

Fritters are a week-night staple, and any leftovers make a great sandwich filling the next day.

Serves 4

400 gm canned chickpeas, drained and rinsed

- 125 ml (½ cup) olive oil, plus extra to serve (optional)
 - 1 small fennel bulb, coarsely grated
 - 4 carrots (about 420gm), coarsely grated
- ½ cup (loosely packed) coriander, finely chopped, plus extra to serve
- 50 gm plain flour, sieved
- 2 eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 2 spring onions, thinly sliced into rounds
- 70 gm feta, crumbled Mint leaves, Greek-style yoghurt and lemon wedges, to serve
- **1** Preheat oven to 220C. Combine chickpeas and 2 tbsp olive oil in a bowl, season generously and spread on an oven tray lined with baking paper. Roast, shaking occasionally, until browned and crisp (15-20 minutes).
- **2** Meanwhile, combine fennel, carrot, coriander, flour, egg, cumin and spring onion in a bowl, and stir until mixture just comes together. Stir in feta and season to taste.
- **3** Heat half the remaining oil in a frying pan over medium heat, add ½-cup portions of fritter mixture in batches and fry, turning once, until golden brown and cooked through (4-5 minutes), wiping out pan with paper towels and adding remaining oil between batches.
- 4 Scatter fritters with chickpeas, extra coriander and mint, and serve warm with yoghurt and lemon wedges.

8 Kiwi and ginger mess

This quick Eton mess-style dessert riffs on the classic meringue and berry combination, using kiwis instead.

- 3 kiwifruit, peeled and thinly sliced
- 3 store-bought meringues (about 10gm-15gm each), broken up Vanilla bean ice-cream, to serve **Ginger and lime syrup**
- 125 gm caster sugar
 - 1 tbsp finely grated ginger
 Juice and finely grated rind of 1 lime
- 1 For ginger and lime syrup, bring sugar, ginger and 125ml water to the boil in a small saucepan, stirring occasionally to dissolve sugar, and boil until syrupy (8-10 minutes), then transfer to a bowl. Add lime juice and rind, and refrigerate to chill (10 minutes). Just before serving, add kiwifruit and stir to coat.
- 2 Divide meringue among bowls, top with kiwifruit and scoops of ice-cream, drizzle with syrup and serve.







Black garlic

The result of an almost alchemical transformation, this intriguing ingredient packs ultra-savoury power.



What is it?

Black garlic is produced by ageing regular garlic at a low heat (around 60C) in a humid environment for some weeks, causing the enzyme that gives garlic its heat and pungent flavour to break down. The Maillard reaction - the chemical interaction triggered by amino acids and reducing sugars, the same reaction that causes caramelisation when searing meat, among other things - also takes place, creating a rich deep flavour quite unlike any other. The cloves turn inky-black and transform from waxy to sticky, soft and pliable.

Why do we care?

It's that umami buzzword again.
Black garlic brings an intriguing
flavour to whatever it's added
to – think sweet and earthy,
dark and delicious. Be warned,
though – it's addictive.

Where can I get it?

Black garlic is available from select delicatessens, greengrocers and Asian grocers, and online from specialist suppliers (such as tasmanianblackgarlic.com.au). It's sold as entire heads of garlic, still in their papery skins, or as individual cloves.

Charred broccolini with black garlic vinaigrette Serves 4 as a snack or side

Heat a char-grill pan to high heat. Slice 3 bunches of broccolini lengthways into large florets and drizzle with olive oil. Char-grill, turning occasionally, until bright green and lightly charred (4-5 minutes), and season to taste. Meanwhile, in a bowl roughly mash 3 black garlic cloves with a fork. Stir in 2 tsp Dijon mustard, then 1 tbsp white wine vinegar. Whisk in 70ml olive oil to emulsify, season to taste, squeeze in juice of 1/2 lemon (or to taste) and whisk to combine. Drizzle garlic vinaigrette over charred broccolini, scatter with coarsely chopped roasted almonds and serve.

Black aïoli Makes about 1 cup

Process 8 black garlic cloves,
2 egg yolks, 1 tbsp white wine vinegar
and 1 tsp Dijon mustard in a food
processor to combine, then, with motor
running, gradually add 220ml olive oil
in a thin steady stream, processing until
thick and emulsified; add a splash of
hot water if mixture becomes too thick
before all the oil is added. Season to
taste and refrigerate for up to a week.
Serve with crisp roast potatoes or fat
chips, or spread on a steak sandwich.

Black garlic butter Makes about 150gm

Mix 120gm softened butter,
4 finely chopped black garlic cloves,
2 tbsp finely chopped chives and 2 tbsp
finely chopped flat-leaf parsley in a
bowl to combine. Season to taste. Spoon
into an even 15cm length on a sheet of
plastic wrap. Fold plastic wrap over to
enclose and, holding both ends, roll on

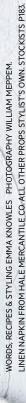
a work surface to form a tight cylinder.
Refrigerate until firm. Black garlic butter
will keep refrigerated for up to a month.
Serve slices on top of char-grilled steaks
or roast chicken, or stir it through
scrambled eggs at the very end
of cooking.

Black garlic roast chicken Serves 4

Preheat oven to 180C. Process 4 black garlic cloves, 2 garlic cloves, 2 coarsely chopped spring onions and 1 birdseye chilli in a small food processor to combine. Add 2 tbsp vegetable oil, 2 tbsp soy sauce, 1 tbsp hoisin sauce, 1 tbsp honey and 1 tbsp sesame oil and process to combine. Transfer to a large bowl, add 4 chicken Marylands, halved through the joint, and mix with your hands to coat chicken well, season to taste and marinate for 30 minutes. Transfer chicken to a large roasting pan and roast until golden brown (15-20 minutes), then increase heat to 220C and roast, turning and basting occasionally with pan juices, until dark golden brown and cooked through (10-15 minutes). Scatter chicken with sliced spring onion and roasted sesame seeds, and serve with

steamed jasmine rice and pan juices.

Charred broccolini with black garlic vinaigrette



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Meet kohlrabi

It may look like something from outer space, but this easy-to-grow and versatile vegetable is easy to love, writes *Mat Pember*.

A member of the brassica family, kohlrabi – from the German "kohl", meaning cabbage, and "rübe" meaning turnip or beet – is believed to have developed from a thick-stemmed species of wild cabbage. Rather than being a root or a head, it's an enlarged stem, which some people believe arrived from outer space thanks to its sputnik-like appearance. We, however, hail kohlrabi as the new spiritual leader of the vegetable patch.

Looks aside, kohlrabi is a versatile, easy-to-grow and pest-resistant cool-season crop. Although it's best suited to autumn planting – get ready to jump in now – in more temperate parts of Australia kohlrabi grows well throughout spring, too. This makes it a plant that can happily go in your vegetable patch at nearly any time of the year.

Like other brassicas, kohlrabi demands soil that's high in nitrogen. If possible, follow on from where you planted beans in the spring and summer because the soil will be loaded with nitrogen. Otherwise, make sure you use plenty of compost and slow-release organic fertiliser. Turn over the chosen patch of soil, making sure it's aerated and friable, which will allow an easier passage for the kohlrabi's roots.

Not overly fussed about sunlight, this plant will cope well with part shade, so choose a position accordingly. Sow seeds directly into soil at a depth of around a centimetre and spaced 20 to 30 centimetres apart. Water the seeds twice daily until they germinate, which should occur within seven to 10 days, and then cut back watering to once a day for the first month.

Once the plants are set, they'll be relatively hardy and only need watering every second day (more often if they're planted in pots). Although

kohlrabi remains largely pest free, like with all brassicas, it's worth keeping an eye out for white cabbage moths. In the absence of other brassica varieties of crops, these pests may take a shine to your new seedlings.

Netting is the only certain way of keeping caterpillars at bay. Make sure you keep the netting taut with some clearance from your plants; if the netting hangs on the foliage, the moths can make a landing spot for their larvae and the caterpillars will not be far away. If you take your chances without netting and encounter a moth problem, use a bioinsecticide such as Dipel to control the damage.

Taking its growing habits more from a turnip than a cabbage, kohlrabi has a relatively quick turnaround time and the plants may be ready to harvest within eight to 10 weeks. Initially the plants produce foliage, which can be picked in moderation – these green leaves can be used in stir-fries and soups. But at the two-month mark the stem begins to swell. This is when the real show begins and the plant begins to resemble a vegetable from out space.

While all parts of the kohlrabi are edible, the true prize of the vegetable is found under the root's outer layer of skin: its creamy yellow flesh. It's important not to let the plant overripen in warmer conditions — it will become fibrous and woody. Kohlrabi lasts well in cool soils, however, and develops more flavour as its starch turns into sugar.

Eaten fresh when it's young, kohlrabi has a good crunch and the mildly spicy aftertaste of radish. Kohlrabi is often roasted or steamed and served with a cosy white sauce, but it can also be grated and added to coleslaw or made into fritters.



RABI PURPLE

TIP OF THE MONTH: LEARN TO BE FLEXIBLE

Becoming a successful small-patch gardener relies on trial and error. While professional advice can be useful, you shouldn't be too rigid in your approach – learn to develop a gardener's natural instinct.

LISTEN TO OTHERS

When you're new to gardening it's logical to follow someone else's example. Advice about preparing

your patch, maintenance, planting and harvesting times are readily available. But novice gardeners need to realise these guidelines are based on personal experience and are therefore open to interpretation.

USE YOUR INTUITION

We wonder how many people are too rigid when it comes to planting their patch – staring at the calendar and

waiting for the month to end before they'll contemplate planting their radish seeds, for instance.

RULES CAN BE IGNORED

We're not suggesting you shun good advice, but learn to trust your own instincts, too. Last year we planted garlic in October, which is now almost ready to harvest. We usually plant garlic in March. See what I mean?



Ratatouille

This Niçoise classic is a jewel-like mix of end-of-summer vegetables, writes *Damien Pignolet*. A gentle touch brings rich rewards.

Rat-a-tou-ee. It's not that tricky to pronounce, and it's even easier to eat. The term dates back to 18th-century France, when it referred to a meat stew. The dish we know today as ratatouille was not recorded until the 1930s. The word derives from the French verb touiller, meaning to stir or mix. Stirring is certainly part of the production of ratatouille, but it's not really its defining

characteristic. It should certainly never be stirred too emphatically – a good ratatouille retains the elegance and freshness of the vegetables that are its building blocks.

The dish originated in Nice, but is popular throughout Provence, where the ingredients grow in abundance. Recipes abound, but all call for eggplant, zucchini, peppers and tomatoes, laced with onions, garlic and basil, and enriched with a fine olive oil. I have come across a recipe that included mushrooms but I believe they would be lost among the other flavours.

Many recipes require each vegetable to be fried separately in olive oil, which could make for a heavy dish, given the quantity of oil required. Most old varieties of eggplant had a bitter taste, so it was common practice to salt the eggplant before cooking to draw out the bitter juices. Virtually all modern varieties have lost this quality and the only advantage of salting them before cooking is to lessen the amount of oil the eggplant absorbs when it's fried. If this appeals to you, it certainly works. A trick I picked up years ago was to place the eggplant in a colander, salt it and leave it for three hours rather than the usual one. Dry it thoroughly before you fry it.

As an alternative to frying, simply toss the diced eggplant in a little oil in a plastic freezer bag and then spread it in a single layer under a very hot grill to brown it. This technique is especially good for dishes requiring sliced eggplant. Some cooks also like to roast the eggplant with similar intent. As for the oil, I find a nice fruity olive oil with a peppery finish works best.

I prefer not to hear ratatouille referred to as a stew – it should be a jewel-like dish, with each vegetable retaining its integrity. It's perfect on its own, simply complemented with crunchy baguette. And serve it hot or at room temperature, so the flavours are fully expressed, but never cold. I also recommend making your ratatouille a day in advance to give the flavours a chance to marry.

Lamb forms a happy partnership with ratatouille, as do goat and quail, but eggs are one of my favourite accompaniments, especially soft-boiled, or mollet as they're known in France, so the yolks anoint the





















delicious vegetables. Barbecued lamb chump chops are particularly good with ratatouille, which brings to mind a dish I enjoyed in the 1970s in Arles at a restaurant called Le Vaccarès. They had marinated lamb rump chops in olive oil, herbes de Provence and garlic, then grilled them over a wood fire and served them with a regional specialty called La Bohémienne (principally eggplant and tomato coulis). Such was the memory of this dish that it made its way some 20 years later onto the opening menu of my Sydney restaurant Bistro Moncur.

Leftover ratatouille has many possibilities — use it to fill a baguette, which can be wrapped in a cloth to take on a picnic perhaps, or serve it as a simple sandwich. A small amount of ratatouille makes a fine filling for an omelette or a topping for scrambled eggs. Mixed with cream and eggs, it works beautifully as a tartlet filling (three eggs to 600ml combined ratatouille and cream), or for crêpes with some chopped pitted black olives and a little fresh goat's cheese or coarsely grated parmesan added to the mix before baking until they're hot. But as a beautiful entrée, ratatouille with soft-boiled eggs is a treat.

I am reminded of a stylish friend whose children couldn't pronounce ratatouille but delighted the family with their title of "rats' tails" for this special Provençal dish.

Ratatouille Niçoise with soft-boiled eggs

"This recipe makes six entrée portions with enough left over to serve as a garnish to grilled lamb cutlets or roast leg of lamb. Ratatouille works best when made in a larger quantity, but this recipe also works well halved. It's best made a day ahead to allow the flavours to meld; any leftover will be delicious for another couple of days."

Prep time 20 mins, cook 11/2 hrs

Serves 6-8

190 ml extra-virgin olive oil

750 gm (3-4) onions, finely chopped

750 gm (about 3) eggplant, wiped with wet paper towel, patted dry

750 gm (5-6) zucchini

400 gm (about 2) green capsicum

400 gm (about 2) red capsicum

- 1/4 tsp ground coriander
- 8 large basil leaves, torn, plus plenty more to serve
- 6 eggs, at fridge temperature, shells pierced with an egg prick or a pin (so they don't crack)

Tomato sauce

- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 10 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 kg Roma tomatoes, peeled, seeded, coarsely chopped
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- ½ tsp fresh thyme leaves, coarsely chopped

STEP BY STEP

1 For tomato sauce, heat oil in a large saucepan until quite hot, add garlic, stir to coat, then reduce heat to low and cook garlic until softened but without colouring

(3-4 minutes). Add tomatoes and herbs and season to taste, cook gently to reduce some of the liquid (20 minutes), then cover and cook

gently until it's thickened slightly but tiny pieces of tomato are still evident (18-20 minutes).

- 2 Heat half the oil in a wide, shallow 4- or 5-litre casserole until hot but not smoking, add onion and stir to coat. Reduce the heat to medium and cook for 5 minutes without stirring, then sauté gently, stirring occasionally to prevent onions from catching, until the onion has released most of its juices (15-20 minutes). Cover and cook gently, stirring occasionally, until the onion looks like a shiny jam (15-20 minutes).
- 3 Cut eggplant into 1cm dice.
- 4 Heat remaining oil in a separate pan until hot but not smoking, add eggplant and fry, stirring, until lightly browned (6-8 minutes). Ensure the eggplant dice retain their firmness; it's better to err on the side of less colour and a firmer texture. Cut the zucchini into 1cm dice and add it and the eggplant to the onion.
- **5** Trim tops and bottom tips off the capsicum and quarter capsicum lengthways, remove the membrane and seeds, then cut capsicum into 5mm strips and add to the other vegetables.
- **6** Add the tomato sauce and ground coriander and return to the boil, then reduce to a gentle simmer. Taste for seasoning, cover and cook until the vegetables are tender but retain some firmness (10-15 minutes).
- **7** Stir in half the basil and adjust the seasoning to taste.
- 8 Lower eggs into a large saucepan of boiling water, return to the boil, then boil for 6 minutes. Drain and refresh under cold running water to arrest cooking. Shell eggs under cold running water or dipping them in a bowl of cold water as you go; set aside in an egg carton lined with plastic wrap so they retain their shape while you peel the rest. Halve, season and serve on ratatouille with extra basil. (If the ratatouille has been in the fridge, bring it to room temperature before you serve it.)

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Back to the future

Stokehouse is back and the St Kilda waterfront dining institution is more compelling than ever. Melburnians can't get enough, writes *Michael Harden*.

My first attempt at landing a table upstairs in the resurrected Stokehouse failed. But it still had its moments. I walked in early one weekday at lunchtime soon after the restaurant had reopened. I didn't have a booking — I'd been told the place had been booked solid until March the moment reservations opened — but I thought there might be a couple of tables set aside for walk-ins. A cancellation, perhaps. The place was still partly a construction site after all, the upstairs bar weeks from completion. Surely people would hold back until it was closer to ready? Wrong. I was informed politely, firmly and quickly that there wasn't a single available seat. And as if to prove the point, I was invited to take a quick look at the dining room.

Walking into that mostly completed and already busy room was a strange, lovely experience – the best kind of déjà vu. $\,$

It is, of course, different. For starters, it's in a building that's larger and more architecturally ambitious than the 110-year-old timber original that famously burnt down during a dinner service in 2014. The ceilings are higher, the dimensions grander. The views of the bay, seen through larger windows, are more encompassing and there's a large partially open terrace down the bar end. Charred timber screens in front of the windows protect diners from the glare and throw dappled light across the room. The glare dissipates, and then comes the room's most theatrical

moment – a button is pushed, the screens slowly retract and the view opens out to the full panorama. It's unmistakably modern. And yet it's still very Stokehouse.

There are the same Arne Jacobsen "Series 7" chairs in pastel shades around linen-covered tables. The timber floor is more rough-hewn than in the original but it gives the room the same relaxed atmosphere, the same timber also wrapping some of the walls. There are brass details, most notably above the large central light fittings - massed hand-blown frosted glass tubes - referencing similar metallic details that had graced the old room. It might be 2017 but Thievery Corporation is playing in the background and the crowd this day groups of colourfully dressed women with expensive hair and shoes, well-groomed men with rich tans and much younger lunch companions, boisterously celebratory mixed groups feeling good about themselves - look as comfortably at home in this new version of their clubhouse as the old one.

From the outside, the looming concrete building housing the Stokehouse Precinct (the collective name for the three eateries now housed on the site) couldn't be more different from the old building on the St Kilda foreshore. The box-like forms and the ground floor, hidden from the street behind a man-made sand dune planted with indigenous beach flora, point to owner Frank van Haandel and architect Robert Simeoni deciding on landmark over replica.>



SEA CHANGE

Clockwise from top left: head chef Ollie Hansford (seated) and manager Hugh van Haandel; seared tuna, wasabi syllabub and pickled radish; the exterior of the Stokehouse Precinct.









The team is charming, professional and efficient. Perhaps good waiters are as *seduced by water views* as the rest of us.

But the interior of the upstairs restaurant, designed by Pascale Gomes-McNabb, has cleverly captured the atmosphere of the original Stokehouse. It's an unmistakably modern room but you feel that you can party like it's 1989.

Fast-forward a month or so after the failed attempt to secure a table by stealth and the "completely booked out until March" story seems to have softened. Armed with a legitimate booking and a window-side table in the dining room, I'm again struck by the sense of familiarity. Especially when the menu arrives.

It's not just that dishes have reappeared verbatim from the old menu. The Bombe, the exuberantly sweet meringue and parfait dessert fixture, is here, as are the fish and chips and a couple of steaks from reputable producers, but it's the general approach of the menu that ramps up the déjà vu.

Frank van Haandel sometimes calls the style "resort food". Dishes are pitched to be a part of the equation alongside the location, view, interiors, cocktails and crowd rather than the focal point. The menu favours accessibility over complexity. Flavour combinations are designed to soothe rather than challenge. It was how the old Stokehouse earned a crust and there's an "if it ain't broke" kind of feeling with the new.

There's a familiar emphasis on seafood, particularly with the raw bar section at the head of the carte, and it's here that one of the restaurant's best dishes resides. Tuna, wasabi and radish always make happy playmates and the version here sees the tuna marinated briefly in white soy before it's blowtorched, cut into long, thin pieces, sprinkled with sesame seeds flavoured with bonito and roasted. A geometric smear of the palest green wasabi syllabub packs low-key heat, and little

pink cubes of pickled daikon bring the crunch. It's a well-constructed crowd-pleaser, presented with an almost retro panache.

The smoked eel pâté is another looker. It's studded with oat crackers and dusted with a fine dark-green bay-leaf powder. The pâté is good, very good even, with the salty, sweet smoky eel happily mixing with crème fraîche, horseradish and herbs. The texture is fine, too – just firm enough to stay where it needs to be. The problem is with the crackers. They're so delicate that they snap when you try to use them to scoop up the pâté. It makes what should be a clean and easy snack messy and a little bit exasperating. First-world problems? Absolutely. But it's something you'd hope the kitchen would've worked out before the dish hit the tables. It's a pity because the crackers are as tasty as they are good-looking. They just need to harden up.

A new kitchen and kitchen team mean that there's a bit of this hit and miss with the Stokehouse menu at the moment. Understandable teething problems perhaps, but less forgivable at these prices.

Fish and chips, for instance, is not the signature dish it should be: King George whiting coated in a tough sourdough crumb, the fish underneath it dryer than you'd hope. Anyone who's eaten the fried fish at Paper Fish, Stokehouse's fish-and-chip kiosk by the building's beachfront, right on the boardwalk, might wonder why the light and lacy tempura batter they've got going on down there isn't making an appearance upstairs. According to Stokehouse head chef Ollie Hansford, the choice of fish is being reconsidered. That's a good thing.

The chips, on the other hand, are triple-cooked things of beauty, and the accompanying tartare sauce has a salty, capery punch and verve.

COASTAL COOL

Clockwise from above: the bar and neighbouring terrace; grilled calamari salad with pickled green mango and salsa verde; Stokehouse sits by St Kilda's promenade.

MELBOURNE REVIEW

There's punch and verve elsewhere, too. Western Australian arrowhead squid, roasted hot enough to leave a smoky torched quality, makes an excellent salad dressed in a lemon vinaigrette and accompanied by sharp-sweet pickled green mango and a punchy salsa verde with lemon myrtle and black mountain pepper in the mix.

Agnolotti stuffed with scallop mousse, topped with spanner crab and served on a seafood bisque and corn sauce are lifted with fermented chilli that adds a noticeable but finely tuned whack of heat. The tartare of Cape Grim eye fillet is cut to order, and reinterpreted interestingly with lime juice and fish sauce alongside puffed grains, sorrel and an odd, slightly Vegemitey black-garlic purée.

There's a dessert on the current list that should give The Bombe a run for its money. The peanut butter semifreddo is a well-adjusted member of its species, beautifully textured without a hint of ice, and peanutty enough without being juvenile. It comes with a dark-chocolate macaron, macerated cherries that loll about in a dark chocolate sauce, candied peanuts and a quenelle of cream. It's not subtle, but it delivers.

Perhaps the most surprising part of Stokehouse's new package is the quality of the service. At a time when there's much gnashing of teeth in the trade about a dire shortage of experienced waiters, the team here is charming, professional and efficient. Perhaps good waiters are as seduced by water views as the rest of us.

The wine list by sommelier Gavin Cremming is similarly impressive, part of Stokehouse 2.0 that feels very much of the present. There's plenty of impressive Champagne at similarly impressive prices and those after a blow-out on Raveneau, Romanée Conti or Grange will have their needs met. But there's also really worthwhile drinking under \$100, including a smattering of interesting new stuff from Australian



ON THE WATERFRONT
Peanut butter
semifreddo with
dark-chocolate macaron.



Stokehouse

30 Jacka Blvd, St Kilda, (03) 9525 5555. stokehouse.com.au Licensed Cards AE MC V EFT Open Daily noon-3pm, 6pm-late Prices Entrées \$10-\$34, main courses \$38-\$43, desserts \$7-\$21 Vegetarian One entrée, one main course Noise Rowdy when crowded Wheelchair access Yes Minus Menu wobbles from a teething kitchen Plus An updated favourite recreates what it does best

makers such as Ochota Barrels and Manon alongside South African chenin blanc and Georgian rkatsiteli. The offer by the glass list is sharp, varied and generous, too.

Like Café Di Stasio and France-Soir, Stokehouse belongs to the genre of restaurants that feel like clubhouses, focused on a particular tribe and as much about the sociable act of dining out as they are about the belly. A well-rounded dining scene needs these joints.

The staggered openings of the Precinct (Paper Fish, followed by downstairs casual and DJ-soundtracked Pontoon, followed by the restaurant and then parts of the bar upstairs) has felt like the restaurant equivalent of a fan dance. Doing it piecemeal like this, with the continuing mess and noise of construction as a backdrop, hasn't been the ideal way to reveal a brand-new day. But bills have to be paid and, as the immediate crowds suggest, people are prepared to compromise a little for the things they love. And love is exactly what Melbourne has for the Stokehouse. It's great to have it back.

AND ALSO

Ready to rambleAnother step towards resurrecting Chapel Street's culinary image,

Ramblr focuses on good wine, sharp service and robustly flavoured food from chef and co-owner Nick Stanton (Leonard's House of Love, Nieuw Amsterdam). On the menu, punchy kimchi and cheese toasties, casarecce tossed with mussels, chilli and bottarga, and nicely salty pig's head fritters join a very good roast chicken served with smoky grilled leek and a rich garlic cream. Ramblr, 363 Chapel St, South Yarra, (03) 9827 0949



Greek expectations

Thomas Deliopoulos wanted to replicate the souvlaki he could get at home in Greece, so at Oakleigh's Kalimera Souvlaki Art, the chefowner is meticulous about sourcing his pork, using only female pigs so the flavour is cleaner and sweeter, and seasons it with Greek oregano. He char-grills his fluffy Greek-style pita before stuffing it with the intensely flavoured meat, tzatziki and chips. It's like a little slice of Athens. Be prepared to queue. Kalimera Souvlaki Art, 41 Chester St, Oakleigh, (03) 9939 3912

Best cellars

The team behind Malvern's Milton Wine Shop and Toorak Cellars has done it again with **The Alps**. It's a handsome wine bar and bottle shop in a former milk bar in Prahran. The wine list is trend conscious, but happily and easily straddles the natural-conventional divide. A Coravin system means there's often something rare and vintage by the glass. Food sticks to the cheese and charcuterie path, successfully fulfilling its role as second fiddle to the booze. **The Alps**, **64 Commercial Rd, Prahran**, **(03) 9529 4988**







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A little Italy Pino's Vino e Cucina delivers on robust Italian flavours and a cracking

drinks list with the dial set firmly to good times, writes Pat Nourse.

Blessed be the locals. Coming out of a year in Sydney packed with openings from big names in even bigger dining "precincts", each more crisply branded and heavily pre-sold than the last, there's something deeply pleasurable about pushing through the doors on a place opened by relative unknowns in the 'burbs and finding yourself in a restaurant filled with promise.

Pino's Vino e Cucina might not have a million-dollar fit-out, but money has been spent, time has been taken and taste has been exercised. It's a good-looking room. Sitting on the intersection of two residential streets in Alexandria, it doesn't give much away at first glance. Only the swinging sign, rendered from a linocut designed by local artist Allie Webb, is suggestive of the adventure offered within. It depicts a gentleman of some maturity holding a glass of wine in one hand and a fat cigar in the other, decked out in the waistcoat, bow tie and moustache that are the internationally recognised signifiers of good-time guys everywhere. One thing is clear: Pino's is here for a good time. And that's what Pino's is all about.

Down the right-hand side of the dining room runs a richly stocked bar, finished in beautiful timber and gleaming with bottles that say "drink me". On the left lie unclothed tables and a banquette kitted out with nicely seasoned leather. Something about the

floorboards, heavy beams, bar stools and all that timber joinery gives it a saloon feel, which somehow clicks with the short, smart Italian menu. Call it spaghetti Western.

The single-sided A4 carte is an admirably concise affair, broken down into eight or so antipasti, a section for pizzicheria (which means delicatessen, more or less, and here translates to the likes of pecorino Sardo, grana padano, Gorgonzola dolce, mortadella, pancetta, sausage and two kinds of prosciutto), six piatti forti (the main courses), three sides and three desserts.

Co-owner and chef Matteo Margiotta hails from Rome and while his flavours and ingredients often skew southern Italian, the food at Pino's isn't wedded to a particular region. Swordfish is offered as a main course with fennel, watercress and radish, and one of the more impressive antipasto dishes sees a fat octopus tentacle set on cannellini beans and dressed with the spicy, porky goodness of 'nduja, Calabria's hot, brick-red spreadable salumi. Things like risotto balls, panzanella and a whacking great big 850-gram grilled T-bone served with a grilled lemon and listed as a "Fiorentina" are more suggestive of northern Italy, meanwhile, but it's probably more useful to think of the direction as cucina Alexandria.

At its best, the menu just leans summery, fun and winningly simple. A fat bulb of burrata with ribbons>



THREE AMICI

Clockwise from left: octopus, cannellini and 'nduja; chef and co-owner Matteo Margiotta, co-owner Diane McDonald and bar manager Antonello Arzedi; The Little Italy cocktail.







All that timber joinery gives it a saloon feel, which clicks with the short, *smart Italian menu*. Call it spaghetti Western.

of asparagus, peas and broad beans: easy. A low, little glazed terracotta dish holding a farinata, a chickpea-flour pancake golden from the pan, scattered with rings of pickled red onion and ricotta salata – the scant grating of hard, salty sheep's milk cheese bringing the whole thing to life.

At one point, one of the waiters — who appear uniformly friendly and engaged under the management of the co-owner and superbly Glasgow-accented Diane McDonald — suggests the side of roast potatoes, done with duck fat and truffle oil. This is the first bum note coming from the kitchen for me. What use the chefs have for an artificial and, to my mind, profoundly unappealing product like truffle oil in an otherwise savvy place like this is hard to fathom. Opt for the panzanella instead and you'll get a bowl of lovely summery tomatoes of various hues and flavours, blissfully free of artificial flavourings.

The kitchen sometimes feints at a more modernist take on Italian food. There are several restaurants that do space-age Italian well in Sydney. Nothing I've seen at Pino's leads me to believe this is one of them. The term "coffee gel" neatly undoes any appeal that may lie in a white chocolate-topped tiramisù. Then there's the dish our waiter describes as "tomato not tomato". "Uh-oh," I think, "this isn't promising." On the menu it was just listed fairly innocently as "mozzarella, red capsicum, celery". Not totally auspicious, but my dining buddy that night was unabashedly pro-cheese in all her ordering. Whatever we expected, it wasn't this: pretend tomatoes made of balls of mozzarella shrouded in skins fashioned from roasted red peppers. What a waste of time and effort. Adding insult to injury, the cheese inside is ice-cold, its texture deeply

unappealing. The pièce de résistance in this exercise in pointlessness? Tomato stems stuck on top of the "tomatoes". Jesus wept. After a few more desultory prods at them to see if they get better (they don't), we don't bother finishing them. The staff, to their credit, take them off the bill. The mozzarella served with grilled peach and curls of prosciutto, on the other hand, gets wolfed down in seconds.

And then there's the best thing Pino's does: house-made pasta. Out the back the guys have a proper professional-grade pasta extruder, so the menu offers more than the usual hand-rolled and filled stuff.

Tonnarelli, here thick-cut spaghetti, make a juicy partner to a pile of garlicky mussels and fruit-sweet cherry tomatoes, scattered with herby breadcrumbs. The plating is a bit fussy — the shells are fanned out around the noodles, pea shoots plonked needlessly on top — but the flavours are true. Zucchini and lardo complement the nuttiness of spelt trenette, meanwhile, and grains of toasted spelt add a welcome bit of texture. Batons of chive and mint leaves pick out a bright top note. (I'm not sure what's going on with the names of the pasta at Pino's. This one, for instance, they call trenette, but the frilly-edged ribbons, a bit like garters made of pasta for the exacting fetishist, look like mafaldine to me. God only knows what happens when Italians come in for dinner.)

Desserts run to the fruity and the fluffy and make no attempts at coolness. Granizado translates to a glass of granita, overlaid with whipped cream, strawberry, blueberries and passionfruit – the love child of a pavlova and a granita. No beetroot, no soils, no coriander cress – though the glass I'm served is, I'm weary to report, rimmed with icing sugar.

SYDNEY REVIEW





strawberry, blueberries and passionfruit.

The millefoglie is likewise a gloriously silly over-the-top thing. It's not layers of pastry as the name suggests (millefoglie's French equivalent is the millefeuille), but rather a wide hollow tube piped full of pastry cream and dressed with pistachio, cherry and diced kiwifruit. Fun fact: Italy is the second biggest producer of kiwifruit in the world, after China. All that's missing is the doily.

Wine and cocktails come from an aesthetic universe that knows no doilies and brooks no kiwis. Italy represents about half the cellar, the remainder split between France and Australia, most of it sold for under \$80 a bottle. It's approachable, but quietly subversive. There's sav blanc by the glass, but it's a Chapter from the Yarra Valley, made with a bit of skin contact. The chardonnay is from Rome, while the vermentino and Montepulciano are made in the Riverland in South Australia. The beer list is even more wilful: lager is from Sardinia, the wheat beer from Piedmont. One of the Australian offerings, a pale ale, is called Bastard Son, while another, a golden ale, goes by the winning name of Fuck the Rent.

Bar manager Antonello Arzedi has done a superb job with the cocktail list, which is full of intrigue. Just how does panettone feature in his 25th Bellini alongside rum and moscato? And when can I make time to pull up a stool and try the tequila, amaro and grapefruit number he calls a Piñata? I can say that the Americanello, which introduces pomegranate juice and a herbal house-made soda into the classic mix of

Campari and vermouth, is a welcome twist on the Americano. In the light-and-fresh department, there's also the Reverse Sake, which combines sake and a matcha tea syrup to refreshing effect in a glass filled with crushed ice, swaddled with hessian and fragrant with yuzu. Arzedi's glassware is as impeccable as his patter. All his ice is cut by hand, and luscious treasures of the distillate world glitter and beckon from the back bar, making this very much a place to visit for the drinks in their own right.

In fact, that's probably the best way to approach Pino's - not so much as a restaurant or a place focused on dining as a place to hang out and have a few drinks, more a great bar that happens to have a more substantial menu than most. A few people have eagerly asked me if it's Sydney's answer to Melbourne's splendid pasta bar Tipo 00. To be frank, it's not. But once the kitchen recognises that pasta and robust flavours are where its strengths lie and jettisons the less-convincing modernist frills it could be. For now, though, Pino's is the romantic, likeable local you wish was your own. And that's no bad thing.



e Cucina

199 Lawrence St, Alexandria, NSW, (02) 9550 2789 Licensed

Open Dinner and drinks Tue-Sat 5pm-midnight, Sun 5pm-10pm Cards AE MC V EFT Prices Entrées \$16-\$22, main courses \$26-\$32, desserts \$10-\$16

Vegetarian Three entrées, two main courses Noise Noisy, great tunes Wheelchair access No Minus Moments of the kitchen's reach going beyond its grasp Plus Cool room, friendly

staff, great drinks

The good oil

The premise of a Singaporean Italian eatery opening a

branch in Sydney might not seem captivating at first glance, and the dreadful house music playing at Olio doesn't help that impression. But Lino Sauro's nuovo Sicilian menu has its moments, not least the pasta. Risone, cooked like a risotto with bone marrow and octopus braised in red wine, is worth a visit in itself. Olio, 10/2 Kensington St, Chippendale, (02) 9281 1500



Cool breese

The freshly rebranded Hyatt Regency at Darling Harbour goes some of the way to redressing Sydney's bizarre lack of rooftop bars with **Zephyr**. Timber decking and screens of knotted rope reference the maritime theme without getting silly, and the focus on rum and vermouth (each represented in an impressive range of bottles) translates to a cocktail list with considerably more oomph and interest than the Sydney hotel standard. Zephyr, 161 Sussex St, Sydney, (02) 8099 1234

Dumplings ahoy

We're not sure what the waiter who recommended the \$39 roast duck pancakes as a highlight at Papa Bo Min was thinking. Perhaps she hadn't tried them. Skip them in favour of the dumplings, which are the specialty of the house at this latest offshoot of the Lotus group. The vibe is more fast casual than restaurant proper, but the dumplings (duck and spinach, prawn and calamari, chicken siu mai) deliver the goods, Papa Bo Min, Plaza Level, Grosvenor Place, 225 George St, Sydney, (02) 8318 3622



Italian classics

Style and functionality meet in these kitchen design classics, making for memorable meals in style.





THINK ITALIAN

Not only is Italy synonymous with style, it's also home to one of the world's most popular cuisines, so it's no surprise the two converge winningly in the kitchen. Smeg produces some of the most stylish and sought-after appliances, and its freestanding ovens are chief among them. No one would argue with the combination of electric oven, gas hob and smooth good looks. With high-performance burners of varying power levels - along with a teppanyaki plate and wok burner - it takes care of your bubbling pot of pasta while you fry off the meatballs, say. Style and substance likewise combine in ILVE's built-in double oven - just the ticket when you need a few things on the go, such as some crowd-pleasing pizze Caprese. Both ovens make cleaning easy - the Smeg with vapour clean, the ILVE with pyro-clean mode - so they're the ideal kitchenhands. What's not to like? Bellissimo.



Pizza Caprese

Prep time 20 mins, cook 30 mins (plus proving) Makes 4

400 gm canned chopped tomatoes, drained (juice discarded)

375 gm buffalo mozzarella (about 3 small), thinly sliced

100 gm cacciatore salami, thinly sliced

250 gm cherry tomatoes, halved

1 cup (loosely packed) basil Extra-virgin olive oil, to serve Pizza dough

2 tbsp olive oil

7 gm (1 sachet) dried yeast

1 tsp caster sugar

450 gm (3 cups) plain flour

1 For pizza dough, combine olive oil, yeast, sugar, ½ tsp salt and 350ml lukewarm water in a bowl and stand until foamy (2-3 minutes). Gradually add flour, mix until a rough dough forms, then turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic (6-8 minutes). Place in a lightly oiled bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set aside until doubled in size (1-11/2 hours). Knock back, knead lightly, then cover and

stand until doubled in size (45 minutes to 1 hour)

2 Preheat oven to 250C. Place 2 heavy oven trays in oven to heat. Divide dough into quarters and roll each into a 30cm-diameter round and place on a sheet of baking paper. Spread tomato over bases, top with mozzarella and salami, then place on trays using baking paper for support and bake in batches until cooked through, swapping trays halfway through cooking (6-8 minutes). Repeat with remaining pizze. Scatter pizze with cherry tomatoes and basil, drizzle with oil, season to taste and serve hot.

66 Style is an important part of the buying equation: choose a model that works with your kitchen design and won't date. 99

TRY BEFORE YOU BUY We offer free cooking demonstrations at each of our stores to assist in making the right decision when choosing to buy kitchen appliances or to help you get the most out of your appliances after you've bought them.

FOR MORE INFORMATION VISIT winningappliances.com.au



Left: ILVE 60cm combination microwave oven (ILCM45X), ILVE 60cm built-in pyrolytic oven (600SPYTCI). Opposite: Smeg Victoria upright cooker (TRA4110BL).

66 Italian cuisine and style converge winningly in the kitchen. ⁹⁹

Polpetti with roasted tomato sauce and pappardelle Prep time 20 mins, cook 30 mins Serves 4

- 4 ripe vine-ripened tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, crushed
- 2 golden shallots, thinly sliced
- 2 tbsp oregano
- small red chilli, halved
- 140 ml extra-virgin olive oil
 - 1 tsp caster sugar
- 250 gm extra-lean finely minced beef
- 250 gm coarsely minced pork with good fat marbling
 - 90 ml dry white wine
- 400 gm dried pappardelle

Finely grated parmesan, to serve

- 1 Preheat oven to 220C. Combine tomatoes, garlic, shallot, oregano and chilli in a roasting pan, drizzle with 90ml olive oil, scatter with caster sugar, season to taste and roast until vegetables soften and start to caramelise around the edges (about 20 minutes).
- 2 Meanwhile, combine meats in a bowl and season to taste. Heat white wine and 2 tbsp remaining olive oil in a deep frying pan over high heat. Form walnut-sized meatballs and add to pan. Cover with a lid and cook without stirring for 3 minutes, then remove lid and cook, shaking pan occasionally, until liquid reduces and meatballs start to fry (3-4 minutes).
- 3 Cook pappardelle in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain, reserving 1 cup pasta water, then return to pan and toss with remaining oil and enough pasta water to coat. Serve topped with meatballs, sauce, parmesan and cracked black pepper.



Captive audience

Leading chefs descend on Melbourne in April for The World's 50 Best Restaurants. We asked local hospitality folk who they'd abduct for the day and where they'd take them to show off their city. There may be coffee, there may be culture, but in the end it's cocktails.

GERALD DIFFEY Gerald's Bar

"I've had Massimo Bottura of Osteria Francescana in at Gerald's, so I know he enjoys a good time. I'd start with a viewing of Wake in Fright at the Australian Centre for the Moving Image, then a visit to the car park under Melbourne University where the Mad Max police station was shot, and from there the natural move would be to calamari at Café Di Stasio with Ronnie Di Stasio and Mallory Wall. Then a pint at The Lincoln, cannoli in Footscray at T Cavallaro & Sons, fish with Michael Bacash and Fiona Perkins at Bacash Restaurant, steak and a glass of Burgundy at France-Soir with JP [Jean-Paul Prunetti] and cocktails with Miss Pearls at Madame Brussels or the venue of her choosing. There would be supper at Hihou, cigars at the

Melbourne Savage Club, pizza at Kaprica, chilli crab at Supper Inn, and an encounter with Gin Palace impresario Vernon Chalker. It'd be sort of like a speed-dating snapshot of the city's food, literature and art. The hood comes off, a light clicks on in his face, and just when he gets his bearings, the hood goes back on and it's off to the next place. Eventually he'll find himself alone late at night at Gerald's Bar with a Gooseberry Martini from Gabriel de Melo Freire. Sarah Vaughan sings her lament through the flickering valves. The door to freedom stands open, but can he leave?"

FRANK CAMORRA MoVida

"Both **Joan Roca**, of El Celler de Can Roca, and **Andoni Luis Aduriz**, of Mugaritz, are total gentlemen, and like most chefs, are inquisitive and food obsessed, so I'm sure they'd want to see what was different about this city. We'd visit the Vietnamese markets in Sunshine and Footscray; they just don't exist in Spain so I'm sure they'd be fascinated with the produce (and we'd definitely pop in to one of the shops for pho). A great Aussie pie would be a must, too. Tivoli Road Bakery makes the best.

THI LE Anchovy

"We'd pick Ignacio Mattos, of Estela, up from the airport and head straight to Song Huong in St Albans for bun bo Hue. Then we'd drive through West Footscray to look at Chinese-Indian cooking mash-ups and snack on dosas. If it's a week day, we'll go for coffee at Patricia Coffee Brewers in the city, swing by Spring Street Grocer and City Wine Shop to buy some cheese and a bottle or two of something tasty, then drive to Alexandra Gardens where you can eat, drink and snooze. Once refreshed,

check out the chaos of the early-evening markets.
Dinner will be at Noi Lucky, the best car-park food in Melbourne, for fiery papaya salad and raw beef salad littered with tripe (and let's not forget the barbecued ox-tongue). We'd then head to Albert Park Driving Range for a beer and bash to digest, then a nightcap at The Black Pearl to finish."

ANDREW JOY Marion

"Besides the fact our beards are the same. Alex Atala. of DOM, and I also share a passion for spearfishing and free-diving, so a quick trip down to Port Phillip Bay to dive for scallops, abalone and urchin would be on the cards. A day of adventure calls for a night of wine, and wine is most definitely one of Melbourne's strengths right now. I'd start out at the back of Bar Liberty for off-the-tap goodness, cracking snacks and a laneway full of inspired street art (and a few loitering hipsters). From there, we'd head to Marion for roast chicken and a bottle of something serious (I know it's where I work,

MISSING IN ACTION

From left: Massimo Bottura from Osteria Francescana, Modena; Daniel Humm of Eleven Madison Park, New York; and Alex Atala of DOM in São Paulo. Opposite: Sejji Yamamoto, of RyuGin, Tokyo.



but the food is delicious and I get a discount). Any day in Melbourne needs to be capped off with a Negroni, so we'd head down to The Everleigh to get some respite from the bustle of Gertrude Street – and maybe there we could finally compare notes on our beards."

TONY TAN Gourmet Traveller

"I reckon Andoni Luis
Aduriz, of Mugaritz, gets
Melbourne. I'll show him
some of our ethnic eats out
in Dandenong because that
type of cuisine is as rare
as hen's teeth in San
Sebastián. He'll be as
pleased as punch to try
the likes of Afghani kabuli
pulao and bolani, the
flatbread stuffed with leeks
and served with yoghurt.

For those wanting a more permanent experience, we'd meet up with tattoo artist Mayonaize for a custom-drawn tattoo."

MORGAN McGLONE Belles Hot Chicken

"Since I live in Birregurra, I would pre-game at my house with Ignacio Mattos, of Estela, and then get my wife to drop us off at Brae. I would definitely take him to Lune Croissanterie, too - a visit there always builds anticipation and their product definitely deserves it. The breakfast menu at Archie's All Day is so much better than other hyped cafés in Melbourne (The Godmother sandwich is my go-to and the coffee is off the chain). No one does late-night drinks like Heartbreaker, Michael

Crispin for dessert. The next morning I'd take them (with sore heads) to try some of Melbourne's best coffee at Dukes Coffee Roasters in the CBD, then to the Queen Victoria Market to do some shopping and sightseeing."

CHRIS LUCAS Chin Chin

"Chef Seiji Yamamoto, of RyuGin, is an obsessive naturalist who can seriously drink and party. We'd start in Yarra Valley with a hot-air-balloon ride before having coffee at Healesville Hotel. We'd visit Yarra Valley Caviar farm (maybe, if timing is right, we'll be able to see salmon caviar getting milked), take a tour of TarraWarra Museum of Art, and have an early lunch at Oakridge with Matt Stone doing his seasonal magic.



Eventually he'll find himself alone late at night at Gerald's Bar with a Gooseberry Martini and Sarah Vaughan singing through the *flickering valves*.

On the way there, we could stop at Clayton, a suburb that's practically the last bastion for genuine Greek sweets. I could also drag him out to Box Hill for rou jia mo, the Chinese burger that's making waves the world over [see page 28]. I think it'll be fun to see how a star chef reacts to ground zero-type grunge tucker."

SHANE DELIA Maha

"I'd take Will Guidara and Daniel Humm, of Eleven Madison Park, for a wander around Collingwood and Fitzroy, where we'd check out local designers Flux and pick up some Biggie Smalls before heading to a Melbourne City FC or Western Bulldogs game. For more snacks around town we'd head to Leonard's House of Love or Pho Nom for a banh mi.

Madrusan has created a quintessential dive bar that's actually a dive bar. It's not known as black-out central for nothing."

SCOTT PICKETT Estelle Bistro

"I'd head to the MCG to see a game of footy with Will Guidara and Daniel Humm. from Eleven Madison Park, hopefully to a packed crowd. We'd take a long drive down the coast to the Mornington Peninsula, visiting the beaches and wineries along the way. Then we'd spend a relaxing night at our beach house, and cook a glamorous barbecue showcasing the finest local produce: Sher waqyu, Flinders Island lamb, local berries and cherries. Back in the city, our dinner-crawl would start with snacks at MoVida, moving along to Embla, then finishing at Saint

After returning to the city, we'll take a laneway street art tour, have a pre-dinner drink at Shannon Bennett's Lui Bar (which has the best view of the city), then soak up the energy and spice of the unique food at Chin Chin for dinner. Midnight will be spent with Negronis, cigars and a view of Melbourne's famed Princess Theatre at Siglo, then post 3am we'll eat legendary suckling pig and drink cold beer at Supper Inn in Chinatown, do some karaoke on Little Bourke Street and have a 6am breakfast at Pellegrini's with the cab drivers, because I think we'll need it."

DAVE VERHEUL The Town Mouse

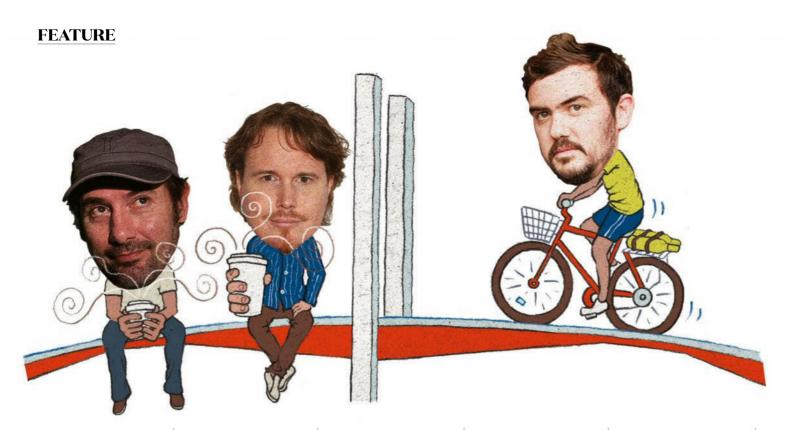
"I'd totally hijack **Enrique Olvera** and the guys from

Pujol – they look like they'd
be loads of fun. We'd grab
a couple of bottles from

Blackhearts & Sparrows, fish and chips from Tommy Ruff Fish Bar in Mordialloc and hit Half Moon Bay for a pre-dinner swim. After that we'd head back into the city for cocktails at Romeo Lane. Everyone needs to go to Dainty Sichuan in South Yarra when they visit Melbourne, too. If things are getting loose we'd go to Heartbreaker, because it's Heartbreaker, then have XO pipis at Supper Inn. Boom."

ROSA MITCHELL Rosa's Canteen

"If I were showing Magnus Nilsson, of Fäviken, around, we'd start with a visit to the Slow Food Melbourne Farmers' Market to meet local producers and see what great produce we have in Victoria. The next stop would be to the Queen Victoria Market where we'd buy a bag of doughnuts>



and wander around Books for Cooks, chatting with the owner, Tim White, about cook books by local chefs. We'd head to Victoria Street for a look at the wonderful Asian food and produce available, and stop for a good pho, before heading to the football at the MCG to see North Melbourne beat Collingwood. Now we really need a drink. City Wine Shop is where we'd go for local wine and people watching, and for me and Magnus the best place for dinner is Lee Ho Fook."

BANJO HARRIS PLANE Bar Liberty

"Will Guidara and Daniel **Humm** at Fleven Madison Park go to lengths other restaurants don't even dream of to make guests have the experience of a lifetime. I'd love to give back some of the love I felt when visiting New York a few years ago. In Melbourne, that looks like coffee at Aunty Peg's and a tour of the Proud Mary roastery, a walk down Smith Street and breakfast at Oneyada café. It's owned by the team behind Jinda Thai and is proof that breakfast can indeed be avocado-free and still utterly delicious. Before

lunch we'd visit the National Gallery of Victoria for a tour of the Indigenous Art collection. For lunch Tipo 00 is tough to top in the city (try the red mullet spaghettini - unmissable), although sweetbreads at France-Soir with a bottle of Burgundy comes pretty close. In the late afternoon we'd catch a game at the MCG, hopefully watching Port Adelaide defeat Hawthorn. As the sun starts to set, perhaps a Campari at Siglo before jetting across town for dinner at my old place of work, Attica – a unique, stimulating and utterly Australian restaurant. We'd finish the night with superior cocktails and questionable banter at either The Attic at Black Pearl or Above Board."

ANDREW McCONNELL Cutler & Co

"I'm enamoured with

Bertrand Grébaut
restaurant, Septime. His
understated modern
approach to flavour, balance
and composition is unique
in Paris. I'd kidnap him for
the day, hire two bikes and
head to the Yarra Valley.
I'd love to go foraging and
explore the wild native

ingredients available only an hour from our city centre. We'd start in Healesville, a town I lived in as a boy. We'd wander around the TarraWarra Museum of Art before visiting a few farms and wineries. We'd drop by **Thousand Candles** vineyard, have a guick lunch at Oakridge and make a final stop at Four Pillars Gin distillery. After a day in the Valley we'd head back into town with some produce and wine, and I'd invite him to hang out and cook with me at home with friends."

VICTOR LIONG

"I would start with a coffee at Self Preservation with Ignacio Mattos, of Estela, when the morning is still warming up; there's something special about strolling up Bourke Street towards Parliament with the sun behind you. After coffee we'd wander across to Cumulus Inc for a really neat hot breakfast, cruise across to the NGV to stare at some art, then have a quick drink and snack on the way back at Arbory Bar while watching the comings and goings of the Yarra. We'd be at the bar of Tipo

00 for lunch, then potter over to Clever Polly's for a cheeky pét-nat on the street. It would be great if he came into Lee Ho Fook so we could host him, but if not, we'd enjoy the remaining sunshine at Ombra with a prosecco and a few small plates to share, then make our way to the bar at Embla. As for the nightcap? Bar Ampère is great for the late-night laneway ambience."

SHAUN QUADE Lûmé

"I'd kidnap Grant Achatz, of Alinea, and Paul Pairet, of Ultraviolet, straight off the plane. On the journey from the airport into the CBD, there's a slight detour across the Bolte Bridge. Melbourne has many great public art pieces but driving across the Bolte always reminds me of the simple but elegant entry way into a great city. We'd ditch the car at my apartment in Flinders Lane and grab a coffee from Tom Thumb, We'd walk from St Paul's Cathedral across Federation Square and the bridge over the mighty Yarra, then down St Kilda Road and along the Royal Botanic Gardens to The Arts Centre and the

of Shanghai restaurant Ultraviolet; Grant Achatz, of Alinea in Chicago; and

TAKEN FOR A RIDE

From left: Paul Pairet

of Alinea in Chicago; and Bertrand Grébaut of Septime, Paris. Opposite: Magnus Nilsson of Fäviken, Sweden; René Redzepi of Copenhagen's Noma; and Brett Graham of The Ledbury, London.



NGV. The gallery building is what I imagine the Ministry of Love from 1984 would look like (minus the waterfall). Lunch would be a burger and onion rings from 8bit in Footscray. From there, we'd drive out to Ballarat to visit the workshop of our friends Jesse Stevens and Dean Petersen from Cake Industries - they have an amazing property for foraging. Then back to the CBD for dinner at Embla. Dave Verheul showcases amazing Australian produce and cooks it simply, which is really satisfying - plus Christian McCabe's wine list is cracking. We'd finish the night with a walk up the road to Whisky & Alement."

DAVID MOYLE Longsong

"I want to kidnap Alex Atala of DOM. I've met him a few times and he seems like a dude. At 9.30am. we'd have a breakfast bratwurst at the Queen Victoria Market and an excellent coffee from one of the two Market Lane Coffee stores. After wandering around fondling foods, we'd browse the Sydney Road record stores and Mediterranean Wholesalers, and stop for baklava, then falafel from Very Good Falafel. Later, we'd have a couple of wines in the park down by the Merri Creek, followed by

a hardcore, bitter Italianstyle espresso and a plate of pasta at Pellegrini's. At 3pm, we'd do mackerel dumplings at ShanDong MaMa, then drink beer in a very little glass at The Exford Hotel, and (of course) it's a perfect day for a little swim in the Yarra. By 10.30pm, you'll find us at Heartbreaker for whisky, then over the road for a 3am ramen."

KATE REID Lune Croissanterie

"I'd take Massimo Bottura, of Osteria Francescana, out for the day, starting in the morning with an espresso at Patricia Coffee Brewers. It was one of the first places in Melbourne to stock Lune croissants and represents the best Melbourne has to offer. Next stop: Lune. It sounds a little self-serving but Lune is my life and it would be pretty great to treat him to a ham and Gruyère fresh from the oven. The next part of the day would involve visiting some of my favourite producers - Meatsmith to grab amazing charcuterie, Spring Street Cheese Cellar for cheese, Tivoli Road Bakery for some of Melbourne's best bread. This would all be enjoyed on a picnic at Fitzroy Gardens complete with wines from Giorgio De Maria. I'd invite all the

above producers to come along, too, and afterwards we'd all head to Embla for more wine, or Pidapipò for gelato."

JESS HO Smalls

"l'd force René Redzepi or any of the Nordic crew to purchase a Myki travel ticket and to top it up at a machine and not have interaction with a human. Then we'd navigate the tricky public transport system that is a bus to Doncaster shopping town. I'd take them for yum cha at Secret Kitchen to frustrate their systematic, wellorganised minds, but reward them with some positive-reinforcement dim sum at the end of the infuriating journey."

GUY GROSSI Grossi Florentino

"Brett Graham of The
Ledbury and I would start
off with a glass of vino or
two at Cumulus Up. The
atmosphere up is laid-back
but sophisticated – a good
way to start things off. We'd
head to dinner at Tonka
to feast on well-executed,
full-flavoured Indian food
paired with excellent wines
and warm hospitality.
A trip to the countryside
(because Victoria has some
beautiful countryside)

And where better to dine than Brae? The food and accommodation are too beautiful to skip. Back in a town where coffee culture is as rich as anywhere else in the world, we'd source a cup from Green Park Dining. By April the footy season is in full swing - 80,000 screaming fans at the MCG is something everyone should witness. We'd head up to Gertrude Street for a wander, perhaps some chicken wings or a stop-in at any of Andy McConnell's venues, or a perfectly balanced cocktail from The Everleigh. But why stop the night there? We'd head to Romeo Lane on Crossley Street to continue the cocktails and end up at Siglo after that."



Mountains is, writes **Paulette Whitney**, the best kind of busman's holiday.

Escaping for a weekend to Sydney,

I'd scrubbed my hands raw to avoid sharing any farm smells with my city friends. As a grower it's enlivening to eat in new places and see how produce is prepared. After a weekend with perfectly clean hands, though, my belly was content, but my heart was happy to find itself on a train headed for Blackheath in the Blue Mountains with the prospect of rolling up my sleeves and getting a bit of earth between my fingers again.

I'd met Erika Watson and Hayden Druce, the couple behind Epicurean Harvest, when we'd traded advice on Instagram about the best way to keep radish flowers fresh (lightly misted in a container lined with damp kitchen paper), or our favourite carrots (the jury is still out on that-there are too many delicious varieties to choose between). The list of Sydney restaurants they supply reads like a Who's Who - Quay, Bennelong, Sepia, Bentley, Yellow, Restaurant Hubert, Ester, Fred's, 10 William St, LuMi, Automata and more – along with feeding mountain locals at Lyttleton Stores and Mesa Barrio at Lawson. Since I was in the neighbourhood, it was a given that I'd go and pull weeds with them; that's what market gardeners do on holidays - weed other people's plots. And enjoy it.

I'd never been to the Blue Mountains, and I craned my neck to see past flocks of tittering ladies on lunch outings. Each escarpment was more stunning than the last as the train moved ever upwards to Blackheath and Hayden and Erika's first garden.

Erika and I weeded while Hayden sowed radishes of every hue. After a token amount of work we gathered tiny Cocozelle zucchini with blossoms like lanterns, purple Cherokee tomatoes warm from the sun, and luminous baby Purplette onions for lunch, and hopped in the van and drove over the hills to eat them at Erika and Hayden's new 49-hectare farm at Hartley.

I was unprepared for the immensity of the landscape, all looming escarpments and vast valleys, but as we entered their newly bought land I felt cosy, a little like I was still in Tasmania – the differences in our latitude is mitigated by their extra altitude, giving us similar frosty winters and warm summers, perfect for frost-sweetened parsnips and wild summer cucumbers.

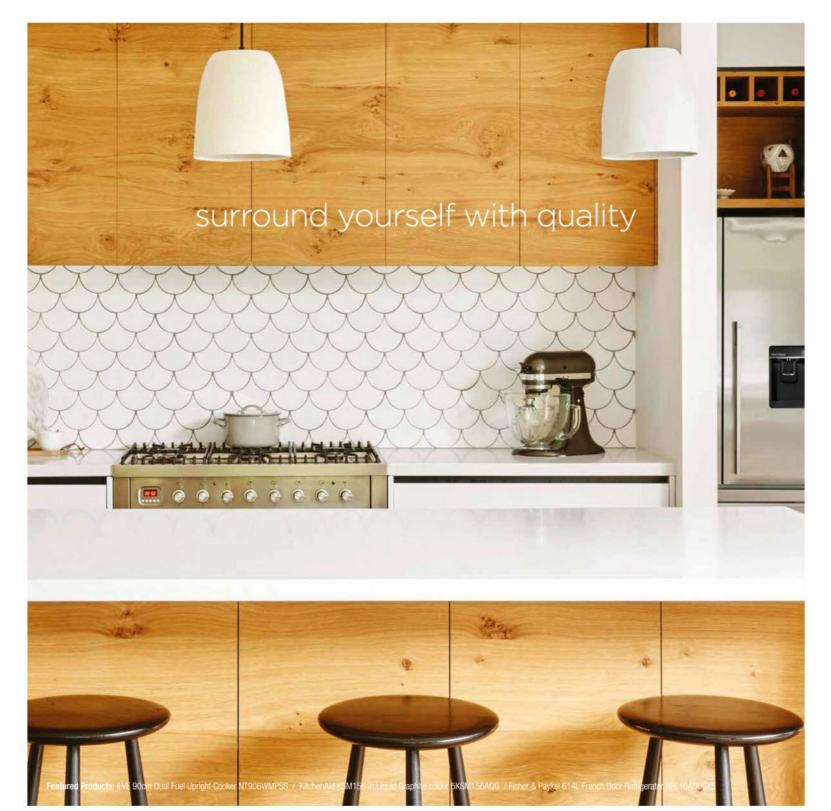
We cooked our little onions, zucchini, and very fresh eggs in the Megalong Gold extra-virgin olive oil that Erika and Hayden help harvest and press, then we shared the candy-sweet onions as they talked of their dreams for this land. As well as vegetables and herbs, there were whispers of mushrooms, honey and livestock.

There can be no clean eating on a dirty planet — Hayden and Erika care for the plants and soil without the use of synthetic herbicides or pesticides, and take a scientific approach to plant nutrition, regularly testing soil and cultivating very little, storing carbon in the soil and avoiding nutrient run-off. As the conversation turns to chefs they single out Martin Benn from Sepia for his low-plastic ethic. When the produce is delivered to Sepia, it's all transferred straight to trays belonging to the kitchen, completely avoiding plastic waste.

It's all a bit dreamy, really: two horticultural scientists with masses of creative energy, wonderfully nurtured relationships with chefs and a commitment to producing nutritious food in an ecologically sound manner, finally owning their own bit of land. They can now invest in permanent fences, enjoy the luxury of the morning commute being done on foot across a paddock, and plant trees and stay to watch them grow. I'd wished I was staying to watch them grow, too. But I bid this farm goodbye for now as the sun dipped, turning the escarpments around us a thousand shades of orange, knowing that when I returned there would be a cornucopia awaiting me.

66 It was a given that I'd go and pull weeds with them. That's what market gardeners do on their holidays. 99







Make mine a Grand Cru

Atelier Nespresso 2016 reunited two celebrated chefs in Japan and inspired them to create coffee-laced dishes for a cast of connoisseurs, writes *Maggie Scardfield*.

Yoshihiro Narisawa and Tetsuya Wakuda are old friends. The Japanese chefs have collaborated before on menus in places as far afield as Australia and Brazil, but they had never cooked together in their home country. Then, in November 2016, they decided to get together for a coffee – but not just any coffee.

Narisawa, whose eponymous Tokyo restaurant was rated number eight on the 2016 World's 50 Best Restaurants list, and Wakuda, the man behind Tetsuya's in Sydney and Waku Ghin in Singapore, are both big coffee lovers.

"I think that coffee is a something that everyone on earth should share," says Narisawa.

It's fitting the two chefs should finally share a kitchen in Tokyo during Atelier Nespresso 2016, the first time this special event has come to Asia.

Held in a different city around the world each year, Atelier Nespresso brings some of the planet's top chefs, bartenders, sommeliers, coffee connoisseurs and food media together to enjoy some exceptional culinary experiences and "auspicious coffee moments".

The two-day event featured Nespresso Grand Cru tastings, cocktail presentations and a series of coffee-themed meals culminating in a gala dinner presented by Narisawa and Wakuda at Tokyo's Happo-en Garden, a beautiful space surrounded by century-old bonsai trees, Edo-style teahouses and manicured gardens. Both chefs prepared dishes that incorporated Nespresso Grand Crus.

Although Japan is traditionally associated with tea, the country now has a strong coffee culture.

"Coffee is such an integral part of everyone's life, but it can be so much more" said Wakuda. "When you pair coffee with something you never thought to pair with it before, it becomes even more of an experience."

For one dish, Wakuda paired roast scampi with braised orange-scented witlof and Nespresso-infused oil. "This sounds a bit weird," he said. "You might think 'very intense', but it's super-delicate with just a little of the oil on the surface."

Atelier Nespresso guest and fellow chef Shannon Bennett of Melbourne's Vue de Monde, a Nespresso ambassador, praised Wakuda's scampi dish. "Tetsuya's food is very simple," he said. "But the amount of work that goes into it is something I have a huge amount of respect for."

For the main course Narisawa served charcoal-grilled wagyu with a bitter ristretto-soy glaze and pickled vegetables cut into autumn leaves.

"We have the culture of enjoying bitter flavours in Japan," he said. "This is unusual compared to lots of other cuisines, and in that sense, there's a very close link between enjoying coffee and Japanese food."

Atelier Nespresso 2016 included a bonsai class, visits to Tokyo restaurants Tempura Kondo, Shirosaka and Narisawa and a tour of the Tsukiji Fish Market led by Wakuda. The take-home message was clear: when it comes to both coffee and gastronomy, quality ingredients, good provenance and precise execution are key.

See more of Tetsuya Wakuda and Shannon Bennett in Tokyo at gourmettraveller.com.au ●

COFFEE TO GO

Clockwise, from top left: Yoshihiro Narisawa and Tetsuya Wakuda; the grand dining room at Happo-en Garden; bespoke Nespresso cocktails; Shannon Bennett and Wakuda visit the Tsukiji Fish Market; Wakuda's scampi with Nespresso-infused oil and orange-scented witlof; Shannon Bennett at Atelier Nespresso.

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FRONT COVER FURNITURE MISSISSIPPI 2-SEATER SOFA, \$1299 (W131*H82*D85); 2-SEATER BENCH, \$699 (W120*H44*D34). FRONT COVER HOMEWARES MELAMINE BOWL SMALL WHITE, \$9.95; TUMBLER WHITE, \$5.95. CORA JUTE CUSHION, \$44.95. LEFT FURNITURE ALMIRA 4-PIECE OUTDOOR MODULAR LOUNGE, \$3999 (W333*H69*D232). ALMIRA OUTDOOR COFFEE TABLE, \$699 (W142*H45*D72). LEFT HOMEWARES MELAMINE SERVING PLATTER WHITE, \$24.95. CONCRETE VASE TALL, \$74.95; MEDIUM, \$69.95. RIVIERA PLAIN CUSHION GREY, \$54.95. WILLOW OUTDOOR CUSHION CEMENT, \$49.95. RIGHT FURNITURE ALMIRA OUTDOOR ARMCHAIR, \$999 (W115*H69*D72). RIGHT HOMEWARES ESCAPE LANTERN WHITE SMALL, \$129.

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LEFT FURNITURE CASA OUTDOOR ARMCHAIR, \$999 EACH (W97*H81*D87). **LEFT HOMEWARES** BOXWOOD TOPIARY ARTIFICIAL PLANT IN POT, \$109.95. ROUND NATURAL WICKER LANTERN LARGE, \$199.95. ROUND NATURAL WICKER LANTERN WIDE, \$219.95. **RIGHT FURNITURE** CASA OUTDOOR 3-SEATER SOFA, \$1999 (W224*H81*D87). CASA OUTDOOR TEAK COFFEE TABLE, \$1199 (W120*H40*D70). **RIGHT HOMEWARES** MYSTIC CUSHION, \$39.95. SHADY CUSHION, \$39.95. GAZE CUSHION, \$39.95. MATTE SALAD BOWL BLACK, \$44.95. BOXWOOD TOPIARY PLANT IN POT, \$109.95. ROUND NATURAL WICKER LANTERN WIDE, \$219.95. RED DAY LEAF BALL TREE, \$329.95.



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LEFT FURNITURE AZURE ROUND OUTDOOR DINING TABLE, \$1399 (D150*H75). MISSISSIPPI OUTDOOR DINING CHAIR, \$499 EACH (W58*H84*D74).

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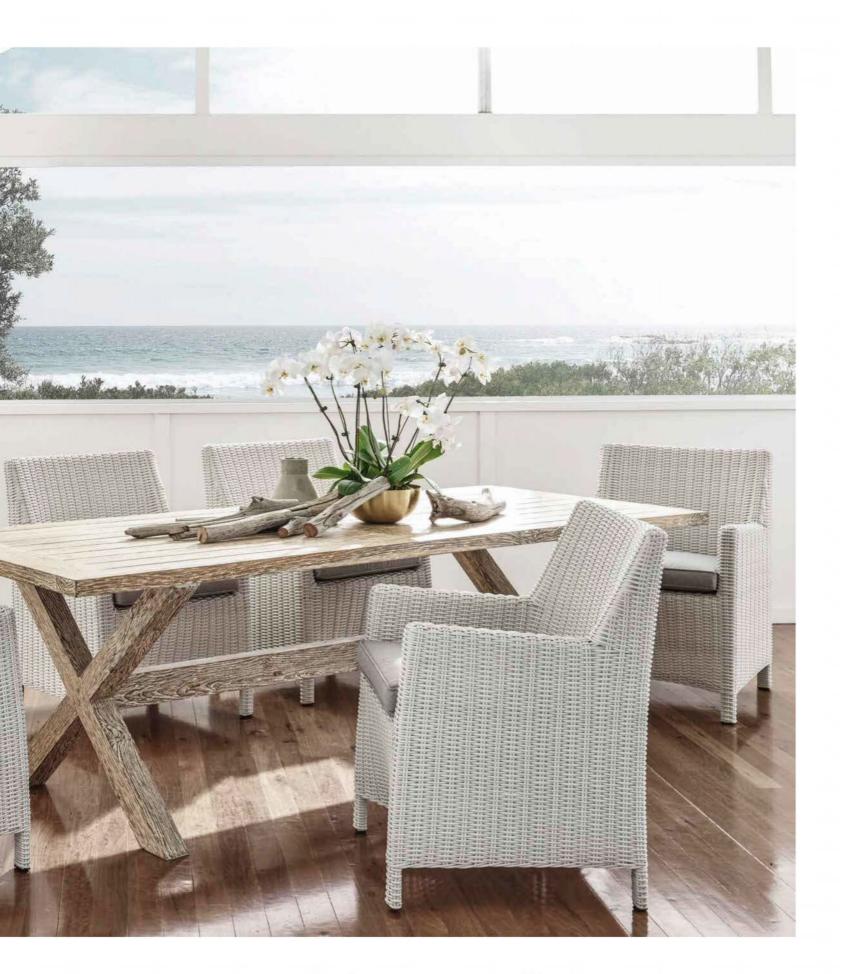


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Finer grains

The cultivation of rice in Italy sparked political conflict and the wonder that is risotto, writes **John Irving**.

> In Italy, the International Slow Food Movement guru Carlo Petrini likes to cite spaghetti al pomodoro as archetypal fusion food: pasta from China, tomato from the Americas. The same could equally be said of risotto alla Milanese: rice also from China, saffron from Spain, courtesy of the Arabs.

The Romans used rice solely for medicinal purposes, and the plant only began to be cultivated as a source of nutrition by the Arabs during their Venetian merchants later imported rice. Venice has a dish of rice with mutton and cinnamon called risi in cavroman: add dried apricots and raisins, close your eyes, and you could be in Tunis or Beirut.

At the end of the 14th century, Cistercian monks began to grow rice round Vercelli in Piedmont, and in a letter written in 1475 then Duke of Milan, Galeazzo Maria Sforza, describes the rice fields round his city, the capital of Lombardy. Piedmont and Lombardy are Italy's main rice-growing regions to this day.

occupation of Sicily in the 10th century. It's likely that

The earliest Italian rice recipes were sweet concoctions, but in the 15th century, in his Libro de Arte Coquinaria ("the art of cooking"), the Milanese cook Maestro Martino includes one in which rice is boiled in meat broth and mixed with eggs. The makings of risotto, maybe.

For centuries the only rice variety cultivated in Italy was known as nostrale ("home-grown"). Then, in 1839, Padre Calleri, a missionary in the Philippines, smuggled home varieties of the Japonica subspecies and scores of new hybrids were developed. Among these, the short-grained carnaroli and arborio were perfect for risotto - rice softened in fat, preferably butter, and cooked with the gradual addition of broth, water or wine. When the rice has completely absorbed the liquid and taken on a creamy consistency, the risotto is ready.

Today, rice only appears in the southern Italian diet in dishes such as the arancini of Sicily (the fried balls of rice and ragù beloved by caterers everywhere), the sartù of Naples (a sumptuous rice timbale), and the tiella of Puglia (a baked vegetable casserole with mussels), while in the north risotto has deep roots, ahem. I used to go to football matches in Turin with an old man from Casale Monferrato, at the heart of the Piedmontese rice fields. Before heading for the game, we'd have a risotto; he wouldn't have considered eating anything else for his Sunday lunch. Another friend, Alberto Capatti, a native of Como in Lombardy, is one of Italy's leading food historians. Whenever he orders risotto at a restaurant, he appraises its colour and flavour like a sommelier tasting wine. As for consistency, he doesn't like it too al dente. Talk about going against the grain.

In the 1920s and '30s the Fascist regime attempted to impose risotto as a national dish, and a national rice board was set up to promote consumption. Recipe books were published with titles like Eat Rice and Rice is Health, and rice became a fixture in school canteens and mess halls. "Home produce is best, especially rice: we don't eat enough of it!" wrote domestic scientist Fernanda Momigliano.

Autarky, or self-sufficiency, was the goal, but the campaign was ideological as well as economic. Today it's hard to imagine a spaghetti-less Italy, but at the time pasta was regarded as the main culprit for what Filippo Tommaso Marinetti, founder of the Futurist movement, described as the "sluggishness, pessimism, passivity and neutralism" of the "Italic race". The Futurists helped develop the image of the "Fascist man", a concentrate of manliness, energy and violence. In their 1931 Il Manifesto della Cucina Futurista they called for the abolition of pasta, which was unsuited, they said, to the speed and dynamism of modern living.

Can You Cook Rice? was the title of another book designed to encourage the use of rice as a substitute for pasta. Hence recipes for risotto alla Bolognese, alla Fiorentina, and so on. Modern inventions with no historical grounding, these were grafted onto existing regional traditions to extend rice's geographical reach.

66 The classics are risotto alla Milanese and risotto ai funghi, without which no Italian wedding reception would be complete. 99

Risotto is famous for its versatility and the ease with which it assimilates all sorts of ingredients. (In the old Milanese dialect, risott means "hotchpotch" or "jumble", by the way.) The classics are risotto alla Milanese and risotto ai funghi with dried or fresh mushrooms, without which no Italian wedding reception would be complete. Then there are the old peasant risotti with cabbage or beans or pumpkin and those that exploit the fauna of the rice fields — frogs, eels, minnows, even coots. Or the seafood risotti of the coastal regions, redolent of Spanish paella.

In some Piedmontese risotti, red wine replaces broth. I once had a column in *The Guardian* in which, under the pseudonym Francesco Quirico, I posed as an Italian food enthusiast. Unbeknown to me, a recipe of mine for risotto alla Barbera was tested by the paper's wine critic Malcolm Gluck. "I amended it in one small particular that may horrify Signor Quirico," he wrote. "I substituted a bottle and a half of Aussie shiraz for the Barbera. I had never thought of a red-wine reduction on such a spectacular scale as Quirico's, but the result was stunning." See what I mean about versatility?

After the war, in 1948, the film *Riso Amaro* ("bitter rice") revealed the terrible working conditions in Italy's paddies, where the mondine, or rice weeders,

would slave all day long in the sizzling heat. But the iconic stills of Silvana Mangano up to her knees in water did more for her career as a sex symbol than they did for the rice industry. In 1950 the Italian market research institute Doxa carried out a nationwide survey on rice consumption. One Roman respondent said, "After seeing *Riso Amaro* and the unhygienic way rice is grown, many people have gone off the stuff," while in Sicily a dressmaker from Catania

predictably told the interviewer, "After eating a plate of rice, I feel I could immediately start on the pasta."

Today, rice is cultivated with state-of-the art technologies and Italy is Europe's leading producer. Risotto still enjoys popularity in its traditional enclaves, but globalisation is initiating a slow process of culinary hybridisation. As immigrants adapt Italian rice to their own dishes, so Italians are taking a liking to varieties such as Patna and basmati, now as readily available as carnaroli or arborio.

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Course célèbre

Racing thrills and fashion met on the field for the most glamorous day on the Gold Coast calendar, the Jeep Magic Millions Race Day, writes **Toni Mason**.

On a scorching day when the mercury soared towards 40 degrees more than 25,000 people braved the heat to attend the country's richest race meeting.

The Jeep Magic Millions Race Day at the Gold Coast Turf Club, the first in the country to offer a total purse of \$10 million, is the highlight of the Magic Millions Racing Carnival, the culmination of more than a week of prestigious thoroughbred sales.

Magic Millions co-owner Katie Page-Harvey hosted a star-studded crowd in the Magic Millions VIP Marquee, including Zara Phillips, the eldest granddaughter of the Queen, and her husband, Mike Tindall, both Magic Millions ambassadors.

The theme for the marquee was flowers en masse, the vision of Page-Harvey, realised with aplomb by Sydney event management company Kat & Co. The space was festooned with flowers in myriad shades of purple, giving a royal flourish to a day all about the so-called sport of kings.

Clusters of monumental floral spheres were suspended from the ceiling, made up of more than 1,500 stems in 20 shades of violet. The Moët & Chandon Champagne Bar presented an interlude of white with more than 300 phalaenopsis orchids massed around the shelves.

The walls were lined with a frieze of Ashley Woodson Bailey "Storm" wallpaper featuring a Rorschach-like leitmotif of delphiniums, punctuated with large floral works by Sydney photographer Jamie Murcutt.

While the Moët flowed, so did the procession of dishes from Sydney caterer Cook & Waiter. Canapés of Queensland spanner crab sandwiches and crostini with carpaccio of beef led the field (the beef came courtesy of Gerry Harvey, chairman of Harvey Norman and fellow co-owner of the Magic Millions with Page-Harvey). The buffet included oysters with mignonette, roast chicken with asparagus, and roast sirloin with salsa verde along with roast chat potatoes, salads of iceberg and chives, and lemony peas and feta, and rounds of burrata with sunny nectarines and tomatoes.

On the track the big prizes went to Houtzen, who won the Two-Year-Old Classic, and Flying Jess, winner of the Three-Year-Old Guineas, bagging two magic million apiece. The races weren't the only action. The Myer Fashions on the Field was hotly contested by frocked-up fans for a \$10,000 first prize.

Despite the sweltering day, all remained cool inside the marquee. "The heat wave definitely challenged us," says Katerina Grant of Kat & Co, "but we have an amazing team of Queensland suppliers who pulled out every stop to make sure we all stayed cool."

PLAYING THE FIELD

Crowds of around 25,000 braved the Gold Coast heat for the trackside magic.



MYER







TOUCH OF MAGIC

Clockwise from above: (from left) Zara Phillips, Gerry Harvey, Katie Page-Harvey, and Mike Tindall; the entrance to the VIP Marquee; Moët & Chandon ambassador Erin Holland; clusters of floral spheres made up of more than 1,500 stems (bottom right); oysters on the buffet; Flying Jess took out the Magic Millions Three-Year-Old Guineas; Myer Fashions on the Field.

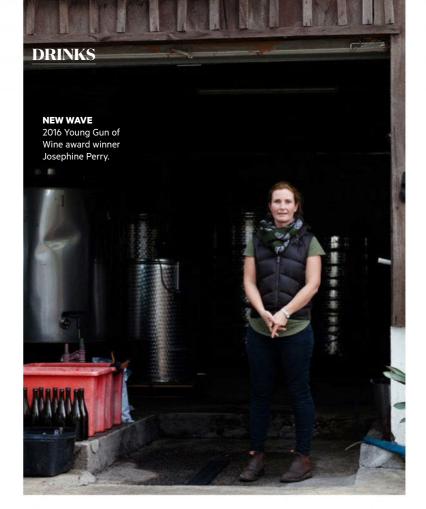
E-THE SECTION OF PERSONS HERE



REVIEW







Western guns

Adventurous winemakers in the West are applying a distinct lo-fi approach to their craft, writes **Max Allen**.

Watch out, wine world – the West Australians are coming. Not content to let the cool wine kids in the east dominate headlines and lists, a band of new, small-scale, adventurous winemakers is emerging in Margaret River, Great Southern and elsewhere in WA.

At the head of the pack is Josephine Perry, winner of the Young Gun of Wine award in 2016. Perry typifies the new wave: a WA local, she started working in Margaret River wineries, then spent years making wine in France and Spain before returning home to bring up her kids and set up her label, Dormilona, in 2013.

"I wanted to do my own thing even if it wasn't what many others in the region were doing," she says. "I'd seen natural winemaking in Europe: every house in Galicia has its own bodega; they do lots of skin contact for their whites, use all the grape, don't add anything."

Perry chose to focus on conventional Margaret River grapes — chardonnay, cabernet, sauvignon blanc — but apply unconventional methods. The results were exciting, especially when she started fermenting in amphorae and releasing textural wines under the Clayface label. Initially some conservative members of the WA wine trade were wary. But as producers have launched new labels, the market has become accepting.

One of the best new producers is Nic Peterkin, whose excellent LAS Vino label was established in 2013.

Peterkin grew up in the Margaret River wine industry: his father is Mike Peterkin of Pierro, one of the region's leading producers, and Nic remembers his early experiences of wine as rather boring — hot summers weeding the vineyard, cleaning the winery floor. As he got older, though, he realised there were opportunities for creative expression in winemaking.

"I didn't see the point in doing something that'd been done before," says Peterkin. "So I decided to make a chenin blanc; other winemakers had kept telling me it was a great grape but consumers didn't understand it, so it was a hard sell. I gave it the same treatment as the best chardonnay and made a wine full of flavour."

Chenin blanc is enjoying a revival among other Margaret River new-wave winemakers — partly perhaps because it's underappreciated so the grapes are readily available. South African-born Remi Guise of Tripe Iscariot, for instance, produces lovely, subregional expressions of the variety — one from Wilyabrup in the north, one from Karridale in the south — while Ben Gould at Blind Corner vineyard uses his chenin to produce a fine crémant style of sparkling wine.

Unlike many of the eastern wine regions where growers and makers have been experimenting with alternative Italian and Spanish grape varieties, most of WA's vineyards are still traditional and concentrate on stalwarts such as chardonnay and cabernet. It's what the new-wave producers are doing with these traditional grapes that sets them apart.

Andrew Hoadley of La Violetta, for example, one of the most influential of the new-wave producers, makes exceptional wines such as a riesling, a shiraz and a cabernet-malbec blend that are quirky enough to satisfy the hipster somms but classic enough to please anyone. Elizabeth Reed and Skigh McManus of Flor Marché craft particularly precise wines from single vineyards across the state's south-west — super-crisp riesling, elegant cabernet — while Ryan Walsh and Freya Hohnen of Walsh & Sons produce both superb, generously flavoured single-varietal wines as well as blends such as the Lola shiraz cabernet grenache.

More WA winemakers are adopting a no-additions, lo-fi winemaking approach, too. Sarah Morris and Iwo Jakimowicz of Si Vintners in Margaret River were among the first to head down the natural route, with wines fermented in ceramic eggs and aged under flor; others include Freehand preservative-free wines in Mount Barker and Sam Vinciullo with his adventurous blend of Margaret River merlot and sémillon.

Another début label showcasing all things lo-fi – skin contact, egg-fermented riesling; unfiltered whole-bunch shiraz; pet-nat pinot – is Andries and Yoko Mostert's Brave New Wine. "I've always been interested in alternative styles of winemaking, in doing as little as possible in the winery, in breaking the rules," says Andries. "With our own label Yoko and I get to do all that. And we're lucky there's now a climate where people are keen to try something new. But unless it's delicious they're not going to buy it again."

the new-wave producers are doing with these traditional grapes that sets them apart. 99

TOP DROPS OF THE MONTH



MOON HARVEST 2015 Moon Marsanne, Nagambie, \$38

The Moon vineyard is across the Goulburn River from Tahbilk, famous for ageworthy marsanne that's light and lean in youth. This is a deliciously different style, already bursting with honeysuckle, textural and savoury on the tongue. moonwine.com.au



BRETT BEER Mayday Hills Yee-Hah Brett Pale Ale, Beechworth, \$7

Say the word
"Brettanomyces" to
winemakers and they'll
cringe. Brett is a yeast that
can go rogue and make
wine taste like blood and
barnyards. But ferment beer
with Brett and you can get
a fabulously rich, creamy
and complex drink, like this.
bridgeroadbrewers.com.au

NEW YARRA 2015 Marli Russell Grenache Shiraz, Yarra Valley, \$46

New from legendary Yarra vineyard Mount Mary, this blend of grenache, shiraz and a touch of mourvèdre is a perfumed, black-fruited wine with supple, velvety tannin. A surprise, perhaps, from this "cool climate" region; released next month.



BRILLIANT BOOJ 2015 Bouland Morgon Corcelette Vielles Vignes, Beaujolais, \$48

The 2015 vintage was a cracker for many regions in France, with Beaujolais faring particularly well. This example is ravishing stuff: gorgeous purple in colour, succulent dark cherry and spice aromas, saturated, snappy tannins, and deeply delicious. *Imported by bibendum.com.au*





OR TOM

GUTSY GIN

Poor Toms Fool Strength Gin, Sydney, \$80 Poor Toms distillery is right under the flight path at Sydney airport. This strong (52 per cent alcohol) gin will shake you like a too-close-for-comfort jumbo jet. Expect lots of tangy grapefruit, rich oily juniper and cardamom. It'd make the perfect Dirty Martini. poortomsgin.com.au



PURE PET-NAT

2016 The Wine Farm Pet Nat, South Gippsland, \$40 The Wine Farm is a new name for a well-established vineyard in cool South Gippsland, where South African-born Neil Hawkins is now crafting exquisite wines such as this delicate, crisp, organically grown and

naturally fermented fizz. *thewinefarm.com.au*





SPIFFING FIZZ

2011 Hattingley Valley Blanc de Blancs, Hampshire \$125

English fizz is on everyone's lips. Even the Queen has got in on the act, releasing her own bubbly, grown at Windsor Great Park, earlier this year. It's not hard to see why when you taste the best examples – like this wonderfully floral, toasty wine. *Imported by cellarhand.com.au*



FRESH FACE2016 Elderslie Hills Blend #2, Adelaide Hills, \$42

Look out for the strikingly packaged wines from this new producer: as well as this pretty, light, raspberry-refreshing blend of pinot meunier and pinot noir, there's also a lovely textural white made from pinot blanc called Hills Blend #1. eldersliewines.com.au





NEW COONAWARRA

2016 Balnaves Entav Clone Cabernet Sauvignon Petit Verdot, Coonawarra, \$28 Wine nerds love talking about clones (slightly different versions of the same grape variety).

different versions of the same grape variety). This thrillingly vibrant wine is made from clones of cabernet not grown in Coonawarra until recently – and it's a brilliant, bold, and bright purple drink. **balnaves.com.au**



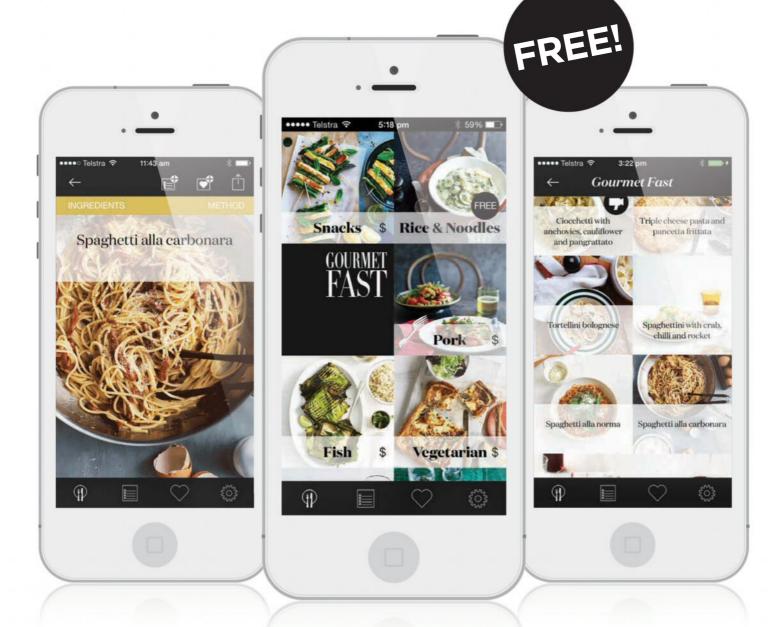


WINE INSIDER: REBECCA LINES, BANSKII, SYDNEY

What's on the list? We have about 40 vermouths, vermouth-led cocktails, a page of Spritz, and about 130 mostly Australian and Mediterranean wines. How's vermouth with food? Vermouth is amazing with food. You've got herbal aromas, a touch of sweetness and balance between acidic, sweet and bitter. I haven't found a dish I couldn't pair with it. Best match? Beef short ribs with Cocchi Vermouth di Torino. Its caramel and tones work beautifully with the caramelised meat. Favourite watering holes? Dead Ringer in Surry Hills, and The Dolphin Hotel – they have an incredible range of natural wine and have nailed pub dining. Banksii, 33 Barangaroo Ave, Barangaroo, NSW, banksii.sydney SAMANTHA TEAGUE



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Apricot chicken biryani

Apricot chicken might sound a bit '70s, but it doesn't just belong on a retro dinner table – it works beautifully in this take on biryani. Crisp fried onion is a classic biryani topping; for a shortcut opt for shop-bought fried shallots instead. We've used slightly underripe fruit for a tart finish and firmer texture. Begin this recipe a day ahead to marinate the chicken.

Prep time 35 mins, cook 1½ hrs (plus overnight marinating)

Serves 4-6

- 1 onion, thinly sliced
- 150 ml vegetable oil
- 2½ tbsp sweet paprika
 - 1 tbsp each black peppercorns, cumin seeds and coriander seeds
 - 1 tsp each ground turmeric and ground chilli
- 1/4 tsp each ground cloves, ground cinnamon and finely grated nutmeg
- 3 cardamom pods
- 1 fresh bay leaf
- 500 gm thick natural yoghurt
- ½ cup each finely chopped mint and coriander, plus leaves to serve
- 1½ tbsp finely grated ginger
- 4 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 long green chillies, thinly sliced, plus extra to serve
- 4 chicken Marylands, halved through the joint
- 40 gm dried apricots, softened in hot water for 15 minutes, drained
- 6 fresh, slightly underripe apricots, halved, plus extra wedges (optional), to serve
- 400 gm basmati rice
- 50 gm butter, diced
- 90 ml milk
- 1/4 tsp saffron threads Fried onion or fried shallots, chopped pistachio nuts and lime cheeks, to serve
- **1** Fry onion in 120ml oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, stirring occasionally, until golden (6-8 minutes). Transfer to a bowl and cool. Dry-roast spices and bay leaf over medium heat, then pound to a fine powder with a mortar and pestle. Add to onion along with yoghurt, herbs, ginger, garlic, chilli and 2 tsp sea salt and mix well. Add chicken, stir to coat, cover and refrigerate overnight to marinate.
- 2 Spread chicken mixture in a heavy-based casserole with a tight-fitting lid and tuck dried and fresh apricots in between chicken pieces. Combine rice, 20gm butter, remaining oil and enough water to cover by 2cm in a saucepan, season generously and bring to the boil. Drain and spread rice over chicken.
- **3** Bring milk, saffron and remaining butter to a simmer in a saucepan, then pour the mixture over rice, cover casserole with foil, then place the lid on. Cook over low heat for 50 minutes, then, without uncovering, stand for 15 minutes. Serve hot scattered with extra apricot wedges, herbs and green chilli, and fried onion, pistachio nuts and lime cheeks.

Apricot and orange-blossom jam

Jam-making is a great way of using imperfect fruit. The odd mark here or there on the skin doesn't hurt, as long as the fruit is free of soft spots. This jam is relatively low in sugar; traditional versions usually have equal quantities of sugar and fruit, but we've nearly halved the amount. This makes for a softer set and a shorter shelf-life, but brings the taste of the apricots to the fore. Store the jam in the fridge rather than at room temperature – it will last a couple of months if you can keep your hands off it. We love it on buttered sourdough toast, especially with ricotta.

Prep time 10 mins, cook 20 mins (plus setting)

Makes about 1 litre (pictured p93)

700 gm apricots, quartered

- 350 gm caster sugar
 - Juice of 1 orange and 1 lime
 - 1 vanilla bean, split, seeds scraped
 - 2 tsp orange-blossom water, or to taste
- 1 Combine apricots, sugar, juices, vanilla bean and seeds in a large saucepan and stir over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves. Bring to the boil, reduce heat to medium and simmer, stirring occasionally, until thick and jammy but chunks of apricot still remain (15-20 minutes).
- **2** Remove from heat, cool briefly, then stir in orange-blossom water. Transfer to sterilised jars (see cook's notes p184), seal and cool to room temperature, then refrigerate for up to 2 months.>

BIRYANI "Como" box from Madras Link. Casserole dish in Mist Grey from Le Creuset. All other props stylist's own.

TEXT PAGE "Harvey" coasters from Madras Link. Jug in Blossom from Mud Australia. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.









Frangipane tarts are *classic for good reason* – the filling is the perfect foil for all kinds of fruit, especially apricots.

Apricot frangipane tart

Frangipane tarts are classic for good reason – the almondy filling is the perfect foil for all kinds of fruit, but this pairing with apricots is particularly good. A thin layer of apricot jam in the base amps up the apricot (the apricot and orange-blossom jam recipe on page 91 would be lovely). For a little bit of gloss, warm extra apricot jam over low heat until it melts, strain it through a sieve and brush it over the tart while it's still warm.

Prep time 40 mins, cook 1 hr (plus resting, cooling)

Serves 8-10

- 130 gm caster sugar
- 100 gm softened butter Scraped seeds of 2 vanilla beans Finely grated rind and juice of ½ orange
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 2 eggs
- 50 gm (1/3 cup) plain flour
- 50 ml brandy
- 150 gm almond meal
- 120 gm apricot jam (optional)
 - 7 ripe apricots, each cut into 6 pieces Sweet pastry
- 300 gm (2²/₃ cups) plain flour
- 90 gm pure icing sugar, sieved
- 180 gm cold butter, diced
 - 1 egg yolk
- **1** For sweet pastry, pulse flour, icing sugar and a pinch of salt in a food processor to combine. Add butter, pulse until fine crumbs form, then add egg yolk and 1 tbsp iced water and pulse to combine. Turn out onto a work surface, bring pastry together with the heel of your hand, form into a disc, wrap in plastic wrap and refrigerate until firm (30 minutes).
- 2 Meanwhile, beat sugar, butter, vanilla seeds, rind, cinnamon and a pinch of salt in an electric mixer until pale (4-5 minutes). Add eggs, flour, brandy and juice, and beat to combine. Stir in almond meal and refrigerate until chilled (1-2 hours).
- **3** Preheat oven to 180C and line an oven tray with baking paper. Roll out pastry on a lightly floured surface to 3mm thick. Place a 4cm-deep, 23cm-diameter ring tin or loose-bottomed tart tin on the oven tray and line it with pastry, allowing excess to overhang. Refrigerate for 30 minutes to rest, then trim edges.
- 4 Spread jam on base of tart case, then spread frangipane over the top. Arrange apricots on top, pressing lightly into frangipane, then bake until golden and centre springs back when lightly pressed (50 minutes to 1 hour). Cool in tin for an hour, then serve. This tart is best eaten on the day it's made, but will still be good the next day; store it in an airtight container at room temperature.

Grilled apricot salad with jamón and Manchego

Here we've scorched apricots on the grill and served them with torn jamón, shaved Manchego and peppery rocket leaves. Think of it as a twist on the good old melon-prosciutto routine. The mixture would also be great served on charred sourdough.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 5 mins

Serves 4 as an entrée (pictured p88)

- 6 apricots, halved Olive oil, for drizzling
- 8 thin slices jamón Ibérico, or other dry-cured ham, such as prosciutto, torn
- 1½ cups (loosely packed) rocket
- ½ cup mint
- 1/4 Spanish onion, thinly sliced
- 30 gm Manchego, shaved with a vegetable peeler

Coarsely chopped smoked or roasted almonds, to serve

Sherry vinaigrette

- 1 garlic clove, finely grated
 Juice and finely grated rind of ½ lemon
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp sherry vinegar, or to taste
- **1** Preheat a barbecue or char-grill pan to high. Drizzle cut sides of apricots with oil, season to taste and grill cut-side down until charred and just tender (2-3 minutes). Cool briefly and season to taste.
- **2** For sherry vinaigrette, combine garlic, juice and rind in a jar and set aside for a few minutes to soften the garlic. Add remaining ingredients, season generously to taste and just before serving shake well to combine.
- **3** Arrange grilled apricots and torn jamón Ibérico on serving plates and drizzle with a little sherry vinaigrette. Combine rocket, mint and onion in a bowl, drizzle with a little dressing, season to taste and toss to combine, scatter salad over apricots and jamón, top with Manchego and almonds and serve.

Apricot and coconut crumble cake

Apricots and coconut are an excellent combination, especially in a cake with a crunchy crumble topping. Using rapadura sugar or coconut sugar gives a beautiful caramel richness to the batter, which is offset by the tang of the apricots.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 1 hr (plus cooling) Serves 8-10 (pictured p92)

160 gm softened butter, plus extra for greasing

- 140 gm rapadura sugar or coconut sugar (see note)
 - Finely grated rind of 1 lime Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean
 - 2 eggs
- 160 gm plain flour
- 90 gm shredded coconut
- 1 tsp baking powder
- 150 ml well-shaken coconut milk
- 40 gm dried apricots, diced
- 5 apricots, coarsely chopped

Coconut crumble

- 75 gm plain flour
- 60 gm chilled butter, cubed
- 2 tbsp rapadura sugar or coconut sugar
- 2 tbsp shredded coconut
- 1 tbsp coconut flakes
- 1 Preheat oven to 170C. Butter a 15cm x 32cm cake tin or a 21cm-diameter cake tin and line it with baking paper. Beat butter, sugar, rind and vanilla seeds in an electric mixer until pale and fluffy (4-5 minutes). Scrape down sides of bowl and add eggs one at a time, beating well and scraping down sides of bowl between additions. Stir in flour, coconut, baking powder and ½ tsp salt, then stir in coconut milk. Stir in dried apricot, spoon batter into prepared tin and smooth top, then scatter with chopped apricot.
- 2 For coconut crumble, rub ingredients and a pinch of salt in a bowl until coarse crumbs form, scatter crumble around apricots, then bake until golden brown and centre springs back when lightly pressed (50 minutes to 1 hour). Cool in tin for 15 minutes, then transfer to a wire rack. Serve warm or at room temperature. Cake will keep in an airtight container for up to 3 days.

available from select health-food shops and supermarkets. If they're unavailable, substitute brown sugar.>

Apricot jelly with baklava ice-cream

A jewel-like jelly made from seasonal fruit is a thing of beauty. We've made a large fluted ring version, but if the idea of turning the jelly out worries you, set it in a large glass bowl instead. It needs less gelatine if you do it this way, so reduce the quantity by a leaf or two. Caramelised apricots would make a lovely addition if the fancy takes you. Begin this recipe a day ahead to let the jelly set.

Prep time 25 mins, cook 20 mins (plus cooling, freezing, overnight setting)

Serves 8 (pictured p89)

- 1 kg ripe apricots, coarsely chopped
- 750 ml (3 cups) moscato or sparkling wine
- 330 gm (1½ cups) caster sugar Juice of 1 orange and 1 lemon
- 10 titanium-strength gelatine leaves, softened in cold water for 5 minutes Crumbled baklava, to serve

Baklava ice-cream

600 ml pouring cream

100 ml milk

100 gm honey

7 egg yolks

2 tbsp caster sugar

150 gm baklava, coarsely chopped

1 For baklava ice-cream, bring cream, milk and honey to a simmer in a saucepan over mediumhigh heat. Meanwhile, whisk yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale (2-3 minutes). Whisking continuously, add cream mixture to yolks, then return mixture to pan and stir continuously until mixture thickly coats the back of a spoon (4-5 minutes). Strain into a bowl and cool, whisking occasionally, then refrigerate until chilled (3-4 hours). Churn in an ice-cream machine, adding the baklava towards the end of churning. Transfer to a container, cover and freeze. Makes about 1 litre.

- **2** Stir apricots, moscato, sugar, juices and 500ml water in a large saucepan over medium-high heat until sugar dissolves, then bring to the boil. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until apricots start to break down (15-20 minutes). Strain the liquid through a fine sieve lined with muslin into a jug to yield 1.25 litres. Don't press on the solids if you want a crystal-clear jelly. Transfer 500ml apricot liquid to a clean pan, squeeze excess water from gelatine, add to pan and stir over medium heat until gelatine dissolves. Remove pan from heat, add remaining apricot liquid and stir to combine. Set aside to cool slightly, then pour into a 1.5-litre mould. Refrigerate overnight to set.
- **3** To serve, dip mould in a bowl of just-boiled water, then remove and gently pull the jelly away from the sides of the mould to break the vacuum. Place a chilled serving plate on top, invert the plate and mould, then remove mould your jelly should be happily wobbling on your platter. Scatter with extra crumbled baklava and serve with baklava ice-cream.

Roast apricot and vanilla fool

A fool is one of the simplest yet most delicious desserts you can make. A ripple of tangy roasted apricot cuts through the richness of the cream, while a scattering of meringue or almond biscuits adds.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 25 mins (plus cooling) Serves 4

220 gm (1 cup) caster sugar

- 8 apricots, halved
- 50 ml dessert wine
 Juice of ½ orange and ½ lemon

400 gm crème fraîche

300 ml thickened cream

Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean Almond biscuits or meringue, to serve

- 1 Preheat oven to 220C. Scatter sugar over the base of a roasting pan large enough to fit apricots snugly in a single layer. Press apricots cut-side down into sugar, stand for 5 minutes for sugar to form a crust, then turn apricots cut-side up. Combine dessert wine and juices in a jug, drizzle over and around apricots and roast, basting occasionally, until browned (20-25 minutes). Cool briefly, then set aside 8 apricot halves and roasting liquid. Purée remaining roast apricots in a food processor and refrigerate to chill.
- 2 Whisk crème fraîche, cream, vanilla seeds and 80ml apricot roasting liquid in an electric mixer to soft peaks (4-5 minutes), fold apricot purée through cream and divide among serving bowls. Top with reserved roast apricot halves, drizzle with roasting liquid and serve scattered with crumbled almond biscuits or meringue.



Jelly and ice-cream are a match made in heaven and we've gone the extra mile by making our own ice-cream, but you could always cheat and smoosh the baklava through a shop-bought vanilla ice-cream instead.











ish and chips is something Josh Niland refuses to approach lightly. Which might seem a bit weird, given he's perhaps the sharpest seafood cook in the country right now. "But it's the one dish that everyone has a nostalgic memory of," he says, and that's the challenge.

Not that Saint Peter is a fish-and-chippa. Niland opened the restaurant in Paddington in Sydney with his wife and fellow chef, Julie Niland, in September last year, and in just six months the modest 34-seater has built a loyal following with its elegant yet seemingly effortless handling of sustainably sourced seafood.

Many come for the fish and chips. Despite the crispness of the coating, it's the quality of what's inside that stands out. "No generic white cubes of fish here," Niland says. It might be bluespotted flathead one day, teraglin or deep-sea bream the next. "There's got to be some kind of identity behind the batter."

Niland grew up in East Maitland, north of Newcastle. While he has fond memories of the fish-and-chip shop, and afternoons spent fishing for flathead with his mum, it wasn't until he worked for Sydney fish whisperer Steve Hodges at Fish Face that he developed a deep appreciation of seafood and its correct handling.

The beauty of Niland's cooking is the way he complements his careful sourcing of excellent seafood with restraint in the kitchen. His fish is never shrouded by heavy sauces or overcomplicated plating. The raw scallops featured here, for example, have nothing more than a vibrant citrus dressing to bring them to life, while folds of cured ocean trout on crème fraîche show the ingredients at their best. "My style is simple," he says. "It's normal, hands-on cookery, purely reliant on finding the best fish and excellent veg."

Where many chefs demand consistency of their suppliers, Niland prefers to ask for "the best of the best" from the likes of fish specialist Mark Eather and Nicholas Seafoods. "It's a really good way to cook," he says. "It keeps my mind active and keeps our customers coming in a couple of nights a week."

The central idea behind Niland's approach – making a virtue of simplicity – translates perfectly to the home kitchen. "Oftentimes you'll find that the simplest of dishes are the most memorable," he says. "These are recipes you'll go back to." Saint Peter, 362 Oxford St, Paddington, NSW, (02) 8937 2530, saintpeter.com.au

Oxheart tomato and white peach salad

"This is a fabulous salad that really shows off the best of summer," says Josh Niland. "Look for fragrant peaches and heavy, juicy oxheart tomatoes."

Prep time 10 mins

Serves 4 (pictured opposite)

- 3 large oxheart tomatoes, thickly sliced
- 3 ripe white peaches (or yellow), stones removed, halved or thickly sliced

Chardonnay vinaigrette

- 90 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 25 ml chardonnay vinegar Scraped seeds of 1/4 vanilla bean
- 1 For the vinaigrette, whisk olive oil, vinegar and vanilla seeds in a small bowl.
- 2 Drizzle tomatoes and peaches with dressing. and season to taste with salt and black pepper.

Scallops with citrus dressing

"Scallops and citrus have a wonderful synergy whether they're raw or cooked," says Josh Niland. This dish was put together at the beginning of summer a few years ago, I had recently seen how to take apart the individual cells of a fresh pomelo and was excited to add this to a dressing along with as many other citrus fruits as I could find. Adding the zest, juice and segments of the fruit it gives you a fantastic balance of sweet, sour and bitter. The white soy sauce adds a wonderful complexity and savouriness to the dressing and a little sugar rounds it out. This dressing can be made with just one or two types of citrus for a similar result, but it's a truly beautiful dish if all the citrus can be found. It's also great served with raw fish - John Dory, black flathead and wild kingfish would all be excellent choices."

Prep time 11/2 hrs

Serves 4-6 (pictured p99)

- 12 live scallops in the shell Citrus dressing
- 1 tbsp lime juice
- 1 tbsp lemon juice
- tbsp finely grated citrus rind, such as lemon, lime, pomelo or ruby grapefruit
- 1½ tsp white soy sauce (see note)
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 150 gm segmented and roughly diced citrus flesh (any mix of lemons, limes, orange, ruby grapefruit, pomelo and finger limes works well)
- 60 ml (1/4 cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2 tbsp grapeseed oil
- 1 Hold a scallop shell with the mouth end facing you and gently insert the blade of a bread knife near the hinge. The scallop flesh is in the centre of the shell, so be careful not to damage that. Staying as close to the top shell as possible almost scrape and carefully slice scallop off the top shell, then lever the top shell off. An intact scallop should be sitting in the bottom shell surrounded by its skirt, which is generally covered in sand, and the scallop roe. Carefully pull the skirt and small white adductor muscle off the scallop

flesh, being careful not to tear or damage the scallop or roe, and discard. Quickly dip the scallop flesh in the shell into a small bowl of salted water to remove residual sand, then immediately pat dry with paper towel. Cover and refrigerate until required (this can be done a few hours ahead).

- **2** For citrus dressing, combine lemon and lime juices and rinds in a bowl, then mix in white soy sauce and sugar to dissolve. Add citrus flesh, season to taste and stand at room temperature for an hour for flavours to develop. Season again to taste with extra sugar or white soy sauce. Add oils and stir before serving.
- **3** To serve, cut flesh from the bottom shell, then slice scallop in half, spoon dressing over and arrange on a plate of ice.

Note White soy sauce is available from Japanese grocers; if it's unavailable, substitute light soy sauce or fish sauce.

Wine suggestion Blanc de noirs sparkling from Orange, NSW.

Crisp-skinned Spanish mackerel, aïoli, parsley and pickled onion salad

"Spanish mackerel has a high oil content which lends itself to this acidic and mineral-driven garnish," says Josh Niland. "Other species that would work well for this include wild kingfish, herring or sardines."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 5 mins Serves 4

- 20 gm clarified butter (see note)
- 4 boneless Spanish mackerel fillets (150gm each), skin on
- 50 gm rice flour Aïoli
- 1 egg yolk
- 1 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 125 ml (½ cup) grapeseed oil
 - 1 tbsp lemon juice
- 1½ garlic cloves, finely grated on a microplane Parsley and pickled onion salad
- 15 small pickled cocktail onions, plus 1 tbsp pickling liquid, or to taste
- 1 cup (firmly packed) flat-leaf parsley
- 1 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil Lemon juice, to taste
- **1** For aïoli, process yolk, mustard and vinegar together in a small food processor. With motor running, slowly add oil in a thin steady stream and process until thick and emulsified. Add lemon juice, garlic and salt to taste. Refrigerate until required (this can be done a day ahead).
- **2** For parsley salad, halve onions and slice into half-moons. Combine in a bowl with parsley, drizzle with olive oil, lemon juice to taste and a little of the pickling liquid from the onions, and toss to combine.
- **3** Preheat oven to 200C. Heat a deep ovenproof frying pan over high heat. Add clarified butter and heat until a light haze is visible on the surface. Very lightly dust skin side of fillets with rice flour and tap to remove excess. Place fish in pan skin-side down, lowering it away from

yourself to avoid burns. Place a square of baking paper on top of the fish, then a heavy saucepan on top of that to weight the fish down -this helps ensure the skin crisps and fish cooks evenly; cook until skin is golden (2 minutes). Remove saucepan and place frying pan in oven until the fish's flesh is warm to touch (2 minutes). Remove from oven, turn fish over so it's flesh-side down in the hot pan, then immediately remove fish to a warm plate to rest for a minute. Slice fillets in half and place on serving plates with a dollop of aïoli and pile of parsley salad. Note To clarify butter, heat 100gm butter in a saucepan over low heat until milk fat separates. Remove from heat, stand to settle, then carefully pour off clear butter and discard milk fat. Wine suggestion A skin-contact gewürztraminer

from Gippsland, Victoria.>



"The simplest of dishes are the *most memorable*. These are recipes you'll go back to."





Fish and chips

"There are few other dishes that come with so much expectation and nostalgia. It's so important at Saint Peter that the fish and chips gets put on a pedestal as a dish of importance and luxury," says Josh Niland. "Gone are the days of having wishy-washy defrosted white fish in limp pale batter and frozen chips. The key to fantastic fish and chips is obviously a great fish that's suited to coating in a batter and deep-frying. Fresh pink ling is a perfect fish for battering – it's robust, has a dense compact flesh with little sinew, good amount of fat, sweet-tasting flesh, few pin bones and can be readily found. The batter is also hugely important. Having worked with Heston Blumenthal as a stagiaire, I got to see his fish and chips and was blown away by the logic of using vodka in a batter. It makes sense – more alcohol content means it burns away faster, resulting in a very crisp and delicious batter. Fish and chips would be incomplete without a good tartare sauce; our tartare, made with yoghurt instead of mayonnaise, is a much cleaner, lighter sauce." Start this recipe a day ahead to soak the chips.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 10 mins (plus soaking, drying)

Serves 4-6 (pictured p98)

- 600 gm pink ling fillet, cut into 7cm x 3cm pieces, drained on paper towels Rice flour, for dusting Dill pickles and lemon cheeks, to serve Potato chips
- 1.5 kg sebago potatoes, scrubbed, skin on, cut into 1cm-thick chips, soaked overnight in old water, drained Cottonseed oil, for deep-frying Yoghurt tartare sauce
- 300 gm natural yoghurt
- 2 large golden shallots, finely chopped
- 80 gm cornichons, finely chopped
- gm drained tiny capers in brine, finely chopped

Batter

- 200 gm rice flour
- 105 gm self-raising flour
 - 5 gm (1 tsp) baking powder
- 170 ml vodka (preferably with 37% alcohol)
- 20 gm honey 275 ml beer (Josh Niland uses VB)
- 1 For potato chips, heat oil in a deep-fryer or large saucepan to 140C. Pat the chips dry in a tea towel and deep-fry in batches without colouring until they blister and small bubbles appear on the surface (9-10 minutes). Drain, place on a wire rack
- over a tray and refrigerate to dry (1-2 hours).

 2 For yoghurt tartare sauce, combine ingredients and mix well. Refrigerate covered until serving.

 3 For batter, combine flours and baking powder
- in a large bowl. In a jug, whisk vodka and honey together, then add to flours along with beer and whisk until the batter has the consistency of heavy cream. If it becomes too thick add a little
- more beer.

 4 Preheat oven to 120C and heat oil to 180C.

 Deep-fry chips in batches until very crisp and golden (5-6 minutes; be careful, hot oil may spit). Drain on paper towels and season with fine table

salt. Place in oven on an oven tray lined with baking paper while you fry the fish. 5 Dust fish lightly in rice flour, shake off excess

and coat in batter. Fry fish in the oil in batches until golden brown (2-3 minutes; you may need to turn fish over midway so it colours evenly). Drain on paper towels and season. Serve fish and chips with yoghurt tartare, pickles and lemons. **Drink suggestion** Steam Ale from Victoria.

Salt and vinegar onion rings Prep time 15 mins, cook 10 mins

Serves 4-6 (pictured p98)

500 ml (2 cups) malt vinegar

- 80 gm sea salt
 2 tbsp caster sugar
 4 onions, thickly sliced into rounds
- 50 gm rice flour, plus extra for dusting Vegetable oil, for deep-frying **Batter**

200 gm rice flour

- 105 gm self-raising flour
 5 gm baking powder
 170 ml vodka (preferably with 37% alcohol)
- 20 gm honey
- 275 ml beer, such as draught beer
- 1 Bring vinegar, salt and sugar to the boil in a saucepan. Remove tiny rings from centres of onion (reserve for another use). Separate onion into individual rings and simmer in 2 batches in vinegar mixture until just softened (1 minute). Transfer to a bowl with a slotted spoon.
- 2 For batter, combine flours and baking powder in a bowl. Whisk vodka and honey together in a jug then add to flours along with beer and whisk until batter has the consistency of heavy cream. If it
- becomes too thick add a little more beer.

 3 Heat oil in a deep-fryer or large saucepan to 180C. Dust onion rings with rice flour, coat in batter and, in batches, carefully lower into the oil so the batter puffs up before the ring has a chance to sink. Deep-fry until light golden brown and crisp (1-2 minutes; be careful, hot oil may spit), then season with salt and serve.

Cured ocean trout, fennel crème fraîche and brioche toast

"This is a great dish to organise ahead of time," says Josh Niland. "Start the brioche a day ahead to prove the dough. The cooked brioche can be stored in the refrigerator for a week or frozen. The ocean trout will keep refrigerated for up to a week." Start this recipe three days ahead to cure the fish. Prep time 40 mins, cook 30 mins (plus curing)

Serves 4-6

- 35 gm caster sugar
- 30 gm sea salt flakes
- 1 tbsp coarsely chopped fennel fronds
- 600 gm piece boneless ocean trout, preferably Petuna, skin on Lemon wedges, to serve Brioche dough
- 14 gm (2 sachets) dried yeast

- 2 tbsp warm milk
- 7 eggs2 tbsp caster sugar
- 500 gm (3 1/3 cups) bread flour
- 300 gm butter, diced and brought to room temperature for 30 minutes

Fennel crème fraîche

- small fennel bulb, finely chopped, plus half the fronds, coarsely chopped
 gm crème fraîche
- 1 Combine sugar, salt and fennel fronds in a bowl. On a work surface, place 2 sheets of plastic wrap overlapping and long enough to enclose the trout. Spread half the salt mixture over the wrap, place trout on top and spread with remaining salt mixture. Wrap trout tightly in the plastic wrap, place on a tray and refrigerate for 3 days, turning each day. Some liquid will be drawn from the fish but don't discard it - this acts as a brine in the
- 2 For brioche dough, combine yeast and milk in a small jug and stand in warm place until foamy (5 minutes). Whisk 6 eggs, sugar, 3 tsp salt and 1½ tbsp water in a bowl to combine and set aside. Place flour in an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Add yeast and egg mixtures and mix on low speed until a smooth dough forms into a ball (5-6 minutes). Increase speed to medium and gradually add butter a couple of pieces at a time, beating well between additions, then mix until dough is smooth and glossy (8-10 minutes). Knead on a lightly floured work surface and form into a tight ball. Transfer to a lightly buttered bowl, cover and stand in a draught-free

place until doubled in size (2 hours).>





Knock back on a lightly floured bench by folding it over on itself, bring dough into ball again, return to bowl, cover and refrigerate overnight.

- **3** For fennel crème fraîche, combine ingredients in a bowl and refrigerate until required.
- 4 Butter a 11cm x 23cm loaf tin and line it with baking paper. Knock back dough on a lightly floured bench. Divide into 5 equal pieces, roll each into a tight ball and place balls in a single row in prepared tin. Beat remaining egg with a pinch of salt and brush it on brioche. Cover and prove until dough rises to the top of the tin (1-11/2 hours). Meanwhile, preheat oven to 180C. Bake brioche until golden and crisp on top (30-35 minutes). Cool briefly in tin, then turn out onto a wire rack to cool
- **5** Toast thick slices of brioche. Unwrap trout and wipe off salt mixture. Place trout skin-side down on a board and thinly slice with a sharp knife, leaving the skin behind. Place a spoon of crème fraîche on each serving plate, arrange trout slices on top and season to taste. Serve with brioche and lemon.

Wine suggestion A Tasmanian chardonnay.

Almond meringue with white peach caramel

"The caramel is a modern take on preserving, the hot caramel capturing the fruit's flavour, like a refined jam," says Julie Niland. "I've kept it for up to 10 months and it's still as fragrant and intensely flavoured as on day one. Granny Smith apples, plums, pineapple, even roasted Jerusalem artichokes, can all be used."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 11/4 hrs

Serves 8-10

300 gm eggwhite (about 8)

300 gm caster sugar

150 gm icing sugar mixture, sieved

- 1 tbsp rice flour, sieved
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar Scraped seeds of 1 vanilla bean
- 50 gm flaked almonds

Peach-caramel cream

300 gm white peaches, stones removed, skin on

150 gm caster sugar

500 ml thickened cream, whisked to soft peaks

1 Preheat oven to 200C. Butter a 20cm-square cake tin and line it with baking paper. Whisk eggwhite in an electric mixer on high speed until frothy, then add caster sugar 1 tbsp at a time and whisk continuously until soft peaks form. Reduce speed to low, whisk in icing sugar, rice flour, vinegar and vanilla seeds. Spoon meringue into prepared tin and sprinkle with flaked almonds. Reduce oven temperature to 145C and bake meringue until crisp and dry (1 hour 45 minutes). Turn off oven and leave meringue to cool completely in oven (3-4 hours).

- 2 For peach-caramel cream, process peaches in a blender until smooth. Heat a frying pan over medium heat. Scatter a third of the sugar evenly in pan and cook, swirling pan and gradually adding remaining sugar as it melts, then stir gently until dark caramel (4-5 minutes). Whisk in peach purée (be careful, hot caramel may spit). Remove from heat, cool, then refrigerate. Just before serving, place a spoonful of caramel in each serving bowl, and gently fold the remainder through the cream to form a ripple effect.
- **3** Divide meringue into 8-10 large portions (we've cut it into 8cm squares) and serve with a generous scoop of caramel-cream.

Wine suggestion Late-harvest riesling from the Barossa Valley, SA.

Summer pudding

"If you don't have surplus fresh berries, frozen are a perfect substitute; just give them a little more time in the sauce to warm through and soften," says Julie Niland. Start this recipe a day ahead to chill and set the pudding.

Prep time 20 mins, cook 8 mins (plus chilling) Serves 8-10

500 gm morello cherries (from a 670gm jar), juice reserved

300 ml sparkling white wine

150 gm caster sugar

600 gm raspberries

600 gm blackberries

100 gm frozen redcurrants

750 gm panettone (or crustless white bread) Strawberries, quartered, cherries and other extra berries of choice, to serve

200 ml heavy cream

- **1** Blend morello cherries with 125ml juice from the jar to a smooth purée. Combine cherry purée, wine, sugar and 250ml water in a saucepan over high heat, stir to dissolve sugar and bring to the boil. Add 500gm raspberries, 500gm blackberries and all redcurrants, remove from heat and stir gently to just warm berries through (30 seconds). Strain through a sieve into a bowl and reserve berries and liquid separately.
- 2 Remove brown crust from panettone and discard. Slice panettone into six 1.5cm-thick slices. Brush slices with a little berry liquid and arrange 4 slices brushed side outwards and slightly overlapping around the sides of a 2-litre mixing bowl lined with plastic wrap. Press gently to join the pieces. Spoon berries into centre of the bowl and gently press down to level. Arrange remaining panettone overlapping on top to cover. Pour 250ml reserved berry liquid over so pudding is stained red. Wrap with plastic wrap and refrigerate overnight. Refrigerate leftover berries and liquid to serve.
- **3** To serve, remove plastic wrap, put a large plate over the top of the pudding and quickly invert. Remove plastic wrap from top and drizzle with remaining liquid. Serve with reserved berries and heavy cream

Wine suggestion A late-harvest riesling from the Barossa Valley.









Chilled black sesame noodles with cucumber

We've added cucumber to this noodle dish, inspired by the Taiwanese ma jiang mian and the Sichuan dan dan mian, to up the refreshment factor. Shredded poached chicken would make an excellent addition, too.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 2 mins Serves 4-6

400 gm kan-to noodles (see note)

- 2 tbsp hulled tahini
- 2 tbsp soy sauce
- 2 tbsp Chinkiang vinegar (see note)
- 1 tbsp smooth peanut butter
- 30 gm ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely grated
- 2 Lebanese cucumbers, seeds removed and cut into julienne Roasted white and black sesame seeds. to serve
- 1 Cook noodles in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender (1-2 minutes), drain and refresh in iced water to chill, then drain well.
- 2 Whisk tahini, soy sauce, vinegar, peanut butter, ginger, garlic and 60ml warm water in a bowl to combine. Drizzle dressing over noodles, top with cucumber and sesame seeds and serve.

Note Kan-to noodles are Taiwanese wheat noodles, available from select Asian grocers; if they're unavailable, substitute somen noodles or another fine wheat noodle. Chinkiang vinegar is available from select Asian grocers.

Drink suggestion A fragrant junmai ginjo sake.

All-day noodles with fried egg and furikake

Why call this "all-day noodles"? Because we could eat these savoury strands for breakfast, lunch and dinner, and quite possibly for a snack at any other time. They're quick and satisfying, which pretty much ticks all the boxes for us. Be generous with the furikake.

Prep time 10 mins, cook 10 mins Serves 4 (pictured p106)

400 gm dried somen or soba noodles

- 2 tbsp vegetable or grapeseed oil, plus extra for frying eggs
- 20 gm ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 4 spring onions, thinly sliced, white and green parts reserved separately
- 100 ml soy sauce
- 50 ml brown rice vinegar, or to taste
- 1 tbsp roasted chilli oil (see note), or to taste
- 3 tsp sesame oil
- 4 eaas Furikake, to serve (see note)

- 1 Cook noodles in a large saucepan of boiling salted water, stirring occasionally to prevent noodles sticking together, until just tender (2-3 minutes). Drain well.
- 2 Heat oil in a wok or deep frying pan over medium-high heat. Add ginger, garlic and white parts of spring onion, and stir-fry until fragrant (1-2 minutes). Add noodles, stir-fry to coat, then remove from heat and add soy sauce, vinegar, chilli oil and sesame oil, and toss to combine.
- 3 Heat a little extra vegetable oil in a large frying pan over medium heat and fry eggs in batches until cooked to your liking (1-2 minutes for soft yolks).
- 4 To serve, divide noodles and sauce among serving bowls, top with an egg, and scatter with spring onion green and furikake.

Note Roasted chilli oil is available from Asian grocers. Furikake, a rice seasoning, is available from Japanese grocers and health-food shops. Wine suggestion Champagne (the only booze you can drink at any time of day).

Sopa de fideos

Noodles don't always have to be Asian-flavoured this refreshing Mexican soup is a case in point. Canned tomatoes are often used in dishes like this, but we've opted to use fresh ones while they're still so great; if you want to skip the dicing, though, use a couple of tins of chopped tomatoes. Plenty of lime, extra chilli and sliced avocado can only make things better.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 15 mins Serves 4-6

- 1½ tbsp olive oil
- 1 Spanish onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 1 long red chilli, thinly sliced, plus extra to serve
- 1 tsp smoked paprika
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1/4 tsp saffron threads
- 1 kg ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 500 ml (2 cups) chicken or vegetable stock
- 200 gm dried vermicelli or spaghettini, broken into rough pieces Juice of 1 lime or to taste, plus extra wedges to serve
 - Coriander, sliced cherry tomatoes and sliced avocado, to serve
- 1 Heat half the oil in a large saucepan over medium-high heat, add onion, garlic and chilli, and sauté until translucent (2-3 minutes). Add spices and stir until fragrant (30 seconds), then transfer to a blender, add tomatoes and stock. and blend until smooth
- 2 Heat remaining oil in the same saucepan over medium-high heat, add noodles and stir until golden brown (1-2 minutes). Add tomato mixture and 400ml hot water, season to taste and bring to a simmer. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until soup thickens and noodles are tender (8-10 minutes). Squeeze in lime juice, season to taste, and scatter with coriander and extra chilli. Serve with sliced avocado and extra lime wedges. Wine suggestion A bold pink grenache rosé.>





Khao soi is all about the combination of tender boiled noodles and the crunch of fried noodles – it's *textural bliss*.

Khao soi

Khao soi traditionally uses meat cooked on the bone, but for this quicker version, we've opted for smaller pieces of chicken thigh fillet; we've also taken a shortcut and used ground spices instead of pounding our own – just be sure they're fresh for the best flavour. If you want to take the longer approach, use chicken Marylands cut through the joint, and simmer them slowly and gently until the meat is falling from the bone. Khao soi is all about the combination of tender boiled noodles and the crunch of the fried noodles that are scattered on top – it's textural bliss. Prep time 20 mins, cook 20 mins

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil, plus extra for shallow-frying
- 400 ml coconut cream
- 300 ml coconut water
- 50 ml soy sauce
- 50 gm light palm sugar, coarsely grated
- 8 skinless chicken thigh fillets, chopped into bite-sized pieces
- 400 gm fresh egg noodles
 Coarsely chopped pickled mustard greens
 (see note), thinly sliced red shallots,
 coriander sprigs, thinly sliced birdseye
 chillies and lime wedges, to serve
 Curry paste
 - 8 dried long red chillies, seeds discarded, soaked in hot water for 20 minutes, drained
 - 8 garlic cloves
 - 8 coriander roots, cleaned
- 30 gm ginger, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 30 gm turmeric, peeled and coarsely chopped
- 4 red shallots, coarsely chopped
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 1 tsp ground coriander
- 1 tsp ground fennel
- ½ tsp freshly ground white pepper
- ½ tsp ground cloves
- 1 For curry paste, process chillies, garlic, coriander roots, ginger, turmeric and shallot in a food processor to a paste, add ground spices and 2 tsp sea salt and pulse to combine.
- 2 Heat oil in a saucepan over medium-high heat, add curry paste and stir frequently until fragrant (2-3 minutes). Add coconut cream, coconut water, soy sauce and sugar, and simmer

until well flavoured (10-12 minutes). Season to taste. Add chicken and simmer until just tender (4-5 minutes).

- **3** Meanwhile, heat 3cm oil in a deep-frying pan over medium-high heat until oil starts shimmering. Add 100gm noodles and fry until crisp and golden (2-3 minutes). Drain on paper towels.
- 4 Cook remaining noodles in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender (2-3 minutes), then drain well and divide among serving bowls. Ladle chicken and sauce over noodles, top with fried noodles, mustard greens, sliced shallot, coriander sprigs and chilli, and serve hot with lime wedges.

Note Pickled mustard greens are available from select Asian grocers.

Drink suggestion A can of Singha.

Lemongrass beef with rice noodles

Noodle salads are excellent in all weather – particularly when it's steamy because there's minimal cooking involved. This dish works well with sliced sirloin; we've made it quicker by using minced beef instead. Roasted peanuts or fried shallots would be a great addition for a bit of crunch.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 5 mins (plus soaking)
Serves 4-6 (pictured p107)

- 2 garlic cloves
- 1 lemongrass stalk (white part only), thinly sliced
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 300 gm coarsely minced beef
 - 1 tbsp fish sauce
- 250 gm rice vermicelli
- 1½ tbsp vegetable oil
- 100 gm (1 cup, loosely packed) bean sprouts
- ½ cup (loosely packed) coriander
- ½ cup (loosely packed) Vietnamese mint
- ½ cup (loosely packed) holy basil Thinly sliced birdseye chilli, to serve Lime-chilli dressing
- 2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 1-2 birdseye chillies, coarsely chopped,
- 1½ tbsp caster sugar
- 2 tbsp fish sauce
- 1½ tbsp lime juice
- 1½ tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 Pound garlic, lemongrass, peppercorns and caster sugar to a coarse paste with a mortar and pestle. Transfer to a bowl, add beef and fish sauce and mix well.
- 2 Place noodles in a large bowl, cover well with boiling water and stand to soften (5-6 minutes).
- **3** Meanwhile, for lime-chilli dressing, pound garlic, chilli and sugar to a coarse paste with

a mortar and pestle, then stir in fish sauce, lime juice, rice vinegar and 1 tbsp water.

- 4 Drain noodles, refresh under cold running water and drain well. Cut noodles into manageable pieces and divide among serving bowls.
- **5** Heat oil in a wok or large frying pan over high heat, add beef mixture and stir-fry until browned and just cooked through (2-3 minutes). Spoon beef over noodles, drizzle with lime-chilli dressing to taste, scatter with bean sprouts, herbs and extra chilli to taste and serve.

Wine suggestion A spicy, peachy pinot gris.>

TEXT PAGE All props stylist's own. KHAO SOI Aria bowls from Papaya. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.







Clam, sausage and black bean noodles with garlic chives

Surf and turf – what's not to love? In this case, it's clams and Chinese sausage, tossed through fresh egg noodles with black beans, garlic chives and plenty of soy sauce. Speedy and tasty.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 10 mins

Serves 4-6

- 1½ tbsp vegetable oil
- 150 gm lap cheong sausage, thickly sliced
- 20 gm ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 2 tbsp fermented black beans, coarsely mashed (see note)
- 1 kg clams (see note)
- 90 ml Shaoxing wine
- 2 tbsp dark soy sauce
- 400 gm fresh Hokkien noodles
 - 1 bunch garlic chives, cut into rough 5cm pieces
 - Roasted chilli oil (see note), to serve
- 1 Heat oil in a wok over high heat, add sausage, ginger and garlic, and stir-fry until sausage is browned (1-2 minutes). Stir in fermented black beans, then add clams and stir to coat. Add wine and soy sauce, cover with a lid and cook, shaking wok occasionally, until clams open (3-4 minutes).
- 2 Meanwhile, cook noodles in a saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender (2-3 minutes). Drain, then add to wok along with garlic chives. Stir-fry noodles, coating well with sauce, and serve hot with roasted chilli oil.

Note Fermented black beans and roasted chilli oil are available from Asian grocers. Clams are available to buy already purged of grit; otherwise soak clams in water for 20 minutes to remove sand. **Wine suggestion** A bold young Beaujolais.

Kimchi noodle pancakes

There's so much flavour in these crisp pancakes, you'll find it hard not to go back for more. We've made two whoppers here, but it's easy to divide the mixture into a few smaller pancakes.

Prep time 10 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 4-6

- 120 gm japchae (see note)
- 300 gm kimchi, coarsely chopped (see note)
- 30 gm gochujang (see note)
- 6 spring onions, thinly sliced, plus extra to serve
- 20 gm (4cm piece) ginger, finely grated
- 2 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 100 gm (²/₃ cup) plain flour
 - 2 tbsp roasted sesame seeds, plus extra to serve
- 80 ml (½ cup) vegetable oil Gochujang dipping sauce
- 2 tbsp gochujang
- 2 tbsp rice vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp roasted sesame seeds
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped

- **1** Cook noodles in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until tender (4-5 minutes). Drain well, rinse under cold running water, drain well again, then transfer to a bowl and snip into rough pieces with kitchen scissors.
- **2** Stir in kimchi, gochujang, spring onion, ginger, garlic and eggs, then add flour and sesame seeds, and mix until well combined.
- **3** For gochujang dipping sauce, stir ingredients in a bowl to combine.
- 4 Heat a quarter of the oil in a 20cm-diameter frying pan over medium heat, add half the noodle mixture, spreading evenly, and fry until golden brown on the base (3-4 minutes). Slide pancake onto a plate, add another quarter of the oil to pan, then carefully invert pancake (see tip) into pan and fry until golden brown and cooked through (3-4 minutes). Transfer to plate and repeat with remaining oil and pancake batter. Scatter pancakes with extra sesame seeds and spring onion, and serve warm with dipping sauce.

 Note Japchae, Korean noodles made from sweet potato, are available from Korean grocers and Asian supermarkets, as are kimchi and gochujang.

 Drink suggestion A shot glass of cold soju



To invert the pancake, once you've slid it onto a plate, place another plate on top of the pancake, invert it onto the second plate and slide it back into the frying pan.









ou know the Brit Pack and Britpop, and you've heard enough about Brexit for a lifetime, but how familiar are you with Britalian? At Luca, tucked behind a green-tiled Victorian shopfront in London's bustling Clerkenwell, chef Isaac McHale and his partners from The Clove Club, Daniel Willis and Johnny Smith, offer "British seasonal ingredients through an Italian lens". Or, if you will, Britalian.

The appeal of The Clove Club has always been its flexibility and conviviality. It's the sort of place that has shot to number 26 on The World's 50 Best Restaurants without sacrificing its party vibe, and there's some of that same magic at play at Luca. Cocktails, a Dirty Martini made with brined green peaches, are dispensed from the marble-topped bar, along with the likes of salumi, salted gooseberries, and olives stuffed with veal sausage.

Beyond the bar, a double-height 60-seat dining room bordered by exposed-brick walls and floor-to-ceiling glass has won over Londoners with an à la carte menu that places particular emphasis on chef and co-owner Isaac McHale's great love: pasta. "Pasta is an amazing food, a wonderful world of stories where history and location and climate and politics have changed the shapes and styles that exist across the country," says McHale. The menu includes spaghettini with Morecambe Bay shrimp and mace butter, and ravioli in pheasant broth.

British produce in place of more familiar Italian ingredients is a theme; airdried ham from Wales instead of prosciutto, for instance. Playful dishes, too, like "unfashionable" mint choc-chip ice-cream cones.

The exciting mix of serious food and informal service that made The Clove Club such a pioneer in London's fine-dining scene when it launched nearly four years ago is also a big part of Luca's appeal. "It's something I first remember experiencing when I was doing a stage at Noma about 10 years ago, just when it was starting to get attention," says McHale. "I remember the food was amazing, but the service was revolutionary – young, hip Scandis just doing their thing, and you happened to be in the same room as them."

And they're not done yet. McHale says he'd like to try his hand next at creating a Chinese canteen, as well as a grill restaurant and a restaurant in Tokyo. For now, though, it's all eyes on St John Street and those gnocchetti Sardi. *Luca*, 88 St John St, London, +44 20 3859 3000, *luca.restaurant*

TEXT PAGE

"Talbot" tumbler (used throughout) from Country Road. "China" chair from Cult. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p183.

Steamed trout with seaweed butter

"I love rainbow trout. It was a supermarket favourite, so it's unfashionable in restaurants, but I think it's a reliable option for dinner and this recipe is all about the cooking technique," says Isaac McHale. "The last time I cooked trout like this was 15 years ago when I worked for Mark Best when he started running The Four In Hand bistro in Sydney's Paddington. It's a great technique that's simple and makes a brilliantly cooked piece of fish every time."

Prep time 20 mins, cook 2 mins

Serves 4

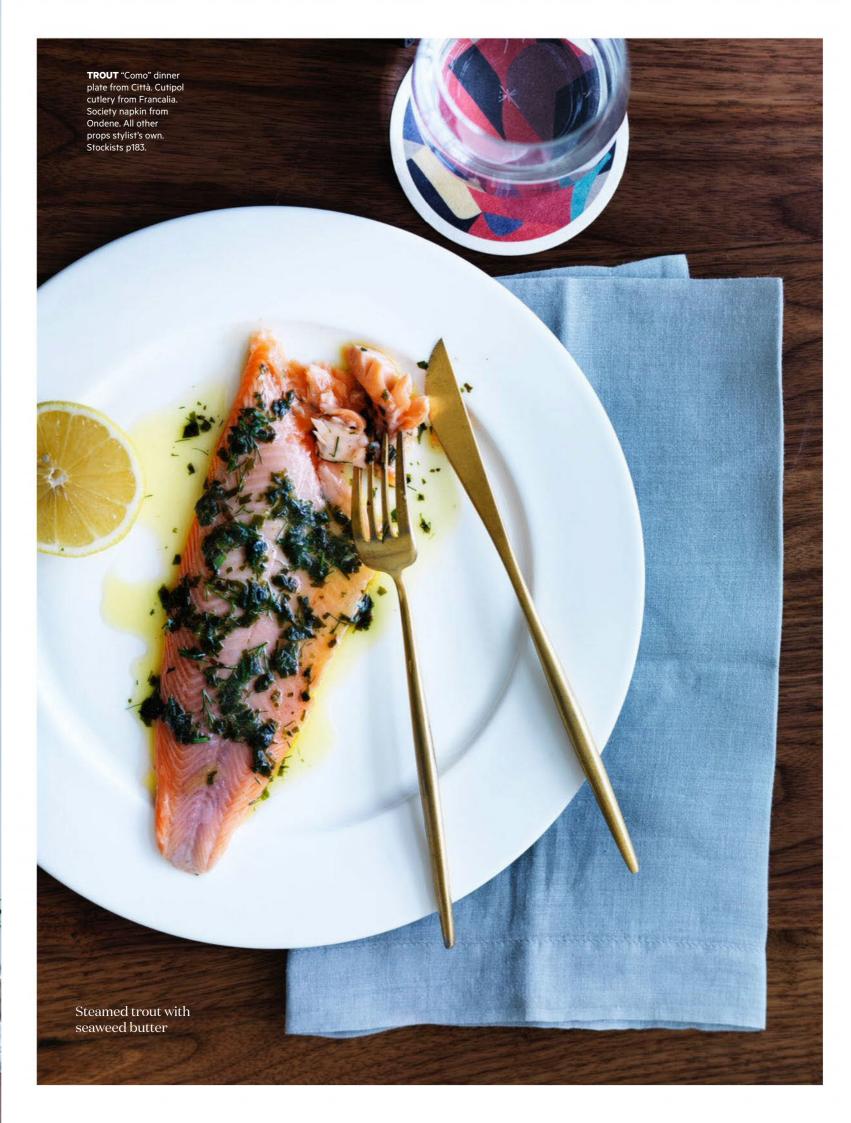
- 4 (130gm each) rainbow trout fillets, skin on, pin-boned
 Butter, for greasing
- 1 lemon

Seaweed butter

- 50 gm butter, softened
- 10 gm dried wakame, soaked in warm water for 20 minutes, drained, patted dry, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup (about 1 small bunch) chervil, finely chopped
- ½ tsp finely chopped dill
- ½ tsp finely chopped tarragon
- 1 For seaweed butter, whisk butter until pale and creamy. Add wakame, herbs and a pinch of salt and whisk to combine. Refrigerate. It will keep refrigerated for a week. Bring to room temperature before using.
- 2 Preheat oven to 190C. Place fish fillets skin-side up on a lightly buttered oven tray, and roast for 2 minutes, then check that top of skin is warm to touch and peel off skin in one go. Squeeze lemon over fish and season with a pinch of salt, then lift onto serving plates and put 1 tsp wakame butter on top of each fillet. Serve with steamed broccoli or a salad and enjoy the warm, just-cooked fish with seaweed butter melting over it

Wine suggestion An aromatic white, such as riesling or vermentino.>







Luca has *won over Londoners* with an à la carte menu that places particular emphasis on chef and co-owner Isaac McHale's great love: pasta.

Gnocchetti Sardi with pork and fennel sausage ragù, anchovy and mint

"This is a great quick evening-meal kind of dish," savs McHale.

Prep time 15 mins, cook 50 mins Serves 4

- 1 tbsp olive oil
- 4 (125gm each) Italian-style pork and fennel sausages, skins removed, broken into chunks
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 1 carrot, finely chopped
- 1 celery stalk, finely chopped
- 1 large garlic clove, finely chopped
- 100 ml red wine (white wine works as well)
- 400 gm canned chopped tomatoes
- 150 ml chicken stock
 - 1 fresh bay leaf
- 440 gm gnocchetti Sardi (see note)
 - 4 anchovy fillets, coarsely chopped
 - ½ cup (loosely packed) mint, sliced Ricotta salata (optional), finely grated to serve
- 1 Heat a deep frying pan over medium-high heat, add the oil and fry the sausage meat, letting it colour at first without stirring. Once all the meat is coloured (10-12 minutes), reduce the heat and add the onion, carrot, celery, garlic and a pinch of salt. Cover with a lid and cook, checking often, until vegetables are softened (5-6 minutes). Remove lid, increase heat a little, add the wine and stir until it's evaporated (5 minutes). Add tomatoes, stock and bay leaf (just add water and a bit of a stock cube if you don't have chicken stock around, or even just water). Simmer until sauce comes together and reduces down (25-30 minutes).
- 2 When sauce is reduced, get a large saucepan of salted water on the boil and cook your pasta until al dente (9-12 minutes). Drain pasta and add to the sauce along with a small ladleful of cooking liquid (about ¼ cup; the starch in the water helps the sauce cling to the pasta). Remove from heat and add anchovies. Serve immediately topped with mint and ricotta salata

Note Gnocchetti Sardi, also known as malloreddus. is a small dumpling-shaped pasta, available from select delicatessens and Italian grocers. If it's unavailable, substitute orecchiette.

Wine suggestion A cool-climate pinot noir (think Alto Adige or Mornington Peninsula).

Corned beef buns with horseradish, parmesan and walnut sauce

"Even if you never make this sandwich, you want to know about this sauce: a beautiful mild, bitter sauce showing the subtler side of walnuts," says McHale. "It's a bit of an Italian classic and it reminds me of the background flavours of parmesan; a tiny bit of cooked garlic, olive oil and a little horseradish tie it all together. It's a great sauce for bollito misto or as an alternative sauce for vitello tonnato, or just something to serve with cold roast pork, lamb or beef the day after a big roast." At Luca, McHale serves these rolls with brined ox tonque: we've used corned beef.

Prep time 30 mins, cook 20 mins

Serves 4 (pictured p114)

4 white rosetta or other white bread rolls

400 gm cooked corned beef (or brined ox tongue), thinly sliced Freshly grated horseradish, to serve Bitter leaves and gherkins (optional), to serve

Walnut sauce

- ½ garlic clove, thinly sliced
- tbsp olive oil
- 20 gm crustless day-old sourdough
- 1½ tbsp milk
- 100 gm walnuts
- 35 gm parmesan, finely grated
- 1 For walnut sauce, place garlic and oil in a small saucepan over low heat until just warm, then cool. Tear up the bread and soak in a bowl with the milk (10 minutes). Place walnuts in a saucepan of cold water, bring to the boil, then immediately drain and repeat twice. Blend blanched walnuts, soaked bread, parmesan and a pinch of salt in a blender until smooth, then add garlic, oil and enough water to form a thick sauce (about 100ml-140ml). Season to taste.
- 2 Preheat oven to 160C. Place bread rolls on an oven trav and warm in oven (5-6 minutes). Cool rolls briefly, then cut in half, spread with a small amount of walnut sauce and layer in lots and lots of slices of corned beef. Occasionally season a layer with freshly grated horseradish and a turn of pepper. When the sandwich is filled and the top layer of beef is nice and flat so the sauce won't run off, spoon 2 tbsp walnut sauce over beef. Put the top half of the roll on and gently press (McHale secures his with 2 skewers and serves them cut in half). Serve with lots of napkins, a salad of bitter leaves and a quarter gherkin each. **Drink suggestion** A Negroni!

Peppers with spinach and salt cod

"This is a light antipasti dish, served slightly warm," says McHale. "I love peppers and this summer we preserved 100kg of organic peppers at The Clove Club to ready ourselves for Luca opening." Begin this recipe a day ahead to soak the cod.

Prep time 40 mins, cook 30 mins (plus soaking) Serves 4 (pictured p115)

100 gm salt cod, to serve (see note)

- 4 red capsicum
- 2 bunches (500gm) spinach on the stem
- 80 ml (1/3 cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tbsp red wine vinegar
- 1 tsp caster sugar A sprig of marjoram
- gm golden raisins, plumped up in 60ml boiling water, then drained
- 1 To prepare the cod, soak it in cold water in the refrigerator for 24 hours, changing the water 4 times. Drain and bring to a simmer in a large saucepan of water until tender (30 minutes). Strain and flake fish, discarding skin and bones.
- 2 Blacken 3 capsicum over a gas burner on a high flame, turning until charred all over (20-25 minutes; or do this in a 220C oven). Place in a bowl, cover bowl tightly with plastic wrap and stand to steam for 15 minutes. Quarter capsicum, discard skin and seeds.
- **3** Blanch spinach on the stem in a saucepan of boiling salted water (40 seconds; see cook's notes p184) and refresh in iced water.
- 4 Juice the remaining capsicum in a juicer or blender with a tiny amount of water, then strain into a bowl. Add olive oil, red wine vinegar, sugar, and a pinch of salt
- **5** Warm roasted capsicum pieces in a saucepan over low heat with marjoram and a splash of the vinaigrette (1-2 minutes). Add raisins and spinach and stir to warm through (30-40 seconds; you don't want this hot, just warm). Carefully lift the blanched spinach and capsicum pieces onto a plate, laying them all out flat. Spoon the dressing over, top with torn pieces of salt cod and serve.

Note Salt cod is available from fishmongers. Wine suggestion An orange wine with concentration and a touch of structure.>









Mint choc-chip ice-cream cones

"Luca is fun and accessible, and I wanted to make some desserts that everyone knows, but you don't see that often on restaurant menus," says McHale. "I love to do the unfashionable things, hence our mint choc-chip ice-cream. We infuse the mint at a low temperature so it has a fresh uncooked flavour, and the ice-cream is white with chocolate flakes instead of fake green like you normally see."

Prep time 30 mins, cook 11/2 hrs (plus churning, freezing)

Makes 10 cones (serves 6 in bowls)

- 1 litre (4 cups) milk
- 125 gm (about 4 bunches) mint leaves
- 300 gm (48% fat content) double cream
- 150 gm (about 9) egg yolks
- 10 ice-cream cones, to serve
- 250 gm finely chopped dark chocolate (66%-70% cocoa solids), to serve
- 1 Place milk and mint in a large saucepan over very low heat (at 50C-60C) and stir occasionally until mint infuses milk (1 hour). Strain the milk through a fine sieve and place milk and cream in a clean saucepan and bring to the boil.
- 2 Meanwhile, whisk yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale, thick and creamy (4-5 minutes). Stir in a little of the cream mixture, then pour the bowl of volks into the saucepan of cream mixture. stirring to combine. Return pan to heat and cook very, very gently, stirring constantly to prevent the yolks curdling, until the mixture thickly coats the spoon and reaches 80C on a thermometer (18-20 minutes). Strain into a bowl placed over ice to cool, then churn in batches in an ice-cream machine. Freeze (2-3 hours).
- **3** To serve, scoop ice-cream into cones or bowls and scatter with chocolate.

Drink suggestion Homemade nocino! Find a recipe and loads of time. Or buy an unctuous sweet wine like a vin de glace (ice wine).





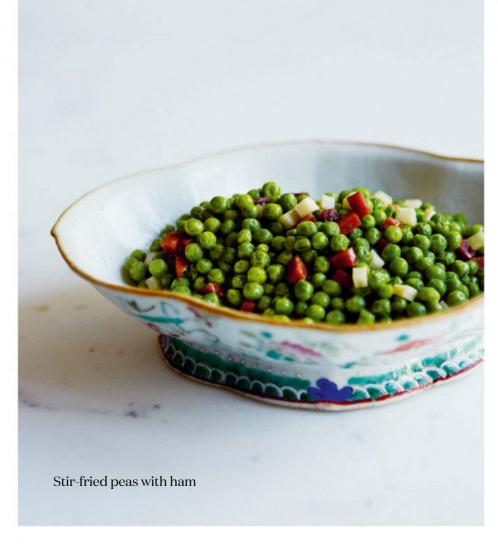
Golden scrambled eggs with prawns (RECIPE P130)



Ataste Yangtee

In her new book, Land of Fish and Rice, celebrated chronicler of Chinese cooking Fuchsia Dunlop takes us to the Lower Yangtze region, a treasure trove of culinary secrets.

RECIPES & FOOD STYLING **FUCHSIA DUNLOP**PHOTOGRAPHY **YUKI SUGIURA** DRINK SUGGESTIONS **MAX ALLEN**



he idea of writing a Jiangnan cookbook began to grow in earnest after I walked through a moongate into the enchanted garden of the Dragon Well Manor restaurant on the outskirts of Hangzhou. There, maverick restaurateur Dai Jianjun had created a sanctuary for the kind of Chinese cooking I had often dreamed of but rarely encountered. His team of buyers were scouring the countryside for radiantly fresh produce and foodstuffs made by artisans who were preserving traditional skills. In the kitchens, his chefs were cooking in the old-fashioned way, making their own cured meats and pickles and using fine stocks instead of MSG. It seemed to me that the Dragon Well Manor was restoring to Chinese cuisine its rightful dignity, as an expression of the perfect marriage between nature and human artifice.

I fell in love with the region and its extraordinary gastronomic culture. I returned often over the following years, seeking out chefs, home cooks, street vendors and farmers with stories to tell and recipes to teach, and tasting some of the most wonderful food I have ever encountered. No one who has fallen in love with Jiangnan ever wants to leave. In the fourth century, the official Zhang Han is said to have abandoned his post in the north of China because of his longing for the water shield soup and sliced perch eaten in his hometown there; ever since, "thinking of perch and water shield" has been shorthand in Chinese for homesickness.

Within China, the region's food is known for its delicacy and balance. Jiangnan cooks like to emphasise the true and essential tastes of their ingredients. The generally even temperament of Jiangnan cooking does not imply any aversion to rich and delicious flavours. Indeed, the region is famed for its red-braised dishes, in which soy sauce, rice wine and sugar are combined to spectacular effect, for its fragrant vinegars and boozy "drunken" delicacies, and for a plethora of funky fermented foods.

I have chosen to write of an overarching Jiangnan cuisine, embracing the cooking traditions of Zhejiang and Jiangsu provinces, southern Anhui province and Shanghai. It's a term that evokes the common culinary threads that link this diverse region and alludes to the ancient idea of Jiangnan, the beautiful south of China, as one of the heartlands of Chinese culture and gastronomy.



Stir-fried peas with ham

Huo tui xiao wan dou

"In a tree-lined street in Shanghai's former International Settlement, there's a 1920s Spanish-style mansion that houses one of the best restaurants in the city. Fu 1088." says Fuchsia Dunlop, "Arrive at the unassuming entrance, and you'll be led through wood-panelled halls and old tiled corridors to a private room decked out in early 20th-century style. You might end up in a grand dining room with antique clocks on the mantelpiece, or a bedroom under the eaves. At certain hours, your arrival may be accompanied by music drifting up from the grand piano downstairs. Fu 1088 specialises in food from Shanghai and the Jiangnan region, and its executive chef, Tony Lu, conjures up some of the finest renditions of traditional dishes you'll find in the city. This is my attempt to recreate one of them, a simple yet delicious stir-fry made with

"The dark pink of the ham sets off perfectly the emerald green of the peas and gives them an irresistible umami lift. The ivory bamboo shoot adds texture, flavour and colour, but the dish will work well without it. If you're using frozen peas, there's no need to defrost them before cooking. Vegetarians may omit the ham, and use diced smoked or spiced tofu, or shiitake mushrooms instead."

- 20 gm thickly sliced Spanish or Chinese cured ham, steamed briefly
- 25 gm bamboo shoot
- 1 tbsp cooking oil (such as grapeseed)
- 200 gm small green peas, fresh or frozen
 - 2 thsp stock or water
- ½ tsp potato starch mixed with 1 tbsp cold water
- ½ tsp sesame oil
- 1 Cut the ham into 3mm-4mm cubes. Bring a saucepan of water to the boil. Cut the bamboo shoot into 4mm-5mm cubes and blanch them in boiling water; refresh under the cold tap, then
- 2 Heat the cooking oil in a seasoned wok over a high flame. Add the ham, bamboo shoot and peas and stir-fry until the ham smells delicious and the peas are piping hot. Add the stock or water, bring to the boil and season with salt. Give the starch mixture a stir, pour into the centre of the wok and mix well. Off the heat, stir in the sesame oil. Serve. Wine suggestion Spicy, slurpy young grenache.

"Within China, the region's food is known for its *delicacy and balance*. Jiangnan cooks like to emphasise the true and essential tastes of their ingredients."

Shanghai fried rice with salt pork and green pak choy

Xian rou cai fan

"In a backstreet not far from Nanjing Road in the heart of Shanghai, there's a small diner that serves one of the most delicious versions of this classic local rice dish I've tasted," says Dunlop. "The plump, glossy rice, studded with salt pork, threaded with the bright green of pak choy, is irresistible. Everyone eats it, in the Chinese manner, with a bowl of broth to refresh the palate (a simple stock with sliced spring onion greens will do). This is my version of their recipe, which includes red onion and shiitake mushrooms. This dish is usually made with short-grain white rice - Japanese sushi rice is what I use at home - but it will also taste delicious with long-grain Thai fragrant rice. For the most sizzlingly delicious results, use lard as your cooking oil. Feel free to vary the quantities of pork or vegetables as you please. Spinach may be used as a substitute for the pak choy.

"Another traditional way to make this dish is to begin by frying the pork and greens, preferably in lard, then add raw washed rice and water. Bring to the boil, then cover and slow-cook on the lowest heat possible."

- 4 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 275 gm green pak choi (3-4 heads)
- 600 gm cooked and cooled sushi rice (300gm uncooked)
 - 2 tbsp cooking oil (such as grapeseed), or lard
- ½ small Spanish onion, finely chopped
- 100 gm streaky salt pork, pancetta or unsmoked bacon, rind removed, diced
 - 1 tbsp finely chopped fresh ginger
 - 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 Cover the shiitake mushrooms with boiling water and leave to soak for half an hour. Remove the stalks and dice the caps. Chop the pak choy a little more coarsely than the other ingredients. Break the rice up into small clumps to make stir-frying easier.
- 2 Heat the cooking oil in a seasoned wok over a medium heat. Add the onion and pork and stir-fry gently until the onion is tender and the pork has released its oil and is fragrant but not browned. Add the mushrooms and ginger, turn up the heat to high and stir-fry briefly until fragrant.
- **3** Tip in the rice and stir-fry, breaking it up as you go. When the rice is piping hot and smells delicious, season with salt and ground white pepper. (If you're eating the rice as a main meal, it will need to be saltier than if you are eating it with other dishes.) Add the pak choi and continue to stir-fry until it is piping hot and just cooked. Remove from the heat, stir in the sesame oil and serve.

Note Vegetarians can omit the meat to make simple cai fan (vegetable rice), although Chinese cooks would still tend to stir-fry the rice with lard to enhance its fragrance.

Drink suggestion Cold bottles of Tsingtao lager.>

SERVING QUANTITIES

The dishes in *Land of Fish and Rice* are mostly intended to be shared with rice as part of a Chinese meal, rather than eaten individually. For this reason, serving quantities are not included. When planning a meal, the most important thing is to make sure that there's enough rice for everyone to eat their fill, while the number and amount of the accompanying dishes are more flexible. In general, try to think in terms of having one dish per person plus one extra, or more if you're feeling generous. The advantage of this method of calculation is that if an extra guest suddenly appears, you can simply add another place setting to the table. The exceptions to this include wontons.





Shanghai red-braised pork with eggs

Shang hai hong shao rou

"Red-braised pork, in which chunks of belly pork are simmered with soy sauce, rice wine and sugar, is beloved across China, and there are many regional variations," says Dunlop. "In Jiangnan, and especially Shanghai, they like theirs dark, sleek and seductively sweet. The pork is only cooked for about an hour in total, so the meat and fat retain a little spring in their step. A secondary ingredient is often added, such as bamboo shoot, deep-fried tofu, cuttlefish, salted fish or, as in this recipe, hard-boiled eggs. The dish is a perfect accompaniment to plain white rice; I recommend that you serve it also with something light and refreshing, such as stir-fried greens.

"At the Dragon Well Manor restaurant in Hangzhou, they call this dish Motherly Love Pork because of an old local story. Once upon a time, they say, there was a woman whose son had travelled to Beijing to sit the imperial civil-service examinations. Eagerly awaiting his return, she cooked up his favourite dish, a slow-simmered stew of pork and eggs. But the

road was long and the travelling uncertain, so her son didn't arrive when expected, and she took the pot off the stove and went to bed. The next day, she warmed up the stew and waited again for him, but he didn't arrive. By the time her son actually reached home on the third day, the stew had been heated up three times, and the meat was inconceivably tender and unctuous, the sauce dark and profound." Start this recipe at least a day ahead to prepare the pork.

- 6 eggs, preferably small
- 20 gm fresh ginger
- 1 spring onion (white part only)

750 gm pork belly, skin on

- 1 tbsp cooking oil (such as grapeseed)
- 1 star anise
- A small piece of cassia bark
- 3 tbsp Shaoxing wine
- 700 ml stock or hot water
- 2 tbsp light soy sauce
- 1½ tbsp dark soy sauce, plus extra to serve
- 3 tbsp caster sugar or 40gm rock sugar

- 1 Hard-boil the eggs in a pan of boiling water, then cool and shell them. In each egg, make 6-8 shallow slashes lengthways to allow the flavours of the stew to enter. Smack the ginger and spring onion gently with the flat side of a cleaver or a rolling pin to loosen their fibres.
- 2 Put the pork in a pan, cover with cold water, bring to the boil over a high flame and boil for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse it under the cold tap. When cool enough to handle, cut the meat through the skin into 2cm-3cm cubes (if the piece of belly is thick, you may want to cut the cubes in half so they end up more cube-like).
- **3** Heat the oil in a seasoned wok over a high flame. Add the ginger, spring onion, star anise and cassia and stir-fry briefly until they smell wonderful. Add the pork and fry for another 1-2 minutes until the meat is faintly golden and some of the oil is running out of the fat. Splash the Shaoxing wine around the edges of the pan. Add the hard-boiled eggs and stock or hot water, along with the light soy sauce, 1½ tbsp dark soy sauce and the sugar. Bring to the boil, then cover and simmer for 45 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- 4 Pour into a pot or a bowl, allow to cool, then chill overnight. In the morning, remove the layer of pale fat that has settled on the surface. Tip the meat and jellied liquid back into a wok, reheat gently, then boil over a high flame to reduce the sauce, stirring constantly. Remove and discard the ginger, spring onion and whole spices. After 10-15 minutes, when the liquid has reduced by about half, stir in 1 tsp dark soy sauce.
- **5** Shortly before you wish to serve, bring to the boil over a high flame and reduce the sauce to a few centimetres of dark, sleek gravy. Turn out into a serving dish. Then go and welcome your son back from his imperial civil-service examinations! Note If you have any leftovers – unlikely, in my experience - you can reheat them with a little water and some dried bamboo shoot, winter melon, tofu knots, deep-fried tofu puffs or radishes. In fact, you might wish, like some of my Chinese friends, to red-braise odd scraps of fatty pork just to cook vegetables, because it makes them so delicious.

Shanghai red-braised pork

Omit the eggs and increase the amount of pork to 1kg. Use only 1½ tbsp light soy sauce, 1½ tbsp plus 1 tsp dark soy sauce, 2½ tbsp sugar and 500ml hot water

Red-braised pork with chestnuts

Add a quantity of peeled, cooked chestnuts roughly equal in volume to the pork when you reheat and reduce the stew. This is a variation made by Zhejiang chef Zhu Yinfeng.

Ningbo red-braised pork with salted fish

Omit the eggs, and use only 1 tbsp light soy sauce, 1 tbsp sugar and 500ml stock or water. Soak some dried yellow croaker in cold water to soften, then cut it into bite-sized pieces. Add the fish to the pork when you reheat it and reduce the stew. Garnish with a few lengths of spring onion.

Wine suggestion Sake made from red rice.

Shanghai pork and vegetable wontons

Cai rou da hun dun

"One day my friend Rose took me to visit her aunt in a tiny, higgledy-piggledy cottage on the banks of the Suzhou creek in the Hongkou district of Shanghai," says Dunlop. "We climbed a narrow wooden staircase to the bright living room, which was filled with Rose's aunts, uncles and cousins. We drank some cooling chrysanthemum tea while our hostess, Xun Naifen, showed us how to make Shanghainese wontons.

"Wontons can be found the length and breadth of China, with different names, forms and fillings – in the Cantonese south they're known as swallowing clouds, in Sichuan as folded arms and in Shanghai as hun dun, a homonym for primordial chaos. The Shanghainese are known for two kinds of wonton: the small wontons made from mere pinches of minced pork loosely gathered into tiny squares of pastry and served in broth; and the big wontons of the following recipe, which I've always found more exciting.

"Big wontons are typically stuffed with finely chopped shepherd's purse, a wild relative of cabbage. Mrs Xun had mixed her shepherd's purse with streaky minced pork, raw prawns and a little dried shiitake mushroom to make a delectable stuffing. Shepherd's purse is rarely sold outside Jiangnan, so at home I use blanched kale, the flavour of which recalls the fresh grassiness of shepherd's purse, or bunched spinach, which is also delicious. Large square Shanghai wonton wrappers can be found in many Chinese supermarkets. The same filling can be used to stuff round dumpling wrappers."

Makes about 20

- 2 x 200gm packets square Shanghai dumpling wrappersA few pieces of nori
- 1 tsp oil or lard
- 1 tbsp papery dried shrimps (see note)
- 2 tbsp finely chopped preserved mustard tuber (see note)
- 2 tbsp thinly sliced spring onions
- 750 ml stock (or wonton cooking water)
 Filling
 - 3 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 250 gm curly green kale, or 150gm bunched spinach or shepherd's purse
- 20 gm fresh ginger
- 1 spring onion (white part only)
- 200 gm streaky minced pork
- 1½ tsp caster sugar
- 1/2 tbsp Shaoxing wine
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 1 For the filling, cover the shiitake mushrooms with boiling water and leave for at least half an hour to soften. If using kale, remove and discard the thick stalks so you're left with just leaves. Fill a large bowl with cold water and ice cubes. Bring a pan of water to the boil, add the kale and boil until tender (about 5 minutes). Drain it well, plunge into the iced water and leave to cool completely. Drain, squeezing out as much water as possible, and finely chop it (If using spinach or shepherd's purse, prepare them in the same way, just blanch briefly in boiling water.) Crush the ginger and spring onion with the flat side of a

cleaver or with a rolling pin to loosen their fibres and put them in a cup with just enough cold water to cover. Discard the shiitake stalks and finely chop the caps. Put the pork in a bowl and add the shiitakes, sugar, Shaoxing wine, sesame oil and 1½ tsp salt, along with 4 tbsp of the water in which you've soaked the ginger and spring onion, which will have taken on their fragrances. Mix well – it's easiest to do this with one hand. Add the chopped greens and mix well again.

- 2 Bring a large pan of water to the boil and fill a small dish with cold water. Place a dumpling wrapper in the palm of your hand and put a generous tablespoon (20gm-25gm) of the pork mixture in the centre, pressing it into the wrapper. Dip your finger in the dish of water and run it around the edge of the wrapper. Wrap the wonton, sealing the edges tightly. Place on a dry surface and make the rest of the dumplings.
- **3** Tear the nori into tiny pieces and place in a deep serving bowl with all the other serving ingredients except the stock and season with salt and white pepper. Bring the stock, if using, to the

boil in a separate saucepan and keep it hot. Drop the dumplings into the large pan of boiling water, stirring gently to separate, and cook them for about 5 minutes. Each time the water comes back to a rolling boil, add a small cup of cold water to reduce the temperature so the dumplings do not jostle too vigorously and fall apart. (You'll need to do this a couple of times before the dumplings are cooked.) The dumplings will rise to the surface when they're cooked. Break one open to check the pork is cooked if you're uncertain.

4 When the dumplings are nearly cooked, pour the hot stock into the serving bowl. Transfer the cooked dumplings with a slotted spoon to the bowl. (Otherwise, simply transfer the wontons and their cooking water to your serving bowl.)

Note Papery dried shrimps are the paper-thin variety of dried shrimp, known in Chinese as "shrimp skin"; they're available from Asian grocers. Preserved mustard tuber is available from Asian grocers and exoticgroceries.com.au.

Wine suggestions Crisp, grapey, fragrant off-dry riesling.>



Hangzhou breakfast tofu

Hang zhou dou hua

"In this recipe, warm silken tofu is seasoned with savoury condiments and topped with fresh and crunchy garnishes," says Dunlop. "It's based on the breakfast tofu I enjoyed near the West Lake in Hangzhou."

Pictured p124

300 gm silken tofu

- 1/4 tsp caster sugar
- 2 tsp light soy sauce
- 1 tsp sesame oil Chilli oil, to taste
- 2 tbsp finely chopped Sichuan preserved vegetable (see note)
- 2 tbsp thinly sliced spring onions (green parts only)
- 1 tbsp chopped coriander
- 2 tbsp fried peanuts
- 1 Bring enough water to cover the tofu to the boil in a saucepan and salt it lightly. Use a spoon to scoop up large pieces of the tofu and transfer them to the water. Simmer very gently for about 5 minutes to heat it through.
- **2** When the tofu is ready, transfer it to a serving bowl with a slotted spoon and break up the chunks into smaller pieces. Scatter the rest of the ingredients over and serve.

Suzhou breakfast tofu

Instead of the garnishes used in the recipe above, put 2 tsp papery dried shrimps (see note p129) and 1 tbsp dried nori, torn into tiny pieces, in the serving bowl. Add the warm tofu and scatter with 1 tbsp finely chopped Sichuan preserved vegetable, 1½ tbsp thinly sliced spring onion greens, 2 tsp light soy sauce and 1 tsp sesame oil. Mix well. This version is served as part of the lavish breakfast at the Wumen Renjia restaurant in Suzhou.

Note Sichuan preserved vegetable, a pickled mustard plant stem also known as zha cai, is sold at Asian supermarkets.

Drink suggestion Tea (of course - it's breakfast).

Golden scrambled eggs with prawns

Xia ren chao dan

"One warm day in May, with the breeze whispering in the bamboo and the lotus leaves lying lazily on the surface of the pond, I spent the morning sitting in the garden of the Dragon Well Manor restaurant in Hangzhou," says Dunlop. "At lunchtime, I sat among friends at a table spread with the most exquisite repast: crisp river shrimp cradled in golden eggs, darkly glistening red-braised pork with tofu puffs, a lively stir-fry of fresh green soybeans, fluffy white rice and a broth in which floated the tenderest, most ethereal little cabbage leaves. It was, like all meals at the Manor, full of quiet, understated joy and the perfection of the season. In this recipe, I've suggested you use sea prawns rather than river shrimp, but have otherwise followed the instructions of the Manor's head chef, Chen Xiaoming." Pictured p125

100 gm uncooked prawns, deveined

- 3 large eggs
- 1½ tsp potato starch
- 3 tbsp thinly sliced spring onion (green parts only)

- ½ tbsp Shaoxing wine
- 3 tbsp cooking oil (such as grapeseed or canola)
- 1 Rinse the prawns, shake them dry and put them in a bowl. Separate one of the eggs. Add 1 tsp eggwhite and ¼ tsp salt to the prawns and chill them in the fridge for 1 hour before cooking.
- **2** Remove the prawns from the fridge and stir in the potato starch. Beat the yolk and remaining white of the separated egg with the 2 other eggs and season with salt and white pepper. Stir in the spring onion and Shaoxing wine.
- **3** Heat the oil in a seasoned wok over a high flame. When hot, reduce the heat, add the prawns and stir-fry until nearly - but not completely cooked. Remove them with a slotted spoon and drop them into the egg mixture. Return the wok to a high flame. When the oil is hot again, add the egg mixture and stir-fry until nearly cooked. Stop stirring and allow the egg to become golden, flipping it over once to colour the other side. Break up egg and pile onto a serving dish. Wine suggestion Rosé Champagne.

Mrs Song's thick fish soup

Song sao yu geng

"This soup is a gentle miracle: a swirl of tender fish, golden wisps of egg yolk and slivers of bamboo shoot and mushroom, its savoury flavours lifted by a final spritz of vinegar," says Dunlop. "Like many Hangzhou dishes, this one tells a story. It dates back to the time when the Song dynasty had been driven south to Hangzhou by Jurchen invaders. One day, the emperor took to the imperial boat for a leisurely tour of the West Lake. As he made his progress, he ordered his servants to summon the floating traders on the lake and ask for samples of their wares. One of them boldly introduced herself as fifth sister-in-law Song, and told the emperor she had followed his court south from the old northern capital Kaifeng, and was making her living by selling thick fish soup on the shores of the lake. The emperor tasted her soup and was overcome by nostalgia for his lost northern capital. Moved beyond words, he thanked Mrs Song with a gift of rolls of silk shot with silver and gold. Afterwards, they say, local people flocked to Mrs Song's for a bowlful of soup, 'half buying a taste of imperial favour, half buying fish'.

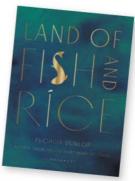
"The recipe is said to have been based on a northern-style sour-and-hot soup made with carp from the Yellow River, but adapted in Hangzhou to use the mandarin fish or Chinese perch. This recipe is adapted from a Chinese cookbook on Hangzhou cuisine, with thanks also to chef Hu Zhongying of the Hangzhou Restaurant for his suggestions."

- 3 dried shiitake mushrooms
- 1 Murray cod, hapuku or other firm, white-fleshed fish (about 500gm), scaled and gutted
- 25 gm fresh ginger
- spring onions, white parts only, reserving the green part of 1
- 1½ tbsp Shaoxing wine
- 10 gm lean Spanish or Chinese cured ham, steamed briefly
- 50 gm bamboo shoot

- 1 tbsp lard or cooking oil
- 1 litre chicken stock
- 1½ tbsp light soy sauce
- ½ tsp dark soy sauce
- 2½ tbsp potato starch mixed with 6 tbsp cold water
- 4 egg yolks, mixed together
- 1 tbsp Chinkiang vinegar, plus extra to serve
- 1 Soak the shiitake mushrooms in boiling water for at least half an hour until softened.
- 2 Cut off the head and fins of the fish and slice it along the backbone into two halves. Rinse and shake dry. Place the fish skin-side down in a bowl that will fit into your steamer basket.
- **3** Take 15gm ginger and 1 spring onion white and smack them gently with the flat side of a cleaver or with a rolling pin to loosen their fibres. Tuck them into a bowl with the fish and sprinkle fish with 1/2 tbsp Shaoxing wine. Put the fish bowl in the steamer basket and steam over boiling water until just cooked (about 5 minutes).
- **4** When the fish is ready, strain off its juices into another bowl. Gently flake the flesh from the fish, discarding skin and bones, and add it to the cooking juices (chopsticks are good for this).
- **5** Smack the remaining spring onion whites to loosen their fibres. Peel the remaining ginger and cut it into thin slivers. Cut the ham and the spring onion green into very thin slivers. Drain the shiitakes, discard the stalks and cut the caps into thin slivers. Cut the bamboo shoot into slivers of a similar thickness and blanch for 1-2 minutes in boiling water then drain well
- 6 Heat the lard in a seasoned wok over a high flame. Add the spring onion whites and stir-fry until they are tinged with gold and smell delicious. Add the stock and bring to the boil, then fish out and discard the spring onion whites. Add the mushrooms and bamboo shoot to the wok and return to the boil
- 7 Add the sov sauces and the fish with all its juices, and season with salt. Return to the boil, then turn down to a very gentle simmer. Give the starch mixture a stir and pour it into the centre of the wok in about 3 stages, stirring well to thicken the soup – add just enough to give it a creamy, lazy consistency.
- 8 Add the egg yolks and stir them into the soup: the volks will set into flowery wisps. Finally. add the vinegar and heat for just a few moments to fuse the flavours of the soup.
- **9** Pour the soup into a serving bowl. Sprinkle with a little ground white pepper and garnish with the sliced ham, ginger and spring onion green. Serve immediately. Invite your guests to add a tiny dish of extra vinegar at the table.

Drink suggestion Rich, strong barley wine.

+ This extract from Land of Fish and Rice by Fuchsia Dunlop (Bloomsbury, \$49.99) has been reproduced with minor GT style changes.







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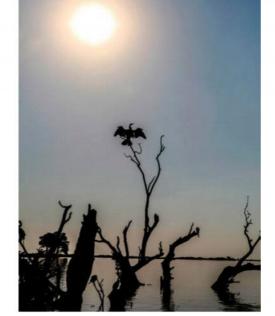














by the international community as "the African

safari guide is emblematic of his nation's story.

Four boys go hunting for birds in the Okavango Delta. Their traps full, the 12-year-old cousins are walking home with their dinner when they spy a kettle of vultures circling ahead. For reasons they still can't explain, instead of steering clear, they walk towards them, curious, forgetting there's only one thing guaranteed to attract vultures.

> The boys interrupt a pride of lions ripping apart a freshly felled buffalo. Almost too late, they recall a lesson their fathers taught them: don't run, stay still, stay silent. Stare down the lion.

> The boys freeze. The lions circle. Predators and prey stay this way for hours, the boys never breaking eye contact - until the big cats scatter as a grass fire sweeps through, lit by a father who comes searching for his boys, who sees the same vultures circling and assumes the worst. "He rescued us and took us home, and to this day we've never forgotten what our fathers taught us."

Kebonye Ramorusi, known to everyone as Ice, tells his story over a fireside dinner at Sanctuary Stanley's Camp deep in the delta. The dense night presses in around us, full of alarming noises and long shadows. We listen, saucer-eyed, in fear and fascination. Like most of the staff here, our guide grew up in one of the six villages within a 105,000-hectare private concession called NG32 on which the camp is located. On safari in the delta, I want to follow the man who has stared down a lion.

Ice was born the day Botswana gained its independence from Britain. In September last year the little landlocked republic of two million people celebrated 50 years of peaceful democracy. Surrounded by troubled neighbours - Zimbabwe, Namibia, South Africa and Angola - Botswana has long been regarded

miracle". Its rare political stability and spectacular economic growth were fuelled by the discovery of the world's largest diamond reserves - fortuitously, soon after the British relinquished their protectorate, then named Bechuanaland - and overseen by Seretse Khama, a benign and beneficent president. Ice's passage from a tribal childhood to highly respected

Botswana is miraculous for other reasons, too. In a region notorious for trophy hunting and rampant poaching of elephants and rhino, the nation has an uncompromising shoot-to-kill policy towards poachers, and hunting of any kind is banned on public land. A third of Africa's elephants have disappeared in the past seven years, according to the findings of the Great Elephant Census released in August last year, and increasingly the remainder is seeking refuge in Botswana: 130,451 of them at last count - the biggest population of elephants in Africa.

We've come to see them, and the many other miracles of Botswana, at a trio of lodges and tented camps in the nation's north run by Sanctuary Retreats, an affiliate of the global Abercrombie & Kent travel group. Though each location and camp style is unique, the welcome at Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero lodge, our first stop, sets the pattern. A choir of staff with lovely, seldom-heard names - Ishmael, Finneas, Florence gather for our arrival and throw their hearts into a song in melodious Setswana, while a cup of bush tea and just-baked scones wait for us. Past a pair of>

GONE BUSH

Clockwise from top left: The firenit at Sanctuary Stanley's Camp; Chobe River, near Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero lodge; Ice, a guide at Stanley's Camp. Opposite, clockwise from top: elephants at Chobe River: Chobe National Park; giraffes near Chobe Chilwero; a guest cottage at Chobe Chilwero welcome drinks.



Across the main channel on marshy Sedudu Island are huddles of male elephants, methodically *salad-spinning their dinner*.



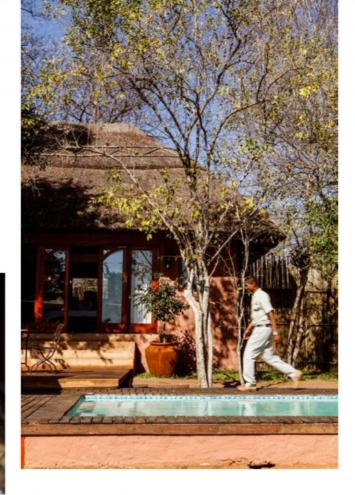












warthogs grazing on the front lawn, along a path scattered with basketball-sized dung heaps and the delicately veined footprints of elephants (as big as serving platters) are 15 cottages. Each has all the comforts of home plus an outdoor shower, a hammock in a courtyard at the back, and a front veranda with views across a floodplain to the mighty Chobe River, broad and brown and teeming, I imagine, with hippos and crocodiles.

Sure enough, there are floats of hippo and plenty of lantern-jawed Nile crocodiles glowering on muddy banks when we take a boat out on the Chobe late each afternoon. We sidle towards a male hippo the size of a minibus as it slides from one stinking puddle to another; our approach elicits a full 180-degree yawn, shocking in its candy-pinkness and unmistakable aggression. We move on.

Birdlife throngs in the dying day: Egyptian geese and helmeted guinea fowl, storks and spurfowl, darters and doves. Fish eagles wheel overhead, crying like babies. We glide past scimitar-horned waterbucks and a 50-strong troop of baboons, momentarily becalmed by their communal delousing exercise.

But this is Africa's Elephant Central - authorities estimate about 80,000 of the nation's 130,000 elephants live here in Chobe National Park - and they steal the show. Families shower together on the banks; the ladies - bags and wrinkles deepening in the twilight - hose each other companionably while their youngsters mock-charge and squirt each other, then roll awkwardly in the mud. Across the main channel on marshy Sedudu Island are huddles of mainly male elephants, methodically salad-spinning their dinner.

We edge close to a dozen of them, ankle-deep, trunks grasping and uprooting reeds, rhythmically threshing in a scything motion to dislodge mud and insects, then popping the thatches in their mouths. Watching this mealtime routine at close quarters – close enough to cop a misting of mud, close enough to smell an elephant's herbaceous fart – is both thrilling and meditative.

It's this mix of exhilaration and intense focus that makes safaris so addictive, and there are twice-daily excursions on river and land at Chobe Chilwero. We head out at sunrise one day on a drive with Chika Kachana, a Chobe guide for 16 years; he shows us the dusty graves of his grandparents in the national park. The early birds are everywhere - flycatchers and francolins, herons and hornbills - and we're discussing the messy feeding habits of the open-bill stork when Chika stops the truck, peers down at a glossy black deposit by the track and announces, "Lion, close."

In the course of the next couple of hours, he tracks a pride back and forth across the park, finding signs of their erratic passage where we can see only sand and scrub. Instead, we're entranced by the persistence of a handsome cappuccino-coloured male impala who chases a wily female repeatedly around a rocky circuit - I'm not sure who to cheer when she evades him on the fifth pass. We feel the pathos in the lowing of a buffalo to her lame, exhausted calf – its limp grows worse as we watch, the distance growing between them. The ride is so packed with distractions we're no longer focused on the big cats when we finally find them: four silent assassins downwind from a waterhole full of elephants and sable antelope.>

NATURAL RESOURCES

Clockwise from top I eft: Chika, a guide at Sanctuary Chobe Chilwero; poolside at Chobe Chilwero; a welcoming staff member at the lodge: an impala. Opposite: aerial view of the Okavango Delta.













The 90-minute flight south-west from Chobe Chilwero to one of its sister retreat, Sanctuary Stanley's Camp – which takes place in a noisy single-prop plane not much bigger than an elephant – is one of the most thrilling of my life, for it's only from this vantage that the complexity, the improbable wonder of this vast delta surrounded by desert can be grasped.

From Chobe, we rise over dry stubbled plains pocked by grey soaks and bisected by a few deadstraight roads that stretch forever. Gradually, the plains become freckled by glittering ponds, then dark ribbons of water appear, winding intestinally around clots of land crowned by palms and termite hills. The ponds become lagoons and the islets multiply and become thousands of islands, and that's when we really know we're in the Okavango Delta.

For a month every summer, the Okavango River surges with rain from the Angola highlands and then spreads dramatically for the next four months across the delta, some 15,000 square kilometres of country in flux. The flood peaks between June and August, by which time the delta has swollen to triple its typical size and attracted one of the biggest and most diverse concentrations of wildlife on the planet. From this low altitude, we can clearly see animal tracks spread like capillaries across the landscape. And we see the animals, too: half-submerged hippos in green swamps, elephants walking trunk to tail, buffalo milling in dark herds.

We touch down on a little dirt airstrip and climb into an open-sided Land Cruiser for an airport transfer to top them all - in deep sand and around termite hills, through chattering thickets teeming with birds and baboons, and around a corner suddenly filled

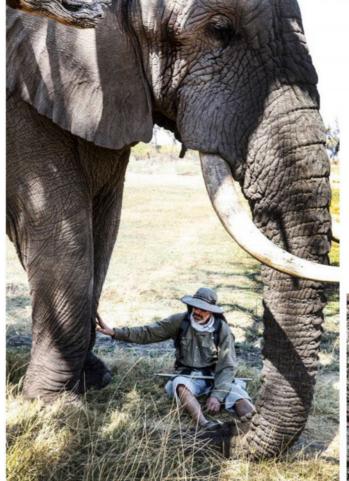
by the enormous flapping ears of a bull elephant. Before long we're fording lagoons the colour of bush tea. "Feet up!" cries TT our driver-guide, as the truck dives bonnet-deep and a wave sloshes under our seats.

It's a perfect introduction to the everyday adventures at Stanley's Camp, just eight stylish tents and a communal dining-lounge pavilion, unfenced, on the shore of a huge lagoon bordering Moremi Game Reserve. Most of the staff here and at the even smaller Sanctuary Baines' Camp nearby come from the villages within the concession, and these communities benefit from the camps' lease fees and best-practice land and wildlife management. There are no other camps on this concession, so it's exceedingly rare to come across any vehicles on game drives, and there's complete solitude during walks in the bush or mokoro excursions on water.

We head out at dawn in fibreglass canoes that resemble the mokoros traditionally hollowed out by hand from tree trunks. Using long poles called ngashi, Manpower Tsile, a third-generation poler, and Sam Mephatoetsile, who learnt the skill from his father, propel their mokoros along "hippo highways", shallow channels cleared by the creatures. A whiff of mist sits above the reeds, gilded by the morning light, and we glide silently, slowly, the languid pace of a dream. A pair of Egyptian geese take flight in unison; "go away!" cries an aptly named grey go-away bird nearby. In the distance a herd of red lechwe scatters, the antelope prancing easily through knee-deep water. It's so quiet that we hear the thunder of stampeding buffalo, a herd of 500 or more, long before we see the clouds of dust they stir up on a distant island.

DELTA DAWN

Clockwise from top left: Islands in the delta; the dramatic transfer to Sanctuary Stanley's Camp; a guest tent at Stanley's Camp; Sam and Manpower in mokoros; Onalepelo, a Stanley's Camp worker.











Mercifully, on a bushwalk next morning, we encounter no buffalo (they're virtually guaranteed to charge) and the only sign of a hippo (also murderous when surprised) is a bleached skull, gnawed around the eyes by hyenas, the two killer bottom teeth as long as an outstretched hand. A walk in the wild is not for the faint-hearted, and Ice hoists a gun over his shoulder and drills us all carefully on emergency procedure. I stick close behind him, recalling his story about the boys and the lions, and soon he's spotting a porcupine quill here, hyena tracks there, and his stories of medicinal miracles found in the bush and crazy-critter encounters flow like the delta in flood.

The appearance of wild sage bushes triggers another of Ice's incredible childhood stories – about the night he was forced to shelter from a storm in an aardvark hole, and rubbed sage leaves on his body to mask his scent from predators, a common practice among traditional hunters. (The story gets better: the sage branches that the boy pulled over the hole's entrance for protection appealed to a passing lion, which spent the night sleeping above him on the cushiony shrubbery. The boy was scared witless but survived to tell the tale.)

Not all encounters with wildlife are random. In its portfolio of philanthropic projects focused on environmental and community sustainability, Sanctuary Retreats works with the Living with Elephants Foundation, which offers guests at Stanley's and Baines' camps a walk in the bush with three orphaned African elephants. For the past 28 years, Doug and Sandi Groves have lived with Morula, Jabu, and Thembi, heading into the delta with them every day to forage and roam, and walking home with

them at night. As ambassadors for a species under threat throughout Africa, the elephants are irresistible and the Groves are articulate advocates for harmony between humans and elephants. Part of their work is an educational outreach project for children from local delta villages — many have grown up fearing or resenting elephants — who spend a couple of days with the Groves and their charges. As we walk hand-in-trunk with the elephants — deceptively quickly, though they look like they're dawdling — the Groves deliver an encyclopaedic overview of the habits and social life of the African savannah elephant. The most fascinating insight, though, comes from watching this unlikely mixed herd of five, as idiosyncratic as any more conventional family.

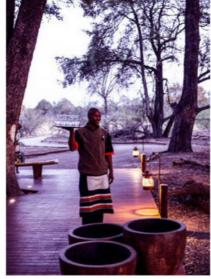
A few days later, we spot the results of another of Sanctuary's conservation projects in the delta. We've flown from Stanley's Camp to Chief's Island, the biggest in the Okavango: 70 kilometres long and 15 kilometres wide, a refuge for huge numbers of creatures during the floods and regarded as one of the best wildlife-viewing locations in Africa. On our first game drive from Sanctuary Chief's Camp, we spot three white rhinos – frisky and healthy (and coloured grey rather than white, by the way). Their existence is another of the nation's miracles. By 1992, fewer than 19 white rhinos survived in the wild in Botswana and the black rhino was declared "locally extinct", prompting the government to take the drastic measure of relocating all surviving rhinos to fenced reserves.

In 2001, in a complex project involving government authorities, the defence force and private bodies, four white rhinos were released in Moremi Game Reserve within the delta, chosen for its lush pastures and>

FUN AND GAME

Clockwise from top left: Doug Groves with one of his elephants; sundowners by a lagoon; the firepit at Sanctuary Chief's Camp; the Geoffrey Kent Suite at Chief's Camp; hippo skull.









relative inaccessibility to poachers; black rhinos were released two years later. Sanctuary Retreats joined the project in 2015, enabling the introduction of another handful of black rhinos. The results of 15 years of painstaking management and vigilance graze in front of us now, part of a healthy breeding population of white rhinos and a viable number of black rhinos in the delta.

Chief's Camp hugs the shore of a pristine lagoon filled with reeds and lilies, an oasis within this vast oasis. Rebuilt last year, it's the company's flagship property with luxuries hard to imagine on safari: a spa, a lagoon-facing pool, children's activity cottage, a gym (which makes sense, given no one can venture outside to run among predators), and cool communal pavilions styled with tribal jewellery, river-stone room dividers, beaded chandeliers and clusters of leather sofas, cowhide benches and deck-side rattan lounges.

Ten apartment-sized guest pavilions have walls lined with canvas, though they're not in the least tent-like, with indoor and outdoor living and dining areas beneath high thatched ceilings, indoor and outdoor showers, deep freestanding bathtubs, coffee machines, and even private plunge pools. Delta décor involves kindling sconces, finely woven baskets and vintage campaign trunks. At the top of the food chain is the Geoffrey Kent Suite, named after the safari

pioneer and founder of Abercrombie & Kent: 620 square metres of pavilions and decks accommodating up to six, with a chef, waiter, housekeeper, wildlife guide and vehicle on call.

The camp is unfenced, which means it's occasionally necessary to pursue an alternative route from the dining pavilion to my suite to avoid an elephant, say, or a rabble of baboons. (At night, all guests heading to dinner must summon a staff escort by walkie-talkie.) At midnight, from behind glass doors, I watch a genet - resembling an oversized pet cat - creep onto my deck and lap from the pool, the tip of its long bushy tail twitching.

But the real, raw action happens on twice-daily drives in Moremi Game Reserve. Binoculars aloft, eco-checklists poised, we never fail to encounter an astonishing range of wildlife: there's the Big Five, the Little Five, and scores of creatures in between. In 90 minutes one morning we see, in the following order: a pair of hyenas, a catwalk of giraffes, a battle-scarred lion fast asleep beside the track, and a pack of rare painted dogs minding 13 playful speckled puppies. When Martin, our guide, parks the truck and sets out muffins for morning tea or mixes G&Ts at sunset, we're usually in wide open country where a single, slow head-swivel typically reveals grazing impala and kudu, zig-zag clusters of zebras, a family of elephants, a lagoon full of hippos and cranes, and a herd of buffalo on the move.

By my last morning at Chief's Camp, the place is fairly bursting with life. It starts before dawn, with a shower of jackalberries followed by the alarming racket of baboons mating on my roof. After breakfast, I step off the main deck into a mokoro with a poler named Derek and we slide across the golden lagoon for the last time. There are birds everywhere: hunting, wading, nesting.

We return to camp as an elephant named Boy, a frequent visitor, wanders onto the scene and goes to step into the mokoro we've just vacated. Will he destroy the canoe? At the last moment, his foot clears the obstacle and he continues towards the pool. When I head to the lobby to check out soon afterwards, Boy is blocking the way, wedged between the boutique and the bar. I wait at a distance while he considers his options and moves on, by which time I'm late for the 40-minute ride to the airstrip.

"Please hold on," the driver suggests politely, no time to exchange names, and, rocking and rolling through swamps and along sandy tracks, we make the transfer in record time. The Cessna is a speck in the sky but approaching fast as we speed towards the airstrip but, oh, it's covered with impala, forcing the driver to jump out and shoo them off, while still displaying the unfailing courtesy and grace that are characteristically Botswanan. He's still there, waving to me – or perhaps shooing impala – as the tiny plane rises above the delta.

DELTA DÉCOR

Clockwise from top left: the central pavilion at Chief's Camp; drinks on arrival at Chief's Camp: each guest pavilion has a plunge pool and deep bathtub. Opposite: the main pool at Chief's Camp.





SEENG In her quest for Fiona Donnelly the source of the

In her quest for the perfect tomato, Fiona Donnelly heads to Naples, the source of the world's most famous red sauce.

PHOTOGRAPHY NICOLA IANUALE





The queue at Pizzeria Gino Sorbillo is five deep and as long as a Neapolitan summer evening when we turn up unfashionably early to avoid the crush. Those who fail to grasp the drill gently insinuate your way to the front, give the man with the clipboard your name, then never let him leave your sight - could loiter on the flagstones of Via dei Tribunali for a long time. Somehow, though, in the haphazard way of Italy, the system works.

> When in Naples thoughts inevitably turn to pizza. The evening crowd outside our pizzeria threatens to block this narrow artery of Centro Storico, the city's moody, labyrinthine old quarter. Along with L'Antica Pizzeria da Michele, Pizzeria Di Matteo and Pizzeria Starita, Gino Sorbillo is among the city's most celebrated pizzerie, the handiwork of the eponymous Gino, scion of generations of distinguished pizzaioli.

To kill time we duck next door to Vinorum Historia Enoteca and order brimming plastic cups of local aglianico, a rustic and savoury red, and falanghina, a lively Campanian white wine. Forty minutes later we're ushered past Pizzeria Gino Sorbillo's two shiny wood-fired ovens and upstairs to a marble-topped table in the simple dining room.

Naples, founded as the Greek settlement of Parthenope around the 9th century BC, is home to what are traditionally acknowledged to be the world's best pizze. Its oldest pizzeria, Antica Pizzeria Port'Alba,

opened as a stall in 1738 and still operates from a modest shopfront. When we show some interest, craning necks to admire the handsome wood-fired oven, we're piloted inside for a better look. We leave clutching a slice of pizza a portafoglio - neatly folded in four like a wallet and stuffed in a brown paper bag - for just two euro.

Later at Gino Sorbillo, we order pizza Margherita, the city's famous red, white and green pie created for Queen Margherita in 1889, and still considered the best means to judge a pizzaiolo's deftness. Pizza bases here are made with a sourdough starter. The base is deeply flavoursome, puffy-edged and lightly freckled, and topped with a slick of crushed organic Italian tomatoes and molten discs of fior di latte misto, a mozzarella made with cow's milk and buffalo milk from the nearby Matese region. There's a single fresh basil leaf at the centre. It's hard to find bad pizza in Naples, but the balance at Gino Sorbillo between the chewy, almost nutty-tasting base, the creamy cheese and the tart tomato sauce is faultless.

A cornerstone of great Neapolitan pizza is great tomatoes, although the fruit is a relative newcomer to the city. It was a Neapolitan cook named Francesco Gaudenzio who first suggested crushing and cooking the saffron-coloured pomodoro ("golden apple") in 1705. A little over a century later another Neapolitan, Don Ippolito Cavalcanti, suggested using the sauce to dress pasta, ensuring its enduring popularity. Tomatoes went on to star in all Campania's finest dishes, from spaghetti Napoletana and parmigiana di melanzane to the olive-studded chiummenzana sauce from nearby Capri and, of course, on many of the region's best-loved pizze.

I've come to southern Italy in search of the perfect tomato. My guide is Giovanni De Angelis, whose career has been pretty much dedicated to the topic.

"Naples is the capital city of the tomato," says De Angelis, a director of L'Associazione Nazionale Industriali Conserve Alimentari Vegetali, which represents the country's fruit and vegetable preserving industry. It's a big business, with an annual turnover of about €6.1 billion, which includes the nation's €3.1 billion canned tomato output. Sixty per cent of Italy's total tomato production is exported; about 40 per cent of Australia's canned tomatoes come from Italy.

For Neapolitans, the humble tomato represents much more than a cooking staple. "In each of our cans there's a strip of our land. Just as Capri represents the best of Mediterranean style and beauty, Naples represents tomatoes," says De Angelis. "There's an important bond between the country and the produce - the tomato business has a kind of soul."

Italy's first tomato-canning plant was established in Campania. This preservation method enabled the perishable produce to be sent worldwide as pelati, or peeled tomatoes, and paste, called conserva. The elongated Roma variety, which is peeled and canned

THINK LOCAL

Above: prime produce in a back street in Naples.







Instead of climbing vertically on stakes, these Roma vines hug the soil, red fruit *shining like baubles* in the dirt.

whole, is grown exclusively in the south. And it's here our search for perfect pelati begins.

From Naples we drive east, past the sullen bulk of Mount Vesuvius and on through mountains and fertile plateaux to the market town of Foggia in neighbouring Puglia – where most of the nation's Romas now grow in vast, easy-to-harvest fields. Instead of climbing vertically on stakes, like the premium San Marzano variety grown only in the volcanic soils of the Agro Nocerino Sarnese region, these Roma vines hug the soil, red fruit shining like baubles in the dirt. It will be at least four years before tomatoes are grown here again. After each harvest the ground is prepared for wheat - a pleasing synergy between the crops that create pasta and pizze. In another neat twist, at the fourth-generation family-owned Pomodoro Mutti factory in Oliveto Citra, rejected green tomatoes are fed to the buffalo that produce the milk for mozzarella.

The bittersweet heirloom San Marzano is considered the monarch of tomatoes and is the only fruit used for "verace pizza Napoletana", or true Neapolitan pizza. The tree-lined town of Castel San Giorgio in the province of Salerno is home to tomato giant Calispa, owned by the deep-pocketed Di Leo family and one of the few companies that owns its own San Marzano fields.

Founded in 1966 by Attilio Avino, Calispa deals in all things tomato, including the premium Nobile brand, which includes canned peeled and organic tomatoes, baby Roma or date tomatoes called datterini, the newer Marzanini tomato — a baby version of the famous slender, firm-fleshed plum-style San Marzano — and, naturally, the prized San Marzano.

The Di Leo family also owns the Hotel
Voce del Mare, about 40 minutes' drive south
of Naples in the hilltop village of Vietri sul
Mare, the gateway to the Amalfi Coast. Here,
in an all-white dining room popular with local
brides, we try both fresh and preserved San
Marzano tomatoes. The six-course tasting menu by
head chef Gianpaolo Zoccola is dedicated to tomatoes,
which feature in a Caprese salad with layers of
oregano-spiked fresh San Marzano tomatoes, and
paccheri al Marzanino, the al dente pasta tubes
dressed in a sweet Marzanino sauce with fresh basil
and creamy burrata.

The dishes are paired with a spicy 2011 Taurasi Alta Valle DOCG made from the local aglianico grape, and a bottle of pale golden 2015 Feudi di San Gregorio Serrocielo Falanghina. Salt-cod dumplings the size of snooker balls arrive in a tart San Marzano sauce, a scatter of sourdough crumbs and a swipe of squid ink on the plate the only adornment. A crisp-skinned fillet of local amberjack is presented simply in a vivid datterini sauce. And a scoop of tomato ice-cream reminds us that the tomato is first and foremost a fruit, tasting almost tropical — here atop a yolk-coloured slab of rum-soaked baba.

San Marzano production, from seeds to labelling, is limited to about 200 hectares a year, a fraction of the 80,000 hectares used to grow Italy's entire tomato crop. Although the industry is heavily regulated, the occasional tin of fake product makes its way onto supermarket shelves. Real San Marzanos, says Calispa president Gianluigi Di Leo, are always hand-picked and sold whole. "The Roma has either two or three>

RED DELICIOUS

Clockwise, from top left: crowds outside Pizzeria Gino Sorbillo; tomatoes at the Calispa plant; rum baba with tomato ice-cream at Hotel Voce del Mare; the restaurant's chef, Gianpaolo Zoccola. chambers, but San Marzano tomatoes have two," he says. "The San Marzano has visible venatura [veining] – white-yellow striations. The San Marzano also has lighter juice than the Roma."

Working on the premise that too much is never enough, we take a fast ferry to Capri the next day to try a Caprese salad on the island where it was created, fortifying ourselves for the 50-kilometre boat ride with espressi from a café at Molo Beverello quay in Naples. We take the funicular for a spectacular four-minute ascent from the Marina Grande to Piazza Umberto 1, better known as La Piazzetta, in the town centre, climbing past the island's yellow, pink and white buildings, many trained with purple and pink bougainvillea vines.

After a trawl of the winding laneways and their designer shops, a fresh lemon juice on the terrace of the Grand Hotel Quisisana affords stellar peoplewatching opportunities. It was here at the Quisisana, legend has it, that the Caprese salad was devised during the interwar years. "It's not one of the most reliable stories," admits De Angelis, laughing. "But it is said the first Caprese salad was prepared in the 1920s for a Futurist who wanted to go against tradition. Instead of using tomato with pasta he wanted to have something from the future. So the chef put basil, tomato and mozzarella together to represent the colours of the Italian flag — and the Caprese was born." It's said the salad's fame spread after it was served to King Farouk I of Egypt when he visited the

On the boutique-lined Via Camerelle, a short stroll from the Grand Hotel Quisisana, we sit at one of the white-clothed tables at Le Camerelle Ristorante. Its version of the Caprese is stacked vertically, with layers of oxheart tomato and buffalo mozzarella instead of the original fior di latte, drizzled with oil and garnished with basil. It sits on a quartet of what look like deep-red piennolo tomatoes, known for their distinctive nipple at the blossom end.

island in the 1950s.

Teamed with glasses of chilled falanghina from the Sannio Hills, it's certainly a memorable take on the dish. The restaurant's Neapolitan calamarata, the pasta mimicking rings of squid, served with a rich tomato-octopus ragù studded with black olives. is another standout.

Back in Naples, we walk the ragged length of La Pignasecca, the city's oldest street market. Lining the street are old-style vendors — tripe sellers, specialist grocers and pastry shops — so we have a chance to assess the region's best produce in a single location.

There are bowls full of silver anchovies and pink-tinged baby red mullet, crates stuffed with baby octopus looking like cacti, and impressive shiny beltfish — so long and narrow they could be mistaken for eels. Everywhere are tomatoes: golden explosions of spunzillo, clusters of dark red piennolo from Nocera, and knobbly oxhearts streaked with green and red often used for Caprese salad. Our thoughts turn again to pizza.

At Pizzeria Starita on Via Materdei, Antonio Starita has made a name for himself with his Montanara Starita — a deep-fried pizza base topped with smoked provola cheese from Agerola, and pecorino, the whole thing anchored by a vibrant tomato sauce.

Starita is a third-generation pizzeria owner who runs a shop in New York called Don Antonio by Starita. So what makes for the perfect pizza? "San Marzano has a slightly sour flavour that is perfect for pizza, and if you make it with fior di latte made from milk from the Sorrento coast it helps the pizzaiolo even more to get the right balance between the San Marzano tomato and the base," says Starita. "For pizza, tomatoes shouldn't be too sweet — they should have a lightly sour taste."

In life, and in pizza, the answer lies in balance. And in finding the perfect tomato.

PIECE OF THE PIE

Clockwise, from below: celebrated pizzaiolo
Antonio Starita; Caprese salad at Le Camerelle
Ristorante on Capri; fresh produce at La
Pignasecca, the oldest street market in Naples.
Opposite: Naples.



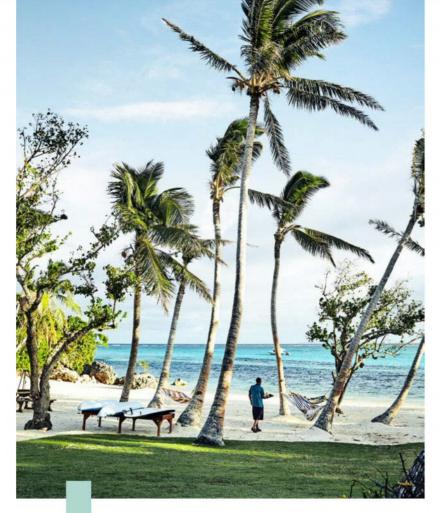












I'm being defeated in a staring contest by a double-decker coconut cake, thickly iced and sprinkled with golden toasted coconut flakes and frangipani flowers. It sits beside a bottle of Taittinger on ice, my only companions inside a villa that's big enough for 10, but intended for two.

> Only three of these enormous villas hug the shrouded shoreline of Kaibu, a remote island in the pristine Lau archipelago in Fiji's far east. Kaibu is one of two islands that comprise Vatuvara Private Islands resort, a hideaway accessible only by its gloriously retro Twin Otter plane, which banks above the sapphire lagoon before touching down on an airstrip at the island's peak.

The owner, like his islands, is very private. In 2007, more than 30 years after launching his sportswear and eyewear company Oakley Inc, Jim Jannard sold it to the evewear giant Luxottica for \$US2.1 billion. His next project, named Red, was more niche but no less successful, producing high-resolution digital cameras for the film industry. One of the brand's earliest champions was New Zealand director Peter Jackson, who shot The Hobbit trilogy on Jannard's cameras, catapulting their value.

So, with no issues regarding cash flow and with a mission to find somewhere to spend a few weeks a year with his toes in the sand and his head in a coconut cocktail, the Californian entrepreneur scoured Fiji. In 2010, he bought a pair of reef-fringed islands in the east: Kaibu, a 324-hectare piece of land on which US fibreglass tycoon Jay Johnson had previously



developed a simple, quiet resort, and neighbouring Vatuvara, which is roughly the same size, dotted with coconut groves and dominated by a soaring mountain peak resembling a stone hat.

Jannard's next step was to lure husband-and-wife management team Rob and Lynda Miller, an Australian and American respectively, to build a secluded resort and run it in the months he wasn't enjoying his splendid island isolation. The Millers were managing Wakaya Club and Spa at the time, considered by many (including Gourmet Traveller, which featured it back in January 2006) as the South Pacific's most exclusive island resort. Its reputation was due in no small part to the Millers' careful management since the early '80s. In its heyday, Wakaya was favoured by the likes of Nicole Kidman and Tom Cruise (even after their split), Russell Crowe, Demi Moore and Spain's Prince Felipe. Apparently Keith Richards toppled out of one of the resort's coconut trees in 2006. That's the extent of the Millers' account - discretion is high among their talents. "We've had to hide the guest book a few times," says Rob when we meet over a salad lunch, plucked mostly from the island's organic kitchen garden.

The Millers are a relaxed couple - he's a hotelier and chef by trade, she has a horticultural degree - and when they arrived, they shared a clear picture of the kind of paradise they wanted to create in this corner of the world. Jannard had his own ideas, of course, but for the most part the Millers were left to realise their vision. "We thought if we can imagine it, we can make it happen," says Lynda.

After 28 years at the larger (though still boutique) Wakaya resort, with its 10 bures and expansive villa, they were keen for a new, smaller project. "We decided it would be fun and new and something we can take charge of ourselves," says Rob. The aim was to attract a similar crowd to a more tranquil and remote island

MAKING **SHORE**

Above from left: drinks served on the beach at the resort: Mesake. Matai and Moko, chefs at Jim's Bar & Grill on the beachfront





idyll. The Lau archipelago is sparsely populated; the closest resort island is Laucala, owned by Red Bull's Dietrich Mateschitz, 60 kilometres to the north. "Between them and us and a few little ones, that's all there is this side of the mainland," says Rob. "Everything else is off Nadi. When you come here, you're out, way out. Almost in Tonga. It's all untouched."

The couple moved to the uninhabited Kaibu in 2010 with a tent, a generator and a handful of helpers, and began work. "We looked at the island like a big backyard," says Lynda, recalling the early days of the resort's transformation. They trained villagers from a neighbouring island in carpentry, gardening and construction to help them, and employed Fijian architects to polish and modernise the existing resort's classic Fijian style. The beachfront pavilion that houses Jim's Bar & Grill is built with darkly stained pylons of Fijian mahogany. The main bar is a highlight; Rob worked with a local tattoo artist to etch the thick slabs of Vesi hardwood with Fijian-style carvings noticeable only when you run your palm over them. For a contemporary feel based on South Pacific style, Lynda sourced furniture from Italy and soft furnishings from Coco Republic and Tommy Bahama.

Sitting on the crest of the island is Delana which, at 450 square metres, is the largest and most impressive of the three villas. A pair of heavy wooden doors as wide as my outstretched arms swing open and I'm looking down the barrel of an infinity-edge lap pool and beyond to the lagoon. I count 11 lounging positions on sofas and daybeds by the pool's edge, each one upholstered in dove-grey linen, scattered with bright cushions and accessorised with potted succulents, candles and coasters.

From the pool terrace, I spot Delana's private cove, where a rack of stand-up paddleboards is flanked by a life-sized chessboard and a cabana with neighbouring twin hammocks.



Inside Delana, the blaze of the sun is muted by the coolness of stone and dark lacquered hardwood. Two desks sit side by side in a study so handsome it's almost presidential. That space flows into a lounging area dominated by slouchy, contemporary Italian furniture, screened by double doors from a supersized custom-made bed looking out to the pool and lagoon through floor-to-ceiling glass. Just a few steps from the bed is a square stone spa bath and massage area, with twin massage tables and a therapist on call. The Vintec is stocked with your favourite wine and spirits requested before arrival.

The island's other villas, Vatu and Saku, sit on either side of Delana but are completely hidden from it. Marginally smaller than the master villa, they have similarly over-the-top features. There are private pools, ocean-facing terraces for yoga or Pilates classes, deep>

TROPIC WONDERS

Clockwise, from top left:
the resort's signature
lunch dish of raw fish
marinated in coconut
milk; the view from
Delana; fruit punch and
juices; the resort's Twin
Otter; managers Rob
and Lynda Miller.













Ink-blue coconut crabs with muscular pincers scurry along paths in front of us and *dart up palms* to evade capture.

stone tubs, outdoor showers, and unlimited cocktails and snacks. For guests who can't (or won't) switch off, there's high-speed WiFi available everywhere on the island – from every hammock and on every beach.

Tablets in each villa are loaded with desertedisland playlists, and there's a direct line to staff should guests need a pillow fluffed or bottle chilled. If one were to request a bath filled to the brim with single-malt whisky, it's not hard to imagine the only question might be one's preference of barrel age.

It would be a shame, though, to remain indoors when there's scuba diving, surfing and fishing trips, cooking classes and a four-hole golf course. A perfect morning might involve a lagoon ride in *Houdini*, the island's speedy 11-metre Naiad boat, with a couple of stand-up paddleboards in tow. It wouldn't be an unreasonable or unusual request to be dropped off on one of the powdery banks that rise from the private lagoon for a few hours at low tide, with a bucket of iced Champagne, a walkie-talkie and your lover. *Houdini* will reappear when summoned.

Back on land, Lynda guides us through the gardens that she and her team of six have cultivated. Paths arc through a riot of lush green splashed with the rude colours of bougainvillea, hibiscus, and frangipani. The gardens are beautiful, but that's only a fraction of the story. With a degree in horticulture and a goal of self-sufficiency, Lynda has developed an expansive farm and orchard with full organic certification, a standard still uncommon in Fiji. "When we arrived, this area was sort of a natural bog," she says, gesturing to small pools at the lower end of the sloping garden. "We created ponds and redirected the water into them, so we can utilise the land here." Chooks scratch and fuss between tomato vines and rows of lettuce, rocket, endive and zucchini; they lay eggs haphazardly, leaving a treasure hunt for the gardeners. There's a little market garden behind each

kitchen, so chefs can dash out and snip mint for drinks or salad leaves for lunch. Ink-blue coconut crabs with muscular pincers scurry along paths in front of us and dart up palms to evade capture (as a protected species, they needn't worry).

The orchard is full of bush lemons, cumquats and Indian and Tahitian limes, which are squeezed and mixed with fresh sugarcane juice and ginger for breakfast drinks. There are dark glossy-leafed macadamia trees and laden breadfruit trees, pawpaws and bananas, delicate vanilla plants and jalapeño plants, bushy rows of shiso and soy beans. Almost everything on the table is grown on the island or sourced nearby. Lynda's herbs and local lobster fill curries at dinner; at lunch, there are sliders with organic beef and lamb from neighbouring Mago Island, which is owned by Mel Gibson. (Oysters from his island are also said to be excellent.)

There are two spots for dining on the island, not counting your villa. Jim's Bar & Grill is a breezy pavilion on the beachfront with a barbecue on the sand for the day's catch – prawns on lemongrass skewers, say, or lobsters caught in nearby reefs – and also a wood-fired pizza oven. This is the spot for knocking the top off a young coconut and sipping its water, and for leisurely breakfasts – smoked salmon with poached eggs and homemade chilli jam, perhaps, or piping hot doughnuts and local coffee. A traditional Fijian lovo earth oven is fired up for chickens, joints of pork or whole fish to cook underground until tender, smoky and crisp-skinned.

Set back from the beach, up on a crest en route to Delana, is a more formal dining pavilion with bar and lounge, aptly named Valhalla. Games and books are stacked up for rainy afternoons, before evening cocktails and candlelit dinners. The menus mix fresh Californian and Japanese flavours with Fijian staples – labelled by Rob as "Pacific Rim" – though as is the>



BULA FOR YOU

Clockwise, from left: out on the paddleboard; Delana's master bedroom; a gardener tends to the island's organic produce; lobster coconut curry. way on this isle of plenty, the kitchen will endeavour to make anything requested. Seafood is abundant; local fishermen routinely come ashore with lobsters, crabs and torpedo-sized yellowfin tuna. We start one evening with Gingeritas and roasted coconut chips dipped in aïoli. Tuna sashimi, lobster curry and grilled opakapaka — a pink deepwater snapper — are followed by banana-caramel soufflé and a nip of whisky from the island's 300-bottle stash.

The cocoon of tranquillity and comfort at Vatuvara seem so shatterproof it's hard to imagine that conditions are not always so calm or predictable. The most recent cyclone in February last year was the wildest in Fiji's recorded history: a category-five event named Winston. It and its accompanying tidal surge devastated many islands, killing 44 people and affecting 350,000 more. An estimated 32,000 homes were destroyed, many of them in low-lying villages. The damage at Vatuvara resort was enormous, though less deadly. Rob recalls running to the resort's main pavilion after the roof on

his house blew away. "Once the roof goes, the walls go," he says. "It was like a washing machine. [The storm] was about eight hours all up." The gardens were shredded; coconut palms torn clean from the sand.

A year later it's hard to detect damage. Aside from a few slightly balding palms, the scars have disappeared under new growth. "It's funny," says Rob as we sit at the outdoor table at Jim's Bar & Grill, looking out to the garden, "during cyclone season, you just have to go ahead and chop the tops off the banana trees so they don't rip away in the wind. Once the storm has passed, they sprout again as if nothing had happened. Everything goes back to normal."

The team here has done much the same. Lynda has the garden back in shape, and guests enjoy its bounty at every meal. It's hard to spot a Fijian face without a smile here, whether they're wrangling coconut crabs or agreeing that, yes, of course, it would be a good idea to whip up a second coconut cake. It's impossible not to match their smiles with one just as wide.>





ROLLING IN

Below from left: the spacious Palms villa at Vomo Island; an artist's impression of the Six Senses at Malolo Island resort; the beach charm of Kokomo. Opposite: aerial view of Vatuvara Private Islands.

FIJI'S ASTOUNDING REVIVAL

A year after Cyclone Winston clobbered Fiji, something remarkable has happened. In the wake of the most powerful storm on record, these idyllic islands have brushed themselves off, spruced themselves up and emerged more appealing than ever. The hardest task for holidaymakers will be choosing which island to visit first.

Top of the leisure list is **Kokomo**, billionaire Australian developer Lang Walker's dream beach resort that opened this month. Walker has reportedly spent a whopping \$90 million so far (with further stages planned) to build the finest "private island paradise that caters to the fast-growing intergenerational market". Kokomo's five rainforest "residences" are ideal for larger family groups — with chefs, butlers and nannies on call — while the 21 beachfront villas cater to couples and small families. Kokomo even has its own offshore aquarium, the Great Astrolabe Reef — one of the world's largest barrier reefs (kokomoislandfiji.com).

Vomo Island is one of several properties to snatch opportunity from the misfortune wreaked by Winston. The resort, which started life as a Sheraton in the early 1990s, emerged from a multimillion-dollar makeover in 2015, but closed after Winston struck in February 2016. It took six months to fix extensive storm damage and complete a wholesale renovation, adding two new private residences of three and four bedrooms apiece and extending the popular sunset bar. Vomo is the island's sole occupant, so guests at its 32 villas have 87 hectares of tropical playgrounds to themselves. There's also a deserted island, Vomo Lailai, accessible by private launch and best enjoyed with Champagne. Dining is overseen by Vomo's general manager Mark Leslie, a resort veteran and one-time personal chef to Nelson Mandela. Those familiar with the resort say it's looking better than ever after the refresh (vomofiji.com).

The Sheraton Resort & Spa, Tokoriki Island, is one of a cluster of five-star properties in the Mamanuca chain just west of Nadi, reopened last month after a year-long, \$16 million reconstruction and makeover. It's not the only holiday inn on this relatively compact island, but it does have a private beach for sunset viewing and 30 adults-only retreats with private pools and ocean views. (Children are most welcome elsewhere within the property, just not here.) Also new to Tokoriki are a Fijian cultural centre and Sunset Bistro, which takes Sheraton Tokoriki's dining options to five, including the Sala Bar and an outpost of Peter Kuruvita's Flying Fish restaurant (sheratontokorikiisland.com).

Stay tuned for the Fijian début of ultra-stylish resort chain **Six Senses** on a private bay at Malolo Island in the Mamanucas. It's set to open at the end of this year – current bets are on November – with 26 pool bures of between 110 and 150 square metres and 60 flash residences of three to five bedrooms

with sunset views. Six Senses does luxe austerity like nobody's business; guests will be able to combine "multidimensional Six Senses Integrated Wellness programs" and treetop yoga with private plunge pools and indulgent menus showcasing the diverse local produce of the archipelago. Two marinas will accommodate guests' private yachts and charter boats (sixsenses.com).

Just next door, Australian family favourite **Castaway Island** is back in business after a serious run-in with Winston. More than a dozen bures had to be replaced but everything was in great shape by the time the resort celebrated its 50th birthday in November. It's a beautiful little island where the bures are comfortable, the kids' club is awesome and the beachside Restaurant 1808 is a gastronomic surprise, in the best possible way (castawayfiji.com). KENDALL HILL













Mornington glory

A game-changing hotel heralds a new era of staying power on Victoria's Mornington Peninsula, writes *Larissa Dubecki*.

A new breed of boutique hotel opens on the Mornington Peninsula on 1 April. Otherwise known as April Fools' Day, it's a fitting opening date for Jackalope, an ambitious hotel, winery, restaurant and bistro that brings a touch of the surreal and a dose of humour to its high-end brief.

Named after the giant horned jackrabbit of North American legend, the 46-room hotel is littered with Jackalopian in-jokes. There's the names of the flagship restaurant, Doot Doot Doot ("flaggerdoot" being the collective noun for jackalopes), and the casual bistro, Rare Hare. A seven-metre-tall jackalope sculpture by Melbourne artist Emily Floyd greets guests at the entrance, and the other commissioned artworks include an installation of 8,000 subtly changing coloured lights on the Doot Doot Doot ceiling. Why? To mimic the process of wine fermentation, of course.

The hotel promises to be a game-changer for the Mornington Peninsula, which has a limited range of upscale places to stay. On an 11-hectare site spanning the Willow Creek vineyard in Merricks North (between Red Hill and Balnarring), Jackalope has been brought to life by a host of Melbourne creatives. Carr Design Group came up with the sleek, black modern building that stretches dramatically above the vineyard, and the interiors. Zuster created the furniture, with most of the pieces one-off designs, and Taylor Cullity Lethlean is responsible for landscaping the grounds, which include a yoga lawn and a 30-metre black infinity pool designed to create the illusion the water is lapping over the vines.

The man behind the hotel is 28-year-old Louis Li. Originally from the city of Kunming in southern China, Li is now based in Melbourne, where he moved eight years ago to study filmmaking and business. Jackalope is an attempt to meld his passions for art, design, food and storytelling.

"I want Jackalope to be a different voice in the hotel industry," says Li. "By reimagining the role that art, design and storytelling can play in the guest experience, I hope Jackalope will develop into a hospitality landmark offering guests a transformative experience."

Executive chef Guy Stanaway will be responsible for part of that transformation. He's overseeing the 80-seat Doot Doot Doot, which will offer four- and eight-course dégustation menus, and the 100-seat Rare Hare for all-day dining. At his disposal is a full-time gardener, a 200-square-metre kitchen garden and an orchard. "It's an amazing set-up for a chef," says the New Zealander, who migrated from Noosa's Bistro C to take up the new position.

With many years' experience cooking in Asia, Stanaway's food is bedded in the push-pull of acidity, heat and texture. "For me, texture is everything," he says. "I have that underlying Asian thing, even if it's just by osmosis. We're really about à la minute – cooking things straight to order. We love finishing over coals, and using our beautiful wood-fired oven."

Working closely with local producers, the chef is sourcing ingredients such as Benton Rise Farm mushrooms, Main Ridge Dairy cheeses, Leontyna olive oil and seafood from nearby Port Phillip Bay. Stanaway's menu will feature a blend of influences from the East and West, with dishes such as roasted bone marrow with chilli sambal and fried shallots, and duck breast and hearts cooked on a konro grill and teamed with cherries from Red Hill Cherry Farm.

Li envisages his Mornington Peninsula property will be the first of a flaggerdoot of Jackalopes. He bought the Willow Creek vineyard in 2013 for a reported \$9.5 million, and two years later added the

Maria George Building in Melbourne's Flinders Lane to his portfolio; concept plans are currently being drawn up to turn the site into the second Jackalope.

His family's JKLP Group also bought the Prince of Wales Hotel in St Kilda for \$45 million in 2015, although the future of the venue – and whether it will be brought into the Jackalope fold – remains unclear. "Beyond the two Melbourne hotels, I would like to take Jackalope to my other favourite cities, Shanghai and Los Angeles, in the next five years," Li says.

The credentials of general manager Tracy Atherton indicate something of Jackalope's ambitions. Headhunted from Canberra's hip Hotel Hotel, she has 10 years' experience at Aman resorts and is aiming for a similar level of service here. "Jackalope is not just a hotel, it's a memory," says Atherton, who promises bespoke experiences such as back-vintage tastings with winemaker Geraldine McFaul. "We've only got one chance to open the brand and we're going to do it right," says Atherton.

Rooms from \$650. Jackalope, 166 Balnarring Rd, Merricks North, Vic, (03) 9519 8900, jackalopehotels.com

FINER DETAILS

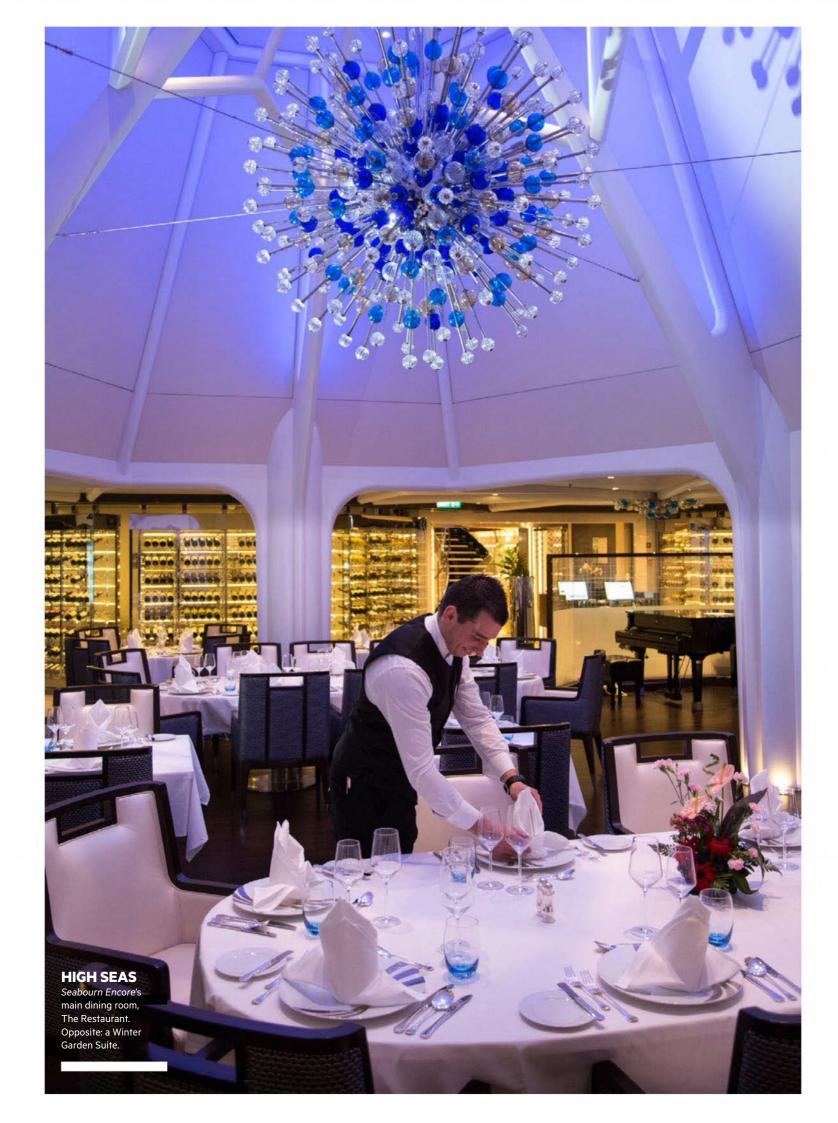
Below: interiors are designed by Melbournebased Carr Design Group; Zuster created the furniture, mostly one-off designs.

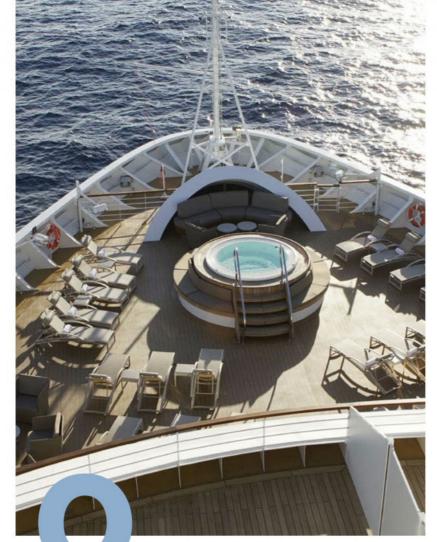












Of all the words stripped of meaning by careless overuse, "luxury" is unrivalled in its emptiness and ubiquity. So when a cruise line promising "ultra luxury" builds its first new ship in five years, what does the cutting edge of luxury at sea look and feel like?

> It looks more like a yacht than a ship, more resort than hotel. It feels more discreet residential than shock-and-awe institutional. Carnival Corporation chief Arnold Donald heralded what he called a "golden age of cruising" at the christening of Seabourn Encore, the most glamorous débutante in the cruise giant's global fleet, a few weeks before Encore's arrival in Australia in January. "In the past four years we've seen tremendous advances in technology to improve the safety, the efficiency, the comfort and just the plain fun on our ships," Donald said at a naming party at Singapore's Marina Bay cruise terminal. "But every few years those advances take a great leap forward with a ship that breaks the mould."

> The Seattle-based Seabourn Cruise Line, the most upscale of the nine lines operated by Carnival Corporation, gave the challenge of designing its biggest ship to prolific hospitality designer Adam D Tihany, known for his globetrotting work on restaurants run by high-profile chefs (Daniel Boulud, Thomas Keller, Heston Blumenthal, Paul Bocuse and Pierre Gagnaire, among others); hotels (The Oberoi Hotel in New Delhi, the Beverly Hills Hotel); and resorts (One&Only Cape Town, Four Seasons Resort Dubai). Born in



Transylvania, raised in Jerusalem, educated in Milan and now based in New York, Tihany describes himself as a "problem solver". "To me, if something doesn't have problems I don't enjoy myself," Tihany says during an interview aboard Seabourn Encore on the Java Sea en route to Australia. "I really like challenges. I like spaces, ideas, things that are difficult. When somebody says it can't be done, that's when I wake up." He smiles and adds: "This was a lot of fun."

Tihany says he aimed for the look and feel of a "luxury yacht", albeit a supersized version with 12 decks and 300 suites. In contrast to the angular Nordic lines and pale colours of its sister ships - Seabourn Quest, Sojourn and Odyssey - Encore is full of curves, contemporary Italian furnishings and a warmer palette of creams, deep blue and maroon. Echoes of yacht design are there in the liberal use of mahogany, glossy wood laminates, chrome and leather on distinctive curvaceous lines throughout the vessel - from windows and stairs to bars and pools. The balancing act, says Tihany, was making the ship feel familiar to passengers who travel frequently on Seabourn ships and yet surprising them as well.

Seabourn Square, which replaces the standard reception area, is a case study. On Encore it's an open-plan living room, library and café arranged around a central guest-services hub, where guests can consult a team of concierges, read, relax on sofas and chat over coffee. As a "hospitality person first, designer second", Tihany radically changed the layout used on Encore's sister ships, taking concierges "from a kind of closed wood box" to an open circular space, facing outwards. "Is the job of the concierge to have customers or hide?" he says. "The logic of the design was about what Seabourn does best, which is service."

The line has a strong reputation among a loyal, mainly American clientele for the kind of intuitive service possible only on small ships. So Seabourn's decision to build a bigger ship that accommodates 600 passengers – the existing three ships carry only 450 each – was a bold one. The balancing act here, says Seabourn president Richard Meadows, is offering more choice for more passengers (six eateries, four bars, several pools and whirlpools) while maintaining

LAP OF

Above, from left: one of several whirlpools on Seabourn Encore. Top right, from left: Seabourn president Richard Meadows, designer Adam D Tihany, and chef Thomas Keller.







Guests can consult a "mindful living coach", join a yoga and "sound bath" session or consult an on-board acupuncturist.

highly personalised service. "We think there's a point you can't go beyond [in size] and authentically deliver that level of personalisation and experience," he says. "I think we're really at that level. We're very conscious to have our crew remember guest names and preferences, for example. That was a very big part of our decision to stay at this size."

All 300 suites have private verandas, walk-in robes, large white- and grey-marble bathrooms with separate showers and full-size bathtubs, and 23 to 120 square metres of indoor space; the larger suites have separate living rooms, entertaining areas and "winter garden" sunrooms. While size matters, the most distinctive interiors are cleverly styled small spaces: a 30-seat restaurant called Sushi, for instance, where chefs work behind an L-shaped granite bar, and The Retreat, with 15 cabanas arranged around a top-deck whirlpool, each with fully stocked fridges, customised menus for dining and spa treatments, and plenty of daybeds. The main restaurant, called simply The Restaurant, is crowned by stylised branch-like mouldings and cleverly varied ceiling heights that create the illusion of settling into a smart intimate restaurant rather than a dining room that seats 400.

Recognising that "our customers know the best", says Meadows, the cruise line has entered into partnerships with several high-profile personalities to deliver on-board services. This includes a restaurant and bar by three-starred chef Thomas Keller of French Laundry and Per Se fame, stage productions by English lyricist Sir Tim Rice, known for musicals such as *The*

Lion King and Evita, cocktails by American mixologist Brian Van Flandern, and a spa and "mindful living" program by Dr Andrew Weil, a physician, best-selling author and the founder-director of the University of Arizona-affiliated Center for Integrative Medicine.

Designed to appeal to passengers typically aged 60-plus "who are extraordinarily proactive about their health", says Meadows, the spa and health program is based on Weil's work integrating conventional and alternative therapies, with a focus on lifestyle, mind-body interaction and "mindfulness", the increasingly popular practice of focusing on the present.

"Spa programs I've looked at on cruise ships have a lopsided emphasis on the physical," says Weil. "It's massages and treatments, and there's not the mind-body component, not the emphasis on mindfulness."

On *Encore*, guests can consult a "mindful living coach" trained at Weil's centre, join group and individual meditation, yoga and "sound bath" sessions, consult an on-board acupuncturist and join discussions with visiting health practitioners. The gym is large and well equipped by cruise-ship standards, with a personal trainer and a body-composition analyser on hand. Also in the spa is a thermal suite tiled in bronze mosaics, comprising a steam room, a "Mediterranean" sauna, heated loungers and a couple of "experience" showers, which can generate a range of directional sprays, from a horizontal aromatic mist to a monsoonal downpour.

I thought a "sound bath" might involve noisy immersion in a pool, but no water is involved.>



SHIP SHAPE

Clockwise from top left: the sitting room in a Signature Suite; a lounger outside the spa; ginger and yoghurt semifreddo in The Restaurant; Encore's atrium.

Instead it's a guided meditation session in which Jade Poleon, Encore's mindful living coach, "plays" half a dozen crystal bowls - a variation on traditional Tibetan singing bowls – by striking and circling their rims with a padded mallet as an aid to meditation. The bowls emit powerful sound-wave vibrations of varying frequency and tone, and the effect during a 50-minute session spent lying on a mat in a darkened room is deeply, hypnotically relaxing. One man said he felt the sound resonate in the site of an old knee injury; a woman said she felt a not-unpleasant "awareness" in an ear in which she'd recently had a minor infection. Poleon also performs a relaxation treatment in which the subject lies on a heated amethyst "bio-mat" and the vibrating bowls are placed on the body.

While the bowls are singing on Deck 10, on Deck Eight a team of chefs are preparing tonight's dinner in The Grill by Thomas Keller. The chef himself is on board during this leg of Encore's inaugural voyage to oversee his interpretation of a chophouse - a fancy steakhouse serving refined versions of American favourites: prawn cocktails, consommés, lobster Thermidor, superior cuts roasted or grilled with sides of creamed spinach, sautéed mushrooms, and macaroni and cheese. Roast chickens and classic Caesar salads are, respectively, carved and tossed at the table, and the spectacle and banter set the tone of the grill. "We have ELF here," says Keller. "Our restaurant should be energetic, loud and fun." The 80-seat eatery is packed every night.

Diners familiar with Keller's restaurants in California and New York - The French Laundry, Ad Hoc, Bouchon, Bouchon Bakery and Per Sewill notice that produce used at Keller's on-board grill is sourced primarily from the same group of élite purveyors he has used for decades, such as Elysian Field Farm lamb for pure-bred lamb and Marcho Farms for veal, both in Pennsylvania, Kendall Farms in California for crème fraîche, Clearwater in Nova Scotia for lobsters, and Snake River Farms in Idaho for premium beef.

The ability to continue long-standing relationships with key producers was critical to his decision to develop grills across the Seabourn fleet, says Keller. "It's a restaurant on a cruise ship, not a cruise-ship restaurant," he says. "That's a big distinction."

Meadows describes *Encore*'s approach to "ultra luxury" as a combination of world-best "hardware and software", referring to the ship's design and features, and the calibre of the 415 on-board staff delivering a complex travel experience. There's impressive attention to detail across the ship, from sunglass-cleaning by pool staff to white-glove service at afternoon tea in the Observation Bar, lit by a skylight lined with luminous glass flying fish. Coffee beans supplied by Seattle-based Fonté Coffee are roasted on board, and Joel the barista conducts impromptu coffee-cupping sessions as he pours espresso. There's customised samphire- and eucalyptus-scented products by Molton Brown in the



FIRST RATE Clockwise from left: Sonoma duck breast at The Grill by Thomas Keller: the thermal suite in the spa and wellness

centre; plating at Sushi.







bathrooms, and a choice of fresh herbal body scrubs for use in the spa's thermal suite. Women are escorted to their dinner tables on the arm of a restaurant host. Tonic water is made to order by a bartender who remembers your name and your Martini preferences.

Back on Deck Eight, the roast chicken being carved tableside at The Grill is a free-range, mixed-breed Jidori bird grown on a small farm in California, brined for 12 hours, trussed and air-dried for 24 hours, and then roasted in a steam combination oven for precisely 26 minutes. The result evokes memories of life's best roast-chicken dinners. That, as much as anything, is luxury.



Seabourn Encore embarks on a range of itineraries in the Mediterranean this year, including a 10-day "Spanish Isles & Italy" voyage departing Barcelona on 14 September, from \$7,499 per person twin share. Closer to home, the ship has a 16-day "South Pacific Isles" round-trip from Auckland, departing 20 December, visiting Fiji, New Caledonia, Vanuatu and Norfolk Island. Fares cost from \$14,499 per person twin share. New itineraries this vear include Seabourn Sojourn's voyages to Alaska in June, marking the line's return to the region after 15 years. A fifth ship, Seabourn Ovation, is due to be launched early next year. 132 402, seabourn.com



TAIWAN, ISLE OF WONDERS

From rugged mountains to gorgeous tropical beaches, ancient cultures to adventure sports, get ready to be thrilled by this island's attractions

ize certainly isn't everything when it comes to Taiwan. Small enough to be easily explored over a week or two, Taiwan's location on the Pacific Rim, right at the edge of the tropics, means it is blessed with a spectacular range of natural assets. Take your pick from majestic mountains, sweeping turquoise coastlines, challenging hiking and running trails, and amazing wildlife such as the blue magpie and endangered Formosan black bear.

Popularly known as "Formosa", which means beautiful – a name bestowed by Portuguese explorers in the 16th century – Taiwan is a hidden travel gem. Don't wait for the stars to align before exploring it!

Hiking the Taroko Gorge

Easily experienced as a day trip from Taipei, the 18km marble-walled Taroko Gorge is one of Asia's best natural wonders. Meander through 38 winding tunnels and marvel at mist-covered sheer marble cliffs and the Tang Dynasty-style Eternal Spring Shrine recessed into the side of the mountain. For more experienced and adventurous trekkers, there's the 10.3km long Zhuilu Old Road. Entry is limited to between 96 and 156 people per day, so be sure to book your spot early. Originally part of a cross-island mountain pass, the trail is no walk in the park and can take up to eight hours to complete, but trekkers will be rewarded with breathtaking bird's-eye views of the gorge and Liwu

River. The section at Zhuilu Cliff sits at an elevation of some 780m – imagine stacking two and a half Eureka Towers and looking down from the top!

Relax in a hot spring

Taiwan's incredible natural landscape is peppered with hot springs, many of them outdoors, filled with steaming mineral-rich water to relax and rejuvenate body and mind. **Beitou** is a popular choice for its proximity to Taipei and the sulphuric waters are said to heal dermatitis and arthritis. In Taichung, the hot springs of **Guguan**, a picturesque mountain town, were discovered 110 years ago and remain a crowd-puller today.



unwind in a

healing hot spring







Soak in the scenery while sitting in the 48 to 60-degree Celsius thermal waters rich with carbonic acid and have the advantage of being clear, transparent and odourless. The area is also known for freshwater fishing opportunities, especially those angling for trout.

Experience Taiwan's aboriginal culture

To visit the island and not experience a slice of the aboriginal culture is a trip sorely lacking context. Making up almost 500,000 people across 16 tribes, Taiwanese aboriginals are believed to have travelled from southern China in 3,000 B.C to settle in Taiwan. The

62-hectare Formosa Aboriginal Culture Village near Sun Moon Lake houses an expansive outdoor museum showcasing the traditional homes and architecture of nine aboriginal tribes, alongside traditional crafts, and cultural and dance performances.

Windsurf in Penghu

Located off Taiwan's southwest coast with strong northern winds blowing down the Taiwan Strait, **Penghu** is THE spot for kitesurfing and windsurfing. With 300km of coastline, pristine waters, coral-sand beaches and rich marine life, this is where windsurfers



TIME TO

Thanks to

Taiwan's relatively small size and excellent road and rail network, it is possible to go from hiking in the mountains to chilling out on beautiful sandy beaches all in one day.

"Taiwan's incredible natural landscape is peppered with hot springs, many of them outdoors"

from all over the world congregate every November for the three-day long **Penghu Pro-Am** windsurfing competition. The summer months of June to August enjoy gentler winds better suited for beginners who won't regret getting their start here.











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Wellington's Museum Art Hotel has become QT Museum Wellington, the first property in New Zealand for QT Hotels & Resorts. In line with Wellington's staunch reputation as the nation's cultural capital, contemporary art plays a big part in the \$12 million fit-out. More than 160 artworks were acquired with the hotel, which spans 100 apartments and 63 refurbished suites. The French-leaning Hippopotamus Restaurant & Bar remains, while a Hot Sauce eatery will open mid-year. This is the eighth property for the Australian hotel chain; the ninth, QT Queenstown, is due to open in September, followed by the first Perth property in mid-2018. 90 Cable St, Te Aro, Wellington, qthotelsandresorts.com



All is well in central Java

Well-being and local wisdom are on the menu at Amanjiwo. The notion of "wellness" on any restaurant or spa menu has a headstart in Java, where jamu – traditional herbal medicine taken as daily shots of juice – is hugely popular. So when general manager lan White and new executive chef Henry Jordan redesigned the

pool-club menus at Aman's central Javanese resort, Amanjiwo, with health and well-being in mind, they drew on the latest health trends and the wisdom of generations of jamu-makers.

One of the detoxifying shots on the menu blends six types of ginger and galangal with honey, turmeric and katuk leaves; another, said to aid digestion, is made from ground rice, turmeric and lime. There's a focus on raw, vegan, gluten- and dairy-free dishes by the pool – think citrus and bee-pollen granola for breakfast, and flaxseed tacos filled with spicy local fish for lunch – and authentic Javanese cuisine in the main restaurant. "They're the kind of flavours you'd find on the street," White says. The menus are among a raft of changes and new experiences at Amanjiwo, best known for its tranquil views and proximity to the 9th-century Buddhist temple of Borobudur.

The temple-like, 36-suite resort celebrates its 20th anniversary this year with art exhibitions, 20-minute cooking classes with Javanese rice, and a 20-kilometre bike ride through paddies and rice villages. "Here in Indonesia we use rice in everything," White says. "We'd like to show guests how precious every grain is." A keen cyclist and volcano climber, White has incorporated into the route a hot-spring bathhouse, a disused Dutch-era railway track and a picnic breakfast in a picturesque rice paddy – with steamed rice cakes in the hamper, of course.

The UNESCO-listed temple is central to the resort's celebrations, each of its nine tiers clad in exquisite friezes and crowned by hundreds of Buddhist statues. It'll be illuminated by special arrangement on the 20th of each month as a backdrop to an anniversary dinner. aman.com

TO DYE FOR Celine's canvas tie-and-dye tote by British designer Phoebe Philo travels easily from beach to bistro and back. It's available at Celine's first stand-alone store in Australia, in Melbourne's Chadstone Shopping Centre. \$2,750. celine.com



BERLIN

TOBY MEAGHER

Gallery director
I'm often drawn to
Berlin's remarkable
historical collections,
even though I work
in contemporary art.

even though I work in contemporary art. The Neues Museum, in particular, is full of Egyptian and classical treasures and the transformation by architect Sir David Chipperfield masterfully shows the bones of a city rebuilt. C/O Berlin is the leading photography gallery in Berlin, and another favourite.

I always send visitors to Auguststrasse in Mitte, at the centre of the contemporary gallery district I work in. At one end is Meine Bar: dimly lit, smoky, always with great music and an effortlessly cool atmosphere - easily my favourite place in Berlin. Any excuse to celebrate I go to Pauly Saal. It's formal by Berlin standards, and the food is unparalleled - modern German-Austrian cuisine with a constantly changing set menu. Try the pike-perch and Japanese artichoke with pistachio, sorrel and grapefruit for dessert. The Art Deco dining room is stunning, cleverly housed in the former gymnasium of an old Jewish girls' school.



On the city's southern side in Neukölln, I like Industry Standard, an unpretentious restaurant with natural wines and produce sourced from farms in Brandenburg — think bone marrow and wild mushrooms. Nearby is Nathanja & Heinrich, one of my go-to bars, with high ceilings and chandeliers.

Berlin starts slowly on Sundays and breakfast spots don't open until 10am or 11am (a novelty for someone from Sydney). Bonanza Coffee Heroes in Prenzlauer Berg, my home suburb, is the standout for good espresso - with a newly opened roaster in Kreuzberg, too. My Sunday usually starts with a run in Volkspark Humboldthain. A massive World War II anti-aircraft tower sits half-buried in the centre; you can see

the whole city from the top. Sunday afternoons are often spent wandering in Mauerpark. With sprawling markets, street food and live music, it symbolises the Berliner attitude: cheap and fun. Also in Prenzlauer Berg is Kanaan, an Israeli-Palestinian eatery with the best hummus I've ever tasted. It's the one place I take everyone who visits me in Berlin. Toby Meagher is the gallery director at Michael Reid Berlin.

SMOKED COD'S ROE AND CARROTS AT COOMBESHEAD





PURE COUNTRY

Chefs Tom Adams, of Pitt Cue in London, and April Bloomfield, of the Spotted Pig in New York, have joined forces to create a food-focused guesthouse in the remote Cornish countryside in the UK. Coombeshead Farm, near Launceston, is a six-bedroom Georgian farmhouse with an open-plan kitchen in which Adams caters for a dozen guests around a communal dining table. Coombeshead Farm, Lewannick, Cornwall, coombesheadfarm.co.uk

VANITY CASE FACE MISTS

A post-flight glow and luminous skin are just a spritz away.

- 1 CAUDALIE Beauty Elixir, \$20. net-a-porter.com
- **2** KORA ORGANICS Balancing Rose Mist, \$39.95. koraorganics.com
- **3** ELIZABETH ARDEN Eight Hour Miracle Hydrating Mist, \$38. *elizabetharden.com.au*
- 4 ENDOTA SPA Hydrate Me Mist, \$30. endotaspa.com.au
- 5 OMOROVICZA Queen of Hungary Mist, \$83. mecca.com.au









travel NEWS



Curators, gallerists and art lovers from around the world are congregating in Hong Kong for a month of heavy-duty viewing and networking, Watch Czech opera and Bavarian ballet among a diverse range of artistic endeavours at HK Arts Festival (until 18 March), then head harbourside to Art Central (21-25 March) where Asian and international galleries introduce their most promising emerging artists. The big date-claimer,

though, is Art Basel (23-25 March), when immersive exhibitions and pop-up galleries appear across the city. Among this vear's features is local artist Kingsley Ng's work turning the city's trams into an altered-reality video exhibition. It's Adelaide's big arts month, too. Street artists, circus tents and food trucks line city footpaths for the Adelaide Festival (3-19 March) and Adelaide Fringe (until 19 March). At the same time. Botanic Park bustles with the 25th iteration of the international music festival WOMADelaide (10-13 March). Ballarat, meanwhile, hosts its first White Night on 4 March. when the Victorian regional city transforms

into an all-night gallery lit by neon and enlivened by interactive street art. Lights are also a central feature at a 4.8-hectare site near Uluru, where more than 50,000 solar-powered light sticks sway in the desert breeze. The public response to Field of Light, by British artist Bruce Munro, has been so enthusiastic the temporary installation's life has been extended to 31 March 2018 Three weeks of festivities at the Sydney Gay and Lesbian Mardi Gras culminate on 4 March with the pride parade along Oxford Street. Next day, head to the Sydney Opera House to discuss women's rights at the **All About Women**

Festival (5 March).



Mike McEnearney has revived Kitchen by Mike with a 90-seat incarnation at Sydney International Airport. Our pick of the menu? The Fly by Mike takeaway packs. Load them up with signature salads, daily roasts and hearty grains to eat on the plane.

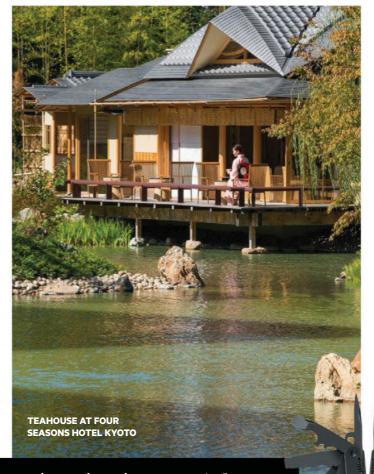
HOT HOTELS

At peace in Kyoto

Find Zen and tea at new lodgings in the former imperial city. In a city where cherry blossoms and autumn leaves draw more tourists than hotels can handle, a new property in Kyoto is greeted with as much relief as the first buds of spring. Opened late last year, the Four Seasons Hotel Kyoto has 110 guest rooms and 13 suites arranged around a 12th-century ikeniwa, or pond garden.

A glass bridge and moss-lined path in the garden lead to a tiny teahouse, one of the hotel's most distinctive features. Stoop to enter – the low entrance was traditionally designed to place all visitors on an equal status – and take part in a tea ceremony, or order a glass of sake or Champagne at the bar next door. The teahouse's crowning glory is a light fitting resembling a wagasa, a traditional Japanese umbrella, made by Hiyoshiya, a fifthgeneration wagasa workshop. The hotel can arrange visits to 20 workshops in the Kyoto Artisans Concierge, including Hiyoshiya.

There's a good chance you'll see a geisha entertaining guests at dinner in the hotel's brasserie, headed by chef Tsuyoshi Iryo, formerly of the Park Hyatt Sydney. Some guest rooms feature a splash of purple – a nod to Kyoto's former status as a royal city – and wallpaper in each room portrays one of the four seasons, naturally. Rooms from \$870; 445-3 Myohoin Maekawa-cho, Higashiyama-ku, Kyoto, fourseasons.com KATRINA LOBLEY



ARMED RESPONSE One device, 27 functions and countless places to use it, from campsite to corporate retreat. Victorinox's latest multi-tool opens bottles, saws metal, cuts wire and weighs only 208 grams. Swiss Tool Spirit XBS, \$349. victorinox.com



DESTINATION DINING

Malouf in the Middle

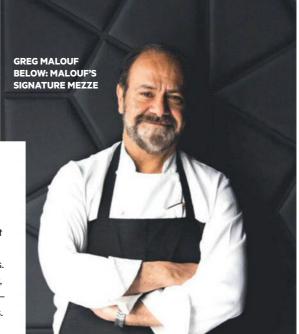
The Melbourne-born chef is back in Dubai serving "cool Lebanese". In Dubai's heady hospitality scene where Middle Eastern food plays second fiddle to European cuisine, Australian-born chef Greg Malouf admits he's swimming against the tide. But it's this ambivalence towards quality Middle Eastern food that's fuelled his next challenge in the desert city: a new restaurant serving "cool Lebanese, if that's possible".

"Good-quality Middle Eastern food with value doesn't really exist here," Malouf says. "So many restaurants are pitched at the high end – and if you don't have entertainment, you don't really cut it." This was the fate of Cle Dubai - "it was turning into a nightclub" which he joined following his Michelin-starred success at London's Petersham Nurseries. Malouf left Cle Dubai last year after his contract expired and has spent the past year consulting and working on a cookbook with former wife Lucy Malouf; their eighth release is an exploration of the vegetarian food of Beirut, due out later this year.

Set to open in April or May, his new venture is called Zaahira, a 130-seat restaurant and bar in The H Dubai hotel. The menu will include Malouf's take on bisteeya - most likely a duck version - as well as plenty of mezze such as wagyu basturma with housemade shanklish. Other dishes might include lentil tabbouleh, Gulf prawns with green chermoula and Egyptian-style pigeon.

His edge in Dubai, he explains, comes with his name. "The name Malouf is very strong in this part of the world," he says. "It comes from a town in Lebanon famous for its food, so people immediately associate you with good food."

Born in Melbourne to Lebanese parents, Malouf is best known in Australia for the various iterations of his Melbourne restaurant MoMo. His latest venture means he's likely to remain overseas for the foreseeable future. Zaahira Restaurant, The H Dubai, 1 Sheikh Zayed Rd, Dubai, UAE, h-hotel.com LARISSA DUBECKI









ANNE SULLIVAN

Australia Where do you travel regularly for work?

CEO, Georg Jensen "I'm one of many Sydney-Melbourne commuters travelling almost weekly

- you know you've joined this club when the Qantas Club barista has your order ready on approach. As part of the expansion of our Georg Jensen retail network, I've also added trips to our new stores at Pacific Fair, Brisbane and Perth lately."

How often are you away?

"I'm lucky enough to visit our head office in Copenhagen two or three times a vear. We also represent Alessi in Australia, so I travel to Milan and Lake Maggiore [90 minutes north-west of Milan], near the Alessi headquarters, a few times a year as well."

Suitcase of choice? "Domestically, I use the lightest possible Samsonite hardshell carry-on. Internationally. a Samsonite Ultralite case." Pre-flight routine? "I have a moisturising facial before travelling and then use minimal makeup (if anv) so that I can moisturise easily during the flight." Essential cabin baggage?

"My iPad and charger, a few good books (I still prefer the old-fashioned

variety) and a Sothys skincare travel pack."

On-board routine?

"I always ask for a window seat to maximise my space and establish my 'cocoon'. with blankets and pillows in strategic alignment. I set my watch immediately to my destination time zone and try to align my eating and sleeping to this. And contrary to better judgement, the flight starts with a glass of Champagne - it defines the beginning of an exciting adventure: it's water from then on. I wear super-comfy crease-proof pants and an oversized top - always black - and then don the

fabulous Georg Jensen silver upon arrival. Voilà!" Roll or fold? "My children are beautiful rollers and have tried to convert me. However, once a folder always a folder. I'm also a really good 'shover', which is often required when I discover something I can't live without. This happens often when working with great design companies." Which airline do you fly most often for work?

"Qantas and the oneworld network offer a level of consistency and advantages that have set a standard."

Favourite airline lounge? "Qantas first-class lounges in Melbourne or Sydney. The Cathay Pacific lounges in Hong Kong are also stunning. Domestically, the Qantas business lounge in Perth is surprisingly lovely and serves wood-fired pizze for lunch - amazing!"

Favourite hotel for business? "In Copenhagen, I'd nominate the Hotel Skt Petri, while my favourite in Milan is Room Mate Giulia by the Spanish designer Patricia Urquiola, who also designed Georg Jensen's Urkiola [kitchen and homewares range. which was launched at the hotel last year." How do hotels get it right and wrong for business travellers? "Guestrooms need to be easy to navigate, have adequate power points (ideally with USB-based chargers), free WiFi, well-lit bathrooms. and super-functional, intuitively placed light switches. There's nothing worse than collapsing into bed after a long day and not being able to turn off all the lights from your bedside or, even worse, not being able to find the switches."



GIRT BY SEA

Explore Australia's diverse coastline on a 40-night circumnavigation designed by cruise specialist **Cruiseco** and the French line **Ponant** on *L'Austral*. The cruise departs Sydney in January 2018 and takes in destinations as far-flung as Cape York and Kangaroo Island, Freycinet Peninsula and Ningaloo Reef, the Twelve Apostles and Lizard Island. *cruising.com.au*

CUBAN RUSH

Royal Caribbean International (RCI) and Oceania Cruises are the latest lines to plan cruises to Cuba this year, following plans announced by Norwegian Cruise Line, Regent Seven Seas and Ponant. Oceania Cruises' Marina departs Miami for Havana this month, while RCI's Empress of the Seas heads to the Cuban capital from Miami and Tampa from April. Azamara Club **Cruises, Carnival Cruise** Line and Celebrity Cruises have plans to follow soon. **HISTORY AT SEA**

Princess Cruises' five Australia-based ships are hosting an exhibition titled Defining Moments in Australian History. Created



in collaboration with Canberra's National Museum of Australia, it highlights 100 key moments in the nation's history with photos and artefacts dating back to the 18th century. Guests are encouraged to suggest their own defining moments, which will feature in the ships' atria until 2021. princess.com

SOUTHERN GEM

Norwegian Jewel has started preparations for her Australian début in November. The 2376-passenger ship, part of the Norwegian Cruise Line fleet, has eight restaurants, a theatre, volleyball courts and the line's Mandara Spa. After arrival in Sydney on 12 November, the Jewel will visit ports in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. ncl.com PLONK RIGHT HERE

Want to improve your wine knowledge? **Cunard**'s reputation for serious

cellars and tastings via its wine academy has been extended by offering education programs for guests that are certified by the British-based Wine & Spirit Education Trust. The program was launched on the Queen Mary 2 late last year and will extend to sister ships Queen Victoria and Queen Elizabeth later this year. cunard.com

STAR ATTRACTIONS

Celebrity Cruises has unveiled new destinations, home ports and itineraries for 2018-19. Highlights include Scandinavian tours from Celebrity Silhouette's new Southampton home port, Celebrity Eclipse's mini Irish season (she'll be the first ship from a major cruise line to be based in Dublin) and cruises to major world events: to Russia for the FIFA World Cup, the French and British tennis opens, and to Cannes for its annual film festival. celebritycruises.com.au

IN THE BAGFITNESS ACCESSORIES

No need to interrupt the fitness regimen with these compact pieces packed and ready.

1 ADIDAS BY STELLA McCARTNEY yoga mat, \$100, from Mode Sportif. *modesportif.com*

2 APPLE Watch Nike+, 38mm case, \$529. apple.com 3 PLANTRONICS Backbeat Fit wireless headphones, \$179.95, from Rebel Sport. rebelsport.com.au

4 NIKE Challenger armband, \$35, from Mr Porter. *mrporter.com*

5 MZ WALLACE Metro quilted shell yoga bag, \$186, from Net-A-Porter. net-a-porter.com





EASTERN JOURNEY

Cathay Pacific has launched four flights a week to Tel Aviv from its Hong Kong hub, using its new long-haul A350s. The move opens the Israeli capital and Jerusalem, about an hour's drive south-east, to travellers. *cathaypacific.com*

LOUNGING AROUND

In time for a long European summer, Emirates adds the Croatian capital, Zagreb, to its network from 1 June, when it launches a daily flight from Dubai. The new route improves access to Dubrovnik (about four hours' flight south) and the Dalmatian Coast. Also timely for long-haul travellers is new user-pay access to seven Emirates lounges at Dubai International Airport for the airline's



loyalty-program members and guests: \$130 for four hours' access to Emirates business-class lounges; \$260 to its first-class lounges. And first-class long-haul passengers will arrive after a night in "moisturising" outfits, claimed as a world first, in which millions of "microcapsules" applied to the fabric release treated sea kelp. The suits are part of a new range of amenity kits in first and business cabins. emirates.com



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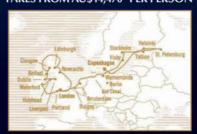
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INSIDER

TIPS

Hot and cool

In a city growing higher, bolder and cooler, *Jennifer Byrne* detects a hint of nostalgia at some of its newest hotspots.



STAY

W Dubai Al Habtoor City

Bolts of ziazaa colour in the W's look-at-me lobby and curvaceous white guestrooms, like pods in an elegant spaceship, neatly reflect the restless energy and futuristic ambitions of the city. This new precinct on 12-lane Sheikh Zaved Road has several hotels but the W has cornered the young, cool-conscious market with its bold design and "whatever, whenever" approach. Guests check in on the 30th floor, with views of the Gulf and

Dubai's new canal, and relax in an adjacent bar with resident DJs. There's a fine-diner and a casual eatery, and a state-of-theart gym. Al Habtoor City, Sheikh Zayed Rd, wdubaialhabtoorcity.com

SFF

A city that has made its reputation looking up is starting to look back. Take a guided or DIY walking tour through the **Bastakia quarter** in Bur Dubai to glimpse pre-oil Dubai, when it was a humble fishing and pearling state.

An atmospheric maze of cobbled lanes, courtyards and traditional wind towers, now houses museums and boutique hotels, including **XVA Art Hotel and Café** (Al Fahidi St) in which each

room is a mini art show and the lobby a walk-through sculpture garden. For just one dirham (30 cents), join locals on a traditional wooden abra to traverse **Dubai Creek**, a wide, busy channel lined with painted wooden dhows. Not just the cheapest trip in town but a reminder this was, and remains, one of the

world's great trading centres. No matter how many times you visit Dubai, the view from the top of the Burj Khalifa (1 Sheikh Mohammed Bin Rashid Blvd), still the world's tallest building. reveals something new. Swift elevators rise past panels charting stages of construction, past the Armani hotel, to the top deck at 555 metres. From here the story of Dubai is illustrated: a thrusting city of glass and steel sprung from an empty desert.

SHOP

The **Dubai Mall** is said to be the world's largest by area - and who'd argue? Spanning the equivalent of 200 soccer pitches, it's the city's undisputed shopping mecca, with 1,200 stores. By contrast, to the east across the Creek is the old, pre-oil neighbourhood of Deira, with its spice market rich with the scent of cinnamon, frankincense and rosebuds. And the nearby gold souk is dazzling - gold being both the traditional sign of love and marker of wealth in the city. Check out the shop displaying the world's largest gold ring, as certified by Guinness World Records: 63 kilograms of 21-carat gold. Eye-popping.



Namu

The W Dubai's fine-diner on the 31st floor has arresting views but all eyes are on four central cooking stations, labelled Steam, Grill, Ice and Fire. Chefs work a greatest hits of Japanese and Korean dishes, from bibimbap to a seafood gyoza dressed with a dainty frill of egg lace. Al Habtoor City, Sheikh Zayed Rd, wdubaialhabtoorcity.com

Nikki Beach Dubai

This new outpost of the global beach-club chain was an instant hit among thirtysomething expats, drawn by its hedonistic vibe and buzzy restaurant. French chef Sylvain Noel serves share plates such as sushi and ceviche boats, sizzling garlic prawns and scallops, and a standout key lime pie. Pearl Jumeira, nikkibeach.com

Bread Street Kitchen

& Bar Dubai
Gordon Ramsay's eatery
in Atlantis, The Palm,
serves dressed-up Brit
pub grub - the likes of beef
Wellington, shepherd's pie,
fish and chips. We were
distracted by the cocktails
mixed with focus and
theatrics (witness the
eggwhite whipping). The
list, as the boss might say,
is bloody brilliant. Atlantis,
The Palm, Crescent Rd,
atlantisthepalm.com



COFFEE CULTURE

One-time Geelong chef Tom Arnel and Spanish business partner Sergio Lopez have brought Melbourne's coffee culture to Dubai at their cult café-bakery-roastery Tom & Serg (15A St, Al-Joud Centre) and the larger The Sum of Us (Burj al Salam, 6th St).

WATER WORLD

In a desert city obsessed with water, Aquarium and Underwater Zoo in Dubai Mall holds special fascination, with a walk-through tunnel, a glass-bottomed boat tour and the chance to strap on an oxygen tank and swim with sharks and stingrays.









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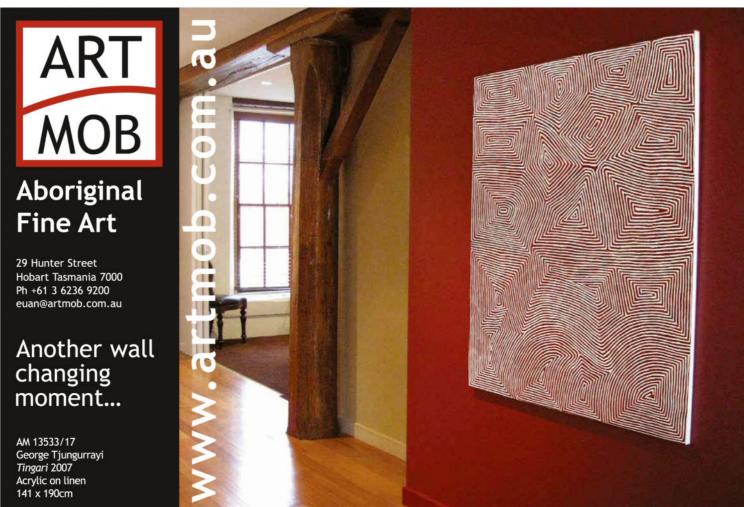
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Parisi Drawing inspiration from nature, Newform's sleek new sink mixer, the Y-Con, offers Italian minimal design and lovely clean lines. The mixer is made from chrome and brass. Priced \$840. parisi.com.au/home/retailer



Toyota Prius v The new-look Prius delivers miserly fuel economy and a fast getaway thanks to its Hybrid Synergy Drive technology. The sleek-looking Prius v is brimming with the latest safety features and comforts. toyota.com.au



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The Essential Ingredient Look out for this new range of beautiful German-made SHW hoes, trowels and scrapers, which feature hand-forged steel and polished ash handles. Great for keeping the garden trim. essentialingredient.com.au



Tasting Australia Join an unforgettable epicurean tour of Adelaide and beyond (30 April to 7 May). Highlights include an Italian feast with Marco Pierre White and appearances by popular Barossa cook Maggie Beer. tastingaustralia.com.au



April An epic chocolate special is just the beginning: we've got all your Easter feasting covered and more.

FOOD

The choctacular

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Easter with Grant Achatz

The chef of Alinea and Next takes the skills honed at two of America's edgiest restaurants and turns them to an Easter lunch with a twist.

The French country kitchen

Step inside Mimi Thorisson's auberge for a taste of French cooking that balances the rustic and the chic with rare aplomb.

Sultry spice

Let chef O Tama Carey's lead you through fragrant dishes spiced with Sri Lankan heritage and given restaurant polish.

TRAVEL

Southern surprise

The southern city of Charleston has always held a special place in the American imagination; now it has captured its appetite as well. Pass the shrimp and grits.

Mayan magic

Who needs a booking at Noma's new Mexican pop-up? With a hit-list of snack shacks and jungle bars from insider chef Paul Bentley, you've got the best of Tulum at your disposal.

Mud and glory

Bryce Corbett spent six months in training for the Kokoda Track, then realised nothing could prepare him for the reality.

ON SALE 27 MARCH

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Wedgwood 1300 852 022, wwrd.com.au

West Elm westelm.com.au

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FARE EXCHANGE (p34)

Blue Nile 3a/115 Main St, Blacktown, NSW, 0426 890 404, bluenilecuisine.com.au The Dolphin Hotel 412 Crown St, Surry Hills, NSW, (02) 9331 4800, dolphinhotel.com.au Hello Please Fish La, South Brisbane, Qld, helloplease.co

Tivoli Road Bakery 3 Tivoli Rd, South Yarra, Vic, (03) 9041 4345, tivoliroad.com.au

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GUIDE TO SYMBOLS S SIMPLE G GLUTEN-FREE **V** VEGETARIAN

A CAN BE PREPARED AHEAD



MEASURES & EQUIPMENT

- * All cup and spoon measures are level and based on Australian metric measures.
- * Eggs have an average weight of 59gm unless otherwise specified.
- * Fruit and vegetables are washed, peeled and medium-sized unless otherwise specified.
- Oven temperatures are for conventional ovens and need to be adjusted for fan-forced ovens.
- Pans are medium-sized and heavy-based; cake tins are stainless steel, unless otherwise specified. **COOKING TIPS**
- When seasoning food to taste, we use sea salt and freshly ground pepper unless otherwise specified.
- To blanch an ingredient, cook it briefly in boiling water, then drain it. To refresh it, plunge it in plenty of iced water (this stops the cooking process), then drain it.
- We recommend using free-range eggs, chicken and pork. We use female pork for preference.
- To dry-roast spices, cook the spices in a dry pan, stirring continuously over medium-high heat until they're fragrant. The cooking time varies depending on the spices used.

- * RSPCA Australia's recommendations for killing crustaceans humanely are to first render the animals insensible by placing them in the freezer (under 4C – signs of insensibility are when the tail or outer mouth parts can be moved without resistance); crustaceans must then be killed quickly by cutting through the centreline of the head and thorax with a knife. For crabs, insert a knife into the head. This splitting and spiking destroys the nerve centres of the animal.
- * All herbs are fresh, and both leaves and tender stems are used, unless otherwise specified.
- Non-reactive bowls are made from glass, ceramic or plastic. Use them in preference to metal bowls when marinating to prevent the acid in marinades reacting with metal and imparting a metallic taste.
- * Eggwash is lightly beaten egg unless otherwise specified, used for glazing or sealing.
- * Sugar syrup is made of equal parts caster sugar and water, unless otherwise specified. Bring the mixture to the boil to dissolve the sugar, remove it from the heat and cool it before use.
- * Acidulated water is a mixture of water and lemon juice; it prevents discolouration.

- * To sterilise jars and lids, run them through the hot rinse cycle in a dishwasher, or wash them in hot soapy water, rinse well, place on a tray in a cold oven and heat at 120C for 30 minutes.
- * To blind bake, line a pastry-lined tart tin with baking paper, then fill it with weights (ceramic weights, rice and dried beans work best).
- * To test whether marmalade, iam or ielly is at setting point, you'll need a chilled saucer (place a couple in the freezer before you start cooking). Remove the pan from the heat, spoon a little mixture onto the saucer and return it to the freezer for 30 seconds, then draw your finger through the mixture – it should leave a trail, indicating that the mixture has reached setting point. If not, cook for another few minutes before testing again. If you prefer, use a sugar thermometer to measure when the mixture reaches 105C; once it does, you can begin testing for setting point.
- To clarify butter, cook it over low heat until the fat and the milk solids separate. Strain off the clear butter and discard the milk solids. You will lose about 20 per cent of the volume in milk solids.



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