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PEOPLE'S TRIATHLON SERIES

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LICENSED REAA 2008



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# Metro!

**AUCKLANDER**  
**OF THE**  
**YEAR**

**100**

**BEST**

*The*  
*most*

**INTERESTING**

*most*

**POWERFUL**

*most*

**PEOPLE**

**INFLUENTIAL**

**OF 2020**

**IN THE GYM WITH**  
**ISRAEL ADESANYA**  
**& CITY KICKBOXING**

**CHEERS!**  
**TOP 50 BARS +**  
**20 FAVOURITE BEERS**

**ARE YOU READY**  
**FOR THE**  
**FAKE NEWS ELECTION?**







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LICENSED REAA 2008







Israel Adesanya, page 44.

CLINTON TUDOR

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# STYLE UP.



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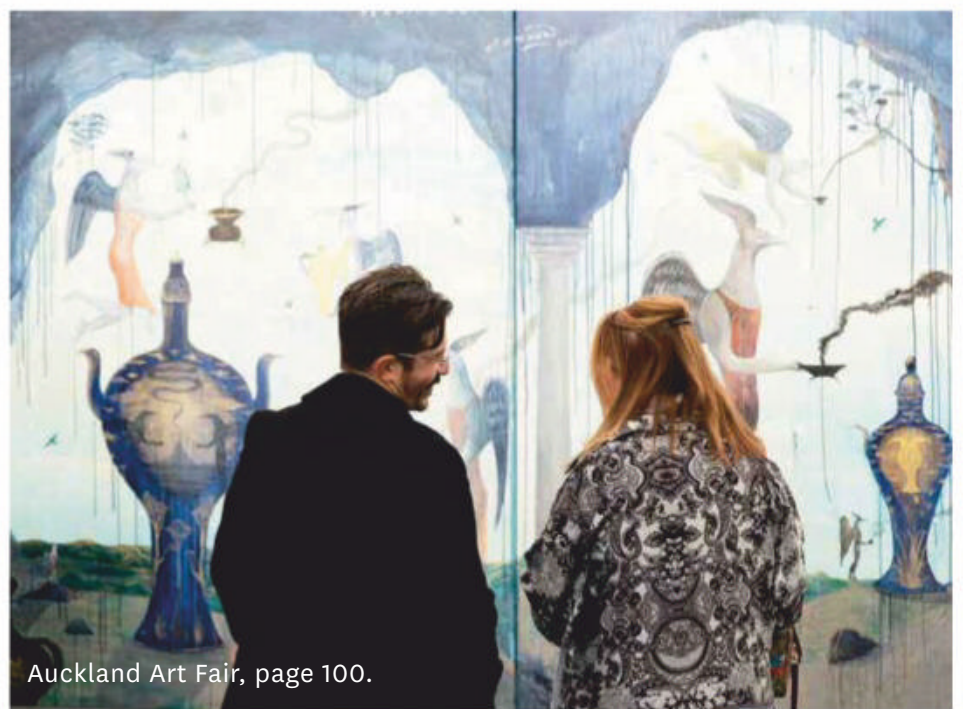




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FRANCES CARTER, JACK TAME, JOSEF SCOTT

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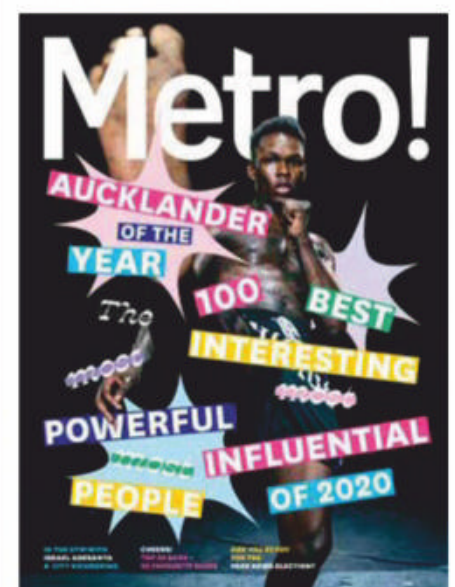
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Photography by Clinton Tudor. Cover design by Alessandra Banal.





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WINE SHOW 2020





BEST OF THE BEST  
Udon Works on Dominion Rd.

## READ METRO ONLINE AT METROMAG.CO.NZ

What've we been up to at metromag.co.nz? Wouldn't you like to know. Alright, alright, here's a sneak peek:

### NEW OPENINGS

2020 has kicked off with a spate of new openings around Auckland, and we've been there to see them all, from new Italian joint Romulus and Remus in WestLynn, to the addition of cafe Percy out by the airport in Māngere, to the Instagram-favourite the Hyderabad Hotel on the Grey Lynn/ Ponsonby cusp. Check out our first looks and sweet pics in the food section of our website.

### BEST OF THE BEST

*Metro's* Top 50s are arguably what we're most readily known for, but sometimes you just don't feel like scrolling endlessly through 50 options to figure out what to eat tonight. So, we've started putting more curated lists of our Cheap Eats, Top 50 Cafes, Best Bars online, including Top 10 lists and location-specific pieces - like where to find the best Cheap Eats along Dominion Rd.

### PLANT BASED

More and more eateries in Auckland are opting to become more or entirely plant based (the catch-all term for vegan or vegetarian), but some cuisines seem more naturally suited to it than others. Food writer Jean Teng went to check out vegan Thai restaurant Khu Khu Eatery in Ponsonby, and was initially suspicious of how they'd make it work without fish sauce. What she found pleasantly surprised her.

### DEAR METRO

Is back for another year! Check out our guest columnist, the singer-songwriter Robinson.

### METRO ON YOUR IPAD

Download the new issue and back issues on iTunes (search: Metro Magazine NZ).

### STAY IN TOUCH

Subscribe to *Metro's* email newsletter at metromag.co.nz

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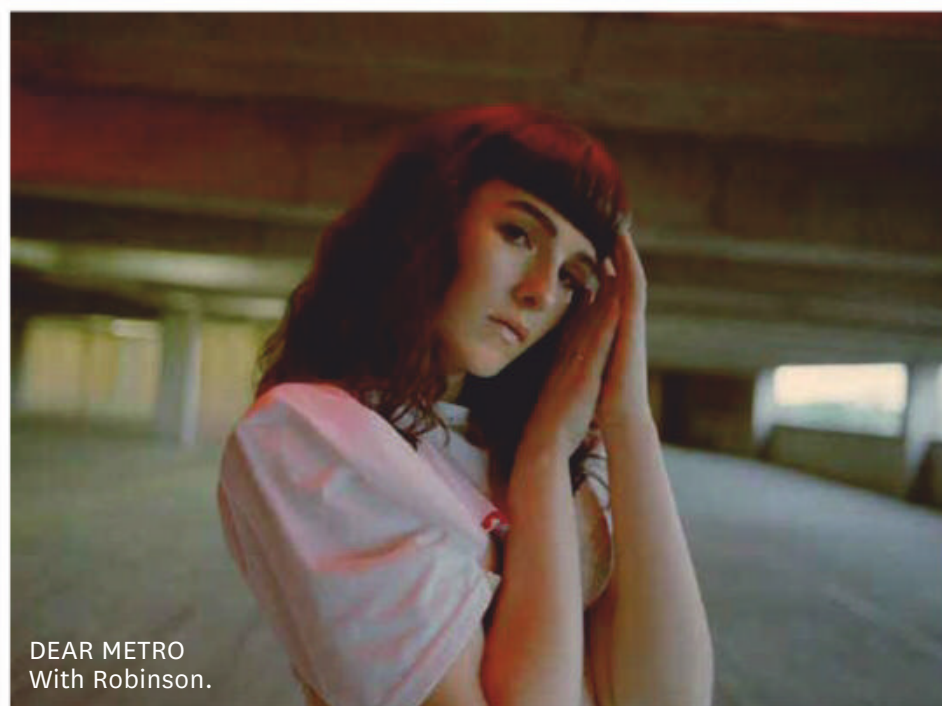
On Instagram, Twitter and Facebook, our username is @metromagnz



NEW OPENINGS  
Hyderabad Hotel in Grey Lynn.



PLANT BASED  
Khu Khu Eatery.



DEAR METRO  
With Robinson.

ANGIE HUMPHREYS, ALEX BLACKWOOD





# Amazing role models



St Cuthbert's



# AUCKLANDNESS

TEXT — HENRY OLIVER



**If you haven't noticed, *Metro* loves lists. And we're known for them — Top 50 Restaurants, Auckland's Best Schools, Cheap Eats, Top 50 Cafes. But to begin the year, we wanted to celebrate Auckland in a way *Metro* hasn't for a few years: by making a list of the people shaping Auckland and making it the city we love, ranking them among their peers, and crowning an Aucklander of the Year.**

Choosing 100 people from 1.7 million or so (50, we quickly realised, wasn't going to be enough) and, from them, championing a single person as somehow representing something special about this city was a difficult, some might say impossible, task. But choosing is what we do. Whether it's the best story to run, or the best restaurant in the city, what *Metro* deems important or interesting informs all our decisions. There are, I am sure, a thousand deserving people we may have missed. More. And while we asked our contributors and colleagues for their nominations, there are likely to be incredibly successful people, and people doing great, noble deeds, and people with a great deal of power and influence who just don't make it on our radar.

Auckland is an incredibly diverse city — demographically, socially, economically, but also in terms of what we think of as its essential qualities; its *Aucklandness*. We wanted to shine a light on people making an impact on life in Auckland; people who live here, or are from here, or are representing our city from elsewhere. Parris Goebel (born and raised here, now in Los Angeles), Mike Hosking (from Christchurch, lives and works here), Israel Adesanya (born

in Nigeria, grew up in Rotorua, moved to Auckland to chase his dreams), and Jacinda Ardern (from Morrinsville, now not only Mt Albert's MP, but, before motherhood and prime ministership, DJed at Laneway and drank single malt at Golden Dawn) are all, for better or worse, as quintessentially Auckland as anyone born, bred, and still living here.

So, to give shape to the huge list of candidates, we devised 10 categories across the spectrum of how *Metro* covers Auckland — politics, culture, media, entertainment, sports, business and technology, property and urban design, food, fashion, and community. We wanted to celebrate the successes of the people we consider Aucklanders.

The subtitle — The 100 Best, Most Interesting, Most Powerful, Most Influential People of 2020 — became our criteria, each a metric we added up and compared as we whittled down our long-list into a shorter one.

We wanted to celebrate Aucklanders who are the best at what they do, locally and globally; Aucklanders with power over the city and its people; Aucklanders with influence (which is different than power — the powerful can *force* others to do things, the influential can make others *want to* do things); and Aucklanders who intrigue us (we didn't want 100 politicians, bureaucrats and celebrities).

We wanted people who make a national or even global impact, but we also wanted to shine a light on people making a big impact in a smaller context; people you might never have heard of but who are playing their part in shaping our city.

Henry

M



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MEDIA GROUP



## DEAR METRO

Got issues with work, love, sex, family, friendships, money or the crushing existential angst of modern life? Each week on [metromag.co.nz](http://metromag.co.nz), our *Metro* advice columnist answers a reader's query and solves all their problems.

### Dear Metro,

My downstairs neighbour smokes incessantly and the smoke wafts into my apartment, upsetting me. So far I've tried such passive aggressive tactics as sighing loudly, saying "omg, smoking again" while on my balcony, "watering" my plants, ie pouring water on my deck in the hope it trickles down below and gets him, and stomping about loudly in a bid to ruin his life. It hasn't worked. What else could I do?

**From,**  
**Smoking, Not Our Future**

### Dear Smoking,

This is a tricky one because I both hate the smell of ciggies and detest being told what to do in my own home (or ever, actually). What your question reveals is how, as we move toward higher instances of medium and high density living in New Zealand, issues relating to how we get along harmoniously while pressed more closely against one another will

become more common.

I used to live in an apartment with paper-thin walls next to a couple who watched *King of the Hill* at all hours of the day and night. Judging by the way the sound carried, their TV appeared to be situated directly behind the wall at the spot where my head went when I lay in bed. It drove me completely insane, and I never want to hear that jangly theme song again. But I couldn't really ask my neighbours not to watch TV, because that would have been unreasonable. What I could and probably should have done, was knock on their door and ask if they could turn it down a bit. What I did instead was nurse a seething resentment until my relationship fell apart (unrelated to but not helped by the *King of the Hill* situation) and I moved out.

Don't be like me, and spend every day with your shoulders half-tensed just waiting for your neighbour to do that fucking thing again you know he's about to. Go talk to him, but don't go in guns blazing.

Because the thing is, ultimately, there's nothing you can actually do to stop your downstairs neighbour from smoking. It is, presumably, his house, and even if it's not I would not advocate snitching to his landlord — Dear Metro is a 'no snitch' advice page. Even though smoking is objectively disgusting and bad for you, it's also a pleasurable vice for a lot of people and dictating how someone you don't even know can and can't relax in



the privacy of their own home is both impossible to enforce and sure to make for bad vibes all round if you try. (IMO, it's more justified to tell someone you care about that you want them to stop smoking because you're worried about their health, but doing so is still usually pretty bad vibes.)

Instead, why don't you see if there's some compromise you could come to? You could let him know the smell really bothers you and you were wondering if there was any way he'd consider helping you out here (look, you could even tell a small fib about having asthma or something if you're worried about feeling shy bringing it up. Dear Metro is a 'sometimes telling lies is okay' advice page).

Possible solutions: Is there anywhere else he could smoke which is about as easy to get to as his balcony but won't waft up to you? Could he smoke there instead? Do you two work opposing hours, and could he try to smoke outside mainly when you're at work? If that's not an option because he smokes so much, then maybe he's the kind of person who stinks so bad of ciggy smoke anyway he could just smoke inside with the doors closed. Could he buy a vape? Could he get a little fan which blows the smoke in a different direction (not sure if this would work; just spitballing here). Could you put a natural barrier in between your balcony and his — more plants, or flowers — or would you be opposed to burning some kind of incense?

None of these solutions are ideal, and all will involve you either being slightly inconvenienced or having to put up with the smell — but that's kind of just life, really. Sometimes we live next to loud people, sometimes we live next to quiet people who then make a very loud baby, sometimes our neighbours are annoying and do things like strictly enforce ridiculous laundry policies because they have weird ideas about what is and isn't unseemly in a 'nice' part of town.

Let's hope that he's the kind of smoker considerate enough to realise how foul his habit is to non-smokers, and is willing to compromise if asked. All you truly have power over is how you react to any of this. No matter what else you do, don't waste your life being mad because you can't control how others behave.

With love,  
**Metro**

## 20 QUESTIONS

- 01**—*What's riskier, Covid-19, or sneezing in public while Asian?*
- 02**—*Remember how we were all going to "Give nothing to racism"?*
- 03**—*"Cruise ships a nightmare of discomfort, claustrophobia and potential infection" — so, no change there, then?*
- 04**—*Some of us have been self-isolating for years, haven't we?*
- 05**—*Was pneumonia a natural consequence of Elton leaving his candle out in the wind?*
- 06**—*Helping with the drought by nobly forgoing shaving your legs for the rest of the summer?*
- 07**—*Anyone suggested to Duncan Garner he could do his bit by decreasing the amount of hot air he's emitting?*
- 08**—*How long until someone uses one of Air New Zealand's "Economy Skynests" to join the mile high club??*
- 09**—*Will the government ask to use them for emergency housing?*
- 10**—*Started calling your rumpty old sleepout a "tiny house" yet?*
- 11**—*Are your kids bouncing on that trampoline, or hosting neighbourhood cage-fighting?*
- 12**—*How many years before boomers start mythologising how they took to the barricades and "saved" RNZ Concert?*
- 13**—*How many will be doing so from their \$2 million bach on Waiheke while still collecting their Super?*
- 14**—*But if you're snoring and dribbling at the same time, can you really say you're "listening" to classical music?*
- 15**—*Doesn't Shane Jones know almonds are out for the conscientious vegan? They're bad for the bees mate, keep up.*
- 16**—*How many more classic NZ First 'zingers' are we going to suffer through before the election?*
- 17**—*If Ardie Savea goes to league, do the All Blacks retain the rights to his haircut?*
- 18**—*Anyone set up a relief fund to help Mike Hosking get to his hairdresser on time??*
- 19**—*Ok, but even if you love public transport, you have to admit the road works are kind of annoying, don't you?*
- 20**—*Look, we wouldn't be Aucklanders if we didn't complain every step of the way, would we?*

## OBJECTIFYING HISTORY

This elaborate artificial flower arrangement is thought to have been made by sisters Mary Jane and Charlotte Milne, who started a drapery shop in central Auckland in 1867. Milne & Choyce went on to become one of the largest and most successful department stores in 20th century Auckland. Making ornaments by hand was popular among young women in the mid-1800s, using materials like feathers, shells, wool, beads and wax. The flowers and foliage in this arrangement were made by wrapping colourful woollen yarn around wire shapes.



AUCKLAND MUSEUM COLLECTION: COL.0737





# *Vote for your favourite dish*

**AND BE IN TO WIN!**

We've shortlisted eight finalists for the PEUGEOT People's Choice Award in the 2020 Metro PEUGEOT Restaurant of the Year Awards. Now it's up to you to choose the winner.

## **THE PRIZE**

Vote for your favourite dish and you could win dinner for two at the winning restaurant, chauffeured in a PEUGEOT.



**Voting closes on 31 March, 2020.  
Vote at [www.metromag.co.nz](http://www.metromag.co.nz)**







# THE FINALISTS

Which dish will win the 2020 PEUGEOT People's Choice Award? It's your call.

- 1. Spinach, sage and goat's cheese dumplings, Cotto
- 2. Steak, Pasture
- 3. Burrata, Amano
- 4. Chocolate mousse, Cazador
- 5. Slow-cooked Sichuan lamb shoulder, Hello Beasty
- 6. Goat's cheese croquettes, Apéro
- 7. Beef heart anticuchos, Madame George
- 8. Karitane crayfish meatballs, Baduzzi

**TERMS AND CONDITIONS** Entry is open only to New Zealand residents aged 18 years and over. Employees of Bauer Media Group (LP) NZ, Peugeot, their affiliates, agencies and immediate families are ineligible to enter. Entries are limited to one per person. This promotion commences on February 10, 2020 at 9am, and ends on March 31, 2020 at 11:59pm. The winner will be drawn and notified by April 2, 2020, at 12pm. The prize is a private transfer from your home/accommodation in a Peugeot, to the Peugeot's People's Choice Best Dish Restaurant and a \$500 voucher for two people for dinner at the Peugeot People's Choice Best Dish Restaurant. Private car transfer only available within the Auckland region. The prize must be redeemed between April 3, 2020 and July 1, 2020. The prize must be taken as offered, subject to availability at the time of booking with the venue, and is not exchangeable, transferrable or redeemable for cash. Except as expressly set out above, the prize doesn't include the cost of passports, visas and other travel incidentals (including spending money, medical expenses, transfers, insurance, meals, and hotel extras). The promoter is Bauer Media Group (LP) NZ, Shed 12, City Works Depot, 90 Wellesley St West, Auckland.





**ABOVE**—Waterworld at Ōkahu Bay, 9 February.

**PHOTOGRAPHED  
EXCLUSIVELY FOR METRO  
BY PETRA LEARY**







01



02



**MONSTER VALLEY:  
THE RELAUNCH EVENT**  
— *Monster Valley*

**01**—Dominic Hoey.  
**02**—Sharayah Ruth & Mhairi-Clare Fitzpatrick.  
**03**—Matthew Crawley & Saan Barratt.  
**04**—Arjun N, Arjun & Arjun B.  
**05**—Jordan G & Jia Lau.

**06**—Rory Keating, Hugo Hall & Darth Cornelias.  
**07**— Xanthe Jujnovich & a visitor from Hawke’s Bay.  
**08**—Barbara Holloway & Laura Forest.

PHOTOGRAPHY — EVIE MACKAY

03



04



05



06



07



08







## THE LEGEND OF BARON TO'A FILM PREMIERE

— *Hoyts Sylvia Park*

**01**— A visitor from Hawke's Bay, Diamond Langi & Andy Stehlin.

**02**— Shuchi Kothari, Julie Zhu & Shreya Gejji.

**03**— Kilian Isaac, Tatiyana Isaac, Paula Boock & Poppy Patterson-Boock.

**04**— Joshua Savieti, Malama Tongilava, Lupetovo Windrush Finau, Shavaughn Ruakere, Kerry

Warkia, Lesieli Malupo & Soana Falahola Aleva.

**05**— Kerry Warkia, Shavaughn Ruakere & Kiel McNaughton.

**06**— Jasmin McSweeney & Kate Rodger.

**07**— Luciane Buchanan & Josh Thomson.

**08**— Tukairangi Maxwell & Villa Junior Lemanu.





# WHAT'S ON

Our pick of Auckland events.

TEXT — JEAN TENG

## FESTIVALS

### AUCKLAND ARTS FESTIVAL

11-29 March

This year the Arts Festival have introduced special under-30 tickets which are cheaper than the adult prices (by about 20-30%) for a portion of their shows. Thanks, AAF! Some of our highlights from those events: First Nations and Māori comedy *Black Ties*, class-war Scottish play *Mouthpiece* and circus-cabaret *Limbo Unhinged*. Turn to page 96 for a preview of our other picks. [Various locations, aaf.co.nz](http://Various locations, aaf.co.nz)

### BEACON FESTIVAL

14 March

Friendly Potential host an open-air electronic festival by the water, with sets by Richie Hawtin, Nina Kraviz and Job Jobse among others, plus kai from Bar Celeste and burger pop-up Five Boroughs. Sounds cool. [Queens Wharf, beaconfestival.co.nz](http://Queens Wharf, beaconfestival.co.nz)

### PASIFIKA FESTIVAL

14-15 March

After a cancellation in 2019, the Pasifika Festival is set to return and celebrate the many cultures which make up the Pacific. There

will be over 200 performances over the two days, and 10 individual villages to showcase different art forms, practices and food. [Western Springs Park, aucklandnz.com](http://Western Springs Park, aucklandnz.com)

### KAURI KARNIVAL

15 March

Most Kiwi kids in Auckland will recall visiting Tāne Mahuta, the thousands-of-years-old kauri named for the Māori god for forests and birds. It was most recently in the news for being threatened by kauri dieback (not good!). Honour kauri trees and the environment and all that jazz at this free day of live music, environmental workshops and food stalls. [Parrs Park, ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](http://Parrs Park, ourauckland.aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

### NEPAL FESTIVAL

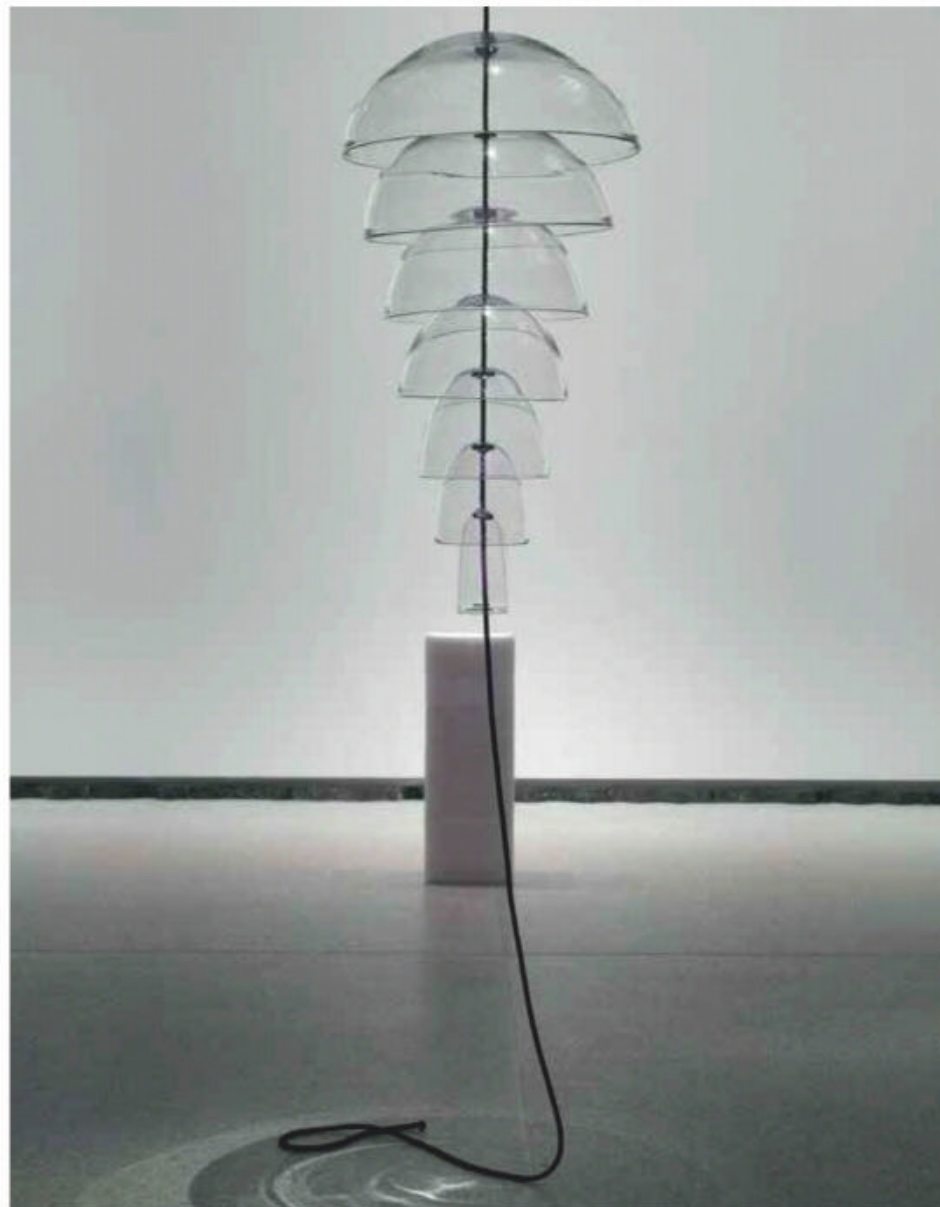
4 April

We can't get enough of Nepalese momos: spiced meat dumplings with thick skins, sometimes served in life-affirming hot sauce. There'll be some of that plus music, dance and crafts that reveal a bit more about the Nepalese culture, beyond those well-loved momos. [Aotea Square, facebook.com/nepalfestivalauckland](http://Aotea Square, facebook.com/nepalfestivalauckland)

### AUCKLAND ART FAIR 2020

29 April-3 May

Art to look at and buy. For more, go to page 100. [The Cloud, Queens Wharf, artfair.co.nz](http://The Cloud, Queens Wharf, artfair.co.nz)



## STAGE

### THE BOOK OF MORMON

6 March-19 April

So, what do Mormons think about it all? According to a *VICE* article which canvassed Mormons in Salt Lake City, most of them are chuffed about the exposure this musical has given them — and, fair enough, seeing as it's currently the longest-running Broadway show and has grossed over \$500 million worldwide. You can add to that total, too, if you want to see what all those Tony awards were about. [The Civic, bookofmormonmusical.co.nz](http://The Civic, bookofmormonmusical.co.nz)

### YEAR OF THE TIGER (虎—HŮ)

10 March-21 March

"Part live-documentary, part social practice". If you've seen Alice Canton's previous work, particularly *OTHER [chinese]*, you might have some idea of what you're in for. If you haven't, a group of strangers (all born in the year of the tiger) gather on the stage to

discuss the world around them. Sometimes awkward, sometimes magical. [The Basement, basementtheatre.co.nz](http://The Basement, basementtheatre.co.nz)

## MUSIC

### NADIA REID

7-8 March

Reid's new album, *Out of My Province* is out on 6 March; the concert is the day after. Plenty of time for the fresh songs to sink in. [Pah Homestead, nadiareid.com](http://Pah Homestead, nadiareid.com)





## MY CHEMICAL ROMANCE

25 March

Time to grow a fringe, invest in red hair dye and reach into the back of our closets for the fingerless gloves — expect to see more scene kids than at the Vans Warped Tour of 2007. We can't wait. *The Outer Fields at Western Springs, livenation.co.nz*

## THE NATIONAL

3-4 April

Dapper men wearing suits play songs in an all-seated venue (and thank God for that — now we can actually see). *ASB Theatre, americanmary.com*

## TAME IMPALA

16 April

Tame Impala keep graduating in venue size every time they come here, and now they've hit the big time, playing in Spark Arena. A new album, *The Slow Rush*, just dropped, so make sure you're all caught up before catching them with support act Khruangbin, who will most likely be your thing if you're into Tame Impala. *Spark Arena, sparkarena.co.nz*

## PATTI SMITH

27/28 April

The Godmother of Punk. *Auckland Town Hall, pattismith.net*

## VISUAL ART

### OPEN HOME

4-21 March

Artist Charles Buenconsejo has left home for a 'better' future, only to find familiar challenges here in Aotearoa. He finds solace in returning to the land of his front yard, transforming it into a vegetable garden and marrying his past and present there (Philippines) and here (New Zealand). *RM Gallery, rm.org.nz*

### HONESTLY SPEAKING: THE WORD, THE BODY AND THE INTERNET

Till 7 June

In an era where we are bombarded by images, international artists Shahryar Nashat, Frances Stark and Martine Syms, plus UK-based New Zealand artist Sriwhana Spong, discuss the relationship



between objects, bodies and language. How does the digital age affect gender politics, power and personal truth? Is the internet actually really bad for our self-esteem? I mean, yeah, probably. *Auckland Art Gallery, aucklandartgallery.com*

### EVERYONE HAS A HORSE PHASE: CLAUDIA KOGACHI

Till 22 March

On-hiatus New Zealand race horses would very much like to be left alone. Kogachi uses small ceramics and paintings to depict small insights into their holiday — grazing, swimming, galloping — before they have to inevitably

return to the race track. Sad. *Sanderson Contemporary Gallery, sanderson.co.nz*

### NICOLA FARQUHAR: LISTENING, TWITCHING

Till 17 May

Farquhar's recent work deals with answering the age-old question of survival in impending climate apocalypse, with vibrant and abstract female figures which "shapeshift between the imagined and the biological". *Te Uru Waitakere Contemporary Gallery, teuru.org.nz*

### SALOME TANUVASA

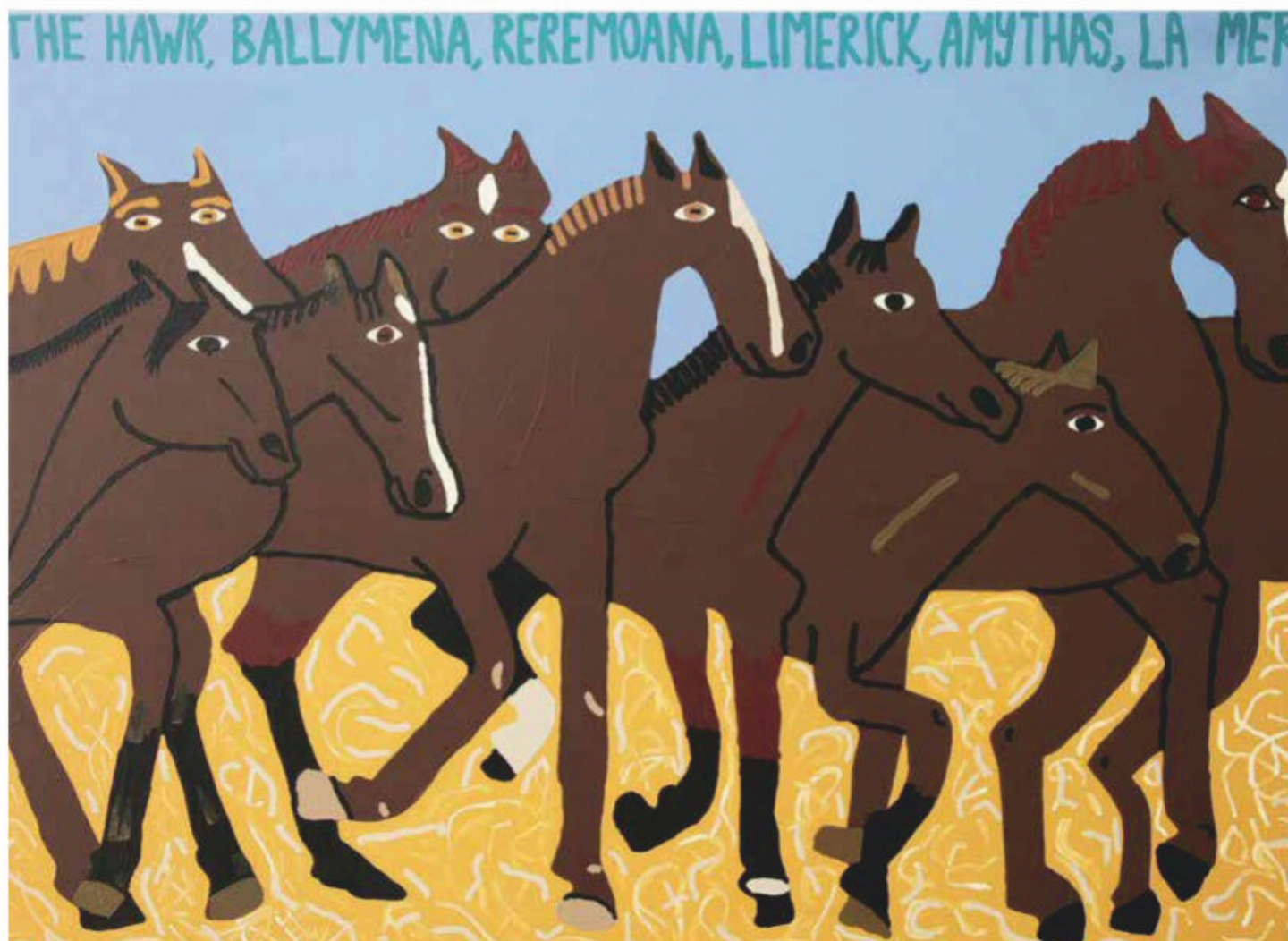
10 March-4 April

We've enjoyed Tanuvasa's past exhibitions, most recently *Mirrored Systems*, featuring colourful drawings arranged purposely to explore communications of meaning and understanding. Here, she shows new work. *Tim Melville Gallery, timmelville.com*

### TONGPOP FETISH: TELLY TUITA

12 March-3 May

Tongpop is Telly Tuita's visual language, developed out of a complex relationship with his ancestral home, Tonga. Think bright colours, traditional ngatu patterns and familiar motifs, assembled together with found materials like thrifted homewares to challenge idealised nations of the Pacific Islands. *Objectspace, objectspace.org.nz*









# PICTURE PERFECT

**Cruz Erdmann** — Photographer

TEXT — TESS NICHOL

PHOTOGRAPHY — ARNAZ MEHTA

**Bo is a six-month-old cavoodle puppy with an adorable caramel-coloured shagpile coat and big brown eyes. He's a tiny ball of energy and irresistible Instagram bait. He belongs to 14-year-old Cruz Erdmann, an award-winning photographer who has never taken Bo's picture.**

In fact, Erdmann, who was last year named the Young Wildlife Photographer of the Year in the contest run by the Natural History Museum in London, claims never to have taken a photo that wasn't under water — not even a cheeky selfie.

Erdmann had no intention of taking photos at all until a couple of years ago when his dad, a marine conservationist and biologist, suggested he have a play around with an old waterproof Canon. He expected the results would be bad and the experience frustrating, but to his surprise the first few shots turned out well and he was encouraged to keep going.

"I just thought it was cool being able to document what I saw. It's really frustrating seeing something and then either it gets hazy in your mind, or you can't describe it to other people."

It is difficult to imagine how you would describe the brilliant luminescence of Erdmann's winning photograph in a way which would remotely do it justice. Shot at night, a reef squid so bright it's practically glowing lights up the centre of the dark frame shimmering blue, pink and gold. Little wonder that it nabbed such an impressive prize, but the win wasn't really planned on Erdmann's part.

"I was just taking photos of what I saw. Some of them turned out really good and my mum said she thought they were competition standard."

His ability to catch fish clearly on film

is partly to do with the buoyancy training he undertook to help advance his diving: Erdmann knows how to control his depth and how to stay still in the water, a crucial skill. His mum, Arnaz Mehta (herself a marine conservationist), calls him a fish whisperer. "It's amazing actually. The fish will stay there for him and pose."

Though still at high school, Erdmann has clocked up more than 100 hours of diving, first in his birth country of Bali, and further north around the richly biodiverse islands of Raja Ampat in West Papua, then later in New Zealand after his family moved to Auckland's North Shore when he was eight. Four years later, as a 12-year-old, he picked up a camera for the first time and a few months after that he snapped the squid photo which brought him to London in October. That in turn led to an invitation to address the World Economic Forum at Davos in January as part of a group of young changemakers that included the climate activist Greta Thunberg. And he's not even old enough to take photography classes at school.

When we speak one summer evening while sitting on bean bags in the lush garden of his family's home, Erdmann is one day away from starting as a year 10 student at Westlake Boys High School. He's that funny teen boy mix of shy and confident, self-serious yet sweet. He answers questions on subjects that don't really interest or maybe even embarrass him (university, video games, whether or not he's an artist) with some reserve, but if you alight on a topic he's engaged with, his answers are thoughtful and detailed.

When I ask what draws him to diving, he describes it as "like being on the moon". "You're not breathing air, and you're where humans shouldn't be. Life evolves differently there — and it's so

much richer than land: more fish, more species of fish, more colour, more coral — everything."

He tells me fish are great to take portraits of because of how human they can look. His favourite photos reveal something about the habitat or behaviour of the species in them.

He says he was in awe of the networks of power he observed around him in Davos. While there he was also attuned to the differences between himself and the other teen changemakers. His speech, "Hidden Worlds in Our Oceans", a 10-minute love letter to the sea, is more of an informative presentation than a call to action, and features beautiful imagery from Erdmann's photographic dives.

"What I aim to do is optimistic. It's more hope-giving or light-hearted in that sense," he explains. It's a deliberately different approach to someone like Thunberg, emphasising the beauty of what we have, instead of how close we are to losing it.

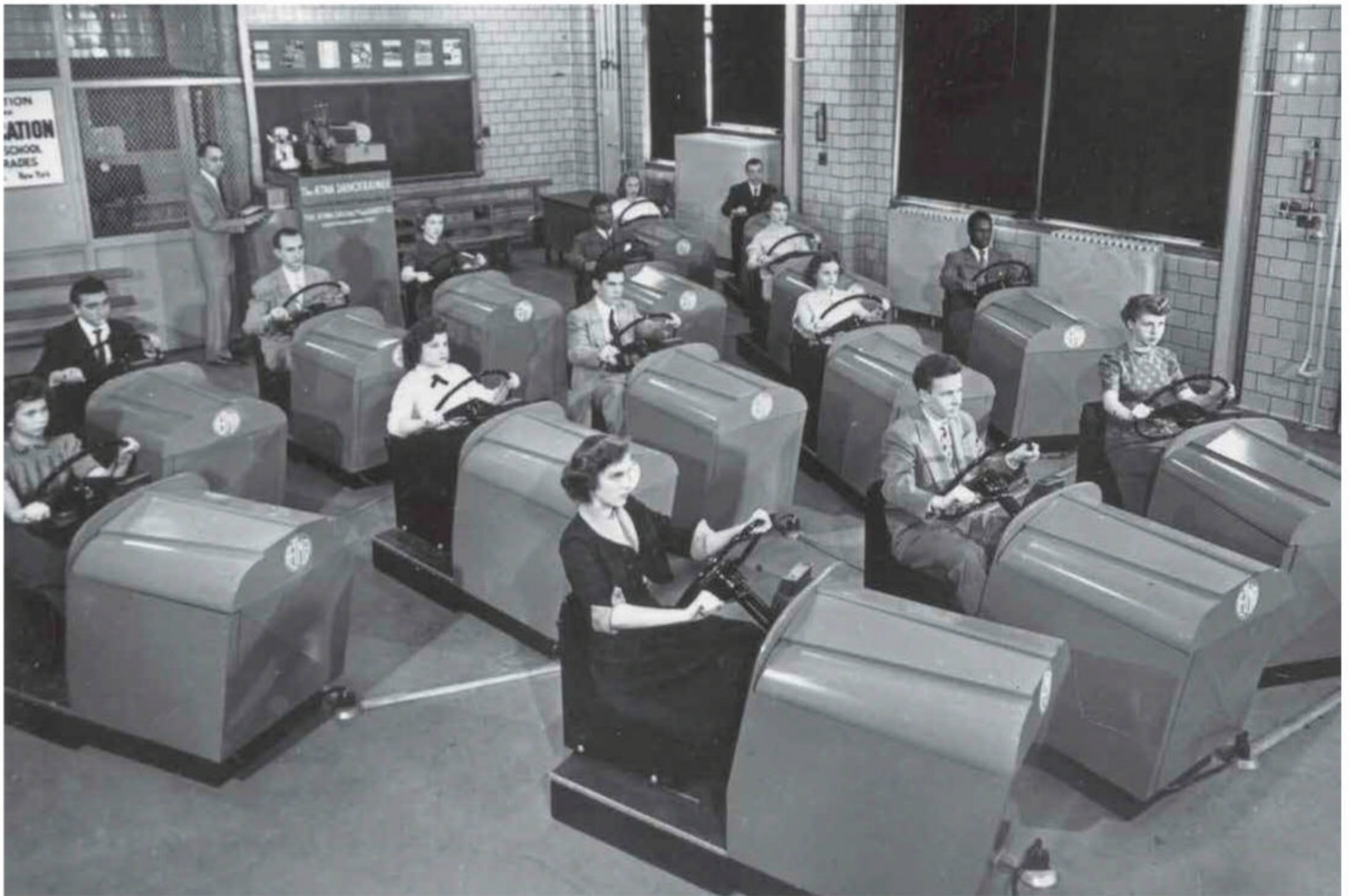
Erdmann has always been self-possessed, Mehta says. As a child he would talk about wildlife "ad nauseam", and even as a six-year-old he wasn't afraid to argue with his dad's marine conservationist colleagues about the ocean. "I used to fantasise he'd be the next David Attenborough," she says.

At the moment, Erdmann is leaning toward some kind of future in experimental design, including virtual reality and light projection, but he's open to seeing wherever this run takes him. The world's his oyster.

**Cruz Erdmann's winning photograph is on display at the *Wildlife Photographer of the Year Exhibition* at Auckland Museum until 10 May.**

M





GETTY IMAGES

# DRIVE, SHE SAID

After two decades of fear and procrastination, a new-year goal finally gets ticked off.

TEXT — LEILANI MOMOISEA

**O**n a steep backstreet in Manurewa almost 20 years ago, my heart raced as cars backed up behind me. My left hand shook as it gripped the gear stick, and my foot planted on the brake was almost cramping from fear and stress.

I was a learner driver attempting the dreaded hill start. Instead of a smooth take-off, I managed an impressive, though unintended, wheel spin and then bunny-hopped slowly around the corner.

But this wasn't the end of the suffering for me or the drivers I was sharing the road with. I rolled up to a busy roundabout at about 30km/h, with clammy

palms and sweat beading on my forehead, screeching to a stop before dutifully looking right and left about 50 times. An angry man behind me honked, hurrying me into the flow of traffic before I felt ready. As I fumbled through the gears, trying to indicate and steer at the same time, I spotted the angry man still waiting to enter the roundabout. I drove around it once more so I could look him in the eye and give him the finger.

It's a miracle that I managed such multitasking while being such a poor driver. It's a bigger miracle that I didn't crash. My sister, known for her calm and patience, was my driving instructor that day. She laughed the whole way, but she also decided that my roundabout road rage was the last straw. The lesson ended and it would be years before I tried learning to drive again.

I somehow made it through university and the start of my working career with just a learner's licence but the embarrassment of having to show it as a form of ID to club bouncers finally spurred me into getting behind the wheel again. This time the car had automatic transmission, and though the driving instructor said I drove

perhaps a little too cautiously at times, I passed my restricted test on the first go.

This did nothing for my confidence though, and my dislike of driving, fear of failure and general habit of procrastination meant almost 10 years would slip by again before I'd work up the courage to take another driving test.

Over these years, I have avoided right turns at all costs. I will circle the block 10 times to avoid having to parallel park. And I will gladly add an extra 10 minutes to my journey if it means avoiding a busy intersection. I was happy to drive between the hours of 5am and 10pm forever. But this new year caused a rare flurry of inspiration to write out a to-do list of hopes and dreams.

In what seemed like apocalyptic times, as our sky turned orange while Australia burned, ticking off some very basic life goals provided a kind of soothing distraction and purpose. Stop drinking Coke, walk 10,000 steps a day, get fit, get my full licence. Only one of those things has been achieved. The driving instructor said I hesitated a little too long at the roundabout. But he gave me my full anyway.

M





**After you've  
designed your  
dream kitchen...**

**@noel leeming**



# SEX IN THE GREY ZONE

Consent is a necessary but not sufficient basis for good sex.

TEXT — MADELEINE HOLDEN  
ILLUSTRATION — AMY NEAVE

**L**isa, a 30-year-old writer living in Auckland, recalls a difficult sexual experience that took place when she was 18. “I went home with somebody I met in a bar, and we had pretty average drunk sex,” she says. “Then I woke up in the morning, and he wanted to have sex again.” Lisa (not her real name) remembers giving non-verbal cues that she wasn’t interested — pretending to be asleep while he touched her, rolling away — before telling him expressly that she was hung-over and feeling too sick to have sex. “He said, ‘That’s okay, you can just lie there.’ So then I just let him have sex with me, and left.”

Lisa’s experience is as common as it is difficult to talk about: sex that falls in the space between coercive and merely unenjoyable, where labels like “rape” or “sexual assault” feel too strong, but where “bad sex” — the way you might describe sex that was simply boring or embarrassing — feels minimising. Lisa says that morning “wasn’t this awful, damaging experience”, but that it was still “quite gross”, and she found herself thinking about the incident often. “It occurred to me years later,” she says, “that there’s something quite messed-up about how that person conceptualised sex.”

This is the bad-sex grey zone: a liminal space falling short of rape where, as Lisa puts it, “that kind of disregard is so common that it’s uneventful,” especially for women sleeping with men. For example, a man badgers a woman for sex until she eventually tires and submits to a sexual encounter she doesn’t want, or he persuades his drunk (but not blacked-out drunk) girlfriend to indulge a fantasy she wouldn’t ordinarily be comfortable with,

or ignoring the non-verbal cues that should make their partner’s discomfort, pain or simple lack of interest obvious.

The most high-profile example of the bad-sex grey zone is the encounter between Aziz Ansari and an anonymous woman known to the world as Grace, who told babe.net in 2018 how he pestered her to touch his penis and perform oral sex. “I know I was physically giving off cues that I wasn’t interested,” she said. “I don’t think that was noticed at all, or if it was, it was ignored.” Grace compares Ansari’s sexual mannerisms to those of a “horny, rough, entitled 18-year-old” and describes the night as “violating” and “painful”.

Because the encounter was reported at the height of the #MeToo movement, and because, after some equivocation, Grace eventually decided the encounter amounted to “sexual assault”, dozens of commentators decried the report as evidence that the #MeToo movement had “gone too far”. *New York Times* columnist Bari Weiss diagnosed it as just “bad sex”.

That sex is often so bad that women leave encounters crying and feeling confused, grossed out and empty is worth talking about, but it’s difficult to do so freely and honestly within the punitive framework of the criminal justice system, where sex is understood in binary terms — consented to or not; sexual assault or not — and in which people are deemed either criminal or innocent. There’s little leeway to discuss sex that’s harmful, unethical and even dehumanising unless it’s also criminal, or to create better models for understanding what good, mutually enjoyable sex looks like.

In an article for digital magazine *Aeon*,

philosophy professor Rebecca Kukla argues that the consent model “distorts our understanding of how a great deal of sex is initiated, including in particular pleasurable, ethical sex”.

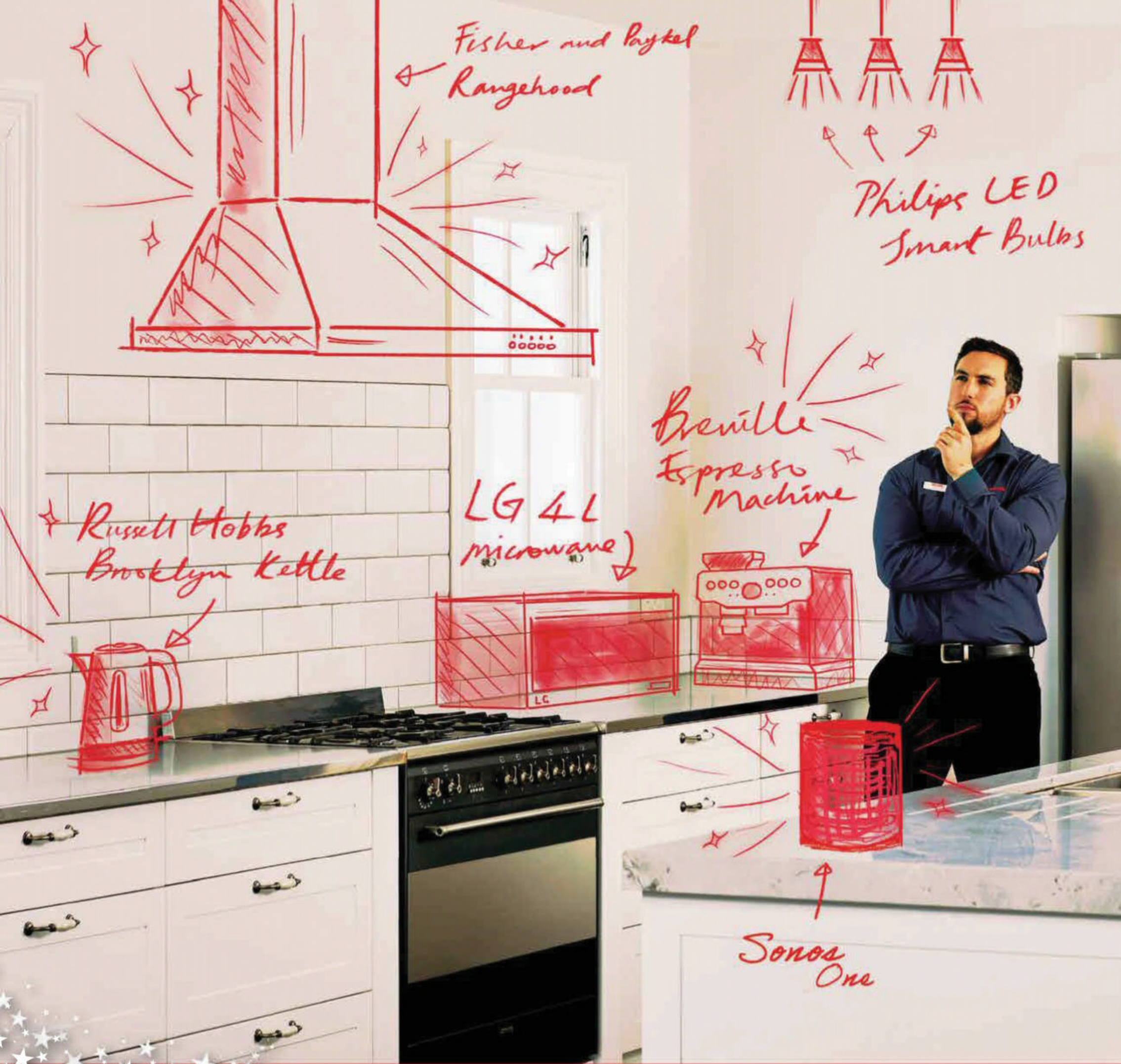
“Ideally, we communicate about all sorts of things other than *whether* to have sex, including what sorts of things we like to do during sex, what we definitely want off the table, whether we are having fun, what we want to adjust as we go, when we want to stop, and much more.” She’s a fan of safewords and thinks they should be used more widely than just in the BDSM encounters for which they were developed.

Kukla says consent is a necessary but not sufficient basis for ethical, let alone good, sex, and to move beyond the conversational impasse created by the consent model, she suggests we use the framework of invitations instead. Invitations “create a hospitable space for the invitee to enter” and it is widely understood that invitations can be freely turned down. “If you turn down my invitation,” she says, “I get to be disappointed, but not aggrieved.”

Imagine how rude and inappropriate it would be to pester a friend to attend your dinner party after they declined, how strange and disconcerting it would be to get them drunk before asking, how sinister it would be insist they stay at an event they weren’t enjoying. Why, then, should sex be any different?

“The thing that really stood out to me is, why did that guy want to have sex with somebody who would just lie there and not be enjoying it?” Lisa says. “At best, that seems really sad, and at worst, it’s quite harmful.”





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# FAKE IT UNTIL YOU MAKE IT

Is it too much to expect of our politicians that they will tell the truth?

TEXT — MORGAN GODFERY

ILLUSTRATION — ELECTRA SINCLAIR

**Nothing drives left-wing nerds wild like a graph that isn't to scale.**

Twitter lights up when a television news poll makes it seem as if the Labour-led Government's lead over the opposition is smaller than it really is. The same thing happened when a National Party bar graph made it appear as if rent rises under Labour were larger than they really were. The misrepresentations were minor, sure, and in the race to the fake-news bottom, Boris Johnson in the UK and Scott Morrison in Australia still hold a commanding lead.

But for how long? Deputy Prime Minister Winston Peters spent February picking fights with the media, condemning the stories about the New Zealand First Foundation as "fake news" and defending a "dirty politics" hit, initiated by the party he leads, on journalists Guyon Espiner and Matt Shand. The National Party is in on the act, too. Last year, Helensville MP Chris Penk falsely said the Government's abortion bill would allow abortions up to birth. In defending the falsehood, party leader Simon Bridges said "one person's misinformation is another person's fact". Does that sound familiar?

Some commentators, such as Bryce Edwards, argue that National "increasingly relies on stoking culture wars". We know Simon Bridges will chase any passing car. Abortion? He's running. The cannabis referendum? Woof, woof. But "culture war" issues, such as abortion or the cannabis referendum, are incidental; the chief characteristic of this year's politics is "fake news".

When Papakura MP and possible leader-in-waiting Judith Collins sent a tweet linking to an actually fake news story, Bridges did nothing to reprimand her. The article, claiming France was abandoning age-based sex laws when its government was actually strengthening

them, was obviously wrong. But in the National Party 2017-2020, pushing fake news isn't an offence. I suspect the party strategists actually think it's a good tactic. Even Labour MPs seem to be trading in minor fakery: former broadcasting minister Clare Curran picked a fight with her opposite from Dunedin, National's health spokesperson Michael Woodhouse, over whether or not he was seen campaigning at McDonald's one night.

This is a trivial matter, but the signs are worrying. Last year National's statistics spokesperson, Jian Yang, sent out a press release suggesting Statistics New Zealand was "hiding" something and the agency should "come clean". At the time, the Chief Statistician was under fire for the alarmingly low completion rate of the census. Fair enough. But National used their criticisms of census completion rates to publicly dispute new electorate boundaries.

In New Zealand, this is largely unheard of. In the past, politicians and the people who run elections would come to a consensus on what are matters of state. This time National was threatening to smash that consensus. And fake news begins when we reject the old consensus, whether on matters as important as

electorate boundaries, as trivial as a bar graph's scale, or as essential as the idea that truth exists. When politicians reject the old norms, such as the responsibility not to mislead the House, fake news almost inevitably follows.

Our political system is vulnerable to fake news and con artists because we enforce very few hard rules. Our unwritten constitution is made up mostly of conventions. Even "The Prime Minister" is a convention, in that it exists in universal practice but doesn't exist independently in legislation. How we form governments in post-election negotiations conforms to rules no harder than expectation and necessity. This is why Peters can use his leverage as the key coalition partner to prevent Labour and the Greens from criticising his "fake news" rhetoric over the New Zealand First Foundation.

I'm not suggesting written and entrenched constitutions such as the US's are better, but seeking to call attention to how dangerous fake news is. I think I speak for every New Zealander in writing we don't want a Trump hack. Or a Boris bro. Or a ScoMo fan. We just want people who'll tell the truth — every time.

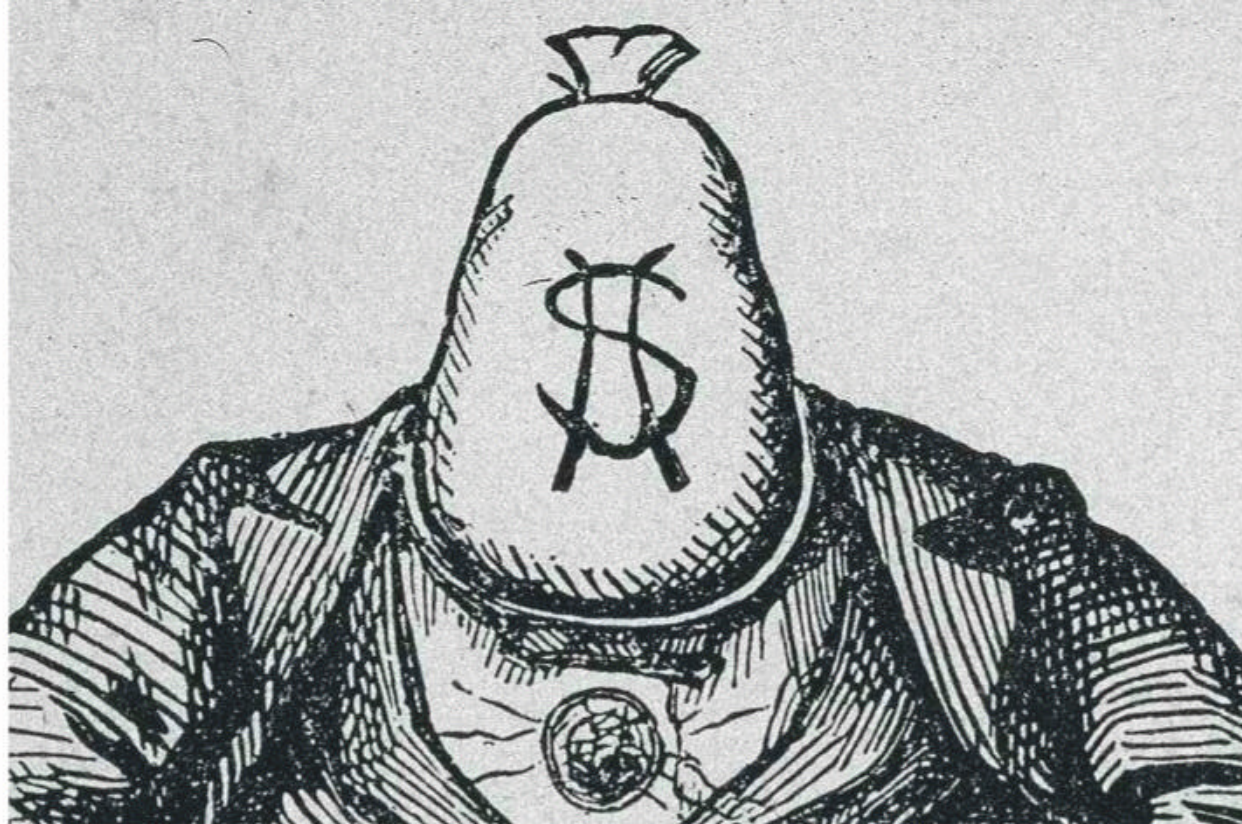




# MONEY GAMES

The police and Serious Fraud Office seem finally to be taking alleged corruption seriously

TEXT — MATTHEW HOOTON



GETTY IMAGES

**The good news is that people associated with parliament's biggest party, National, and its most powerful, New Zealand First, are under investigation by the Serious Fraud Office (SFO). Charges have already been laid against the former lot.**

This is a big change from the past 20 years, when the authorities' most common response to alleged wrongdoing by the political class was to publicly acknowledge it had happened but declare it "not in the public interest" to do anything about it.

The seriousness with which the Electoral Commission, police and SFO have taken the recent scandals involving people associated with National and NZ First suggests the electoral finance regime may now finally be working and, if convicted, the alleged offenders are likely to get jail time. The motives of those using the current investigations as a pretext to call for yet another review of the law governing taxpayer funding of political parties can therefore fairly be questioned.

People give to political parties for a range of reasons. The most common is still ideological, or at least partisan, fervour, though it may also just be habit — they give to the blue, red, green, black or yellow team because they always have. Others spread the love around, buying tables at corporate dinners for a number of parties, either out of a genuine desire to support democracy, or more likely because they are political tragics who have moved up the corporate or socio-economic ladder enough to flick \$5000 here and there.

Particularly among immigrant communities, for whom a snap with President Xi, Prime Minister Modi or President Trump would be unobtainable, a few thousand dollars for a photograph with the Prime Minister, or potential Prime Minister, is a bargain, and the main parties are more

than happy to strike a deal. Similarly, youth-wing activists have historically sold hundreds of hours of pamphlet-delivery labour for a single photo with the Dear Leader. Such photos may look impressive in a boardroom or sinister on TV but they usually record an exchange of only a few seconds. John Key could do hundreds in a night, all with the same plastered grin.

Critics of the system correctly say that it favours parties that pitch for wealthier voters, but the stronger effect is to advantage the governing party or the one that looks likely to be governing in a few months. It can also help to have a popular or even just quirky leader, whether Jacinda Ardern or Don Brash. Money in politics tends to follow success rather than vice versa, as Gareth Morgan and Kim Dotcom have proven so conclusively. Nevertheless, the electoral finance disclosure rules are meant to make the fundraising process transparent and to place downward pressure on donations from any one individual. The SFO charges against National's former chief whip and three of its donors indicate it is now prepared to take seriously allegations that those rules have been abused.

The murkier cases involve money being related more directly to policy. A flow in one direction ("Gee, I like your environmental policy; here's \$10,000") is democracy working; a flow in the other ("Here's \$10,000 if you vote against the new environmental protection laws") is a breach of sections 102 or 103 of the Crimes Act. If you do that deal as an MP, you risk up to seven years in jail; if you do it as a minister, it's 14 years. The person who pays the bribe to the MP or minister is also at risk of up to seven years' imprisonment.

These provisions in the Crimes Act have probably not been tested by the authorities as often as they should have been — former Māngere MP Taito Phillip

Field, sentenced to six years in 2009, is the only case in recent times. New Zealand prides itself that it is number one on Transparency International's index for lack of corruption, but we overlook that the annual survey is based purely on "perceptions", not evidence or analysis.

In practice, the bigger the party, the broader its base and the more stable its ideology, the less possible it is for money to buy its policies. No amount of money is going to make National abandon dairy farmers or Labour the unions, or get the Greens to support the oil and gas industry. Micro-parties are theoretically most at risk of being paid off to support Big Tobacco over the Ministry of Health, Greenpeace over Federated Farmers or Taipei over Beijing, and that can make a huge difference if they make it to Parliament.

No system is perfect. Politicians will game whatever rules are in place and people will usually only be caught if there is a whistle-blower. Even with state-funding of political parties — which would benefit existing parties over disrupters, and which we sadly already have for those in Parliament — there would continue to be incentives to raise more on the side for polling, media training, advertising creatives and the like. It is almost impossible for such spending to be tracked if kept outside formal party accounts.

This year's moves — especially if they result in convictions and custodial sentences — will do more to cleanse the system than any further bureaucratic reviewing, "reforming" or raiding of the taxpayers' purse. Party officials, fundraisers and donors will all be much more careful. And hopefully, the election campaign can be about things like schools, hospitals, law and order, the environment and tax rather than mudslinging over scandals to which the authorities seem finally to be giving proper attention.



# PINK MOON

Using a menstrual cup is a simple way to cut waste destined for landfills, though you may need to call a friend to help you get started.

TEXT — ELLE HUNT

ILLUSTRATION — ROBERT WALLACE

**They say a journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step. I just still don't know why I chose to take mine in the ladies' toilets at work.**

I was, for the first time, attempting to install inside myself a Mooncup: a bendy silicone vessel that is inserted into the vagina to collect menstrual blood. Feeling mounting guilt over my tampons' monthly contribution to plastic waste, I'd been moved to give it a go by the happy coincidence of a friend's rave review and an online deal for a two-pack.

Though the Mooncup quickly becomes easy to use, I'd been told there is a knack to it that takes a couple of goes to master. But the opportunity to practise came just once a month, and I was impatient and overconfident.

Your first attempt, I now know, should not be made in one of two toilet cubicles serving a female staff of 50, when your absence from your desk will definitely be noted. It sounds obvious, but this was only dawning on me then, as I realised with horror, that the bloody thing was stuck.

The Mooncup, folded in on itself on entry as instructed, had not unfurled inside of me like a delicate flower as the booklet at my feet had indicated it would. Instead, it seemed, on inquiry, to be on its side, my exploratory finger coming up against a wall of smooth silicon. Nothing to grip. Nothing to push. No way to pull it out.

With mounting panic, I pictured the worst-case scenarios: being discovered in the ladies after a staff-wide search, having to explain the sorry saga through door, my boss herself using a circular saw to break me out of the cubicle. (In my distress, my inability to dislodge the Mooncup had become conflated with my inability to unlock the toilet door.)

My friend once forgot to take out a tampon before sex and had to have it removed in A&E. Would that be where I'd wind up, too? And all for trying to do my bit for the environment?

I had been using tampons since I was 12, making consistent progress towards the total of as many as 14,000 used over a lifetime of menstruation, the vast ma-

jority of which ended up in landfills — a steady trickle of waste, leading from me to an already overburdened planet.

The thought had bothered me, as had the accumulative cost of tampons (by rough estimates, nearly NZ \$3000 over a lifetime and the faff of having to keep one on your person. I had wished for another way — and my friend Ally had seemed to deliver.

I had known Ally for years. She was one of those conscientious, plugged-in people whose endorsement — whether it be of a GP or a brow product — you knew to act on without hesitation. And Ally had raved about her Mooncup: its ease of use, its convenience. Indeed, most of the product's astonishing sales growth — 98% in five years — has been through word-of-mouth.

You popped the cup in, let it fill up, took it out and emptied it — sometimes only once a day — then repeat as needed. No more worrying about being caught out without a tampon, she'd said — no more tampons, full stop. You were catching the leak at the source, and the







cup was estimated to last a decade. If, of course, I ever managed to get it out.

I silently cursed the corporations whose short-term thinking and single-minded pursuit of profits had passed responsibility for reducing plastic waste onto consumers. And I cursed Ally, too — in real time, over iMessage. This was, after all, exactly the type of emergency that you justified taking your phone into the bathroom with you for.

Fortunately, Ally was also one of those people who texted back immediately. With her direction and emoji of encouragement, I was able to upend the silicone cup into what was clearly its correct position: it was secure and imperceptible.

I returned to my desk unnoticed after what might have passed for an early lunch break, both enormously relieved and quietly triumphant.

Five years and some 60 periods later, it is hard to reconcile my panicked first time using a Mooncup with my effortless command of it now.

Trains, planes, nightclubs, music festivals — no bathroom is a barrier, and

the tampons that rolled around at the bottom of every handbag and drawer are long gone.

It is only when another woman asks me for one that I am reminded that not everyone has made the switch — despite my best efforts. Today I am as much of an advocate for the menstrual cup mission as Ally, having helped at least two friends to switch over, and they have had their own converts too.

That is, between us, thousands of tampons already saved from landfills — and what's more, we'll probably never have to return to them.

Of course — what with carbon emissions, rising sea levels and entire continents seemingly on fire — even if all the world's menstruators made the jump to Mooncups, it would not be enough to reverse the harm being done to planet Earth, or even significantly reduce it. That task is also too often framed as the responsibility of individuals when only governments and corporations can effect change on a scale large enough to have any significant impact. But, nonetheless,

many of us want to do something rather than nothing, and unlike many superficially eco-friendly measures, switching to a menstrual cup entirely replaces a detrimental activity with a sustainable one — no one is going to be 'cutting back' on tampons.

Using a Mooncup (or otherwise making your red flow more green, such as with washable pads) also quickly becomes habitual, far more than remembering your reusable shopping bags or coffee cup every time you leave the house. It is a regular, recurring commitment to doing good — the equivalent of authorising a charity to make a direct debit instead of flicking them the odd \$20 whenever you feel flush or guilty.

Now that I have mastered my Mooncup, the memory of those tense 20 minutes in the ladies' toilets is a reminder that change sometimes requires us to get a little bit uncomfortable, with help from others, and then to pay the favour forward.

But maybe wait until you get home to start.

M



BARFOOT  
THOMPSON &  
LICENSED REAA 2008



DIVERSITY

PEOPLE

FAMILY

COMMUNITY



*Auckland*



**OF THE** year!

**THE** 100 best,



**MOST**

*interesting,*

**MOST**



*powerful,*

**MOST**



*influential*



*people* **OF 2020**

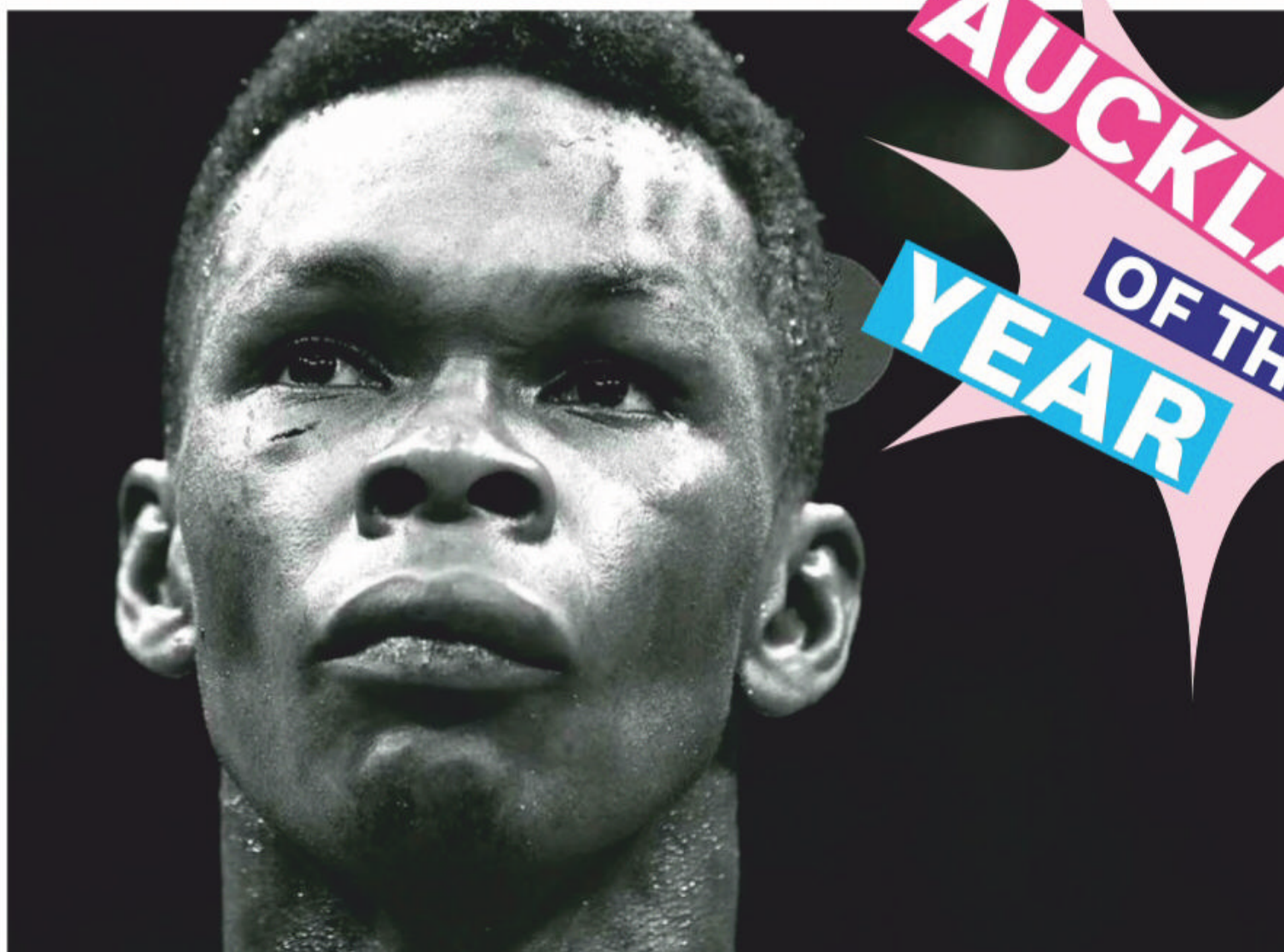


*We've chosen 100 Aucklanders leading the way in 2020 – a tall order in a city of nearly 1.7 million people. You may not like or agree with all our picks – it would be strange if you did – but whether they're making waves or ruling them, designing clothes or tailoring opinions, killing it on the world stage or battling for justice right here at home, we think you'll agree each is a force to be reckoned with.*

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KEY **THE BELTWAY** **THE OPINION-SHAPERS** **THE HIGHBROWS** **THE TASTE-MAKERS**  
**THE DO-GOODERS** **THE ENTERTAINERS** **THE FASHIONISTAS** **THE JOCKS**  
**THE MONEY MAKERS & INNOVATORS** **THE CITY SHAPERS & PROPERTY BARONS**

## *The Jocks!*



**01. ISRAEL ADESANYA** He's an embodiment of many of the things we want Auckland to be in 2020 and beyond. He's smart, he's sharp, he's funny. He's strong, he's flexible, he's resilient. He's literally a world-beater. Undefeated. For his size, he's the best on the planet at what he does. He's New Zealand's Sportsman of the Year, and his "If I win, you win" speech at the Halberg Awards is going down as one of the most memorable New Zealand sports quotes of all time. While we can understand the squeamishness some might feel in aligning our city, which we hope to be peaceful and nonviolent, with someone who (consensually) enacts violence for a living, watching Israel



fight is to watch a physical genius, a dancer and a monk and a warrior all in one. And he's a star. There's no one in Auckland in 2020 with more charisma, more momentum, more raw power. If he's in the room or on the screen, you're not looking anywhere else. He was born in Nigeria to an accountant and a nurse, who moved the family to Rotorua when he was 10. At 21, he moved to Auckland to train at City Kickboxing in Mt Eden. At 30, he became the UFC middleweight world champion and the only person in Auckland to pull off a bright orange McLaren.



**02. BEAUDEN BARRETT** He hasn't even played a game for the Blues yet, but every story around the team seems to involve speculation on whether, when he finally does, the star All Black can turn its fortunes around.

**03. EUGENE BAREMAN** The mastermind behind Adesanya's rise, as well as the proprietor of what's right now the most successful MMA gym in the world (see page 44).

**04. KARL BUDGE** There is no other sports administrator, definitely not in New Zealand but possibly anywhere, with a more glowing reputation in the media than the tournament director of the annual ASB Classic. And he's put a bonkers proposal forward to the powers that be for next year.

**05. MARTIN STEWART** While there are constant rumblings about the war for sports screening rights, Sky TV still very much has the upper hand, with rugby remaining firmly in its possession (it was a masterstroke giving away a chunk of the company to NZ Rugby to lock them in). CEO Stewart has doubled down on sport since he arrived, backed women's sport, got rid of the protectionist mindset and tried to give consumers what they want. Will that be enough?

**06. GRANT DALTON** The old man of the sea is very much that at age 62, but he still holds the management of Team New Zealand with an iron grip and will be prominent in the build-up to the America's Cup next year, which will see Auckland waters turned into ground zero for the most cashed up yachtsmen in the world.

**07. ELIZA MCCARTNEY** The Olympic bronze medal pole vaulter has been injured for the better part of a year and a half, but is still on track to make a comeback in time for the Tokyo Olympics. McCartney's popularity and marketability will mean that her face is going to be seen on plenty of screens between now and then.

**08. LISA EDSER** The Breakers had a crazy 2019-20 season, but it was far more good news in the run home than bad, and attendance shot up 38% over the course of the season — due in no small part to its chief operating officer.

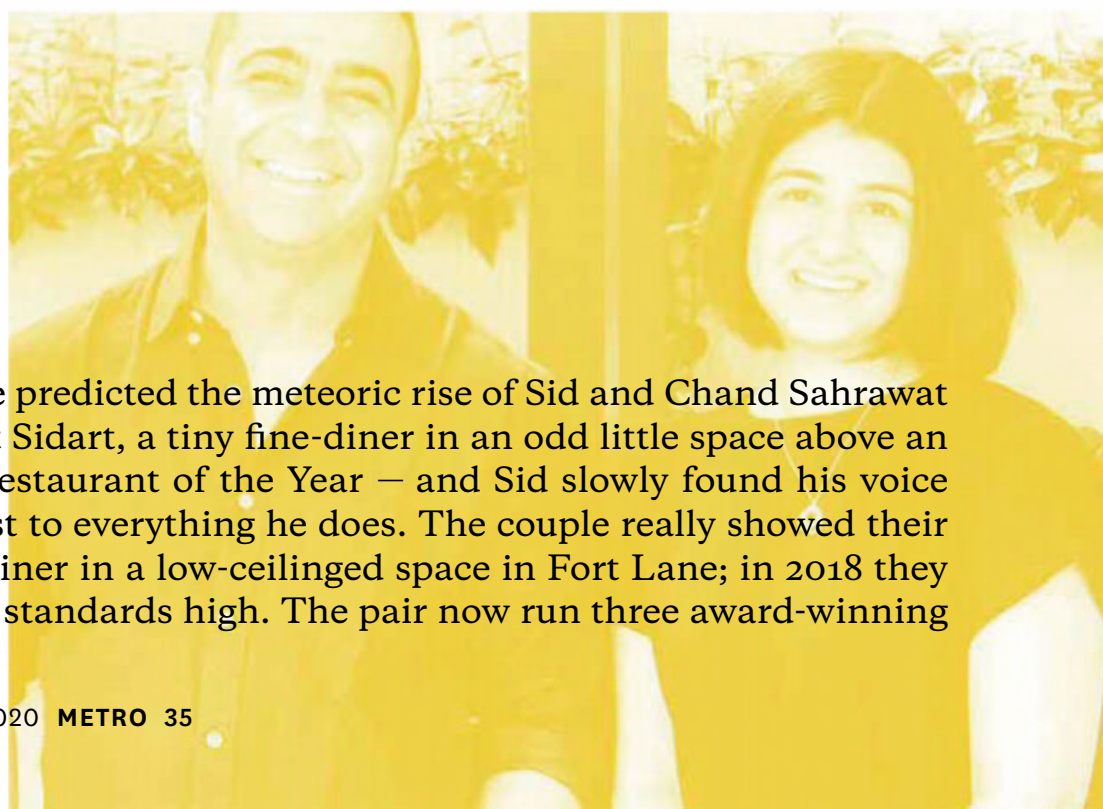
**09. GEORGIA HALE** Women's rugby league is quickly becoming a viable option for female athletes, thanks to the Warriors being part of the fledgling NRL Women's Premiership (NRLW) competition. The 24-year-old Hale is not only Warriors women's captain, but also won the 2020 Young New Zealander of the Year for her community work and multi-code sporting achievements.

**10. SONNY BILL WILLIAMS** The most high-profile code swapper of all time has gone back to his first love of league, in far-flung Toronto, for what might be his last stint before hanging up the boots. But SBW's image these days seems to be far more about projecting family values than anything else. His social media is awash with loving moments with his children, meaning that his influence from the other side of the world is still as strong as ever.

## *The Taste-Makers! (Literally)*

**01. AL BROWN** He may be a little out of the limelight, but Best Ugly is expanding, and if his recent additions to his retail line are anything to go by (his habanero mustard is highly recommended), he'll soon be a constant presence in your fridge.

**02. SID & CHAND SAHRAWAT** Few could have predicted the meteoric rise of Sid and Chand Sahrawat when Sid left his head chef position at The Grove to start Sidart, a tiny fine-diner in an odd little space above an arcade in Ponsonby. Awards followed — including our Restaurant of the Year — and Sid slowly found his voice as a chef: these days, there's an unashamedly Indian twist to everything he does. The couple really showed their chops when they opened Cassia, a smart-casual Indian diner in a low-ceilinged space in Fort Lane; in 2018 they bought iconic fine-diner The French Café — and kept the standards high. The pair now run three award-winning





restaurants: if you want to eat something fancy in this town, there's a good chance you'll pay them to do so. But they're not averse to controversy: a couple of years back they used their Restaurant of the Year speech to make an impassioned plea against the Government's tightened immigration policy. We look forward to their next opening.

**03. RICHARD SELDON** The guy who oversees the restaurants at SkyCity, the deepest pocketed restaurant owners in Auckland. **04. JAMES AND JANENE DRAPER** The owners of Farro Fresh have changed the way bougie Auckland shops, and can make or break local artisan food and beverage producers. **05. NADIA LIM** Responsible for what's on the stove in a huge chunk of Aucklanders' kitchens each night. Who else has managed to leverage a reality TV win into a genuine empire? (No, Art and Matilda, your weird paleo store doesn't count.) **06. AL KEATING** A huge reason no-one features as often in our Top 50 Cafes as Coffee Supreme. (RIP Good One.)



**07. ED VERNER** The best chef in Auckland and owner of the best restaurant in Auckland (to be re-evaluated next issue), if anyone's going to put Auckland on the global high-end food map, it's Ed and his restaurant Pasture. **08. SAMMY AKUTHOTA** Who doesn't love this guy? The K' Rd king has cemented his status as a hospitality guru with the opening of the Hyderabad Hotel — you know, that new bar you've seen on the feed of every Instagram influencer in the city. **09. MIMI GILMOUR** The CEO and founder of Burger Burger (who previously built and sold Mexico) has transformed Auckland fast-casual dining and upscale franchising. **10. MORVEN MCAULEY** Whether you're a restaurant owner, a sommelier, an editor, a writer, a brand-manager, a distributor or retailer, the best food and beverage PR/marketer calls, you answer.



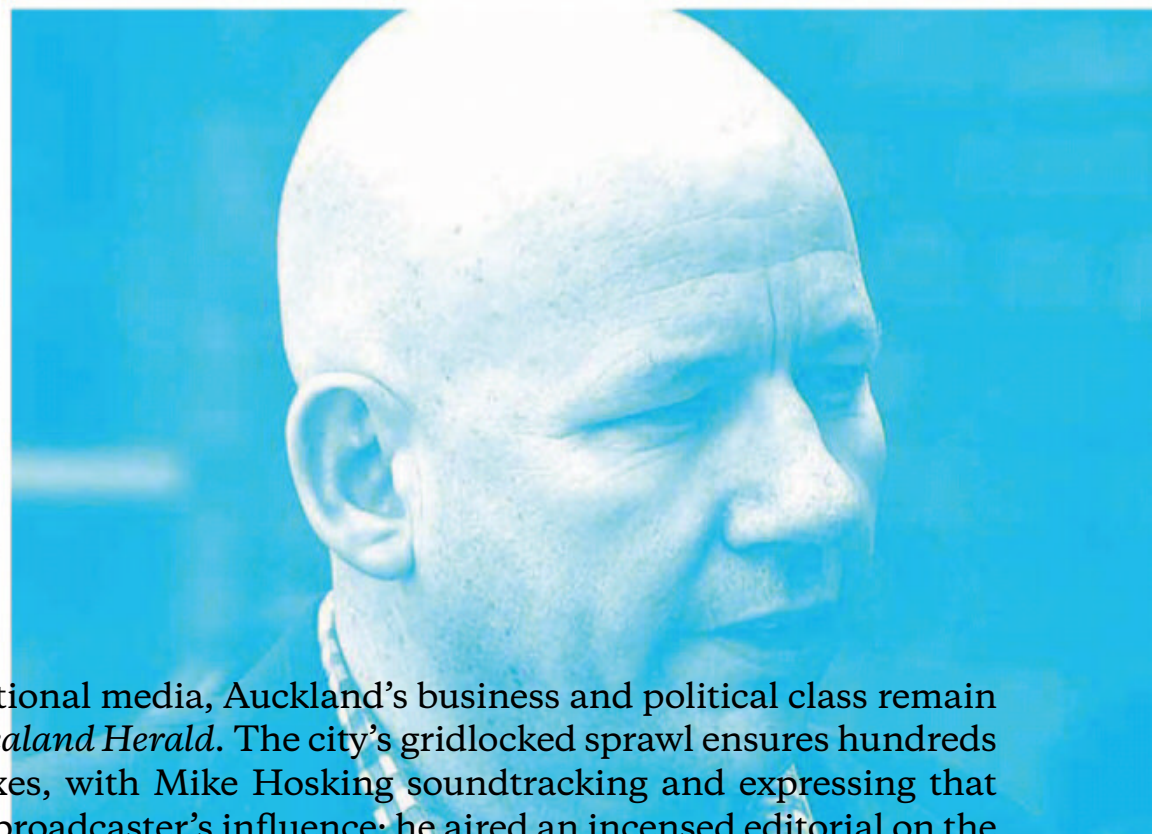
## *The Beltway!*

**01. JACINDA ARDERN** Though our own Morgan Godfery negged her by calling Winston Peters her “co-prime minister”, Jacinda Ardern's soft-power influence is unparalleled locally and globally, even if she wimped out on a capital gains tax. **02. PHIL GOFF** Yes the Super City's CCO structure has largely disempowered the mayoral throne, but he's still mayor of the largest (and we think best, most powerful, most influential and most interesting) city in the country. He's put through targeted rates to fix some problems, he's helped convince central government to pay for infrastructure, and reforms to the CCO structure could empower him further. **03. NIKKI KAYE** She's been Auckland Central's MP for 12 years, beaten Jacinda Ardern twice, and is the obvious favourite this election. She's also piling on council for its, in her mind, disorganised, disruptive development programme. **04. CHLOE SWARBRICK** She's been the coalition government's surrogate in the cannabis referendum and, since her rise in 2016, has inspired countless young Aucklanders to engage in politics (and pissed off countless New Zealand boomers). **05. SEAN TOPHAM** His digital marketing firm, Topham Guerin, helped get Boris elected in the UK, influencing the way campaigns will be run here this year. Left-wing New Zealand is so scared of him, many have claimed, with no evidence, that National have already hired him.





**06. PAUL MAJUREY** He's one of the country's best negotiators — so much so, the government should send him to Washington DC to secure that elusive deal, a free trade agreement with the world's largest economy. Under Majurey's leadership, the influence of Pare Hauraki — the collective tribes of the Hauraki — extends from the Coromandel to north of Auckland and back again to just south of Tauranga. That influence, or those "interests" to use the Treaty settlement term, causes some friction with iwi that share claims to the same land and resources. What is Hauraki doing here, iwi from Tauranga Moana were asking in 2018? Some iwi in Auckland ask the same question. But Hauraki's claim to interests is undeniable, and under Majurey's leadership they've forced the Crown to formally recognise and provide for them, creating space everywhere from the Maunga Authority to first right of refusal over crown properties. Paul Majurey gets what he wants. — *Morgan Godfery* **07. STEPHEN TOWN** It's the chief executive of Auckland Council's last year as the city's string-puller. Let's see what he can do. **08. ADRIENNE YOUNG-COOPER** The new chairwoman of Auckland Transport has one of the toughest, most thankless, no-win jobs in the city. Be brave Adrienne, be brave! **09. PIPPA COOM** Doing her best to turn Auckland into a cycleway (which we like, BTW). **10. CHRISTOPHER LUXON** Twenty years ago we'd have already run a cover story with the headline "New Zealand's Next Prime Minister". Today, we'll give him one line: watch this space.



## *The Opinion-shapers!*

**01. SHAYNE CURRIE** For all the turmoil in traditional media, Auckland's business and political class remain in thrall to two institutions: Newstalk ZB and the *New Zealand Herald*. The city's gridlocked sprawl ensures hundreds of thousands of us begin our days trapped in steel boxes, with Mike Hosking soundtracking and expressing that frustration to many. Earlier this year you could map the broadcaster's influence; he aired an incensed editorial on the pace and direction of the city's transport transformation. Within days, Simon Wilson, Hosking's ideological opposite, had expertly refuted much of what he said. Auckland Council followed that with a full page ad in the *Weekend Herald*, defending and explaining their work. NZME made money off every piece of that. Currie pilots the whole machine, ensuring Auckland remains a company town for his organisation. As managing editor of NZME he's overseen the launch of Herald Premium, built a powerful alliance with TVNZ and ensured neither RNZ nor MediaWorks has anything like the hold on this city that his properties claim. Of all the major private media companies, his is best-placed to weather this storm, thus its hold on the city's elite is only likely to increase over time. — *Duncan Greive, The Spinoff*





**02. MIKE HOSKING** Love him or hate him, his opinions are arguably the most well-read, not only in Auckland but throughout the entire country. When you can get whole offices repeating your talking points as often as he can, whether they agree with you or not is beside the point. **03. KEVIN KENRICK** With TVNZ poised to meld with RNZ to create some kind of state-funded media behemoth, he may soon find himself helming the only television network with a viable future. His commercial orientation may not fit perfectly with an ad-free media operation, but his aggressive online push has paid dividends, and what happens with TVNZ will affect the fortunes of many other media companies, particularly MediaWorks. Imagine being the guy who decides what the entire country gets to watch on the telly every night. **04. SIMON WILSON** The former *Metro* editor is now something of a Hosking-antidote at the *Herald*, and about the only political commentator with any clout who consistently advocates for the government and/or council actually spending money to get stuff done — an important voice with a clear vision in a sea of naysayers. **05. ANNABELLE LEE-MATHER** Behind every killer story from Māoridom you'll likely find Annabelle Lee-Mather, usually alongside her former *Native Affairs* teammates. Also a global hit-maker responsible for seeing potential in something that others didn't and bringing us the pure joy and delight that is *The Casketeers*. **06. STACEY AND SCOTTY MORRISON** Doing the most to revive the te reo Māori, by spreading it far and wide — on TV, in classrooms, and (we're told) over email if you've got the contact. **07. JESSE MULLIGAN** Got a job in media? It'll probably be his job soon. Loved by RNZ afternoon listeners and *The Project* viewers, respected by comedians, and influential in food circles, he's truly multi-platform. **08. MIRIAMA KAMO** Another multi-programme, multi-format, multi-platform juggernaut. She's pushing for more Māori voices on mainstream media, waging her own war on waste. Pity about the unconsented yurt on Waiheke. **09. DUNCAN GREIVE** The Spinoff's founder and managing editor has pivoted of late to writing almost exclusively about the state of the media industry, and few people get the read of the room better than he does. He's built a thriving ecosystem of talented writers and creators, managed to get people to pay to support it, and is a powerful backroom influence in many "future of media" discussions. **10. MIRIYANA ALEXANDER** Unlike Trump, the *Herald*'s head of premium has built a wall and is making them pay for it. Tasked with not only restoring Auckland's newspaper of record's credibility in the eyes of many of its readers, but proving the paywall model can work for online media companies. If she can pull it off (and if Stuff comes into the NZME fold), then maybe the news industry can stave off collapse for another few years. No pressure.



## *The Highbrows!*

**01. JENNIFER WARD-LEALAND** Not only Kiwibank's New Zealander of the Year for 2020, she's a 40-year theatre veteran who has put her considerable influence in the industry to good use, most memorably in 2010 when she co-fronted the fight against the "Hobbit law", despite threats it would derail her career (it didn't, and the law was eventually altered to allow for collective bargaining). She's the head of the actors' union, a theatre patron, a trust board member and a director as well as an abundantly talented actor. She's also a committed Pākehā advocate



for the revitalisation for te reo Māori, part of the reason for her Kiwibank win, and while some critics kicked up a bit of a stink about it (not unjustifiably), others came to her defence, including Anabelle Lee-Mather (see page 38), who called her “the very best Treaty partner” on Twitter. **02. JENNY GIBBS** Money makes the art world go round, and she’s got (and donates) a helluva lot of it.



**03. ELEANOR CATTON** Look, does it really matter whether you finished *The Luminaries* or not? Catton, the youngest ever winner of the Man Booker Prize, has done more for New Zealand’s literary reputation globally than anyone else of her generation. **04. SUE GARDINER** With the Chartwell Trust, she not only helps the local ecosystem of artists and galleries survive, but its longterm loan to the Auckland Art Gallery ensures there’s local contemporary art on display at all times (and it’s usually often the best thing on there). **05. HELEN CLARK** She’s the Twitter power-user who saved Concert FM, yet doesn’t want concerts at Eden Park. Go figure! **06. MICHAEL PAREKOWHAI** Auckland’s most visible and influential artist. Remember the *Herald* publishing article after article railing against *The Lighthouse* until \*gasp\* Aucklanders actually liked it? **07. NEIL IEREMIA** A dancer, choreographer, and founder and artistic director of Black Grace — the predominantly Māori and Pacific Island dance troupe renowned around the world and sold out whenever it returns to Auckland (which it is in this year’s Auckland Arts Festival performance, *Verses*). **08. MICHAEL LETT** He has the best stable of contemporary artists of any contemporary art gallery in the city, maintained by his creativity, generosity and support. **09. PAULA MORRIS** Doing the most to spot the next generation of literary talents and holding the whole damn scene to account. **10. DEREK GEHRING** The landlord of Samoa House, he’s helped provide a space for studios, artist-run galleries, and a fine-arts library when the University decided to close its one.

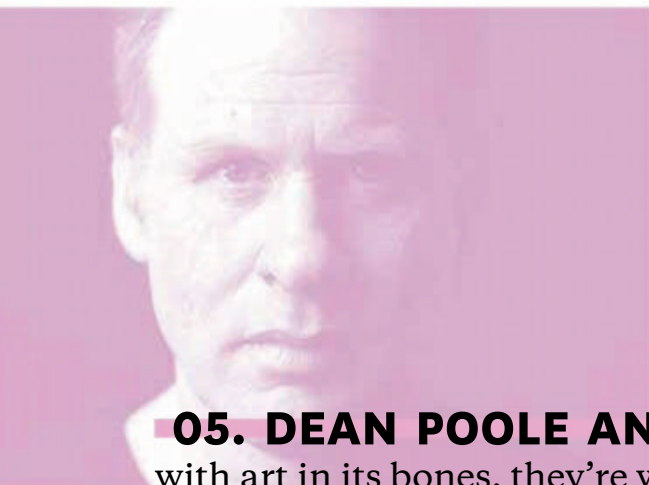
## *The City Shapers & Property Barons!*

**01. JOHN COOP** The head of New Zealand’s largest and arguably best architecture firm Warren and Mahoney, Coop presides over an increasingly global company and has had a hand in some of the biggest developments in the city, from Giltrap’s stunning showroom to the massive Commercial Bay development to the potentially cursed International Convention Centre. **02. PETER THOMPSON** His family company is involved in about one in every three houses sold in Auckland. And what he says about the property market and what his company’s data suggests seems to have a major impact on its fortunes. **03. MICHAEL FRIEDLANDER** Owns huge tracts of Ponsonby Rd and K’ Rd — probably your favourite restaurant/shop’s landlord.



**04. PANIA NEWTON** Five years ago Pania Newton was fresh from law school, planning to take up a job in an Auckland practice. Five years later the Auckland University alumna, who never took up that job in legal practice, is one of the most influential Māori people in Auckland. Newton, together with her cousins and comrades in the “land protectors” group SOUL, have reshaped Māori activism for the 21st century, using social media, provocative messaging, and old-fashioned organising to rally to thousands behind their mission to save Ihumātao — the earliest site of human settlement in the Auckland isthmus — from a 480-home development. In a testament to Newton’s influence, figures ranging from Dame Tariana Turia to Ōrākei legend Joe Hawke are behind her cause. The government, too, is doing its best to resolve the issue at Ihumātao, perhaps in the small fear that if Newton puts her influence to electoral politics Labour could be in trouble. — *Morgan Godfery*





**05. DEAN POOLE AND BEN CORBAN** The designers behind Alt Group, a truly world-class agency with art in its bones, they're why so much you see in the city — from the Auckland Art Gallery's deceptively simple brand to the annual pop-up public art project POP — looks the way it does. **06. SCOTT PRITCHARD** He's the CEO of Precinct Properties, which controls most of downtown and is about to begin another era with the opening of Commercial Bay... soon? **07. CLIVE MACKENZIE** The head of Kiwi Property, New Zealand's biggest commercial/retail landlord, thinks it can fix the housing crisis. Fingers crossed! **08. CAM PERKINS** The head of the council's City Centre Project Design team, he's recently allowed pedestrians to, as Phil Goff says, "not pull your shoulders in" on High St after a successful trial to widen the footpath. The council is sensitive to the "war on cars" sentiment. But he's got big plans to take the pedestrian-friendly approach across the CBD, making it a place for people to sit, stay, drink, eat and wander, rather than a place for cars to drive through and park in. **09. NAT CHESHIRE** He's not a qualified architect, but only because he doesn't want any limitations. Whether it's holiday homes up north or hot-to-trot hospo developments in industrial wastelands like Morningside, he (along with his dad Pip) is guiding Auckland's updated modernist-industrial aesthetic. **10. JEREMY SALMOND** If a heritage building has been saved in Auckland, he's probably had a hand in it.



## *The Entertainers!*

**01. PARRIS GOEBEL** A choreography genius to the megastars — music videos featuring her work are some of the most watched on YouTube (Justin Bieber's "Sorry": 3.3 billion views) — she recently choreographed the Super Bowl for Jennifer Lopez, is mates with Rihanna, and she still has The Palace Dance Studio in Penrose (which includes her dance crew the Royal Family, three-time World Hip Hop Dance Championship winners). She has also recently moved into modelling, having signed with IMG Models in the US, which represents names like Bella Hadid and Gisele. Goebel is the latest face of MAC NZ and Australia, so expect to see her face on billboards and bus stops for a while yet.



**02. ROSE MATAFEO** She's been killing it overseas for a few years now (Edinburgh Comedy Award in 2018, US television stand-up debut last year) and could fly home tomorrow and walk right into any TV job she wanted.



**03. LORDE** *Where is the album, Ella?* But seriously, she could take another three years off releasing new music and her Instagram stories would still make the front page of the *Herald's* website. **04. ANIKA MOA** She's jumped from station to station since killing it on Māori TV with her show *All Talk*. Everyone wants her, she just wants to have a fucking good time. **05. MADELEINE SAMI** A comedy veteran, she has probably had a hand in every new show/production/stand-up comedy routine you've seen and liked in the past five years. **06. DAVID FARRIER** In subject matter, format, and platform, he's blazing a very modern path to success through the contemporary media landscape — weird documentaries, weird Netflix shows, weird podcasts. **07. BAILEY MACKEY** With his production company Pango, he tells New Zealand stories to New Zealanders and, increasingly, the world. **08. NIGEL LATTA** The charming, sensible centrist voice which helps a not inconsiderable chunk of us decide where we sit on some of our most important social issues. **09. LAURA DANIEL** From *Jono and Ben*, *7 Days*, to *Funny Girls*, to *Two Hearts*, to being the first celebrity contestant on *Dancing With The Stars* to be hired as a judge on the next season, to *Seven Sharp* — is there anything funny she can't do? **10. JEREMY WELLS** Powering a broadcast career now in its third decade with his naughty-boy charisma alone. Would easily win in a fight with Mulligan.

## The Fashionistas!

**01. MAGGIE HEWITT** Hewitt wasn't the first to get on the sustainability train, but she's arguably the New Zealand designer doing the most right now at a local, global and luxury level to push the ethical style conversation forward — and encourage the wider local fashion industry, including established names, to look at its own practices. With her brand Maggie Marilyn, the bright young Aucklander is a staunch and vocal advocate of transparent supply chains and local manufacturing, exporting a uniquely Auckland style to the world from her Newmarket showroom. All those candy colours and silky dresses you're seeing around town (and on Instagram)? That's Maggie. Since 2018, the brand's wholesale packaging has been made from biodegradable cassava root bags, expanding last year to include biodegradable retail packaging. All textiles are ethically sourced and recycled, and the brand has a sustainability strategy which is in line with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Maggie Marilyn clothes are stocked globally (including online at Net-a-Porter) and big names like Michelle Obama and Meghan Markle have been snapped wearing Hewitt's pieces. **02. PARIS MITCHELL & GEORGIA CHERRIE** The designers and owners of local brand Paris Georgia have enjoyed a slew of international press. Their pieces are being worn by an insane number of celebs, including Kendall Jenner and Solange Knowles — not to mention every scenester eating at Lilian, Céleste or Clay will be wearing at least one item from PG's latest collection. **03. DONIELLE BROOKE** The founder of retail site Designer Wardrobe, Brooke is changing the way we shop, in part by offering a clothing rental service, which the company pivoted to last year. She started the business after being diagnosed with thyroid cancer several years ago, and has turned it into a mini empire. **04. DAN AHWA** Telling you what to wear, buy, watch, read and eat every Wednesday in *Viva*. Ahwa has styled shoots for a slew of magazines in his 10-year career, including Jacinda Ardern for UK *Vogue*, and has his eye on where our fashion scene's roots are and where that means we're headed — as seen in last year's collaborative exhibition with designer Doris de Pont, *Moana Currents*. **05. GRACE STRATTON** The brains behind All is for All, a website curating New Zealand designers' pieces for those with disabilities, so they can shop online for high-end, fashionable clothing while knowing exactly how each piece is made so no stray buttons or long zips will catch them off guard after purchase. The site uses imagery featuring models with disabilities, and also offers consulting services for brands and companies who are looking to make their own websites more accessible.



**06. SAMMY SALSA** Stylist to some of NZ music's biggest stars and a vocal advocate for diversity in the fashion industry, Sammy Salsa has been a fashion tastemaker for years. He's styled runway shows, advertising



campaigns and magazine shoots as well as musicians including Ria Hall, Hollie Smith and Ladi6, and was last year a New Zealand Fashion Week ambassador. **07. KATE MEGAW** Every season, Penny Sage is ahead of the pack, and iterations of Megaw's inventive cuts, dreamy fabrics and bold designs always end up on the racks of other designers' later collections (whoever the buyers are at Glassons, they're definitely drawing "inspiration" from Penny Sage). Megaw not only designs but makes her clothes in New Zealand, a rare, expensive decision reflecting her integrity on the fashion scene. **08. KAREN WALKER** No other local designer could convince us to drop close to half a grand on a pair of sunnies. A few wobbles recently, but still sitting at the top of the fashion food chain after all these years. **09. MANAHOU MACKAY** The first Māori transgender model and the first openly trans person to be signed to a modelling agency in New Zealand full stop, Mackay has been blazing trails in the three years since she blew up NZ Fashion Week. Now killing it in Sydney. **10. SONJA BATT & MARILYN SAINTY** Scotties boutique has been around since 1978, meaning Batt and Sainty are the OG fashion influencers in this country, bringing the best of international fashion to our shores from a time long before you could know what was on trend just by checking Instagram. Responsible for half the wardrobe of every fashion-forward New Zealander over 50.



## *The Do-Gooders!*

**01. NICK LOOSLEY** Everybody Eats founder Nick Loosley is Kiwibank's 2020 New Zealand Local Hero of the Year, two years after first establishing the charity that takes good food which otherwise would have gone to waste and turning it into three-course restaurant-quality meals. Anyone can pull up a chair and dig in at their volunteer-run restaurants; Everybody Eats' pay-as-you-feel model ensures the charity's sustainability and facilitates a sense of community where diverse diners gather together in one space. Everybody Eats' original operation is based at Gemmayze St, and runs only on Mondays, but Loosley recently added a second, permanent, space in Onehunga which opens for dinner five days a week. Since its inception, Everybody Eats has served over 30,000 meals and saved more than 30 tonnes of perfectly fine food. Pretty good, we reckon. **02. STEPHEN TINDALL** Putting some of his vast fortune into environmental causes to help combat climate change (shout out to Trees That Count) and investing over \$100 million into local start-ups trying to find better ways of doing things, he says he wants to leave the world in a better place than he found it, and so, it seems, do his five kids. **03. JACKIE CLARK** There's no one quite like the pack-a-day smoking, foul-mouthed, deeply caring Jackie, and we'd wager there's no single person doing more on-the-ground, frontline work to help women get out of violent situations than she is with the Aunties. **04. CAMDEN HOWITT** The co-founder of Sustainable Coastlines regularly gets his hands dirty for beach clean-ups and tree plantings, but it's his education schemes in schools and at the flagship building in Wynyard Quarter that are likely to have the biggest impact. **05. TED MANSON** He grew up in a state house, runs one of the most successful commercial property development companies in the country, and now he's trying to fill the state's housing gap by dedicating \$160 million to build houses for those in need. **06. GAEL SURGENOR** The head of the Southern Initiative, a council scheme that has been lauded internationally for trying to find ways for South Auckland to share in the region's economic growth, she leads a team looking holistically at inequality. From teaching parenting skills to creating business incubators to pushing new procurement policies that will benefit those in deprived communities, she believes that what's good for the south is good for the country. **7. MATT LOWRIE** The heart and soul of Greater Auckland, he has championed better public and active transport options for years and managed to find favour with many politicians through the Congestion Free Network. Advocacy journalism at its most effective. **08. EDWARD UINI** Homelessness is as much a loss of dignity as it is a lack of food and shelter. And Orange Sky aims to provide that dignity — and an empathetic ear — through its mobile laundromat and shower service.

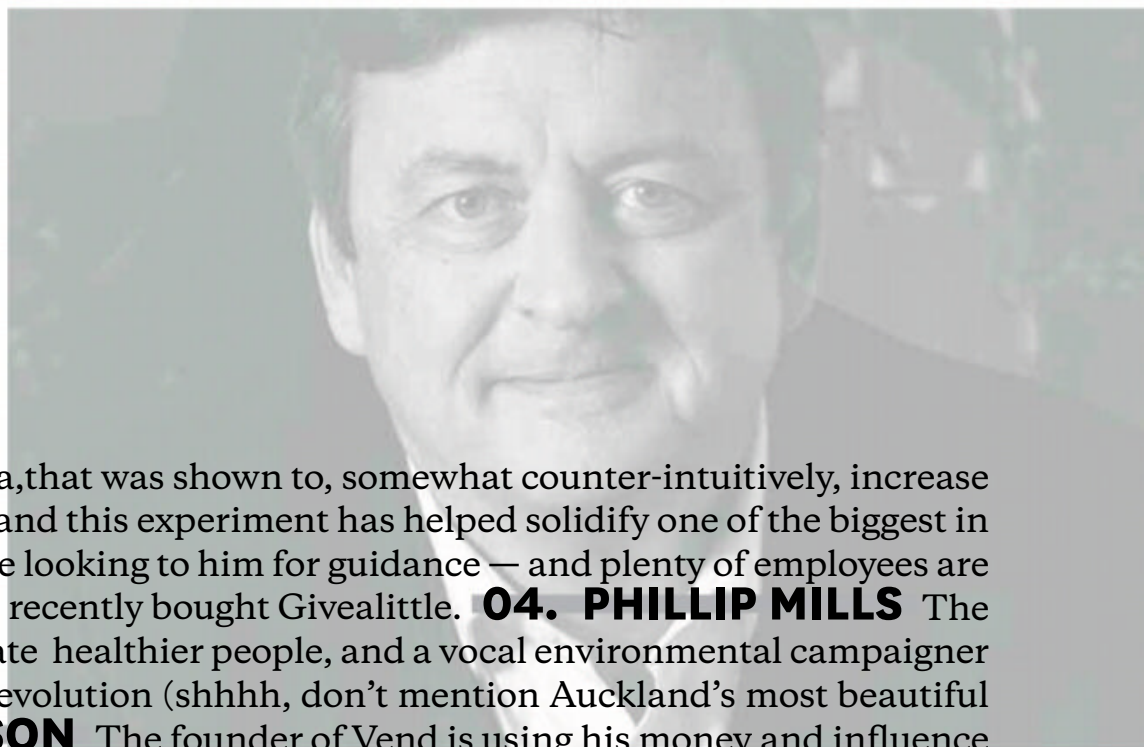




**09. JAZZ THORNTON** Using her own experience of abuse and attempted suicide as fuel for speeches, documentaries and books, her story of survival is helping others fight their demons. **10. KEVIN BULEY** In some places, zoos are a cruel anachronism, but in New Zealand, and at Auckland Zoo helmed by Buley, there's no denying the important role they play in conservation and helping connect an increasingly urban population to nature.

## *The Money Makers & Innovators!*

**01. SAM STUBBS** The outspoken CEO of Simplicity regularly comes out swinging against the finance industry, calling for harsher regulations, more transparency on fees and fewer investments into industries like arms and alcohol. And he's getting results. But it's not at the expense of performance: the not-for-profit is among the best in most of the products it offers. **02. THE MOWBRAYS** With Zuru Toys zeroing in on US\$500 million in sales — and as owners of the Chrisco/Dotcom mansion — Nick, Mat and Anna are well ensconced in New Zealand's entrepreneurial establishment. And they're not stopping at toys. They smell more opportunity in nappies, pets and hair care. **03. ANDREW BARNES** The founder of Perpetual Guardian has become a global media darling after a trial of the four-day work week, with academics there to capture the results. Its success means it has been rolled out



permanently, and Barnes is now a big booster for the idea, that was shown to, somewhat counter-intuitively, increase productivity. Businesses are loath to miss out on a trend and this experiment has helped solidify one of the biggest in the commercial world at the moment. Plenty of bosses are looking to him for guidance — and plenty of employees are probably asking their bosses when they'll get a turn. Also recently bought Givealittle. **04. PHILLIP MILLS** The true leader of the global Les Mills cult, which aims to create healthier people, and a vocal environmental campaigner through Pure Advantage, which aims to create a green revolution (shhhh, don't mention Auckland's most beautiful car park in Victoria St). **05. VAUGHAN FERGUSSON** The founder of Vend is using his money and influence for good — on things such as STEM education for kids, pushing for more diversity in tech and buying a big lodge in Raglan and calling it the Institute for Awesome. Bonus points for switching to his mother's maiden name because, as he told the *Herald*, "most of what I do in life is due to her and how she inspired others". **06. DR MARK SAGAR** The mayor of Uncanny Valley, Sagar is giving artificial intelligence a human face — quite literally — through Soul Machines. He's won Oscars for digital effects at Weta, and now he's winning clients and charming investors with his "digital humans". Even the police have one now. **07. MARU NIHONIHO** Māori, woman and tech company founder is an unfortunately rare combination of words. But the founder of game development studio Metia Interactive, who has made it her mission to tell more Māori stories in game form, and used tech to help treat depression, is trying to change that. **08. ALIESHA STAPLES** The "It girl" of VR/AR and mixed reality in New Zealand, the founder of Staples VR has created immersive experiences for a host of big names from the film and ad worlds and was named a future director by TVNZ last year. And her company's vRemedies use VR to prepare patients for operations. **09. JOLIE HODSON** One of a disappointingly small number of women CEOs in New Zealand, and in charge of one of our biggest companies Spark, her calls around whether to keep moving into media and take on Sky, or keep pushing 5G and take on Chorus, will have effects across industries. **10. ROBETT HOLLIS** Parlayed his pro snowboarding cred into production and property businesses and is now a walking opinion machine and social-media force. Polarising, for sure, but there's no doubting his passion for tech, his work ethic or his desire to inspire kids like him who need a hand up. **FOR MORE DETAILS ON METRO'S AUCKLANDER OF THE YEAR 2020 BROUGHT TO YOU BY BARFOOT & THOMPSON, GO TO METROMAG.CO.NZ** 



# IRON SHAR

TEXT — JAMES BORROWDALE  
PHOTOGRAPHY — CLINTON TUDOR

UFC has smashed its way to prominence in New Zealand, with a cluster of star fighters — including middleweight champion Israel Adesanya — winning global recognition. To the team behind the elite's success, however, star power counts for nothing.



**ABOVE—**  
From left, UFC middleweight champion Israel Adesanya, lightweight Dan Hooker, coach Eugene Bareman, flyweight Kai Kara-France and lightweight Brad Riddell, all of Auckland's City Kickboxing.



# PENS IRON







**ABOVE —**

Dan Hooker, seventh-ranked contender in the UFC lightweight division, grapples with an opponent at City Kickboxing in Auckland.



**T**owards the end, exhaustion seemed to almost win: the bodies dragged themselves up from the floor as if gravity had tripled in strength. But, in an instant, a new opponent appeared, and the fighters collapsed into tackles, the weight of their shoulders falling into their fresh antagonists' hips, forcing them to the floor. For 25 minutes — the length of the five-round Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) bouts middleweight champion Israel Adesanya and lightweight contender Dan Hooker would soon fight — coach Eugene Bareman marshalled the forces of his gym against his top fighters. Against the black padded wall — darker where his hot sweat was daubed across it — Adesanya wrestled, the grace of his long, liquid limbs searing into the mind like a catchy song. Hooker, slim-hipped, his angular but boyish face framed by the red strapping of the ear guards he trains in, appeared almost skinny, until he picked up an opponent to toss him backwards over his head, his biceps inflated with the effort.

Brad Riddell and Kai Kara-France, training for shorter three-round fights, had finished as subjects of the drill, but, after a quick break, joined their two-dozen or so teammates against Adesanya and Hooker. Riddell, also a lightweight, carries the stocky frame of a wrestler, and so perfectly embodies the Hellenic ideal, Roman nose included, he looks like an ancient vase brought to life. Kara-France is a coiled spring of a flyweight — power and strength compressed into a 1.65m frame — whose size soon made him hard to spot among the swarm of bigger bodies. “We’re pushed passed that wall,” he’d told me earlier about this drill, the “Spyda”, “and we can dip into reserves that are [usually] only emulated in the fight.” A week later, for Kara-France, Riddell, and Hooker, those fights were to arrive at UFC Fight Night 168, across town at Spark Arena; two weeks after that, Adesanya was to defend his middleweight title, in Las Vegas.

Bareman — barefoot, dreadlocks bunched behind a black baseball cap, stopwatch open on his phone — barked orders: “Change!” he yelled, and one man peeled away from the subject of his aggression for another to appear in his place, a fresh body against which to test the ever-weakening muscles of the men under the microscope. First sparring upright, then wrestling, then on their backs, punches rained upon them, as they endeavoured to twist their bodies in a way that would lessen the force of their opponents’ blows. “Change!” A new pair of fists arrived to seek for weakness. “Change!” “Change!” “Change!”

The fighter, alone in the ring against a sole opponent is a symbol of individualism. But, as this ritualised event neared its crescendo, City Kickboxing resembled a beehive’s interior, humming with collective effort in the cause of serving the queen, or, in this case, three of its princes and one of its kings. To learn how to most effectively hurt the human body, you need bodies to practise on. A visiting American wrestling coach told me, as much as anything, his job was to teach his students by fighting against them, signing over his own body as a tool to help them learn how better to force others into submission.

Bareman called time. Hooker raised his right arm in celebration as he sauntered aimlessly through the gym, his feet leaving fast-fading sweat prints on the mat before he crumpled against the wall. The ordeal he goes through to get to the fight, he had told me a couple of days earlier, adds a kind of ballast of suffering to his life that means he’s able to push himself further in a fight. He regards his preparatory suffering merely as a necessary part of the process, and is ambivalent to its pain. “What I’ve been

through to get here is too much to waste and look for a way out in the fight,” he said. “I’ve sacrificed months of my life, been through hell to get to here.”

Adesanya leaned in a corner, head resting on the bicep of an outstretched arm, and then retired through the open back door, stepping shirtless into the dappled sunlight of the street. The aroma of frying sausages — striking coach Tristram Apikotoa had slipped out to get the barbecue underway — cut through the dull bouquet of sweat, a syrupy reminder of the effort just expended.

**S**port helps humanity comes to terms with the potentials and deficits of these vessels that carry us through life. The beauty of high-level sport is in watching humanity’s finest physical specimens publicly reconcile us to the fact that we *are* (and don’t just *have*) bodies. I spent a week sitting at the edge of the mat, as these four fighters prepared themselves for the ordeal of the ring, where an austerity of limitations — this is sport pared back to the fewest rules possible, separated by four-ounce gloves — means its participants appear, to the uninitiated, to explore that theme with all the subtlety of an elbow bursting through drawn-together forearms to bloodily break a nose.

But you don’t “play” mixed martial arts (MMA), as you play rugby and cricket. It’s more elemental. While not all of us know what it’s like to score a try, or hit a six — all of us know having a body means to also know pain. “Everyone gets fighting,” Adesanya said one morning, sitting shirtless in the parallelogram of sunlight shining into City Kickboxing through the open roller door, across the road from the railway line in light-industrial Mt Eden. “Cricket, not everyone gets. Gridiron, football, not everyone gets.” And that, perhaps, is why mixed martial arts, driven by the UFC, is the fastest-growing combat sport in the world. “Fighting,” writes Joyce Carol Oates, “belongs to something predating civilisation, the instinct not merely to defend oneself ... but to attack another and force him into absolute submission.” We love to watch — or, at least, we can’t look away. “It’s just in our DNA,” Adesanya continued. “Everyone loves fighting.”

Then, Adesanya was two days away from being crowned Sportsman of the Year at the Halberg Awards. (Bareman was nominated for Coach of the Year.) I asked Adesanya a few days after the event what his victory meant for the sport in New Zealand. “For this country, for our sport here, it’s big, it’s huge,” he said. “We get to be recognised.” Bareman also thought it a watershed moment. “If we go overseas, [UFC] is a global phenomenon, and sports like rugby and netball ... take up a very miniscule part of the real estate, and then we come here and it’s the complete opposite. But that’s New Zealand, right? That’s how it is. It was a big step putting us alongside some of those big sports.”

Some quarters of talkback radio chattered with derision at the thought of MMA sitting alongside our treasured stalwarts: cricket, netball and rugby. Halberg judge Mark Richardson, a former cricketer, in his role as a host on *The Project*, said, “I believe UFC to be prison violence. I don’t like it at all.” The objection I think has to do with what the sport says about us: it cannot, because of its potential for brutality, be integrated into what we wish were true about ourselves. It tugs at an instinct many wish wasn’t there. “People like violence,” Riddell told me one morning. “It comes down to the base root that people do like violence, watching people fight.” Conflict, Hooker said, “is human nature ... As long as we’ve existed, we’ve been at war with each other.”

Even Richardson, despite his distaste, was moved to score





**ABOVE —**  
Adesanya training with fellow fighters at City Kickboxing.







Adesanya and Bareman highly; the incredible success of 2019 — Adesanya and teammate Alexander Volkanovski both winning titles; nine wins from the gym's 10 UFC fights, declared *MMA Junkie's* Gym of the Year — meant he had to. "It's had amazing growth, they're amazing athletes and I've got to take it seriously."

The UFC has arrived in New Zealand as a cultural force: the Halberg Awards confirmed it; Fight Night 168, which drew the biggest sports crowd in Spark Arena's history, was more proof. City Kickboxing is the engine room of that New Zealand uptake, Bareman and his coaches the men shovelling coal into its flames.

**O**ne morning, Bareman sidled up to tell me an interview with Adesanya would have to be rescheduled: six minutes late, he'd been sent home. "He was late and you can't participate in training if you are late," he told me later. Bareman, a quiet man with intent eyes, told me that Adesanya missing a training session weeks out from a title defence, when every element of his life — food, sleep, training — was calibrated to the finest detail, was "a big thing". Instead of Bareman's expert tutelage, Adesanya had to figure it out on his own that morning. At City Kickboxing, there are always consequences when its standards are transgressed: "It doesn't matter who you are," Bareman said. You have to abide by the rules."

It could — and perhaps at another gym, would — have been forgiven, the coach's self-interest in his fighter's immediate success might've overridden concern about the example being set. But Bareman is playing a longer game. City Kickboxing was established in 2007 and the culture he and his fellow coaches built during that gestation is, in his view, the reason for its success and far too important to surrender for the sake of convenience.

Too often, Bareman said, we hear of a gym's "family atmosphere" — but in his experience, few gyms live up to their own rhetoric: ego invades and stars get special treatment. His great achievement, with help from his coaches — Apikotoa, Doug Viney, Mike Angove and Andrei Paulet among them — has been to inculcate in City Kickboxing fighters, from amateurs to UFC champions, a sense of common purpose. The biggest part of that is a "selflessness", he said. When your own fight is over, "What matters is that there are other people that helped you get to that point, to give you those privileges, that need it paid back"

Every fighter is connected by this account of common sacrifice, to which each deposits and from which each withdraws. "It hasn't just been your journey to get there. It's been every single person that you've ever trained with, from whenever you got to this gym. You are completing a part of their journey because you've been a part their journey. And that's what you are drawing on; you're drawing on all the people that had input to get you to that point. Some of them have been training and pushing Israel for the whole decade he has been here ... Sometimes, for a lot of us, that is more motivating than doing it for ourselves."

It was, he said, much larger than the pinnacle represented by Adesanya, Volkanovski, Hooker, Kara-France and Riddell. (Another City Kickboxing UFC fighter, Shane Young, is injured.) When Bareman first opened the gym, he had to vet potential members — people he thought were coming for the wrong reasons: a desire to inflict violence or prop up an ego. But those people seemed to stop coming. He wondered why. Until, one day, he looked around his gym — likely to see Adesanya chatting with a fitness class, Hooker playfully tossing kids about, Kara-France talking with the parents of a kids' class — and an

epiphany came to him. Those people were still coming, but they were soon changed. As they learned that martial arts was not about violence, but about discipline, strategy and skill, and that everybody, in the right hands, was powerless, they began to shed those concerning traits. It was a profound realisation, and an achievement that no number of world champions would top. "The environment was vetting them, the environment was changing them ... I was like, 'Fuck, this is brilliant.'"

**A**t the age of 17, in his last year at Mount Albert Grammar, Kai Kara-France won his first professional fight, a head-kick knocking out his opponent at the Pitt Street YMCA. He went home to study for an exam the next day, but he was hooked: "I wanted to keep chasing that feeling." There was then no local blueprint for UFC success: Kara-France took off, basing himself in Phuket, and fighting in 13 Asian countries over four years, with a bout — in boxing, MMA or Muay Thai — almost every second week. He appeared in the 2016 edition of *The Ultimate Fighter*, the US reality TV show that acts as a UFC feeder, but wasn't picked up. He came home and joined City Kickboxing.

Bareman told him that if he put the hours in at the gym, the rest would follow. In 2018, he made his UFC debut, beating Elias Garcia in a bout declared Fight of the Night. He is now the eighth-ranked flyweight contender. "I wouldn't be here today if I didn't walk into this gym," he said. "[Bareman] just makes you realise what's important. You could go on holiday or you could just train — you know, what's more important to you? Do you want to make the UFC or do you want to enjoy your New Years or Christmas?" There was no festive break for him, nor Riddell, making his second UFC appearance, nor Hooker, the seventh-ranked lightweight contender. The Spyda I saw was the final major workout in a months-long training camp, during which the three of them had trained alongside each other and other fighters — amateur and professional — preparing for their own fights.

During the gym-wide sparring sessions, in which the swirling maelstrom of fighting pairs intermingle, swapping after each round, it becomes impossible to tell the amateur from the elite: a distillation of the Bareman method. "You'll get beaten up by the amateurs, and you won't even know," Kara-France told me one morning between training sessions. "You'd think this guy is a pro fighter, but nah, he's just a regular guy — he's got a desk job and he just comes in to get some rounds in."

It was a rare thing, Hooker told me, for a gym to be animated so electrically by that spirit of communality. He had a similarly peripatetic journey to draw on. "I've been through all Asia, trained in the US, trained in a lot of gyms, and you're not going to get that. You just don't get guys coming in on a Saturday night to help you out; you're not going to get guys coming in on a Sunday — that's their family time, that's their day off. Or after a big fight. In most of those other gyms, you won't see that fighter for another couple of months, until he gets a fight. But here, in this camp, the culture that the coaches have created, everyone is accountable to everyone else, so if I win my fight, I'll be back here next week helping Israel for his fight. And that's a culture that's been created. It's been mindfully created. It's not something that has happened by chance."

Nor was it created out of a sense of altruism. For Bareman, it's just the way he was taught a gym should function, and the best way to ensure success. "It's a culture solely conducive to producing high-level combat sports athletes, and it's all aimed



**BELOW—**  
Coach Eugene Bareman talks fighters through a  
finer point of technique.







**ABOVE —**  
Israel Adesanya, UFC middleweight champ and  
New Zealand Sportsman of the Year.







**BELOW—**  
Hooker soaks up the crowd's acclaim after his UFC  
victory at Spark Arena on February 23.





towards that.” For amateurs, proximity to the superstars — and the chance to spar with them, linking your story to theirs and becoming a link of chain in their battle-hardness — is thrilling. Everyone is treated the same, and it cuts both ways. At that same sparring session, I watched one pair of combatants careen across the floor, the mouthguard-muffled complaints of the aggressor — “Stop running away!” — following the other man as he tumbled among other fighting pairs. I lost them in the commotion. But when time was called, Bareman called out the fighter who fled to stand beside him, as a circle — there were 87 participants that night — formed around him. “Yoga classes are on Sunday, maybe that’s more your style,” he said, his student squirming with embarrassment, before condemning him to hundreds of burpees. He had, Bareman later told me, skipped out on the latter half of sparring. “You can’t do that. If you take, you have to give back equally. He won’t do it again, but also it’ll be a warning for other people. It’s all part of building this kind of culture.”

**T**he fighter must master the human instincts — to recoil from pain, to flee from danger — that help keep us alive. “You can hear that voice in your head,” Adesanya told me in our rescheduled interview, “‘You’ve done enough, you’ve rocked him, you’ve shown you are capable, you’ve shown you are hard, you’re tough, it’s okay, you can relax now.’ It’s self preservation; it’s the strongest instinct the human animal has.”

That voice, evolution’s echo, came to him in the fourth round of his fight against Kelvin Gastelum in the US in April last year. Before the fifth round, leaning against the cage, he sought the counsel of his comrades. First Bareman: “This is what we came for. This is what we do.” Pumped up, another echo pulsed in his brain. During camp, pushed beyond his limits and attempting to push further, Riddell had urged Adesanya to “Go numb, go numb!” In that moment in an Atlanta stadium, the words of his City Kickboxing teammate returned to reverberate in his mind — go numb, go numb. “I turn around and look at Kelvin ... I said, ‘You’re not going to beat me, I am prepared to die.’ And for me that was me signing my life away, and I meant that. If I died right there, that was a glorious death.”

It was a pact he made with the sport, with his opponent: “I’m not an evil person, I’m not a bad person, I’m not a psychopath ... but for me I was trying to take him out. It was me or him, and he could’ve done the same thing to me.” Adesanya, of course, won by unanimous decision to become interim champion. Later in the year, in Melbourne, he beat Robert Whittaker to make his dominance of the division undisputed.

A flashback to a teammates’ advice, received in a moment of pain, was the catalyst for overriding the escape route his subconscious had planted. I asked Bareman, who has previously witnessed the death of a fighter to injuries sustained in the ring, about that moment. He said he knew it sounded stupid — that Adesanya was prepared to die — but that really it was just a coded expression of the iron-clad will to win that his training had implanted, and, circuitously, a form of self-preservation. “If Israel didn’t respond in the same way he did — that I’m willing to die, I’m willing to make that sacrifice — if he didn’t respond like that I believe he wouldn’t have been successful in that fight. And he might’ve been hurt.”

**O**n the walk to the octagon, the fighter — equipped by his months of training, his priestly asceticism — becomes,

like a moth released from its chrysalis, his public persona. In the instant that Hooker became Dan “The Hangman” Hooker, draped in a New Zealand flag, his prefight bluster about “defending the land” suddenly seemed terrifyingly literal. His two City Kickboxing colleagues had already done their part — Kai “Don’t Blink” Kara-France by unanimous decision over Tyson Nam, a bloodied Brad “Quake” Riddell by split decision over Magomed Mustafaev. “This event is everything,” Bareman had told EMG Access in the lead-up. “Not just Dan, we have Kai and Brad, Kiwi born-and-bred fighters. It’s amazing. We’re the focal point of this event. The team is what this event’s all about.” It was up to Hooker to complete a clean sweep for that team.

“Respect is the appreciation of fear,” Hooker had told me a few days earlier. He’d come the closest of the fighters I spoke with to admitting that what he did for a living did, on some level, scare him: “If you go in without fear, you’d probably get knocked out very quickly ... You need to have a certain amount of fear, or a certain amount of respect for your opponent and his abilities going into the fight.” Instead of feeling pressure, he told me, he was thinking about the fight — his first UFC fight as the main bout — as an opportunity to showcase his skills to the friends, family, and fans who would usually only get to see them on TV.

The bell sounded. Metres from Hooker bouncing into battle, I realised how much I had come to like him and his teammates over the previous couple of weeks. Objectivity deserted me as his persistent jab found its target — the increasingly red nose and fast-swelling right eye of Paul “The Irish Dragon” Felder — until, reactively, I suddenly considered what I was cheering for: a stranger’s pain. “Knock him out!” the crowd chanted, during the second round, and then, during the third: “Fuck him up!”

Hooker’s right cheek swelled alarmingly, the blood under his right eye reminiscent of a Virgin Mary statue crying mysterious red. Both fighters by now wore the obvious tattoos of their battle.

By the fifth and final round, both fighters were forced into imprecision by exhaustion, Hooker was stumbling at times, a cascade of sweat bouncing off his forehead when he was caught by a shot to the head. The final act — possibly a decisive one — was for Hooker to wrap his opponent in his arms, forcing his back hard onto the floor in an enveloping tackle like those countless repeated in training. Exhaustion, during that final round, looked likely to beat both fighters; but it was Hooker, the judges decided, in a split decision, who was victorious. His fight-stained face relaxed in relief when his name was called, and he crumpled onto the floor as if his skeleton had dissolved. “I enjoyed myself,” he told the presenter when he had gingerly reanimated — but enjoyment, of course, had never seemed more subjective. He limped off to hug his family, and then to hospital; both he and his opponent, after five rounds of battle, needed to be checked out. Hooker later tweeted a photo of them side by side in stretchers: “Just a couple of dads putting bread on the table.”

And this is what City Kickboxing is about. The goal is to most efficiently liberate its members’ capacity for the martial arts, but Bareman and his coaches wrap that in higher human aspirations: respect, solidarity, camaraderie. It’s pleasing to know those noble things work, even if they are unleashed in the pursuit of something that fills many of us with unease.

“Look at what we’ve done,” Adesanya told me, “look at what we’ve created over the last two years. Even before that. A lot of people think, ‘They just blew up’, but nah, we’ve been cultivating this for years.”



On Waiheke Island, the future is on a collision course with the past.

TEXT — BOB HARVEY

**ILLUSTRATION — GARY VENN**



I'm travelling with Joe Billings, a veteran anti-Springbok tour activist. In 2010, he invited me to Waiheke to help lead a revolt against Rodney Hide and his bloody-minded plan to amalgamate all the Auckland councils in a single city. I'd just been fired as the Mayor of Waitākere, so I was up for it — I was all for an independent Waiheke and went from mayor to anarchist in a heartbeat. But we lost.

Billings is typical of many people who have gone to Waiheke to find a haven. It's still a place where you can see ponytails, kaftans and healing crystals and catch a the whiff of dope, but that old Waiheke now butts up against new Auckland money.

In her recent short documentary, *The Rocky Bay Store*, Eileen Lee traces the history of a dairy that, since the 1920s, had been more than just a place to buy newspapers and ice creams — it was the centre of a community. In 2002, it was sold to a new owner, who received council consent to demolish it. But residents barricaded the building with their cars, protecting it from the contractors who had come to tear it down, then went to court to get interim enforcement order preventing demolition and successfully lobbied to get the building listed as a heritage site. A few months later, the store burned down under suspicious circumstances. The ruins are still there. This was when the island united in

protest, Billings tells me. And it hasn't let up since.

**W**aiheke Island, 19km long and 92sq km in area, has a resident population of around 9250, and 3400 non-permanent residents. It's a lush island of rolling hills, wild bush, picturesque vineyards, dazzling gulf views and famous beaches. It's Auckland's biggest suburb and it's an island apart. Unlike Mt Roskill or Glen Eden, which have come to terms with their loss of independence over the last couple of decades, Waiheke is a community at boiling point, with conflict bubbling just below the surface.

Waiheke locals have always felt separate, distant and special. My father bought two cheap-as-chips sections on the island in the 1950s, and we would go once a month to mow the lawns. He never built a house, but he's buried there, so over the years I have got to know the locals and their gripes.



Cath Handley, the chair of the local board, is a wealth of Waiheke knowledge and she knows how the Council works. As we sit overlooking Oneroa, she tells me that the council-imposed bed tax is ruining accommodation on the island. She believes Waiheke should be exempt because of the large number of young Argentinians that make up a major part of the community and she feels that Waiheke is being disadvantaged by a tax that is really designed for the Auckland tourism sector. She has written a vigorous report in the local paper, *Gulf News*, to whip up support for yet another petition (there are five already in the pipeline).

Handley is a close friend of the newly elected Auckland Councillor Pippa Coom, a champion of cycling in Auckland who can be seen most weekends pedalling around the island's winding roads. Coom and Handley share common interests. They cheer on environmental and sustainable living. Together they showed the long-time councillor, former Auckland Regional Council chairman Mike Lee, the door.

Coom is clear about what the issues are on Waiheke: lack of infrastructure, housing and the rising conflict between tourists and locals. As a cyclist, she knows first-hand how difficult the roads are. They weren't meant for high volumes of traffic. They are twisting and hazardous. The locals also say the Fuller double-decker buses are too big to manoeuvre on the cramped roads. The buses service the vineyards, which do extraordinarily good business at weekends, and the remote beach destinations. Waihetians feel they don't get their fair share of the infrastructure dollar from the council and can often sound as if they expect a reduction on their rates and a subsidy on their ferry travel just for the privilege of living there.

The other tough political woman in this mix is National MP Nikki Kaye, whose Auckland Central electorate includes Waiheke. Like Coom and Handley, she is not frightened of a good scrap and when Fullers turned up on the island for a public meeting to try and resolve some of the issues that the islanders felt needed addressing she came with a credible agenda and was clearly well respected by the locals.

These three women are a fighting force for Waiheke, which needs all the support it can get as it faces a future when

tourism will collide with the reality of limitations on transport and sanitation. Waiheke, like Queenstown, has a global reputation as a tourists' paradise and the possible 35,000 internationals heading our way for the next America's Cup is a dream opportunity of hope and horror that needs to be managed, lest it turn into a nightmare for everyone else.

I'm sitting on the deck of Sir Rob Fenwick's Waiheke homestead talking about conservation and sustainability. Fenwick is one of New Zealand's most lauded environmentalists. He co-founded the organic composting company Living Earth and the bottling company New Zealand Natural. There has hardly been an issue of conservation in the past two decades, from the Predator Free 2000 movement to kiwi conservation, that has not brought people knocking on his door. Fenwick and his wife Jennie founded Te Matuku Oyster Company in 2000 and their home is above the bay of the same name where oysters are harvested from barges to be sold at the local village shop and throughout New Zealand.

Fenwick and his wife gave Auckland Council a walkway through forest teeming with native bird life on their Waiheke property. He reminds me that in *Islands of the Gulf*, New Zealand's first locally made television documentary back in 1964, presenter Shirley Maddock revealed that there were 40,000 new sections waiting for approval on Waiheke as soon as the new high-speed ferry service was running. She was interviewing Wes Burns who said "like it or not, Waiheke will be another dormitory suburb of Auckland". Wes, who has since died, was standing on what is now the Matiatia Wharf and behind him a large group of Hereford cattle were meandering along the beach. This year, Fenwick says, we have overshot Wes' prediction of dwellings by a factor of seven times.

Fenwick has made the island his home for 40 years and is incredibly proud of his block of more than 370 hectares, which he placed under covenant to prevent its being mined. This year, under Fenwick's leadership, Waiheke signed up to be predator-free by 2050. The locals have named the mahi Te Korowai o Waiheke. As Fenwick says, Waihetians are good at this sort of thing: they debate an issue to exhaustion, but when they sign up, they

are unstoppable. This one is a runaway success — 90% of Waiheke residents have signed up to the predator-free pledge.

As the long hot summer winds down, Waiheke will continue to attract thousands of tourists, who will line up to the ferry building and beyond. And locals will continue to argue with low-wage workers who scan their tickets if they're not allowed on the boat fast enough to ensure they can get their favourite seats.

Fullers, which has had a monopoly on transport and freight to the island, is unpopular with residents for frequent cancellations and increased freight charges. In January, massive cruise ships berthing at Auckland in the early morning created mayhem for ferry commuters. Fullers cancelled or delayed several sailings and the disruption was exacerbated by the cancellation of several Fullers ferries to Devonport because of unrelated mechanical failures. The space is simply too small for the big liners; there are videos of mini tsunamis in the basin caused by their wash. Auckland Mayor Phil Goff called an urgent meeting to get all parties around a table and on the same page: Fullers, Auckland Transport, the Harbourmaster and the cruise liner companies. It's a mess. And everyone seems to think everyone else is to blame. Fullers CEO Mike Horne says he's open to discussing the monopoly but he considers safety not open to negotiation. It can't be. In 2015, a ferry operated by Fullers and driven by an insufficiently trained master crashed into Devonport's Victoria Wharf, injuring 19. Add international cruise ships and it could have been a lot worse.

So where to now for Waiheke? This tortured, glorious floating suburb. The complexities of modern cities are tricky to navigate and the Auckland of the future is a very different beast from that of 20 years ago. The Super City is a mean monolith that needs and demands compliance for the benefit of all. If Waiheke is not going to be towed out to sea, it's going to have to learn to live within the Super City confines. The next two years are crucial for Waiheke, and for all of Auckland. Let's hope the council, Fullers and the residents, rise to the opportunity.





1947 EATERY, ACHO'S, APÉRO,  
ALBI BREWER'S LOUNGE, AN-  
NABELS, AZABU, BAR CÉLESTE,  
THE BEER SPOT, BROTHERS  
BEER, CARETAKER, CLAY, CLIP-  
PER, COCO'S CANTINA, COLEY  
AND PUNCH, COUNCH, DEAD-  
SHOT, DEBRETTS KITCHEN, FREI-  
DA MARGOLIS, FUKUKO,



# TOP 50 BARS 2020

Whether you're after a dirty martini, a hazy IPA or a skin-contact pinot gris, these are our favourite places for a drink or two — and maybe even a bite.

PHOTOGRAPHY — REBEKAH ROBINSON

OPPOSITE PAGE —  
Galbraiths, Eden Terrace

## KEY



OPEN LATE  
(PAST 1AM)



ESPECIALLY GOOD  
FOR DATES



ESPECIALLY GOOD  
FOR GROUPS

### 1947 EATERY

60 Federal St, City

The drinks list here is a leather-bound bible, the clasp opening up to a long list of curated cocktails that showcase the passion of the in-house expert, Sahil Patel. Think house-made pepper-and ginger-infused vodka or oolong liquor or even a topping of popcorn foam. Either park up at the bar near the back or lounge in plush, low couches around the room's moody edges. Some okra fries and curry chips sound like a good idea, too. ♥

### 605

605 New North Rd, Morningside

It's always a good time at 605. You pull up in the evening for some live music or a comedy show, or to huddle around a table in the cosy outdoor area during happy hour. Locals pack in for Thursday quiz night and Wings Wednesday (10 good wings for \$10) and even if you don't live local, you'll feel like one. Plus, free popcorn.

### ACHO'S

St Kevins Arcade, 183 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

You can't really get a pinot gris here, but why would you want to? Soak up St Kevins late-night atrium atmosphere over a glass of something Japanese you can find only at Acho's and maybe not even on the menu (ask for their specials). An interesting assortment of hot and chilled sakes, whisky, plum wine and shochu will go well with something deep-fried and savoury. A classic Japanese beer will do the trick, too, of course. 🌙♥

### ALIBI BREWER'S LOUNGE

70-72 Onetangi Rd, Waiheke Island

Alibi Brewer's Lounge is one of the best spots for a cold beer on one of Waiheke Island's hot summer's days, hidden away and done up in a brick-lined, speakeasy style, with dim lighting and leather armchairs. The best go here is to load up a tasting paddle with four seasonal craft brews aged in wine barrels, sample the intriguing notes and then choose a favourite for a full glass, with some snacks to match. ★



**ANNABEL'S**

277 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby

Annabel's is the best small wine bar in Auckland that has its own deli slicer on the bar. All wood, leather, and sun, Annabel's is a perfect spot to spend a long Sunday afternoon picking at platters and sipping interesting wines or an intimate night over expertly made traditional cocktails. ♥

**APÉRO**

280 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

You might know it as a place to eat, and it's very good for that, but may have forgotten that it's also an excellent place to get a drink, especially a nightcap on the way home from something else. The tables are small and timber, the walls are brick and the service is attentive and friendly. The wine list is terrific and offbeat and so is the beer list. If you need a little something to eat, may we recommend the charcuterie platter? ♥

**AZABU (ROJI BAR)**

26 Ponsonby Rd, Grey Lynn

Sit up at the bar in the dark little cave that is Azabu and start your night out right, with a small bite to eat made right in front of you in the open kitchen while you sip on a Nippon negroni of gin, Lillet blanc and a syrupy (but not too sweet) umeshu plum liqueur. There's an extensive sake list if that's more your kind of thing, and a decent selection of wine and basic beer. ♥

**Top 10 BAR CÉLESTE**

146b Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

Bar Céleste may be an excellent restaurant, plating up anchovies and guanciale and whatever's good at the moment, but it's also quickly become the go-to K Rd bolthole for a sundown natural wine and oysters, with groups crowding on outside benches or couples knocking knees in the sweet window seat. By night, the volume turns up, the menu switches over to just snacks — including the famous fillet o' fish carried over from the owners' La Pêche pop-ups — and things get a little wild. We like that. ☾♥

**THE BEER SPOT**

54 Northcote Rd, Northcote

The Beer Spot has 40 beers on tap, more than you could ever need, with a blackboard ranking that helps you make some impossi-

ble decisions. Spending an afternoon here is like catching up with friends and family in their own garage, and food's always different, too, coming from a revolving line-up of food trucks. They've recently opened a branch in Morningside to add to Huapai, with more on the way — an Auckland Beer Spot takeover. ★

**BROTHERS BEER**

City Works Depot, 90 Wellesley St West, City

With old 70s carpet and furnishings and the Thunderbirds toys your cool neighbour had when you were little, Brothers Beer certainly ticks the nostalgia box. Their beer selection (for which they have both an off-and-on-licence) will tick all your other boxes. It's the adult equivalent of a lolly shop, with beer divided by type, not by brand, so you can go for a stout, a sour or one of their on-tap rotation.

**Top 10 CARETAKER**

Downstairs, 40 Customs St, Britomart

Does what it says on the tin. The staff will take care of your every drink-related need with a seemingly endless variety of custom-made concoctions. There's no need for a menu here, just let your waiter know what you enjoy sipping on and they'll return with your new favourite cocktail, every time. The dark, New York-style lounge buzzes with energy, but never tips into rowdy territory. Makes for a classy night out all round, really. ☾♥

**CLAY**

366 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

There is a lot to like about K Rd's newest natural wine bar: the colourful mosaic tiling at your feet, the fridges of wines you've never heard of (more than 200), the ever-changing menu of snacky pizzas and funky vegetables. We like that the vibe is relaxed and communal — diners share a single large table filling to the edges of the room — and regulars can always drink something different by the glass. You can even get a bottle to go.

**CLIPPER**

3/175 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby

Friendly, knowledgeable service is just one reason to visit this suntrap of a bar on a Saturday afternoon. In the spot where Mea Culpa used to be, Clipper has redone the

decor and the new pink interior feels fresh and fun. The bar is long and narrow but you really want to grab a table out the front for maximum ray-catching. The cocktail menu features a list of favourites and a frequently changing page dedicated to whatever exciting new concoctions the bar staff has most recently created. ☾♥

**COCO'S CANTINA**

376 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

It's easy to forget that Coco's is on the right side of the strip, bathed in afternoon sun, with an expansive outdoor terrace on the footpath: there aren't many other places we'd rather be at happy hour, when the beers are cheap and you can get a plate of pasta and pomodoro for the kids while you drink and keep an eye out for all the people you know walking past, who invariably join you for a beer. Also: Coco's makes a highly excellent negroni late at night.

**COLEY AND PUNCH**

139 Quay St, City

A dark-leather-and-velvet whisky bar is a stark contrast to its sunny Auckland Viaduct setting, but it works. The light, innovative cocktails (a chocolatey take on an old fashioned, or a pineapple-infused margarita) provide a tropical theme to the Prohibition-era feel of the bar. Their curated, 250-strong whisky selection focuses on special releases that are hard to find anywhere else. There wasn't a single cocktail that we weren't immediately eager to try. ☾♥

**CONCH**

115A Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby

Do the vibes get any better than out back at Conch on, like, a Thursday night? The high energy, friendly staff and the cosy wooden nooks make for a great place to pop by after work and accidentally have a couple more than the couple you meant to, probably because you bumped into at least four other people you know while there. The happy hour deals are a real steal and the cocktails are exceedingly reasonably priced to boot. ♥★

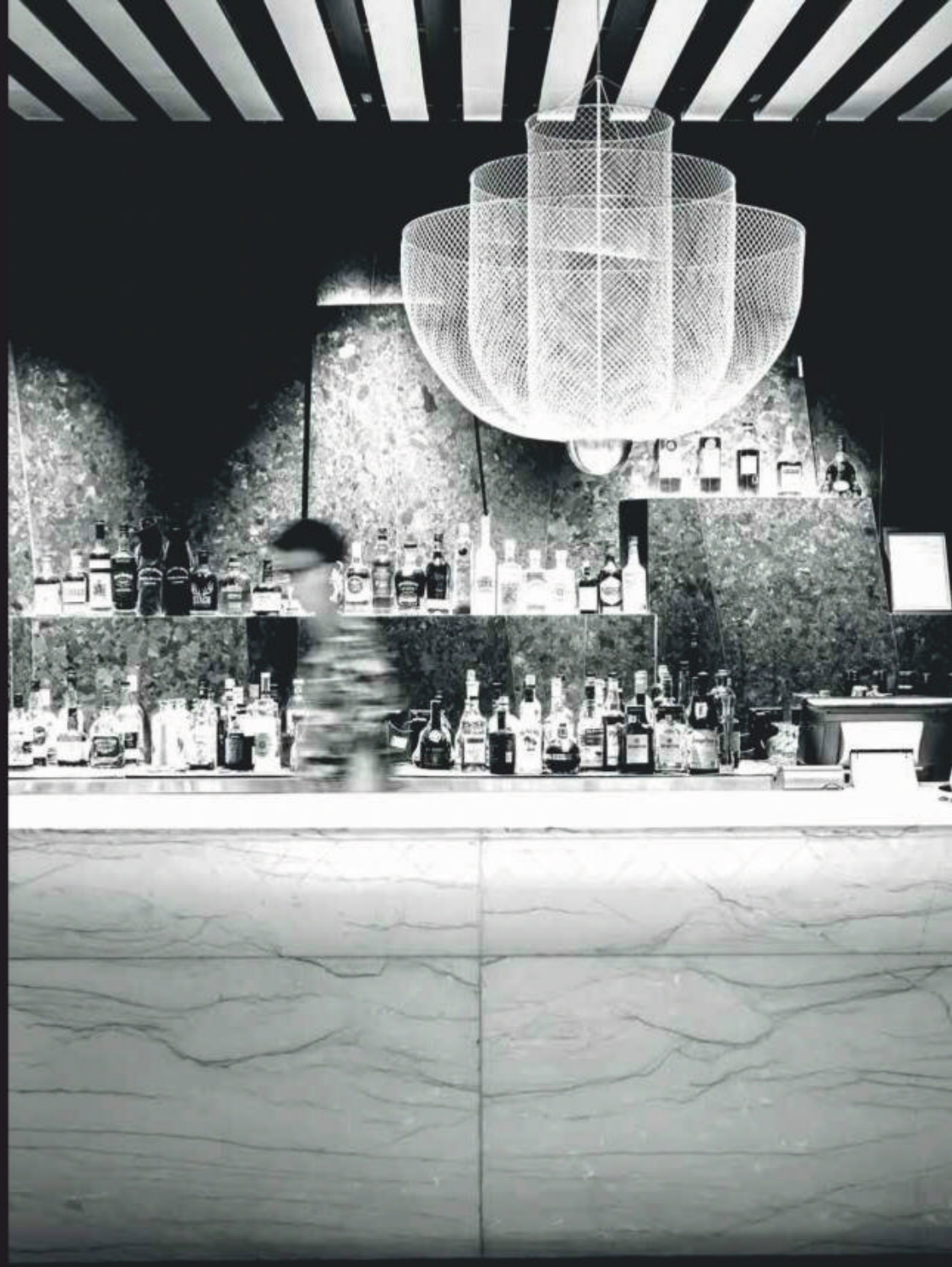
**DEADSHOT**

45 Ponsonby Rd, Ponsonby

Behind an unassuming door set back from the street is the most cinematic speakeasy-inspired bar in Auckland. Everything from



# GALBRAITH'S, GARAGE PROJECT KINGSLAND CELLAR DOOR, GG X FLAMIN- GO, HALLER- TAU, HI-SO, HUAMI,



the light fixtures, to the mirror behind the bar, to the phonograph, is period-perfect. No menu, no prices, just personalised guidance from seasoned mixologists with hundreds, if not thousands, of drinks up their sleeves to meet your every demand. ♥

Top  
10

## FREIDA MARGOLIS

440 Richmond Rd, Grey Lynn

Simple yet jazzy vintage decor and simply good drinks in what was once an organic butchery makes for an intimate bar that is prone to merriment once the live music comes out late in the evening. The wine list isn't huge - the emphasis is placed on quality not quantity — and they serve all the classic cocktails. This is the place for a street-side negroni or old fashioned with live music late in the evening, and to make a friend out of a stranger. ☾★

## FUKUKO

43 Tyler St, Britomart

Although this little bar is Japanese-themed, the black wooden surfaces, DJ booth, exposed concrete and street-side location make

it feel a bit New York. There is no confusion about the drinks menu, though: cocktails are divided into a page of shochu-infused drinks and another of sake-based tipples. Not to mention that the sake list and all-Japanese whisky list will delight any enthusiast. ☾♥

Top  
10

## GALBRAITH'S

2 Mt Eden Rd, Eden Terrace

Celebrating your birthday? Leaving Auckland for a while? Got a family gathering coming up? You know you've got to invite everyone for drinks at Galbraith's. The Mt Eden stalwart never changes and that's probably because the owners recognise there's no point messing with perfection. A solid beer selection, pub food on the right side of a bit fancy and seemingly endless space, Galbraith's is a top spot for every group get-together you can't be bothered actually organising a dinner for. ★

## GARAGE PROJECT KINGSLAND CELLAR DOOR

357 New North Rd, Kingsland

Kingsland locals rejoiced when Wellington

brewers Garage Project opened their doors in Kingsland — a spot to get beer from people who really know beer is very welcome. What was even more welcome, however, is the discovery of their tasting paddles as an enjoyable alternative to a simple pint at a bar. Why have just one beer when you can try many little ones, choose a favourite and bring a box of it home? Not to mention that Garage Project now has Hyderabad Hotel, a Wes-Anderson-inspired collaboration with the Satya team, just around the corner in Grey Lynn. ★

## GG x FLAMINGO

269 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

GG x Flamingo is fast, furious and fun, slinging serious cocktails in a vaguely tiki-inspired bar and smelling enticingly like cinnamon. The same burlap sacks decorate the ceiling as in their chai lounge next door, but GG has a personality all of its own, where you can settle in at the bar and have a chat

## ABOVE—

HI-SO, Cnr Customs St & Gore St.



JERVOIS RD KITCHEN AND BAR,  
 JOHN & MAYS, LA FUENTE, LEIGH  
 SAWMILL, LE CHEF, LILIAN, LIT-  
 TLE CREATURES, LITTLE CULPRIT,  
 LOVEBUCKET, MADAME GEORGE,  
 MASU, MEZZE BAR, MO'S, NEO,  
 NEXT DOOR BAR, PEACH PIT,  
 SATYA SPICE AND CHAI SHOP,  
 SLY, SWASHBUCKLERS,



Please Order  
 AT THE Bar... Cheers!

## mezze bar

since 1992

### TAPAS & MEZZE

- Feta Cheese - drizzled with lemon juice, chili & dukkah SERVED WITH HOT TURKISH BREAD 10
- Patatas Bravas - roasted paprika potato chunks WITH TOMATO SALSA AND AIOLI 10
- Parmesan Potatoes Chips WITH WHIPPED FETA 14
- Roasted Carrot Mezze WITH GARLIC YOGHURT, FENNEL DUKKAH & PAPRIKA OIL 11
- Garlic Mushrooms & Chorizo Sausage WITH LEMON JUICE, PARSLEY & TURKISH BREAD 12
- Tortilla Española - tasty fritatta of potato, onion and egg WITH AIOLI 13
- Sundried Tomato & Rosemary Dip WITH VEGE STICKS AND WARM PITA BREAD 14
- Hummus WITH FRESH TOMATO SALSA, TAHINI SAUCE AND WARM PITA BREAD 11
- Mezze Dips Platter - 5 of Mezze Bar's famous dips, served with warm pita bread 15
- Deviche - white fish marinated in lime & lemon juices WITH COCONUT CREAM & LIME 22
- Spanish Tuna Dip FROM THE ORIGINAL RECIPE, SERVED WITH CHAR-GRILLED TARTAR BREAD 11
- Chicken Liver Pâté WITH BRANDIED SULTANA COMPOTE AND CRISPY FRIED 18
- Roasted Chicken Drumsticks WITH PEARL SAUCE 15
- Roasted Meatballs & White Beans IN A TOMATO BROWN SAUCE 15
- Shish Kebabs - skewered Turkish meatballs, hummus, black tahini & spices WITH HOT PITA BREAD 17.5
- Grilled Lamb Chops & Chilli Prawns, seared in olive oil, SERVED WITH BREAD AND AIOLI 19

### MEALS

- Soup - Turkish red lentil & feta DRIZZLED WITH PAPRIKA OIL & LEMON, WITH HOT TURKISH BREAD 17
- Greek Salad - tomato, cucumber, red onion, green pepper & olives, with hummus & pide bread 21 ADD THICKEN MEATBALLS + 8
- Salmon Salad - white fish marinated in lime & lemon juices and coconut cream WITH FRESH 26
- Salmon with a Twist - fresh tomatoes, grilled haloumi cheese, pesto, cucumber, avocado, tomato salsa and salad greens WITH HOMEMADE BREAD 26
- Vegetarian Burger - pulled roast lamb in a Turkish pide bun, WITH GRILLED HALOUMI CHEESE, FRESH TOMATO SALSA, CUCUMBER, & BAKED OVEN ROASTED POTATO CHIPS 28
- Chicken Burger - Skewer, with a potato, eggplant & feta kizarmas, hummus, WITH GARLIC YOGHURT AND LAYERS OF BREAD 27
- Roasted Chicken - grilled chicken in herb butter, with corn salad WITH FRESH ROASTED CORN, FRESH ORANGE, & BAKED OVEN ROASTED POTATO CHIPS 26
- Tenerife Market Fish - grilled chorizo, fish, potato, onion, PARMESAN LEMON & RED PEPPER SAUTÉ, GARLIC, OLIVE, AND PINE
- Roasted Chicken in spinach & red pepper WITH OLIVE, FRESH CUCUMBER & PARMESAN 31

SIDES Side Salad 7 Bread 4 Garlic Bread 6.5

### Sangria Fest

1/2 L \$22  
 1 L \$39

- ORIGINAL red wine, orange & apple juice, brandy, fruit
- SANGRIA ROSADA red wine, grape juice, orange brandy, berries & mint
- mezze cocktails
- RHUBARB RHOYALE rhubarb liqueur & Cava (Spanish Pilsener) in extra champagne glass 13
- ESPRESSO MARTINI Shaken! Not stirred! 18
- BOOZY LIMONATA fresh pressed lemon & lime, citrus vodka, lemon & lime, crushed ice & mint 15
- GINGER MOJITO lemon & lime, ginger & pineapple 16
- APEROL SPRITZ refreshing citrus 14
- DOUBLE BERRY COSMO Raspberry vodka, cranberry, lime & triple sec in chilled glass 17
- NEGRONI Premium Gin, Campari, Bitter Rosso 11

Special:  
 SYRIAN HUM



with the bartender about what you're in the mood for. Happily, it's also the ideal place to wind down your night after dinner on K Rd with an excellent spiced negroni or two. ♥

#### HALLERTAU

1171 Coatsville-Riverhead Highway, Riverhead

We named this our favourite bar for outdoor drinks in our 100 Best of Auckland spots, and it's well deserved. Head out to Riverhead and sink a few pints — or get yourself a tasting flight — in the beautifully landscaped beer garden (take a sober driver), then stick around for some wood-fired pizzas and live music. ★

#### Hi-SO

Cnr Customs St & Gore St, City

From the balcony of Hi-SO, the rooftop bar at the new SO/ Hotel, you can enjoy an inventive cocktail (or classic dry Martini) while getting a perfect snapshot of Auckland's central city in 2020 — the city lights glistening on the harbour to one side, and the building site of one of many new downtown developments aiming for completion before next year's America's Cup on the other. ♥

#### HOUSE BAR — HOTEL DEBRETT

3B O'Connell St, City

DeBretts Kitchen is like a CBD secret: once you walk up the stairs from O'Connell St, the space opens out into a high-ceilinged room filled with lush plants and skylights. You can either sit out in the lounge area or up in the slightly more opulent bar, where the service is what you'd expect given DeBretts Kitchen is part of a hotel (so it's good). The perfect place to take a breather from the city. ♥

#### HUAMI BAR

SkyCity 87 Federal St, City

The bar at Huami is small and opens out onto Federal St, so you can people-watch while sipping on a special house-made red

rice lager (only \$8 during happy hour). The drinks menu features an enormously long page of gins (with recommended East Imperial tonic matches), cocktails (including a short list using house-made baijiu, a popular Chinese grain spirit), mocktails, beer and wine. The perfect place to pop in after work for a quick drink before heading home. ♥

#### JERVOIS RD WINE BAR AND KITCHEN

170 Jervois Rd, Herne Bay

The extensive wine list here features a huge variety of New Zealand makers at a range of price points (trust us, it's worth spending \$18 on the Rippon riesling from Wanaka) and the staff are attentive and knowledgeable. It's more casual here than at some of its Herne Bay neighbours but still feels fresh and lively — a top spot for a drink after a swim at one of the inner-city beaches, if you're so inclined. ☾

#### JOHN & MAYS

Level 1/12 Vulcan Lane, City

In the small novel of a menu (complete with flavour infographics), you'll find a selection of the best of wine, beer, mezcal, bourbon, whisky, you name it. Better yet, the staff know everything there is to know about every item. They make cocktails an art form and some are given matching accoutrements — gazpacho on a cracker, a cross on a Jaffa cake. The speakeasy vibe presented in the decor is aided by the slightly hidden entrance. ☾♥★

Top  
10

#### LA FUENTE

Snickel Lane, 23 Customs St East, City

Part wine shop, part mezcal shop, and an all-round excellent bar, this is a slip of a space just off Fort Lane, with a simple wooden bar, classic wooden stools and high shelves stocked with wine and mezcal. The wine list features a range of interesting varietals from New Zealand, Europe and South Africa but the mezcal is why you come — there's a great range, as you'd expect, but there's also friendly, helpful service for the uninitiated. And, for a raucous night, chase it down with a beer.

#### LE CHEF

13 O'Connell St, City

This sweet little French spot in the heart of the CBD is the perfect place to take yourself

for a mid-week solo wine or Aperol spritz. Down a charming wee laneway, the space is small with a handful of outside tables catering up to four people max. There's live music most nights of the week and a relatively short but well-selected drinks menu featuring almost exclusively French wine, plus a decent choice of beers, cocktails, aperitifs and digestifs. ☾♥

#### LEIGH SAWMILL

142 Pakiri Rd, Leigh

Just so we're clear, the Sawmill brewery started at Leigh Sawmill, but isn't there any more, though the Leigh Sawmill is still one of the nicest pubs in the Auckland region. Now featuring many beers — including McLeod's from Waipū — it has a fabulous big garden and a well-worn wooden interior. And still one of the best places to go for a gig. ★

#### LILIAN

472 Richmond Rd, Grey Lynn

Freshly open and worth the buzz, Lilian keeps its wine menu short and sweet, dividing it into the very simple categories of sparkling, white, red, rosé and, endearingly, "for after". The beer list too is kept select. As for their cocktail list, there are only four — all simple elegant variations on tradition. Of course, half the advantage of Lilian is that you can grab a bite of their food while you're at it. ★

Top  
10

#### LITTLE CREATURES

2 Boundary Rd, Hobsonville

Catch the ferry over to Hobsonville Point for an afternoon drinking in the truly enormous Little Creatures hangar, nestled in the Catalina Bay precinct. The bar is a three-for-one deal with several food options, places for kids to play and plenty of indoor and outdoor space. Grab one of the house brews on tap and enjoy with a bucket of chips in the sunshine — it's worth the trip. ★

Top  
10

#### LITTLE CULPRIT

151 Wyndham St, City

Little Culprit was designed as somewhere to send patrons after they'd dined at Culprit, but has quickly become a destination in its own right. The sumptuous leather-and-wood interior will draw you in but the drinks list will make this your go-to. There's no nonsense and the (mostly natural) wine

#### OPPOSITE PAGE —

Mezze Bar in Durham St East.

#### KEY



OPEN LATE  
(PAST 1AM)



ESPECIALLY GOOD  
FOR DATES



ESPECIALLY GOOD  
FOR GROUPS



is divided by description categories like “energetic whites” and “full-bodied reds”. The prices on the whisky list run from \$10 to \$480 and the cocktail list has the sense of innovation that saw Culprit become a favourite. Top it off with a grazing platter fit for a king, and you’ve got all you need for a night. ★

#### LOVEBUCKET

309 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

You walk down past the cookie bar and the South American barbecue joint and into another world: it’s very dark and very moody and there is usually a DJ playing some sort of funk or soul on vinyl. The cocktails are legendary here, some of the best in the city. It’s the sort of place where you can have a long conversation about the merits of a different type of gin in your negroni. A good time, in other words. 🌙❤️



#### MADAME GEORGE

490 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

It’s become more common in recent years to see pisco sours feature on Auckland’s bar menus as Latin American food becomes more popular here, but no one makes a pisco sour as good as Madame George’s. Aniseedy, crisp and tart with the creamiest foamy top, they’re unbeatable. In fact, Madame George gets most of what it does right, from the welcoming staff to the perfectly balanced cocktails and gorgeously executed shared plates. An enduring K Rd favourite, and a lot of fun. 🌙❤️★

#### MASU

90 Federal St, City

One really nice thing about Masu by Nic Watt is that it has little flavour-profile descriptions by each of the drinks. The sakes, whiskies and cocktails (the drinks on which Masu places emphasis) are divided into sub-categories like “bitter”, “salty”, “fruity, floral aromatic”. Some of the drinks are simple twists on classics while they imbue others with interactive elements. The streetside open-air bar is full of sakura flowers. It feels breezy and opulent, with ample opportunity for people-watching. ❤️★

#### MEZZE BAR

9 Durham St East, City

It’s open seven days, so Mezza Bar is always a comfortingly familiar proposition for

meeting a friend for after-work drinks: your favourite window seat or cosy corner couch beckons, and so does your favourite mezze (kofte kebab is a winner). The unfussy drinks list is populated with well-known names from home and lesser-known drops from overseas, particularly Spain and Portugal, and service is efficient but refreshingly easy-going. We think every city deserves a reliable go-to, and we’re glad ours is Mezza. ❤️★

#### MO’S

5 Federal St, City

Something pretty drastic would have to happen for us to stop sending people to the best tiny bar in the city. Mo’s serves old fashioned drinks, like White Russians and, er, old fashioned, well made and not updated. It only takes eight or so people for this place to be packed, so go with a small group if you just want to party by yourselves (they might even let you choose the music). 🌙❤️

#### NEO

Level 1/34-40 Queen St, City

Tucked up above Queen St is Neo Café, which might not be quite idyllic enough to call an oasis (fog horns in the harbour carry alarmingly loudly to the balcony outside) but it’s close enough for the inner city, surrounded as it is with tropical greenery and a pleasant view to the street and down to the wharf. Light and airy inside and with plenty of outdoor seating, it’s a great spot to catch up with a friend or take a good book. ❤️

#### NEXT DOOR

469 New North Rd, Kingsland

Next door to Umu Pizza in Kingsland is this delightful cocktail bar that serves as an overflow room for the restaurant and a great neighbourhood bar often open well beyond when the pizza oven is shut down. It’s often too busy before a game at Eden Park, so we suggest a visit after.



#### PEACH PIT

352 Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

Come here for the interesting wine list (orange wines abound, and most are available by the glass) and stay for the mostly plant-based food, seasonal and inventive. Whatever cauliflower dish they are doing will be great, and if there’s mapo tofu, get

that. Unassuming from the street — well, except for the fact that the outdoor tables are always nabbed early and crowded with punters — but dimly cosy inside, it has staff who know their wines and will hook you up with something tasty. ❤️



#### SATYA SPICE AND CHAI SHOP

515a Sandringham Rd, Sandringham

Owner Sammy Akuthota is one of Auckland’s most lovable hospo figures, but that’s only part of why we dig Satya so much. The place is all charmingly DIY chic, with a seriously impressive craft beer selection housed in help-yourself fridges and perfect food matches — deep-fried paneer, spicy and garlicky chicken and flavour-bomb dahi puri. It also has what is possibly the best non-alcoholic option in the city, a cold iced chai. Hassle-free and laid-back, it’s the kind of place you want to make your regular. ❤️

#### SLY

354a Karangahape Rd, K Rd Precinct

It might not be as hidden as its owners initially intended, but this surreal speakeasy behind a wall of picture frames makes fantastic, inventive cocktails that go perfectly with the psychedelic rock swirling around the room. 🌙❤️

#### SWASHBUCKLERS

23B Westhaven Dr, Westhaven

If you’re thinking of visiting Swashbucklers, one of Auckland’s last great institutions, we recommend skipping the restaurant and going straight to the bar in the little shack to the left. The drinks selection is firmly in the middle of the road, and the food is exactly what you’d expect, but it’s all perfectly suited to the kitschy beach-shack vibe.

#### TALULAH

120 Quay St, Britomart

Long after the Chamberlain has closed, this secret tiki bar keeps pumping in the loft above. It’s lit with neon lights, yet it feels easy and friendly; the walls are covered in tropical murals and the sofas are upholstered in velvet, curved into intimate alcoves just right for reclining. There are \$10 specials but their more extensive menu is full of fruity, spicy drinks you’ll want more than one of. They boast that they do all the classics, even drinks that aren’t on the menu. “Put us to the test,” they challenge. 🌙



**TINY TRIUMPHS***5 Clarence St, Devonport*

Always heaving with locals (and how lucky they are to have this in their hood), Tiny Triumphs just has “the vibe”—which is to say, it’s a lot of fun. The inside is cosy and worn-in, the bar staff friendly, and there’s a drinks list that’ll make any beer-conservative dad happy while quenching your taste for the fancy craft stuff, with revolving tap takeovers. Live music is a frequent treat, oh, and bring Fido along, too — it’s quite possibly the most dog-welcoming pub on the Shore.

**URBANAUT BREWING CO CELLAR DOOR***2B Western Springs Rd, Morningside*

We love coming here for a tasting tray of our favourite brews — some are mainstays and always available — or to sample something new and different. Seating is plentiful and the vibe is casual, so though they don’t have an on-licence, it’s still a place to park up with mates and have a yarn. Happy bonus:

on weekends, food trucks like Miso Ra and Hapunan will sometimes make a visit. Beer and ramen? We’re there. ★

**VULTURES’ LANE***10 Vulcan Lane, City*

There are 22 rotating taps and 75 beers in the fridge at Vultures’ Lane. That’s 97 opportunities to try something you probably haven’t drunk before — from hazy IPAs to Belgian sours via a few more sedate options, this is beer-lover’s paradise. With a long wooden bar, tall leaners and a beery, Victorian feel, it’s every inch the central-city beer pub. The staff is really helpful, too — and more than happy to guide you through all those guest taps. ★

**XUXU DUMPLING BAR***Cnr Galway and Commerce Sts, City*

With the added bonus of a recently revamped wine list that’s surprisingly affordable — the glass pours are all under \$14 — Xuxu Dumpling Bar is still our favourite place to

find refuge from all of downtown’s madness. Stacked bamboo steamers serve up a concise list of delicious dumplings; we go for the fragrant fish, sambal and coconut, or classic pork and shrimp shaomai. While the wine is great, Xuxu’s stars are their interesting cocktails, featuring Asian flavours like kaffir lime and plum wine. **M**

**BELOW—**  
Mezze Bar in Durham St East.



TALULAH, TINY  
TRIUMPHS,  
URBANAUT  
BREWING CO  
CELLAR DOOR,  
VULTURE’S  
LANE, XUXU  
DUMPLING  
BAR.



# ALCOHOL FREE

You don't have to drink booze to enjoy the vibe of a bar, the company — and, yes, dancing like an idiot. But why is it so hard to find a good alternative to sip on?

TEXT — JEAN TENG

**Despite news reports (and trend reports) suggesting a cultural shift towards drinking less, the truth is more complicated. Binge drinking might be downward trending (which is great) but casual drinking — a glass of wine to unwind after work, for example — is on the rise. Our weekly spend on alcohol has remained more or less unchanged in the last five years. We're innovating; changing the way we drink to be more aligned with contemporary viewpoints and values, which lean more into creating connections rather than partying — think “hard” kombucha, “hard” teas and “hard” cold-brew coffee. Think pretty, Instagram-ready RTD cans, “new-wave” aperitifs, “post-category” spirits (using unconventional techniques), worldlier taste profiles (more spice!), sustainable bottles: “feel-good” alcohol, in more ways than one.**

About 80% of New Zealanders over 18 drink alcohol. But some of us are either seriously cutting down (19%) or moving away from drinking entirely. Are we still, like, enjoying life?

Maria Mo, 32, stopped drinking last October. Growing older has made the hangovers harder to swallow, and one miserable night of throwing up later (“having blown tons of money without anything to show for it”), Mo went cold turkey. It has been, by and large, a positive experience: more genuine interactions, being able to drive home, saving tons of money. “My doctor told me that only drinking on the weekends over a period of 20 years can negatively

affect your short-term memory,” Mo tells me, “which is scary. I’m not sure that the long-term health effects are as emphasised as, say, cigarettes.” Nishita Chandra, 23, who has cut back on alcohol, thinks similarly. “I feel great!”

Globally, no-alcohol drink sales are predicted to increase 10% annually over the next five years — so surely there’s some good non-alcoholic options in Auckland, right?

“I tried non-alcoholic beer once, and it tasted like the sad memory of a beer,” Mo tells me. Many non-alcoholic versions of alcoholic drinks are objectively terrible, like a little kid playing dress-up with lipstick smeared all over their face. “I find a soda water or kombucha can be just as satisfying in terms of fizziness and the motion of bringing a glass to your mouth. I don’t think non-alcoholic alternatives are cheap or tasty enough to go out of my way to pursue.”

They do feel expensive. You’d pay about \$14-\$18 for a Seedlip cocktail. Seedlip is a special distilled non-alcoholic spirit, which is blended with things like cardamom and berries and citrus, and has become common in Auckland, particularly at fancier restaurants. Price-wise, a bottle is comparable to alcoholic spirits, because it’s just as hard to make. But there is something programmed in us that balks at spending serious money on non-alcoholic, non-mood-affecting drinks, which could discourage outlets from experimenting in this field further.

And they make their money off alco-

hol, so economically, why bother? Will Aucklanders ever pay NZD\$12.50 for a fermented maple and coffee on the rocks, for example, like they do at trendy liquor-free bar Getaway in New York?

History would suggest no — our only attempt at a non-alcoholic bar in Auckland quietly closed within five weeks. Perhaps it was a self-fulfilling prophecy — their alcohol license was already in progress, in case of failure.

But that was five years ago. Nowadays we have more alternatives which still lack the creativity and thought afforded to alcoholic drinks on the menu; an after-thought, a deep sigh of “if we have to”. This is slowly changing.

Because non-alcoholic drinks are a growing market, makers are increasingly trying to cash in. In a world first, Giesen just produced an alcohol-removed Malborough sauvignon blanc — 0% sav!

Maybe, finally, I’ll stop getting the “baby service” at restaurants — and it’s always restaurants — where a suited sommelier gently guides me to the kid’s table and plops down an orange Fanta with a curly straw to accompany my beautiful plate of octopus carpaccio. You can hide a bit better in bars, I think, even though functionally bars are for drinking. Everyone I talk to still likes going to bars. It’s not the drinking that’s important; it’s the company, the music, the vibe. “I love dancing like an idiot,” Mo says.

At 32, Mo says most of her peers reply that they’ve also been thinking about



# TOP 50 BARS BY SUBURB

cutting down on drinking, too, but wonders whether younger non-drinkers might cop more flack from their peers.

As a younger drinker, the flack I cop is mostly self-inflicted; there's still that sticky feeling of not fitting in. People make you feel like an outsider in unintended, roundabout ways, when they talk about how much fun they had getting drunk in the weekend, or joke around about how they're dying for a drink. It's not their fault, but it's these ingrained, cyclic conversation points I struggle with the most. "I definitely need to explain it to everyone I meet," Chandra says. "It feels like a task, and there's a certain pressure to drink — even if you don't want to."

So, yes, not-drinking in bars and restaurants and social situations is both increasing in New Zealand and not a death sentence in our public lives, but it's still, undeniably, all happening within a culture where drinking alcohol is the norm — and still very cool.

While we wait for this to (maybe) change, we're desperately pleading for innovation in non-alcoholic drinks that's not just leeching out alcohol from traditionally-made drops.

Please don't make us drink kombucha.



## CENTRAL CITY

**1947 EATERY**  
60 Federal St

**BROTHERS BEER**  
City Works Depot, 90  
Wellesley St West

**CARETAKER**  
38 Roukai Lane, Britomart

**COLEY & PUNCH**  
Shed 22, 147 Quay Street,  
waterfront

**FUKUKO**  
43 Tyler St, Britomart

**HI-SO**  
Cnr Customs St & Gore St

**HOUSE BAR — HOTEL  
DEBRET**  
2 High St

**HUAMI BAR**  
87 Federal St

**JOHN & MAYS**  
Level 1/12 Vulcan Ln

 **LA FUENTE**  
Snickel Ln, 23 Customs St  
East

**LE CHEF**  
13 O'Connell St

 **LITTLE CULPRIT**  
151 Wyndham St

**MASU**  
90 Federal St

**MEZZE BAR**  
9 Durham St East

**MO'S**  
5 Federal St

**NEO**  
Level 1/34-40 Queen St

**TALULAH**  
52 Tyler St, Britomart

**SWASHBUCKLERS**  
238 Westhaven Drive,  
Westhaven

**VULTURES' LANE**  
10 Vulcan Lane

**XUXU DUMPLING BAR**  
Cnr Commerce & Galway Sts

## DEVONPORT

**TINY TRIUMPHS**  
5 Clarence St

## EDEN TERRACE

 **GALBRAITH'S ALEHOUSE**  
2 Mt Eden Rd

## GREY LYNN

 **FREIDA MARGOLIS**  
440 Richmond Rd

**LILIAN**  
472 Richmond Rd

## HERNE BAY

**JERVOIS ROAD WINE BAR &  
KITCHEN**  
170 Jervois Rd

## HOBSONVILLE

 **LITTLE CREATURES**  
2 Boundary Rd

## K' RD PRECINCT

**ACHO'S**  
St Kevin's Arcade, 183  
Karangahape Rd

 **APÉRO**  
280 Karangahape Rd

 **BAR CÉLESTE**  
146b Karangahape Rd

**CLAY**  
366 Karangahape Rd

**COCO'S CANTINA**  
376 Karangahape Rd

**GG X FLAMINGO**  
271 Karangahape Rd

**LOVEBUCKET**  
309 Karangahape Rd

 **MADAME GEORGE**  
490 Karangahape Rd

 **PEACH PIT**  
352 Karangahape Rd

**SLY**  
354a Karangahape Rd

## KINGSLAND

**GARAGE PROJECT  
KINGSLAND CELLAR DOOR**  
357 New North Rd

**NEXT DOOR**  
469 New North Rd

## LEIGH

**LEIGH SAWMILL**  
142 Pakiri Rd

## MORNINGSIDE

**605**  
605 New North Rd

**URBANAUT BREWING CO  
CELLAR DOOR**  
2B Western Springs Rd

## NORTHCOTE

**THE BEER SPOT**  
54 Northcote Rd

## PONSONBY

**ANNABEL'S**  
277 Ponsonby Rd

**AZABU (ROJI BAR)**  
26 Ponsonby Rd

**CLIPPER**  
3/175 Ponsonby Rd

**CONCH KITCHEN & BAR**  
115A Ponsonby Rd

**DEADSHOT**  
45 Ponsonby Rd

## RIVERHEAD

**HALLERTAU**  
1171 Coatsville-Riverhead  
Highway

## SANDRINGHAM

 **SATYA SPICE AND CHAI  
SHOP**  
515A Sandringham Rd

## WAIHEKE ISLAND

**ALIBI BREWER'S LOUNGE**  
70-72 Onetangi Rd

## TOP 10

Bar Céleste / Caretaker /  
Freida Margolis / Galbraith's  
Alehouse / La Fuente / Little  
Creatures / Little Culprit /  
Madame George / Peach Pit  
/ Satya Spice and Chai Shop

**SUPREME WINNER**  
Madame George

**JUDGES** — Alex Blackwood;  
Simon Farrell-Green; Tess  
Nichol; Henry Oliver; Jean  
Teng





**ABOVE—**  
In the Philippines, generous servings of glistening pork are a must at family gatherings.



# MORE THAN SKIN-DEEP

Crispy, juicy roast pork hock is one of the glories of Filipino cuisine.

TEXT — JEAN TENG

PHOTOGRAPHY — JOSH GRIGGS

**A**t my grandfather's funeral, we feasted on 10 whole pigs, roasted on the spit before being expertly chopped up by men whipping knives through the air so fast, you felt sure the tip of a finger must end up on your plate. The generous servings of glistening pork are a must at family gatherings, an affirmation that we're all together and flourishing and healthy enough to gorge ourselves on a hunk of salty, fatty meat.

There's a lot I love about Filipino crispy pata: the fact that it uses an underappreciated cut, the hock; the crispy skin; the way it's always shared. I first ate it in winter at **Kalye Manila** in Panmure. I gnawed on the bone in a porky haze, slowly coming to the realisation of just how much I had eaten and proceeding to half-heartedly chew on a couple of cold lettuce leaves in an attempt to make amends. (It didn't work and it was back to the bone.)

Crispy pata, which is similar to the German Schweinshaxe, has a short history in the Philippines. It was "invented" in the 1950s by Rodolfo Ongpauco, whose mother owned the restaurant Barrio Fiesta in Caloocan, north of Manila, after he decided to deep fry discarded pork legs. It's now one of the most popular dishes in the Philippines and is, for better or worse, what Filipino food is most associated with, though there's a lot more to the cuisine than deep-fried pork (see next page).

"It should be served on the bone," Raymund Macaalay tells me. Raymund, who runs the food blog *Ang Sarap* (meaning "it's delicious" in Tagalog, the Philippines' national language), has eaten crispy pata many times and agreed to be my expert companion on some pata-tasting outings.

At **Manna Kitchen** in Onehunga, the crispy pata comes with the bone, but neatly carved up into bite-sized pieces you can pick up with chopsticks. Here,

the meat is a little dry (it should be juicy and tender), probably because it was cut up before it was deep-fried. It's also too fatty, so the collagen stubbornly sticks to the crispy skin in thick blocks. It's intensely salty but without much else by way of flavour, though I can't help joking that bad deep-fried pork still tastes better than a salad. Crispy pata comes with a spicy sweet-vinegar sauce — sawsawan — that does a lot of the heavy lifting here to cut through the fat. Raymund decisively pronounces it a five out of 10.

At **Boracay Garden** near the Viaduct, the crispy pata is an eight. I like it here; the room has a distinct Southeast-Asian-hotel vibe, as if I'm popping in for a quick meal on vacation. When you order crispy pata, though, the meal probably won't be quick: it's the signature dish and a big boy, maybe the biggest in Auckland, coming in at over 2kg.

Anthony Bourdain said that eating pork skin was like eating candy, and the first thing I do is pop some beautiful candy in my mouth to give it the crunch test. Mamma mia! The skin is crispy without being tough (a difficult feat), and I want to just eat that alone, Peking-duck style, wrapped in flour pancakes. But there's also meat, with a bone so clean a Flintstone could wear it. This one looks as if it's been cut *after* being cooked, a vast difference which has resulted in juicier, more tender meat. (A shout-out to their sisig, a sizzling dish of pig's face and liver and vegetables, chopped and mixed up with an egg; it is truly delicious.)

Raymund recommended I go to **Chikos** in Lincoln Rd, Henderson for a pata that is slightly more fusion. It is excellent, in that lovely way that something is when it looks simple but reveals itself to be anything but. It's smaller than the other hocks, but the meat near the bone is so tender that the clouds part as I eat it. Fusion? Well, it's drizzled with tom yum sauce and a boring salad on the side. It

doesn't need it — the garlic and pepper and bay leaves translate. It also comes with peanut sauce, lightly spiced with cumin. I like it, but think it should have been served with sawsawan instead, because vinegar works so well in counterbalancing the deep-friedness of it all.

Lastly, I'm at **Nanam**, joined for dinner by Laura and Aldrin, the couple behind Filipino food truck Hapunan. "Every restaurant in the Philippines has crispy pata. You'd just close down without it," Aldrin laughs. (Nanam's co-owner, Jess Granada, tells me it's been on the menu since the beginning.) Growing up, Aldrin ate crispy pata mostly during celebrations. In making it, spices are key, he says (onion, garlic, ginger and star anise among them), but the true trick is to boil the hock and let it rest overnight.

Nanam's pata uses Sichuan peppercorns to make the flavours really pop. There's a satisfying marriage between the pata and the pandan rice that has fried garlic generously folded in. Their sawsawan has the zing of calamansi, the super-tart Philippine lime. In open-air hawker markets in Malaysia, we would drink tangy and refreshing preserved calamansi juice with sugar and sour plums. Here, the calamansi and chilli have a similar effect, working to give it an extra sour punch. "It's just so good," Aldrin says.

Some takeaways from my journey: you *have* to eat this dish with rice. And you have to bring friends to share it with. If you're by yourself, try ordering lechon kawali, which is deep-fried pork belly and also very good. And dipping sauces make all the difference, as you'll find out if you turn the page — chef Carlo includes four, plus a savoury side salad (ensaladang talong) of eggplant and tomatoes.

**Turn the page for Carlo Buenaventura's crispy pata recipe.**



**CARLO'S CRISPY PATA**

Carlo Buenaventura is the chef behind The Cult Project, a pop-up cooking New Zealand cuisine filtered through a Filipino immigrant's lens, notably using the Southern Filipino cooking style sutukil — a portmanteau word from sugba (grilled), tuwa (stewed) and kilaw (marinated). It's not as well known as northern cuisine specialties such as crispy pata and sisig, but Carlo wants to showcase what else the Philippines has to offer.

When I asked Carlo to cook pata, his mind jumped to the salads and accompanying dips. He loves crispy pata, he reassured me, but said the ensaladang talong and dips are what makes his pata special; the smoky, vinegary eggplant with shaved slivers of salty duck egg is a flavour-punch, beautifully enlivening the deep-fried pork. My favourite dipping sauce is delightfully simple and effective shallots and red onions. I imagine this dish would be a dream addition to an outdoor meal under the darkening sky, or cooked for a special gathering as the night's centrepiece.

**RECIPE**

You'll need 1 pork hock, hind leg if possible

**BRINE**

2.5l water  
240g sugar  
100g kosher salt  
5g whole black peppercorn  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
2 bay leaves

Combine all ingredients in a pot; bring to a boil and take off the heat.

Allow the brine to cool then transfer into a container with the pork hock. Leave in the fridge to brine for 12 hours or overnight.

**STOCK/BRAISING LIQUID**

3 stalks of lemongrass  
4l water  
2 white onions, peeled and quartered  
3 cloves garlic, crushed  
5g whole black peppercorns  
2 bay leaves  
100ml fish sauce  
50g kosher salt  
50g sugar

Remove the pork hock from the brine and discard the brine.

Puncture inside the pork meat with a knife. Repeat in different locations to create about three small holes, and stuff the punctured holes with the lemongrass.

Combine all ingredients into a pot and bring to a simmer but do not let it boil. Add more water as needed and season with salt to taste (but remember the pork has already been brined, so be careful to not over-season).

Simmer for 4-6 hours or until tender. Remove pork from the braising liquid, let it air dry and allow it to fully cool down. *Tip: Keep the stock — this can be a good base for soups, sauces or other braised recipes.*

**DEEP-FRY**

2-3l rice bran oil  
5l stock pot

Bring the oil to 180 degrees, or just until it starts to smoke. Rub the pork with a tiny bit of salt.

Carefully lower it into the pot and fry for 15 minutes, or until crispy, turning it using a pair of kitchen tongs if necessary. *(We used a commercial deep fryer, so results might vary. For the best results, make sure the skin is dry.)*

**ENSALADANG TALONG**

1 eggplant  
2 steak tomatoes  
2 salted duck eggs  
30ml pinakurat vinegar  
15ml patis/fish sauce

Grill (sugba) or boil (tuwa) the eggplant (the sugba method gives a nice smoky flavour), then peel it before letting it cool in the fridge. The tomatoes can be kept as is, or you can cut them in half and grill them as well.

Peel the shell of the salted duck eggs and cut into quarters. Kilaw/marinade the eggplant, tomato and salted egg with the pinakurat and patis dressing. Serve on the side.

**DIPPING SAUCES**

Lechon sauce  
Soy sauce and shallot or red onion  
Patis at suka (fish sauce, vinegar, and coconut or cane sugar)  
Atchara

*Tip: Check the Chinese/Filipino aisle at your local Asian supermarket for unfamiliar ingredients*

**RIGHT ABOVE —**

The brined hock is fried until crispy — about 15 minutes — and turned as necessary with kitchen tongs.

**RIGHT BELOW —**

Carlo Buenaventura wants to showcase Filipino cuisine, especially lesser-known techniques.







## Two of the best hotpot restaurants in Auckland

Food writer Dylan Willson pays a visit to Little Lamb's two Auckland branches and is pleasantly surprised.

**A**s a fan of Chinese cuisine, I've been to many hotpot restaurants in Auckland, not only because I like cooking food at my table, but also because I believe that boiling meat and vegetables is one of the best ways to keep their original taste and nutrition. And the discovery of Little Lamb was a welcome find for me, as they champion the Inner Mongolian hotpot style rather than the more common Chongquin or Sichuan styles.

When selecting your hotpot you can choose between mushroom soup, chicken bone soup, tomato soup or the low-oil spicy soup - for those trying to keep it healthy. Delicious lamb skewers and other cold dishes from North China are also available.

Little Lamb has one branch in Ellerslie and another in Takapuna, both providing quality meat and fresh vegetables. The Ellerslie restaurant is cosier, and feels like a great place to have lunch

or dinner with close friends or that special someone, while the Takapuna branch is ideal for big events and family dining, featuring "Mongolian Yurt" private rooms Little Lamb can provide a roasted whole lamb cooked in a traditional Mongolian way. While dining there recently, I could smell the beautiful barbecue aroma wafting over from the other guests' private room.

So head to Little Lamb for a delicious, nutritious hotpot meal at a reasonable price. Two people can dine for about \$80, including traditional Mongolian milk tea. To benefit from discounts and other promotions, check out Little Lamb's Instagram, or visit their Facebook at [fb.com/littlelambnz01](https://www.facebook.com/littlelambnz01).

**FOR THE LAST TEN YEARS, LITTLE LAMB HAS BEEN VOTED ONE OF THE TOP 10 HOTPOT RESTAURANTS IN CHINA (CHINA CNPP BRAND RESEARCH INSTITUTE). VISIT ONE OF THEIR AUCKLAND RESTAURANTS AT 178 HURSTMERE RD, TAKAPUNA OR 2E ROBERT ST, ELLERSLIE.**



**ABOVE TOP —** The Takapuna restaurant features Mongolian Yurts.

**ABOVE —** Little Lamb's hotpot meat plates.

**LEFT —** The sumptuous seafood platter.





# SERVING ACES

Ozone might be trying too hard with the food, but it has the makings of a great local.

TEXT — SIMON FARRELL-GREEN

**82** FOOD NEEDS IMPROVING, SERVICE IS TERRIFIC.

**A** confession. When a colleague suggested I review Ozone — the Taranaki-via-London coffee roaster's newish all-day eatery in Grey Lynn's Westmoreland Precinct — I didn't really take them seriously. I just thought it was a cafe that served wood-fired pizza at night. Good for the kids but not a fully-fledged local. Then I had a look at the menu, and saw that they had handmade linguine with tuatua and nduja, and I made a booking on the spot.

It was a Friday afternoon and it was a bit empty, though it filled up later — I'm not sure if they're doing a roaring trade in the evenings, and if they aren't I hope things improve soon. We took our kids and we sat in the big, generous booths down one side with the really comfortable green-leather banquettes. There's a roughly industrial feel to the place — it's a big shed and a working roaster, and the kitchen sits in the middle, open to the whole restaurant with a wood-fired oven and steel shelving.

The kids will be five and three soon, and they have a much-improved attention span in restaurants, as long as Ira can get to the toilet soon after eating, which is a habit I remember of my brother back in the 1980s. So as long as we can be done and dusted inside



an hour, and the food comes quickly, they're remarkably good company.

As any parent knows, you're even more grateful when restaurants know what it takes to make that hour not just tolerable, but pleasant. At Ozone, regardless of whether you take your children, they treat you with a kind of upbeat but highly effective casualness that I associate with super-casual but very good bars and cafes in Melbourne. We've had three waiters across two visits to Ozone: they were all brilliant; not one of them could have done better. They knew the wine and beer and food lists inside out. They all had excellent taste.

It's always the small things, right? On that first visit, they let the pizza cool slightly

before it came to the table, and they split one glass of juice in two without asking; they could see the kids starting to fidget and asked us if we wanted another drink, or the bill. On a later visit with friends, a waiter steered us to a cheaper bottle of wine after bringing out about four for us to taste, and then we sat there until about 10 o'clock without realising we were the last to leave, or feeling remotely hurried. Stuff like this seems effortless, but it's really hard — and it's even harder to keep up that bouncy, infectious energy when it's quiet. Auckland hospitality's biggest failing is service: somehow, Ozone shows everyone else in the category how good a really great waiter can be.

I think the food could do

with a little work. There's a lot of curing and smoking — maybe too much. That linguine with tua tua and nduja was fantastic — juicy little tuatua, out of the shell, scattered through a thick, smoky, spicy sauce that didn't overcome the sweet shellfish; the linguine had bite to it. We've also eaten a lovely dish of pork schnitzel, a sinfully thick, golden-brown batter enveloping a tender schnitzel, with an amazingly zesty green apple slaw and a sauce gribiche. We loved a dish of blue-moki "collars", deep-fried, the fish unctuous and tender, falling away and beautifully complemented with an excellent sauce gribiche and a very nice plate of smoked carrots with labneh and dukkah — smoky and spicy.



# NO GREAT HEIGHTS

The Sugar Club was meant to transcend its view, but too much of its food is ho-hum.

TEXT — HENRY OLIVER

**68** INCREDIBLE VIEW, DELICIOUS COCKTAILS, DISAPPOINTING FOOD.

**They say the better the view, the worse the food. And The Sugar Club, the fine dining restaurant at the top of the Sky Tower, has one hell of a view.**

On my first visit, I spent half of my two-and-a-bit hours there with knee-shaking vertigo. I kept my eyes settled off into the distance, as if in a plane, avoiding eye-contact with the streets below. A year later, I was drawn back by the a plant-based, low-carbon set menu, a display of confidence worth rewarding with a visit, an open mind, and a steady knee.

At lunch, the shiitake mushroom was soft and squishy, tasting like an enjoyable-but pedestrian pie filling shaped like a tartare. This was followed, oddly, by another tartare, this time of smoked beetroot — earthy, herbaceous and meaty. It was the Impossible Burger of vegetable tartares. We lapped it up. The steamed kūmara was soft and pleasant but monochrome in flavour and texture. And the broccoli dumplings were so forgettable, when a different companion ordered them on a second visit a couple of weeks later, I said, “Oh those sound good”.

Dinner on a sweaty February night started on a high note with one each from the

Native Cocktail section. Both were home runs — a gin with riesling and passionfruit, and a gin with harakeke, lemon, apricot and chickpea brine, the restaurant’s signature cocktail ingredient. The wine service was just as good — recommendations were enthusiastic and knowledgeable, and a slightly obnoxious request to lightly chill a wine offered at room temperature was welcomed with a smile.

The entrees were excellent. The seared octopus was beautifully cooked, soft and buttery, with a noodle-like nest of daikon and chorizo broth. The mushroom dish from the previous lunch (on ordering, I failed to find a polite way to warn off my companion) came alive with less cooking and more spice — it was firm, with an enlivening jolt of pepper. The mains were less enticing. The dumplings were a soggy mash of vegetable in a crispy deep-fried shell, like an attempt to hide vegetables from a picky eater. My companion called it retire-

ment-home food. The duck was soft and nicely medium rare, but so gently cooked, the remaining fat and sinew made it hard to cut, let alone chew, and stuck in my teeth for the rest of the evening.

The problem with The Sugar Club is expectation. It’s meant to be the flagship restaurant of one of the most celebrated and innovative New Zealand chefs of his generation, yet too much of the food fails to justify the high price tag. It was meant to transcend its view, not rely on it. It should be one of the best restaurants in the city, not a tourist trap. The rumour is that Peter Gordon is returning to Auckland this year. It’s welcome news. The Sugar Club needs him.

## The Sugar Club

Level 53, Sky Tower, 72 Victoria Street West. Ph 363 6365  
skycityauckland.co.nz/  
restaurants/the-sugar-club/

**Hours:** Open Mon, 11am-9pm, Tue, 5-9pm, Wed-Sun, 11am-2:30pm, 5-9pm

**Bill:** Lunch \$59-\$129, Dinner \$79-159

But the other night I had parpadelle with smoked mushrooms and a cured yolk: the pasta, again, was delightful, big wide ribbons of fresh pasta, cooked perfectly al dente, but the sauce was overpoweringly rich, at once intensely creamy and sour and smokey. It’s not often I tell people to pull back, but this is that rare time. A main of mussels, meanwhile, came with koji mayo, tamarillo powder and whey emulsion, and it too was overpoweringly rich.

In short, you get the sense they’re trying a little hard, as if they’ve got something to prove, when really, they haven’t — this has the makings of one of Auckland’s best locals.

## Ozone

1/18 Westmoreland St West, Grey Lynn. Ph 360 8125  
ozonecoffee.co.nz

**Hours:** Monday 7am-4pm, Tuesday 7am-9.30pm, Wednesday-Friday 7am-10pm, Saturday 8am-10pm and Sunday 8am-9.30pm.

**Bill:** Small \$9 to \$22; Large \$18.90 to \$36; Pizza \$8 to \$24; Dessert \$12.50.

### HOW WE REVIEW

WE VISIT RESTAURANTS AT LEAST TWICE AND RATE THEM FOR WHAT THEY HAVE SET OUT TO DO: A SUPERB BISTRO AND SUPERB FINE-DINER BOTH GET 90 OR MORE. OUR SCORES ARE BASED ON THE QUALITY OF FOOD, SERVICE, ROOM, DRINKS AND X-FACTOR. WE PAY FOR ALL MEALS AND DO NOT DECLARE OUR PRESENCE.

|                                   |          |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| AVOID! AVOID!                     | UNDER 50 |
| WE'D EAT HERE IF WE HAD TO        | 50-59    |
| GOOD, BUT REALLY SHOULD BE BETTER | 60-69    |
| PRETTY GOOD                       | 70-79    |
| REALLY GOOD                       | 80-89    |
| AS GOOD AS IT GETS                | 90-100   |





# BEST IN TOWN? MAIS, NON

A TripAdvisor favourite is merely pleasantly forgettable.

TEXT — JEAN TENG

**66** FORGETTABLE FRENCH FOOD, WEIRD VIBES. GREAT WINE, THOUGH.

**L**e Bistro des Gourmets is the best restaurant in Auckland. At least, that's according to TripAdvisor, where, at the time of writing, it's at #1 after a comparatively small amount of reviews (87; The Grove, number 4, has 1,666). Overseas, I often plug into TripAdvisor to help make impossible dining decisions, and so I was intrigued. How did a Parnell restaurant I had scarcely heard of climb all the way to the top, and is the TripAdvisor ranking an accurate reflection of the Auckland food scene as we actual Aucklanders experience it?

The restaurant is weird. You walk up narrow stairs to a vacant entry room that has a Getty image of a vineyard on a false door. "Where do I go now?" I texted my friend. It turns out, you need to round the corner, where it opens up into a quaint white table-clothed room with wine bottles for decoration. We were seated at a lovely table by the window, which looks out onto Parnell Rd. At eye level across from me, two bizarre black-and-white stock photos of the Eiffel Tower sat below a 2006-esque wall decal that read 'Bon Appétit'.

They've gotten rid of most of the strange and interesting. The whole kidney I read about a couple years back? Gone. The ox tongue? Gone. I can't begrudge them that — who is eating a whole kidney

in 2020? — but a girl wanted to try some squidgy kidney. Where else could I? I had venison sweetbreads with truffle instead: overcooked, not tender or moist, and without a crispy skin around them like I've enjoyed at other restaurants. They were in a sauce that could only be described as very tasty but "generically French", all garlic and onion and white wine. "Like the inside of a pie filling," my friend mused. This was cooked on a stove that the server wheeled out tableside — except it wasn't quite tableside, but five feet from tableside, due to the raised platform my table was on. "Do we stand up and look?" I asked. The host didn't say a word, but I was slightly charmed by the whole peculiar formality of it.

I was slightly charmed, too, by the French host/sommelier, who convinced me to drink during a non-drinking stint without even saying anything except for, "and the wine?" I folded like a deck of cards. A consultation is required because everything is in French. I had a chenin blanc from Vouvray and enjoyed it a lot.

What else did I enjoy? The truth is, I enjoyed all of it, in the same way you enjoy a surprisingly good meal when you're on holiday and stumble across a cool-looking restaurant within walking distance



of your hotel. Maybe in that sense, it really is the perfect TripAdvisor restaurant.

A plate of lamb rump (pâtisson d'agneau en croûte d'olives, jus au romarin, caviar d'aubergine) was cooked nicely, sitting in a rosemary jus with the same base flavour as the sweetbreads, and healthy pools of eggplant caviar. The caviar needed to be richer and more luscious; as it was, it was more of a puree. The gurnard (poisson du marché rôti, étuvée de légumes et son jus acidulé) was, again, well-cooked and nicely seasoned, licked up with a clear citrus jus that was unevenly sour, served with vegetables that were stewed beyond recognition but oddly appetising because of it ("That's a root vegetable, but what root vegetable?"). If anything, both were disappointingly bland and safe dishes, though nice to eat.

At dessert, our host tested us again on our French. I took Japanese in high school, so would have had a better

chance of conversing with the tourists at the table next to us. Upon recommendation, we ate a cloud: the île flottante aux fruits rouges, a meringue that is quickly poached. The meringue disappears as soon as you put it in your mouth, like it was never there.

So, is this actually the best restaurant in Auckland? No. No, but a lot of it was perfectly nice, and they obviously know their wine. It's unfortunately pleasantly forgettable. They need to work on ambience (the decal's got to go, and they need to play music) and that awkward entrance if they want to attract more Aucklanders beyond Parnell locals.

## Le Bistro des Gourmets

237 Parnell Rd, Parnell

Ph 374 3938

lebistrodesgourmets.co.nz

**Hours:** Mon-Sat, 11.30am-2pm; 5.30-9pm.

**Bill:** Mise en bouche \$14-\$23; entrees \$16-\$18; mains \$32-75; desserts \$15-\$18

REBEKAH ROBINSON



# A *taste of Italy*

Discover the regional differences in Italy's coffee – from north to south there's plenty of variation.

**P**rolific coffee consumption is part of Italy's DNA. From that first morning cappuccino in a stand up bar, through to the last espresso of the evening with friends around the dinner table, it's an essential part of Italian life; every bit as important as going to church, eating excellent food, drinking good wine and spending time laughing - and fighting - with your family.

And like everything that passes anyone's lips in Italy, geography plays a huge role. Every region has a different flavour, style and intensity of coffee; a different length and temperature for roasting beans and different notes that make it unique to that particular area. Don't expect a blend from Rome to taste the same as a blend from Milan, nor a person from either of those cities to have the same opinion on what constitutes a good cup of coffee.

Nespresso's intense collection of coffees, *Ispirazione Italiana*, is based on this fierce provenance. Launching with debut flavours, Napoli and Venezia, the range of seven includes variants from Italy's best loved cities. It will take coffee lovers on their own Italian journey so they can discover varying regional coffee aromas and cremas themselves.





## NAPOLI: BIG, BOLD AND BRAZEN

There's nothing meek about Naples. Not the food, not the people - and definitely not the coffee. Napoli is larger-than-life in every sense, and the locals are food-obsessed, passionate and proud. It's not uncommon to see mini-dramas playing out amidst the cobblestoned alleys, millennia-old ruins, medieval castles, and baroque churches of this city - no one even bats an eyelid.

It follows that the coffee should also be intense, especially to complement food like gutsy Napolitano ragu, garlicky spaghetti alle vongole, sweet sticky Sfogliatella pastries - and, of course, pizza. Birthplace of the original margherita, Napoli dough proves for two days and is topped with local tomatoes, luscious chunks of fresh mozzarella and fragrant basil then blasted briefly in a scorching oven till puffy.

A mild coffee would never make it with food - or in a town - like this. The Napoli blend comprises Robusta beans roasted for long periods at high heat to just before burning point - for maximum intensity. Influenced by nearby Africa and the Mediterranean, it's thick bodied, velvety and creamy with dark chocolate notes and a pleasant bitter aftertaste. It definitely deserves its nationwide reputation - be it straight up, in a cappuccino or as the base of an Espresso Martini.

NESPRESSO ISPIRAZIONE NAPOLI—

**A velvety, creamy, dark roast with an extremely thick body and a pleasantly bitter aftertaste. INTENSITY 13**



The bar staff at Andiamo make a perfectly balanced Espresso Martini - ideal for an early-evening pick me up.

Andiamo's margherita pizza will transport you instantly to the streets of Napoli.



## **VENEZIA: A LIGHTER SOPHISTICATION**

The north of Italy is such a contrast to the south. Influenced by Switzerland and Austria, it has a totally different feel to the south's raw, vibrant intensity. Venice's epic grandeur is a perfect example; a fairy tale city with show-stopping piazzas, palazzos and basilicas. Art reigns supreme and there's an air of sophistication - a cooler head to the passion of the south.

The food is different too - less pizza, (fewer tomato-based pastas) more risotto, heavy on lagoon seafood. Indulging in cicchetti (small bites) over a glass of prosecco is a favourite Venetian pastime - think small open-faced sandwiches, olives, fried meatballs and seafood.

Charming Treviso is the gateway town to much-loved Venice and claims to be the birthplace of Tiramisu. An international crowd pleaser, this coffee-laden symphony of boozy sponge combined with a creamy mascarpone, egg and sugar mixture and dusted with cocoa is the ultimate pick-me-up dessert. The thick-bodied creaminess of Nespresso's Venezia roast and its caramel honey flavours couldn't be a better coffee to use when making it.

Like the Napoli blend, the Venezia is also roasted at high temperatures but for a shorter time. Predominantly Arabica beans, its biscuity taste is round and smooth and definitely has shades of an Italian dessert; sweet and bitter elements all in perfect balance.

NESPRESSO ISPIRAZIONE VENEZIA—  
A delicately aromatic blend, with all elements balanced harmoniously, caramel notes and thick body. INTENSITY 8



Andiamo pride themselves in their signature dessert - tiramisu. Every bit as good as the Italian version.





# MY FAVOURITE

**T**en years ago - hell, even five years ago - Auckland was a bit embarrassing on the beer front. In Wellington, you could barely move for hoppy IPAs, rich stouts and tongue-tingling sours, but in Auckland, the odd craft-beer bar aside, a Peroni on tap was about as good as it got.

These days you can fill up a growler at Liquorland, get a ParrotDog Bitterbitch at Prego and buy a six-pack of Liberty's Yakima Monster at Countdown. Auckland even has its own "beer mile", running from the top of Symonds St down New North Rd to Morningside, with eight or so breweries or beer-dedicated bars to stop in at.

It's not just Auckland. We are living, my friends, in a golden age of beer. There's never been a better time to drink the stuff in New Zealand than right now.

A few years ago, there were murmurings that the craft-beer bubble was set to burst. The industry was getting crowded with new microbreweries, some of whom seemed to prize style over substance. After a couple of independent breweries sold to Big Beer, there was concern more would follow suit, leaving the few little guys unable to compete with the lower prices, higher output and advertising clout of those with stacks of cash behind them.

But it hasn't played out that way. The sale of Christchurch craft brewer Harrington's to Lion in 2018 aside, there's been nothing much doing in the past few years, and the upside of the likes of Panhead, Emerson's and Tuatara being bought out by Lion and DB is that their indisputably good beer is available at a wider range of places.

The rash of new breweries with cringe-worthy names and try-hard labels seems to have slowed down too, and instead we've seen some very good brewers who cut their teeth as craft stalwarts here and overseas go out on their own to quietly set up labels all over the country.

So if you're not a beer drinker, or perhaps you're a green-bottle-only type, there's no better time than now to dive into the wonderful world of New Zealand beer. If you're already on board, hopefully there'll be a few in the following (alphabetical) list of 20 of our favourites to add to your to-drink queue. Cheers!



(A)



(B)



(C)



(D)



(E)

TEXT — ALICE NEVILLE

# FAVOURITE



**8 WIRED****HIPPY BERLINER SOUR PALE ALE (4%)**

\$22, 6 X 330ML BOTTLES

Can't really get your head around sour beers? I don't blame you. They can be a challenging prospect if you're used to hop-forward brews, but the Hippy Berliner is a great entry point, bridging the gap between sour and hoppy. Warkworth-based 8 Wired, something of a pioneer on the sour scene in New Zealand, describes it as "the love child of a Berliner Weisse and an IPA", and that's pretty damn spot on. Juicy, fruity hop flavour, a balanced bitterness and a subtle tang add up to a very refreshing drop, at a quaffable 4%.

**BACH****(A)****BILLFISH APA (5.8%)** \$24, 6 X 330ML CANS

Bach is an Auckland outfit that contract brews at Ōtāhuhu's Steam Brewing, producing consistently good beers in cans that feature whimsical Kiwi summer scenes. While APA traditionally stands for American pale ale, Bach Brewing decided to widen it out to all As, brewing this one with hops from America, Australia, Aotearoa and, um, Anglia. Despite that somewhat convoluted backstory, it's simply a good solid pale ale. Nothing too fancy going on, just lovely tropical fruit flavours on a beautifully balanced backbone of bitterness. A very good go-to.

**BEHEMOTH****LID RIPPER HAZY IPA (6.9%)** \$10, 440ML CAN

Behemoth churns out hazies with almost alarming regularity, and they're always excellent, but this is the OG and it's hard to top. Hazy IPAs have been everywhere in the past couple of years and there's no sign that the trend is abating. They're unfiltered, which gives the beer a hazy or cloudy appearance to varying degrees, and are often described as "juicy" on account of the fruit-forward hops they showcase, with less palate-blasting bitterness than the classic west-coast IPA. The Lid Ripper is thus named as you can literally rip the lid off the can and drink up, which you'll definitely want to do as it's so damn delicious.

**BONEFACE****OUTLAW IPL (5.2%)** \$22, 6 X 330ML BOTTLES

'What the hell's an IPL?' I hear you yell.

Swap the 'A' for ale for an 'L' for lager and you've got yourself an Indian pale lager — essentially a lager, but hoppy. Lagers are brewed in a different way from ales, using bottom-fermenting yeasts rather than top, and the result is the light, fizzy, crisp beers the world loves. Chuck in a bunch of delicious hops late in the brewing process and you've got yourself the tropical-fruity yet still clean and refreshing Outlaw from Boneface, a newish addition to the burgeoning beer hub of Upper Hutt.

**CROUCHER****(B)****LOWRIDER A VERY SMALL IPA (2.5%)**

\$14, 4 X 330ML BOTTLES

Making a low-alcohol beer that actually has flavour is no mean feat, so kudos to Rotorua brewery Croucher for this offering. Co-founder Paul Croucher is a doctor of synthetic chemistry and used his science smarts to develop the recipe and you can actually taste the hops. The Lowrider might not rock your world or your palate but it's balanced and flavoursome — a "smash a few of these at the next barbie you attend and drive home safely without feeling hard done by" kind of a deal. The definition of sessionable.

**DEEP CREEK****(C)****ROESELARE BARREL-AGED RED SOUR ALE****(6.9%)** \$30, 750ML BOTTLE

The latest from Silverdale-based Deep Creek's barrel-ageing programme is a beauty — a Flanders-style number with notes of black cherry and redcurrant, aged in red-wine barrels for almost two years. Barrel-ageing gives beers layers of complexity, so this is not the sort of drop you knock back after mowing the lawns. Share it with friends and sip it slowly of an evening, savouring it as you would a fine whisky. A thinking woman's beer if ever there was one.

**DUNCAN'S****(D)****RASPBERRY RIPPLE ICE CREAM SOUR (5%)**

\$9, 440ML CAN

How could a beer with that name not be delicious? Kāpiti-based Duncan's describes this as a dessert-style sour, brewed with lactose sugar and vanilla to add a touch of sweetness to a tangy raspberry base. It had its launch at Beervana last year, where it was

poured on nitro, making it super velvety and creamy, and was constantly trending at the top of the festivalgoers' favourites list. So smooth, so fruity, so delightfully pink in hue, it's a beer to make you smile.

**EPIC****SHOTGUN XPA (4.8%)**

\$4, 330ML CAN

XPAs have been all over the show lately, and I urge you to welcome them with open arms (and mouths). The X stands for extra, and while there's no set definition of an XPA, they're usually lighter and brighter than IPAs and APAs, with lots of hoppy flavour but not so much palate-blasting bitterness. Often under 5%, they're a thirst-quenching, sessionable option, and this one from Auckland brewing stalwart Epic features Citra and Amarillo hops, giving it delicious citrus notes.

**GARAGE PROJECT****WHITE MISCHIEF SALTED WHITE PEACH****SOUR (2.9%)**

\$5, 330ML CAN

Salty, sweet and sour, the White Mischief is a curious little drop, a kettle-soured wheat beer infused with white peaches and a touch of salt, with a teeny ABV of 2.9%. Garage Project's take on the very old German style gose, it's crisp and clean and palate-cleansing, one I often drink if I have overindulged in hoppy 8 percenters and need to recalibrate. If you like cider, you will like this beer (but if you're easily offended by fornicating rabbits, do not look too closely at the can).

**HALLERTAUI****(E)****09 (4.5%)**

\$29, 9 X 330ML BOTTLES

Had to include the self-proclaimed "beer of Auckland" in the magazine of Auckland now didn't we? The Hallertau 09 is a simple, dare I say basic, drop, not dissimilar to Aucklanders themselves (kidding! (kind of)). The brewery doesn't categorise it as any particular style, and my palate is not fine-tuned enough to guarantee this is brewed with a bottom-fermenting yeast, but it screams lager to me. Either way, it's a beer aimed squarely at taking on the green bottles — still crisp and refreshing and smashable, but with some flavour. God bless the 09.



# MY FAVORITE



# FAVOURITE



**KERERŪ****FEIJOA WEISSE (3.8%)**

\$30, 6 X 330ML BOTTLES

If you don't like feijoas (you're a traitor to your country, quite frankly), look away now. The autumnal fruit's curious flavour doesn't always translate well to other food and drink products, but this is simply \*chef kissing fingers\*. Weisse is a cloudy wheat-beer style brewed with lactic acid, which gives it a lovely tartness. The style originates in Berlin, where I don't imagine feijoas are plentiful, but they work an absolute treat here, thanks to the fine folk of Kererū in Upper Hutt, who recommend drinking it as a substitute for New Zealand sauvignon blanc.

**LIBERTY BREWING (G)****HALO PILSNER (5.4%)**

\$22, 6 X 330ML BOTTLES

The Halo is a modern classic. I would argue that if anyone was to challenge old mate Hallertau 09 (above) for the title of beer of Auckland, it's this one. The Halo is a fine example of a New Zealand pilsner — fruity hops, gentle bitterness, heaps of aroma. It's a gateway beer: one that people who aren't really into hoppy beers try, they like, they drink lots of it, then they progress up the chain to pale ales and before you know it they're sinking 8% double IPAs.

**LIBERTY BREWING (H)****PROHIBITION PORTER (13.1%)**

\$11, 330ML BOTTLE

I'd planned not to put any brewery in this list twice, but I miscalculated and here we are with another Liberty beer. It's apt, though, because every beer Liberty makes out in Helensville is bloody good. Aged in charred bourbon barrels, the Prohibition Porter has won a bunch of awards and is hugely popular with the average punter as well. Because it is, in a word, delicious. The 2019 vintage comes in at a hefty 13.1% and is rich, smooth, deep, complex, chocolatey. Sip slowly and it'll blow your mind.

**MCLEOD'S****FAR NORTH CHILI PILS (5.2%)**

\$9, 500ML BOTTLE

Based up in Waipū, McLeod's flies a bit

**(F)**

under the radar, going about its business producing some incredibly good beer without fanfare, from barrel-aged sours to hop-focused unfiltered IPAs (do get amongst the 802 series if you ever see one on tap), to quaffable delights like this here pilsner. It's made with Kaitaia Fire chilli sauce, but the heat is balanced, well integrated with a gentle hoppiness, lingering a little on the back of the palate in a very moreish manner. Get in.

**NEW NEW NEW****SYNAPTIC VOYAGE THAI LIME & LEMONGRASS SOUR (5.6%)**

\$11.50, 650ML BOTTLE

This tart wee number hails from Dunedin, made by a brewery named New New New that opened its doors in 2016 and produces beers that are interesting but not weird for the sake of it. Does the Synaptic Voyage take the drinker on a synaptic voyage? I searched "synaptic" in the dictionary and still don't understand what it means, so couldn't really comment, but I can tell you that this is a very nice sour, super refreshing and with a pleasingly dry finish.

**NORTH END****PIT BOSS SMOKED DOPPELBOCK (7%)**

\$8, 440ML CAN

The pleasingly named doppelbock is a lager, but not as you know it. A subset of the German bock style (doppel means double), it was originally brewed by Munich monks and is strong, rich and malty. North End, based in Waikanae on the Kāpiti Coast, has an adjoining barbecue-focused restaurant called the Salt and Wood Collective, and the brewers co-opted the restaurant's smoker to mānuka-smoke the malt used for this beer. The result is smoky, rich and a little bit bread. Excellent paired with pulled pork.

**PARROTD OG****JANICE DOUBLE IPA (8.5%)** \$11, 440ML CAN

Wellington's ParrotDog has a series of beers with names that sound like they could be your aunt and uncle from Taumarunui. Classic Kiwi boomer names, basically: there's Keith, Gavin, Joan, Glen, Susan, Lloyd, Colin, Terry, Vivian and Lindsay. And there is Janice. If you're anything like me, sometimes you don't want sour or barrel-aged or malty or dark or complex, you just want to

be punched in the face by delicious hops. For those times, there is Janice. She's big and bold, zesty and tropical fruity, and her name is Janice. What's not to like?

**SAWMILL BREWERY (K)****PASSIONFRUIT SOUR (4.5%)**

\$11, 500ML BOTTLE

Brewed with a Mexican-inspired mélange of passionfruit purée and hibiscus flowers, this is tart and refreshing like a good sour should be, but with a touch of spice and bread notes adding complexity. It's also the prettiest damn beer you'll ever lay your eyes on, pouring a glorious sunset pink. Sawmill's Matakana brewery was gutted by fire last year but they should be back brewing by Easter, with the adjoining brew bar/restaurant the Smoko Room set to be up and running by mid-year, so be sure to pencil in a cosy winter visit.

**URBANAUT****MIAMI BRUT LAGER (5.5%)** \$3.50, 250ML CAN

You can't judge a beer by its can, but honestly, have you ever seen anything cuter? A pocket-sized 250ml, drinking this makes you feel like you're on holiday. The brut trend began with the brut IPA, which is brewed with an enzyme that makes the beer super dry and effervescent, not dissimilar to a brut méthode champenoise wine. Brewers are now giving it a go with other styles, and this IPL-style lager (see the fourth entry on this list for more on that) is a real treat: Mosaic and Citra hops bring heaps of tropical-fruity flavour to a delightfully crisp, refreshing drop.

**ZEELANDT****BLACK MONK SCHWARZBIER (5%)**

\$8 FOR A 500ML BOTTLE

Schwarzbier is a great choice for those times when you fancy a dark beer but aren't up for a Guinness-style "meal in a glass". It's a German black lager, a "lighter" style of dark beer in comparison to the richer, more intense stouts and porters. Named for the Bavarian monks who brewed this style in the Middle Ages, Black Monk, one of Hawke's Bay brewery Zeelandt's most highly regarded brews, is light and refreshing, packed with malty flavour, with hints of chocolate and coffee and a crisp, dry finish.

**(I)****(L)**



# Enhancing fine dining

Travelling the world exploring the best food, wine and holiday experiences sounds like the ultimate job – that probably doesn't exist. Zoe Bowker would beg to differ. She's living proof you can live the dream.

**K**iwi Zoe Bowker, now based in Dubai, started her foray into the world of sharing the good times in 2016. In something of meteoric rise she has garnered the praise and attention of the world's best food and wine establishments as her online directory *The Luxeologist* is feverishly followed by eager foodies all over the globe.

In the past two years alone, Zoe has travelled to Spain, France, Portugal, Mexico, China, the USA, Jordan, Denmark, Thailand, Indonesia, Slovenia and New Zealand where she called into our local hotspots to see how we were doing it. *The Luxeologist* is designed to act as a guide and as Zoe herself says, "help direct people towards experiences that will bring them happiness and create long-lasting memories".

Whether you're on the search for somewhere great to visit in your own backyard, or perhaps even somewhere international, Zoe's goal is to help ensure you avoid disappointment. She achieves this through comprehensive reviews and stunning photography, all orchestrated by her own hand.

Zoe's ability to convey an experience has been rewarded by invitations to sit on judging panels for top-level restaurant awards, like The World's Best 50 Restaurants. It's fair to say she has become an expert on exploring how every chef, sommelier or maître d' adds a 'je ne sais quoi' to make the dining ritual unique.

Exploring the dining ritual is something that is dear to the heart of New Zealand owned company, antipodes water. Their



**ABOVE** — Zoe Bowker.

**OPPOSITE PAGE** — Pure and simple antipodes water has a low natural minerality, making it the ideal table water for fine dining.

little glass bottle of goodness that is so familiar to all of us can be found on dining tables all around the world.

Antipodes is committed to ensuring they do their best to reach those tables appropriately, having been carbon-zero certified since 2005. All things considered, it's no surprise that antipodes water has turned up on a table that Zoe has been sitting at – whether it's in Dubai or Dominion Road.

Antipodes CEO Angela Buglass recently spent some time comparing notes on the rituals of dining with Zoe. The following is a small excerpt of what happens when two foodies get together over a glass of sparkling and talk shop about mutual passions.

**AB:** You've travelled so extensively with the dining table being a key focus of the destination. The dining table is also our favourite place to land, wherever we are in the world. Naturally, New Zealand is a treasured place and we're proud of the evolving hospitality landscape. You regularly return home to the shores of Aotearoa, so what do you think about the New Zealand dining scene at the moment?

**ZB:** I think New Zealanders don't know how good they have it when it comes to the quality of the dining options available. The New Zealand dining scene really benefits from the fact that chef owner-operators can start small and grow as their reputation and audience does. Because of this, hospitality concepts in New Zealand tend to be drawn more from personal passion and inspiration, as opposed to commercial formulas, meaning there is much more individuality and innovation in the market.

The multicultural nature of New Zealand also brings so many cuisines and fusion elements to the table – the Asian and Indian cuisine on offer is truly incredible! One can't overstate the benefit of having access to high-quality, locally sourced produce, a key ingredient when it comes to serving up amazing cuisine – and New Zealand has that in spades. Add incredible local wines, water and the Antipodean can-do spirit and it's easy to see why New Zealand is my favourite dining destination.

**AB:** The word 'hospitality' covers a lot of bases. Some people would argue you have to be born with it to be truly





**hospitable. Others believe constant learning around service can create that hospitality. What does hospitality mean to you?**

**ZB:** For me, excellence in hospitality is creating a personalised and personal experience for the diner. It's reading the table; understanding and anticipating a diner's needs. It's ensuring every part of the meal comes together to create an experience that you cannot wait to return to the moment you leave.

**AB: How important is the ritual of eating around a dining table?**

**ZB:** There's no social situation I love more than sharing a meal with friends. Taking time to converse over great food and wine is the perfect antidote to the hectic pace of modern life.

**AB: I can't help but ask - how important do you think good water is to the dining ritual?**

**ZB:** Whenever I'm served water that tastes unpleasant at a restaurant, it detracts from the meal, not just once, but every time you take a sip. Water is essential at every dining table, but should never interfere with the flavours of the food or the wine. Over the years I've become quite particular about the type of water I drink when dining out, and I avoid certain brands due to their high mineral content, which I personally find unpleasant.

Antipodes' low minerality makes it the perfect dining accompaniment, worthy of the world's best food and wine. I also find myself hydrating even more than usual without realising it. Always a blessing when you're also enjoying great wine with your meal!

**AB: I couldn't agree more! When I see antipodes on a restaurant table, I have a sense of pride, as a Kiwi involved in the**

**company. What does it mean to you when you see antipodes in a restaurant?**

**ZB:** When I notice antipodes being served in a restaurant it's a good sign that they have carefully considered the products they serve and the suppliers they work with. It definitely gives me confidence that the rest of the menu will be just as well curated. And let's face it - the bottles are the best looking on the market.

**AB: Who's your hospitality hero? Who continually inspires you?**

**ZB:** In terms of New Zealand, Tony Stewart (ex-Clooney) always comes to mind. His warmth and passion for New Zealand food always impresses and I cannot wait to see what will come of him joining forces with the fabulous chef Vaughan Mabee at Amisfield in Queenstown! It will definitely be a formidable combination.

***antipodes.co.nz***







# LOOKS & GAZES

**Penny Pickard** — Model and early-childhood teacher

AS TOLD TO — AIMIE CRONIN  
PHOTOGRAPHY — FRANCES CARTER

**I**t's a hard road finding the perfect leather jacket, especially second-hand. I could go and get one from Stolen Girlfriends Club that would be amazing and really well fitted but I still do like the thrill of trying to find something from an op shop. I'm always on the lookout for the perfect leather jacket and I thought this one (main photo) was a bit of a find. It's a little weird and everyone was saying to me "it's too small and too boxy", but I like it. My boyfriend Sid has a lot of leather jackets because of his motorcycle obsession and I borrow some of his, which just makes me look like the Michelin Man. I got my one from The Cross Street Market.

Buying vintage has always been a natural gravitation for me. I used to love op-shopping as a 14-year-old in Papakura, where I grew up, and K Rd, where there were just tonnes of those little op shops. When I was younger I was always op-shopping. I think I was a little bit obsessed with it. I find it a little bit trickier now. A lot of times it seems like when you

go into them the stuff is from big chain stores, so it feels really different to when I was op-shopping in the 90s. Back then, it would feel a little bit like you'd stumbled across something really rare and a real treasure. Cross Street Market does the work for you a little bit and picks out the good stuff.

I got these shoes (01) from a flea market in Paris in 1997 when I was 16 or 17 and have treasured them ever since.

I wouldn't define myself as being into fashion. I'm not big on keeping up with the seasons, or making sure I always have the latest trends. If something really speaks to me I'll buy it, but I don't buy a lot of clothes. I think a lot of people would assume I would be obsessed with fashion and have tonnes of stuff, and I probably should have collected more fashion, but a lot of it has been boxed up over the years and given to charities. Throughout my modelling career, Kate Sylvester is one of the designers I have worked with the most consistently and I have tried to keep a lot of her clothes. This (main photo) is a

really beautiful dress that is almost bridal or something, but I just love it.

I work as an early-childhood teacher now, as well as modelling part-time. I finished a philosophy degree and was really interested in early learning and early-childhood development, so I went and did a graduate diploma in teaching and now I am working at a Steiner kindergarten in Ellerslie. There is a bit of a colour therapy situation where they



**OPPOSITE PAGE** — Penny Pickard in her op-shop leather jacket and an "almost bridal" Kate Sylvester dress

**RIGHT** — (01) Shoes found in a Paris flea market in 1997



kind of discourage teachers from wearing black, which is funny because I wear a lot of black in my personal life. I wear light-coloured Kowtow T-shirt dresses that I layer up. I love the Kowtow stuff.

My mum and dad moved to Paeroa five years ago and this dress (02) is a Paeroa find. It's a little bit moth-eaten. I saw it hanging up and had to buy it because I think it is so unique. It's New Zealand-made from the days when a lot of things were still manufactured here. I've worn it a couple of times on special occasions, to a few significant birthdays with zero on the end. It's a bit of a showstopper.

My mum is 79. She had me quite late. She grew up in that generation where her mother sewed all of her clothes for her. There are beautiful, glamorous photo-

graphs of Mum in the 50s and the 60s in incredibly tailored clothes that were hand-sewn, and I think I might have inherited a bit of that respect and reverence for making things last and for thinking about where things come from and not necessarily going to the chain stores.

This jacket (03) I bought when I was about 17. I think it's rabbit fur. It's the kind of hippy vibe I was always into and I still wear it now, but I don't know that I wear it as well any more; it might have suited me more when I was younger. I wouldn't ever get rid of it. I think I bought it from an op shop in Sydney and just loved how authentic it was. I have another dress I haven't been brave enough to wear, but it's another New Zealand-made one. I was given it when I did a show promoting vintage clothes. It's so over the top, I really

love it. I have this Mama Cass fantasy of wearing it one day. I read an article recently that talked about the "big dress" as being a way to smash the patriarchy now, and dressing for the female gaze, and I thought that was really interesting. I'm turning 40 next year, so I'm thinking it may be the time to be a little bit fabulous — an "it's your party so you can wear what you want to" sort of thing. I was thinking after reading that article that a lot of the clothes I own are quite long and roomy and I might naturally be dressing for the female gaze. I think it's an important, subtle way that fashion can be a political statement.

M



## LEFT —

(02) Found in Paeroa, this New Zealand-made, slightly moth-eaten dress is "a bit of a showstopper" on special occasions.

## ABOVE —

(03) A jacket, possibly of rabbit fur, bought from a Sydney op shop.



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# *Fiji for thought*

Menu-less dining, sustainable fishing, luxury appointments, and wilderness exploration, *Metro* style.

**L**ocated in one of Fiji's Mamanuca Islands, Likuliku Lagoon Resort has perfected the art of simplicity and escapism by marrying traditional culture with modern ease.

The wilderness island retreat at the foot of vibrant green slopes is Fiji's exclusive resort for authentic over-water bures, surrounded by pristine Pacific Ocean, a protected marine sanctuary, and scores of subtly luxurious appointments.

Guests partial to local seafood, tropical fruits and diverse cuisine inspired by the cultures in the region will find executive chef Ryan Ward's simplistic approach to Fijian fare refreshing (think chargrilled reef octopus married with green papaya, snake bean, chili, mint, and coriander; or local mud crab with a macadamia ajo blanco, cucumber and watercress).

Any visit to Likuliku is incomplete without a moment to appreciate the rediscovery of the once considered extinct Malolo Crested Iguana, a remarkable example of Fiji's dedication to conservation in the area.

Travellers who consider gastronomy more their style of therapy will discover Jean-Michel Cousteau Resort in Savusavu Bay to have superb credentials.

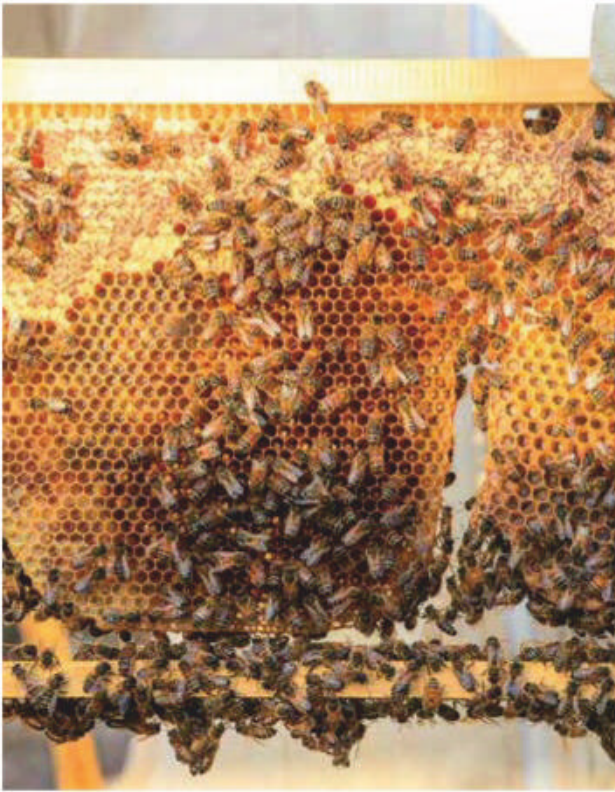
Executive chef Raymond Lee elevates the paddock to plate concept to new heights with principally Fijian dishes developed using produce sourced from the hotel's own organic garden coupled with his Asian heritage.

Built to replicate a traditional Fijian village, Jean-Michel Cousteau dovetails exceptional dining with holistic wellness and remedies that have been practiced in the region for centuries.

**THIS PAGE—**

A duck from Vitogo, braised green lentils, roasted grapes, pistachio dish crafted by executive chef Ryan Ward at Likuliku Lagoon Resort's restaurant, Fijiana.





## A FIJI MOMENT

**7AM**—Join Kokomo's local network of small-scale fisherman out on the glistening morning ocean to reel in the day's feast.

**10AM**—Dive into a late morning of snorkeling at Six Senses Fiji, checking and transplanting nursery coral, and recording the size and location of marine life.

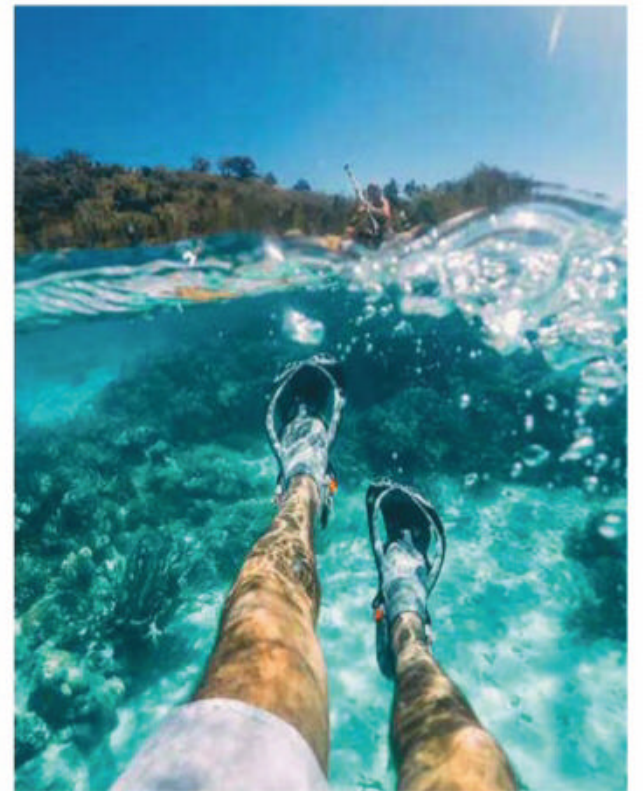
**1PM**—Fuel up on simple pleasures such as fresh homemade samosas and iconic goat pie created by official

culinary ambassador for Fiji, chef Winston Fong at the Malamala Beach Club.

**5PM**—Retreat back to Likuliku Lagoon Resort for a cocktail or two.

**7PM**—Watch your freshly line-caught dogtooth tuna transform into mouth-watering sashimi, garnished with micro herbs and citrus from Kokomo's on-island farm.

**9PM**—As night falls, sneak a peak at the endangered Malolo Crested Iguana resting in the forest.



### ABOVE TOP LEFT CLOCKWISE—

Kokomo's hydroponic garden uses up to 90% less water and reduces the need for soil to grow their fresh, flavoursome produce on site. Leading the 'Dock to Dish' movement, Kokomo's network of small-scale fishermen sustainably forage wild sea greens and fresh fish daily. Fiji's exclusive destination for authentic over-water bures are just the start of Likuliku's traditional – and luxurious – details.

Sedate walks sampling medicinal flora and fauna, Bobo massages releasing stress and tension, and Reiki all promote the healing of body and soul.

For Jean-Michel Cousteau, living off the land isn't a right, it's a privilege. With dedication and respect being poured into conservation, the ocean's reefs and the island's endangered palms are being nurtured before their own to preserve the fragile Fijian ecosystem.

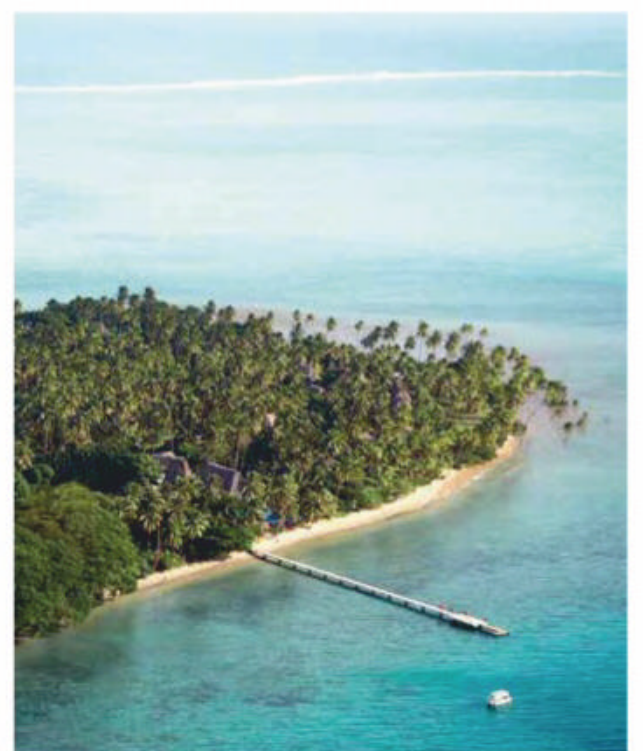
But, if pared-back luxury is what you've envisioned for your next sojourn, Kokomo Private Island promises wellness and reconnection to the earth in the most opulent – and gentle – way possible.

Whether you choose a private

residence or beachfront villa, Kokomo is yours to forage. The 2.2 hectare farm is self-sustaining with honey, herbs, fruits and vegetables, all grown on site, and includes farming and egg-collecting to entertain the kids.

For stressed out urbanites: intuitive eating relieves the burden of dining from a menu with chefs in the Walker D'Plank restaurant curating bespoke dishes based on what you feel like each day.

Not only does this guarantee one less decision to face on your break but it ensures the land in which you live off continues to thrive all year long. A concept that wouldn't go amiss in other areas of our lives, back in the real world.



### ABOVE TOP TO BOTTOM—

On the fringe of Malolo Island, coral reefs brim with tropical fish and azure waters protected in their *Na Tabu* marine reserve. Fiji's Jean-Michel Cousteau feels like a majestic step back in time. Ideal for romantic getaways, it has remarkable feasts, secrets of nature – and an organic farm to explore.





# NORTH OF THE BORDER

In Pakistan, the locals are preposterously hospitable, a Kalashnikov is just \$300 and everyone loves Martin Guphill.

TEXT & PHOTOGRAPHY — JACK TAME

**T**he flatbed just clipped us. A peck on the nose. Not enough to spin us or flip us, but enough to send our tuk-tuk driver into a fury. He pulled up to the truck at the next traffic lights, slapped the driver's door, and started screaming in Urdu. The driver just smirked.

Of course the driving in South Asia is everything you expect — frenzied — except maybe a little worse. Vehicles straddle multiple lanes for no obvious reason. Stop signs and red lights generally serve only a decorative function, and many drivers treat their horns as crude echo-location systems. Once, our car was pulled over and our driver fined for doing 89km/h in a 50km/h zone. Our man laughed, back-slapped the policeman, paid the fine in cash, and accelerated away at a speed I'd guess was almost exactly 89km/h.

On this occasion though, the tuk-tuk driver was seriously pissed off. He cursed and spat, and as we waited at the lights, he squeezed the nose of our tuk-tuk back in front of the flatbed so the truck couldn't move forward. The light went green, the traffic on both sides accelerated out, and the flatbed was boxed in behind us.

Our driver waited. And waited. And then he growled forward, slowly, twisting side-to-side like a match-racing skipper, deliberately frustrating the flatbed behind us. As soon as the flatbed driver found a gap in the traffic on his left, he swung his truck into the space, accelerated, and then tried to drop his truck back in front of our vehicle to block us in the same way we'd blocked him. But he got it wrong. He accelerated way too hard and spun out right across our lane into the next one over,



putting the flatbed perpendicular to the speeding traffic on our right-hand side, with his door flush against the stream of oncoming cars. Boompha. Our tuk-tuk driver weaved through the mess and gassed it into the Karachi night.

That was probably the closest my brother Frank and I came to death in Pakistan. We had done our research before we travelled; avoided areas with Taliban sympathies; wore local threads; travelled with a doorstop and used the deadbolt in our hotels. We read the news and we didn't push our luck. We avoided western Balochistan. We didn't accidentally stray into Pakistani Kashmir or nip across the Khyber Pass into Afghanistan for a long weekend. When Qasem Soleimani was assassinated in an American drone strike, we saw a few amateur posters glued up in Rawalpindi calling him a shahid (martyr) and vowing revenge. An official banner just down the road said, "Pakistan: A Peaceful Country". 100% Pure.

We found Pakistanis almost preposterously hospitable. A tuk-tuk driver in Rawalpindi, whose annual earnings we probably match with a couple of days' of work in New Zealand, tried to refuse our measly fare after collecting us from the railway station. "Please," he said, "you are guests in our country."

The same thing happened at a suburban restaurant, where we ate a big chicken biryani and four deep-fried lentil-and-beef patties with raw onion and chutney. Sizzling bliss on the sidewalk. "Please, no," said the owner. "You are guests in our country."

To feel guilty and humbled at once.

**W**hen there's a good chance you'll be shitting in some unfamiliar holes, it's good to travel with someone who has your back. I'm lucky to have my brother and we're into the same stuff. Last year we did a month in the Middle East. Latin America in the years before that. Nothing too extreme. We're drawn to modern history, geopolitics, and food. We like to feel away when we go away. Political tension? A complicated modern conflict history? Amoebas? Sign us up. Frank's come to enjoy the taste of rehydration salts.

We started in the Punjab, crossing from Amritsar in India over the Wagah border into Lahore. It was the front line of Partition. The bloody line in the sand. In 1947, when the Brits upped sticks and moved out, between one and two million people were savaged and killed in a few months. Rape, butchery, infanticide: Partition was top of the pops in human barbarity. Today, people live on either side of the border, only a few dozen kilometres from their ancestral homes, knowing they'll most likely never cross again. If they want to get close, they can visit the nightly Wagah border ceremony, where army officers from each country face off, huffing and puffing and silly-walking and stomping, before they lower the flags and slam the gate shut. On the Indian side, they built a stadium for locals to come and cheer on the border guards. They pumped up the crowd with "Jai Ho!" Pakistan gets by with a more modest set-up: a few tiers of uncovered seats and no speakers blasting the Pusycat Dolls. The whole thing is camp, but it's tribal. Muslims to the left. Hindus and Sikhs to the right. On the count of three, everyone say "Hate!"

There were maybe 20 of us wanting to cross the border but when we arrived the system was down. It took an hour or two to fix it and we sat in the dark waiting.



**ABOVE TOP —**  
Posters in Rawalpindi of the Iranian commander Qasem Soleimani, who was assassinated by the US.

**ABOVE —**  
A market inside the Walled City of Lahore.

**OPPOSITE PAGE —**  
The writer, photographed by his brother in Raja Bazaar, Rawalpindi.



A gregarious Sikh family pulled in next to us. “Are you from New Zealand?” the mother asked. “Yes!” I said. “How did you know?” “We live in Upper Hutt.” Sweet as.

When the computers came right, the Pakistanis in the room were told to sit and wait for everyone else to go first.

**L**ahore is special. We stayed in a hotel with concrete trellises covering the windows and a small army of guards with Kalashnikovs and pump-action shotguns. Everyone loved Martin Guphill. Inside, it was opulent; outside, the air pollution was several times the safe level. We hit a market, where a beggar with a monstrous leg infection dragged himself around while women shopped for refulgent wedding garb. We walked to Gaddafi Stadium (yep, *that* Gaddafi), outside which, 11 years ago, the Sri Lankan cricket team’s bus was attacked by terrorists, all but ending international cricket in Pakistan. In the field across the road, boys practised in the nets by a pitch with an old rope boundary. We lay down and savoured the babble of cricket in fading light.

Cricket is everywhere in Pakistan. By a gate to Lahore’s walled city, I photographed school boys in dirtied shalwar kameez as they bashed each other’s bowling around an empty concrete lot. They had stacked a few bricks and old rocks to use as wickets. Few of them had learnt how to bowl and so simply chucked the ball instead. There were no girls and no defensive shots; every couple of minutes a tuk-tuk driver outside would be startled by an errant ball falling from the sky and bouncing across the road. One game ended when the boys hit the ball in a sewer. Everyone loved Martin Guphill.

Lahore really is special. The walled city is darkness and light. Lethargy and pep. Beguilement. Hot tandoor bread, clattering bangles, dazzling wedding dresses and death-row chickens. Noise and quiet, puddles and smut. I photographed a man with a henna-dyed beard and a bad eye. A woman in niqab looked at me and turned away fast. Squatting men shared food from a large cooking pot outside their sandal shop. Everyone loved Martin Guphill.

The lanes open up to Lahore’s magnificent Badshahi Mosque, whose courtyard can hold 100,000 people. Red sandstone and marble. Square lines and domes. Glory. Give me a grand mosque over a cathedral any day; Mughal architecture is mathematics in brick. We got confused and entered through a side door with an excited wedding party, always so clean in the dust.

Lahore has some wealth. Recreational cyclists wear Lycra and cappuccinos are served in coffee shops where they roast their own beans. We Ubered out into the suburbs where a developer built a replica Eiffel Tower as a centrepiece for a new town. In Rawalpindi, we visited the same developer’s Statue of Liberty. Death to the west? Not so much.

Pindi and Islamabad are sister cities and contrast each other by design. Chaos and order. In Rawalpindi we wanted to see the park where Benazir Bhutto was assassinated. It was grim. We visited the park where her father was hanged in the old jail. Moderately less grim. Bazaars curled about at all angles. We hit cakes and ice creams and lassi, thick as chowder, ladled out smooth from foaming cauldrons. Dry societies always have good sweets. We came to a bazaar which specialised in equipment for disabled people. Some of the shops had stairs. I got a haircut and the guy cleaned up my neck with a cutthroat



**ABOVE TOP —** Cricket with bricks for wickets by a gate to the Walled City of Lahore.

**ABOVE —** Lassi, ladled from a foaming cauldron.

**OPPOSITE PAGE —** The writer (right) and his brother at Lahore’s Badshahi Mosque.



razor, pausing for each delivery of a Big Bash T20 game on his scratchy TV. In a gun shop, I inquired as to the cost of a Pakistani-made Kalashnikov. About \$300. Very reasonable. At the Pakistan Army Museum, we read the grand displays on various celebrated Pakistani shahid. The gallery dedicated to the fight against terrorism didn't mention the raid on bin Laden's Abbottabad hideout.

Islamabad is sometimes compared to Canberra. It's a measured capital. Formal. Deliberately inorganic. There are grids and zones. Wide streets and nice houses. Foreign diplomats can eat sushi or Spanish tapas if they leave their compounds. In the middle of town we sat under an umbrella and ordered tandoor chicken rolled tight in fresh parathas. Superlative. The waiter fed scraps of kindling into a fire in an old paint can. At the Metrobus stop closest to the embassy enclave, a massive banner said 'STAND WITH KASHMIR.'

We'd hoped to go north into the mountains, up the Karakoram Highway in the shadow of some of the biggest mountains on Earth. Pakistan's best scenery can make the Southern Alps blush. You can go all the way to the border with Western China, where a Pakistani bank boasts of having installed the world's highest ATM. When we arrived at the airport though, the weather was ropery. With all the snow in winter, the delays up north can last days. We waited five hours for the ping-pong-ladies-and-gentlemen call of death. Next time.

Instead we ended our trip in Karachi. Hard work in the heat, but in winter just fine. If the North of Pakistan boasts untouched beauty, the south is definitely touched. We joined the masses at the mausoleum where Pakistan's founder is en-

tombed in marble. Splendid white on white. Outside, Bedford buses with psychedelic paint jobs heaved and groaned, windowless sweat pits with men hanging out the doors. We walked to a Christian cemetery where a local businessman has erected a massive, provocative, 14-storey Christian cross. He boasts the cross is bulletproof. We didn't hang about to see.

At Clifton Beach on the Arabian Sea, squealing Pakistani families hired dune buggies at low tide, spitting up sand and the abandoned detritus of life. A thin stream of water stretched from some shacks into the filthy shallows. The tang of sewage. Frank mistimed his jump and his sock squelched all afternoon.

Before we left Pakistan, in a park once modelled on Kew Gardens, we were welcomed by men for a last joyous game of cricket. They asked us for team photos, then we cooled off with Peshawari ice cream and cold Coke. We savoured the city's vigour and drone. The mania. The glistening chickens roasting roadside. We ate rabri from clay bowls, the smooth, sweet condensed-milk gloop spiced with cardamom and pistachios. Our hotel thumped with the sound of another big wedding party. As I waited to check in at Karachi Airport, a man dressed in pure white robes, headed to Mecca, cut in front of me in line.

What privilege it is to get your bearings in someone else's city. To weave between the 70cc Hondas or share a handrail on the bus. What privilege it is, not just to read of another person's existence, but to share it for a moment, to rip bread from the same oven and buy oranges from the same cart, to feel the snap of the same barber's scissors, to choke on the same exhausts. What privilege it is to *choose* a little discomfort. For what is travel but the pursuit of experience that reminds us we're alive? M





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# ROOM SERVICE

TEXT — TESS NICHOL

**T**he first thing Joel Bray would like you to know about his deeply intimate play about the alienating experience of racism in Australia is that it's actually "a bit of a romp".

The overarching themes — heartbreak, racism, and lack of belonging — belie the lightness of *Biladurang*, a hit in last year's Sydney Festival, which will be performed to groups of about 20 people at a time over two weeks during

the Auckland Arts Festival.

Bray, a light-skinned Aboriginal man who grew up queer in a Pentecostal Christian community, will perform the play for the 100th time while in Auckland. He's yet to even remotely tire of it, saying he loves working with such small audiences: he can see the way people quirk their brows or purse their lips or smile, and tailors each show as he goes to suit the people who are there on the night.

Each evening..., a group of strangers will gather in the foyer of Auckland's Metropolis Residences and Bray, affecting spontaneity, will invite them up to his room. "Then, when they arrive, I'm not quite sure what to do, and the show continues from that point."

*Biladurang* tells the story of Bray's never feeling like he belonged; of being not quite white and not quite black, of being raised religious but

PIPPA SAMAYA, PAASCALINO SCHALLER



knowing he was queer. He conveys this through the prism of a story his Wiradjuri grandmother told him about the platypus (biladurang). The animal was perceived as a mutant: the legend tells of an animal born from a duck and a water rat, with a bill and webbed feet, who lays eggs, but has a mammal's body.

"My personal biography has always been that of a fish out of water," Bray says. After moving from Australia, he spent 10 years in Israel with a partner, but when that relationship ended, he felt disconnected and homesick. "I had basically stopped telling anyone I was Aboriginal. That's because if you're fair — and I'm very fair, people think I'm from Sweden — it is difficult trying to explain to someone in Israel or Eastern Europe, first trying to tell them what an Aboriginal person is, and then trying to explain to them why I don't look like the Aboriginal person they expect."

Unable to stay in Israel, Bray spent much time on the road trying to figure out where to settle next, living itinerantly in artists' residences, Airbnbs and hotel rooms. "Hotel rooms are a little bit like airports — they're neither here nor there, they're in-between spaces. I was really feeling this yearning to reconnect with my family and my home and my

country — and I mean country in the Aboriginal sense of the term, my ancestral homeland." In his mid-30s, he was also single for the first time in 10 years, and didn't know what that meant. Grindr, for one, had not been something he'd ever had to contend with.

The neither-here-nor-there-ness he'd always felt was heightened during this unsettled period. Bray began writing to process his thoughts, reading the pieces aloud to himself while alone in hotel rooms. It was here that what *Biladurang* would become was born. The show "weaves together choreography, storytelling and audience

participation," he says.

Audience participation is always a bit scary, Bray acknowledges, "I think because people have often had the experience of sitting in the front row of a stand-up gig and getting roasted." He has no intention of embarrassing anyone. "It keeps the work really alive and really fresh — it's like a different show every time," he says. "It's kind of a space where there's lots of humour and lots of fun but we also have a dialogue around these more serious issues."

*Biladurang* is autobiographical and so deals with Bray's homeland, Australia, but New

Zealand as a colonised country is full of people grappling with similar feelings of displacement. "Either because you're indigenous and your land and your culture and the traditional structures have been taken away from you, or because you're the descendant of [colonialists] who were torn from their families and their homelands on the other side of the world, or you're a refugee. So the story of being in a place where you don't fit is actually, ironically, the thing that connects us all."

***Biladurang*, 11-15 and 18-22 March, Auckland Metropolis Residences.**

M





# FINGER TAPPING

TEXT — JEAN TENG

**Y**ou don't quite know where to look. Two pairs of dancing fingers dressed in thimbles tap across the crystal floor in a Fred-and-Ginger-style number, while camera operators and lights do their own strange dance around them. The cameras act as your binoculars, projecting the scene onto a big screen where live special effects are added and a droll voiceover accompanies us as, one by one, we're guided through seven absurd deaths.

Before all this, film-maker Jaco Van Dormael (*Mr Nobody*, *The Brand New Testament*) and partner and choreographer Michèle Anne De Mey asked themselves if they could do something different: work in which cinema does not do a disservice to choreography, or vice versa (Van Dormael reckons dance is one of the hardest things to film).

In 2011, they found the answer with their first work together, *Kiss & Cry*, a finger-tapping love story which created its own genre. The show was performed to more than 180,000 people around the world. "It was just after *Mr Nobody*, which went on for years and years," Van Dormael recalls. "It was then I thought, could I make a long feature film just on the table in my kitchen?"

In *Cold Blood*, the cameras circling the dancers are projecting but never recording, so what they capture is experienced only by those in the theatre. Miniature sets — a baby's room with dotted wall-paper, lush forests between two mirrors which repeat the trees for infinity, apartment

blocks in an eerily empty city — are constructed to produce an illusion of detailed reality, an uncanny perfection which betrays its falseness. "It's very strange," Van Dormael says. "It's like you're seeing through a trick by a magician and at the same time, it's magic. We try to make it look fake but the feelings are true." When they understand all the tricks, then they're ready to believe.

*Cold Blood* is also a dance show. Fingers jump and swoop and arch gracefully just like a dancer's body (the hands do belong to a professional dancer) to music by David Bowie and Nina Simone, among others.

The concept can take some time to wrap your head around, but Van Dormael is remarkably relaxed about it; he knows from experience that we as humans are quick to adjust. "We accept that a hand is a hand, but that the hand is sometimes a body. The hand is sometimes an animal. It's a part of our body that we know the best, because we can see it without a mirror; it's just so central. I remember as a kid, playing with toys in my hands. It has something to do with that — the process of creating worlds."

The show starts with the audience being told they will live and die seven times. As the deaths start to roll out, each is stupider than the one before it. It's humorous and melancholic, but the show is not about death.

"The subject is really your last memory," says Van Dormael. And the last memory is not seeing your whole life,



but remembering the very tiny little things that didn't look so important at the time. Remembering the smell of fruits, the softness of the skin, the first time I held her hand in my hand. It's about the things that are deep in our memory and are, perhaps, the most important."

Van Dormael explains *Cold Blood* is the work of a collective, much more so than in his film work. Different from his film practice, too, is the element of improvisation and loss of control — the pair went into the project without knowing the story they wanted to tell, just that it had to be different from *Kiss & Cry*. The narrative took

shape only after half of the four-month process, when writer Thomas Gunzig was able to tie their improvisations together into a whole.

Ultimately, *Cold Blood* is, "not theatre, it's not film, it's not dance, yet it's something between all that," Van Dormael says. "This couldn't have existed 20 years ago. But the cameras are now lighter, the technology is better. It opens new languages. So many more things are now possible."

***Cold Blood*, 11-14 March, ASB Waterfront Theatre.**

M



# THE HUMAN FACTOR

TEXT — TESS NICHOL

**T**hose who have seen Wellington musician Estère Dalton perform may be surprised to learn the “powerhouse band” billed to appear on stage with her for *Into the Belly of Capricorn* will be composed of human beings. It’s a change for Dalton, who during her solo career has mainly been accompanied on stage by some combination of her “machine band”: Lola, a sampler, Korgy, a synthesiser, and Toto, a three-headed drum kit.

But then, a lot of things are different with this show. Known for her “electric blue witch-hop”, Dalton has both been likened to and opened for Erykah Badu. She has a honeyed voice, usually accompanied by heavy basslines and hooks. That soulful energy will still be part of *Capricorn*, but audiences can also expect to hear a heavy folk influence, in both the lyrics and the musical arrangements of her new songs.

Don’t expect her to turn Simon and Garfunkel,

though. “Folk music is deeply rooted in that almost mythological context, and the folk music I’ve been inspired by isn’t necessarily only Western,” Dalton says. “I’ve drawn a lot from myths and ideas of shared human experience and storytelling.”

She has also been influenced by music she’s had on heavy rotation during the show’s creation, including the indie pop artist Feist, Gillian Welch (she likes how Welch tells entire stories from start to finish within a single song), and the Tuareg rock group Tinariwen, who live in the Sahara Desert region of northern Mali.

“I just decided to follow whatever feels right and it can turn out, you know, not how I expected it to but that’s just kind of the way everything I do seems to work. I have an idea and I follow it through, and it’s never quite what I envisioned but it’s exactly what it is.”

One thread in *Capricorn* explores the shift we all experience as we grow from child to adult, and what we can lose

during that metamorphosis, an idea explored in some of the mythologies she’s been reading: “The shift from that innocence or newness and naivety, where we might lose touch with those intrinsic parts of ourselves which were once really clear in childhood — sometimes we need to find our way back to that.”

The show is directed by the award-winning Sara Brodie, with lighting directed by Jo Kilgour and audio-visual by Kaysha Bowler. Dalton will be joined by three other artists: a drummer, another singer, and a bass/synth player. They’ll be performing in the Spiegeltent, and Dalton is ready for the quirky, almost circus-like energy that stage usually produces during the Arts Festival.

Capricorn is a teaser for Dalton’s upcoming album *Archetypes*, due out this year. “It’s an interesting and exciting thing for me because it’s pretty much the only place people can come and share this new music.” The performance will incorporate storytelling, dance and visual effects to create an immersive experience of the music. Dalton wanted all elements of the work to cohere as a single concept, with the intention of creating a distinct experience. Exactly what that experience is it’s hard to say, she says, because the show hasn’t been “gifted” to an audience yet. But she’s excited to find out.

**Estère - Into The Belly of Capricorn is on 19 March 2020, at the Spiegeltent, Aotea Square.**

M



# BRINGING ART TO THE WORLD

The Auckland Art Fair generates millions of dollars in sales and attracts thousands of visitors to the city. Does its success mean we should be taking Auckland's arts-tourism potential more seriously?

TEXT — LANA LOPESI

**T**he art world loves to hate an art fair. From the VIP parties, to the admission prices, to the outright commercialisation of art — it is really the perfect balance of things to get under the skin of an arts worker on a moral high horse (and we love our moral high horses).

And yet, in the case of Auckland Art Fair, most galleries in the city either directly or indirectly programme events and exhibitions for the fair's audience. So rather than leaning into a classic Kiwi pastime of disliking art (especially in relation to money), perhaps it's time to re-evaluate what economic, cultural and social value the Auckland Art Fair actually has for the city of Auckland? And what is it about the fair that draws in our local galleries and

artists time and time again?

Judging by the visitor numbers, people think the fair is well worth going to.

In 2019, it included more than 45 galleries and showed work by almost 150 artists. These artists and galleries drew 10,000 visitors during the fair's five days, and about 1500 of those were considered to be influential art collectors and curators. It also included a schools' programme in which 260 year 10-13 students were given guided tours by tertiary students of art or art history.

The operational costs of the fair are mostly covered by galleries and visitors, with the remaining 30% covered by partnerships, primarily with ANZ Private Bank and Auckland Tourism, Events and Economic Development (ATEED), but also other supporting organisations.

I almost fell through my desk when fair co-director Stephanie Post told me \$9 million worth of art was sold at last year's fair (up from \$6-7.5 million in 2018 and \$3-5 million in 2017). Additionally, about 1200 national and international visitors came here specifically for the fair. Based on an independent report by ATEED on the impact of the Auckland Art Fair, those visitors resulted in 3340 visitor nights in Auckland with an additional GDP contribution of more than \$1million (not including what is spent on art).

Looking to some of the world's largest art fairs, such as Frieze in London, New York and LA, and Art Basel in Basel, Hong Kong and Miami, Post tells me that Auckland Art Fair wants to become even more of an art-tourism destination.

Post believes there are so many talented New Zealand artists working at a world-class level, we should make a destination out of it. Her aim







is for the entire city to see itself as a contemporary-art hub for five days, with galleries across the city holding enough events that the international audience can be dispersed regionally.

Can Auckland generate an art-tourism industry?

A 2017 report on the art market by economist Dr Clare McAndrew identifies cultural tourism as “one of the fastest-growing and most valuable sectors of the multibillion-dollar global travel and tourism industry, which accounted for an estimated 9.8% of global GDP in 2016 and 14 million jobs.” The art market and wider sector, McAndrew says, plays a critical role in enhancing a nation’s value and attractiveness to visitors.

In Australia, art tourism is the fastest-growing tourism market: numbers grew by 47% between 2013 and 2017, a higher growth rate than for international tourist numbers overall (37%). More than eight million international tourists visited Australia in 2017, and 3.5 million (43%) engaged with

the arts while there. While much of this was due to some landmark exhibitions like the Sydney Biennale and the Asia Pacific Triennial, why couldn’t a similar swell in arts tourism occur in Auckland?

Research on the 2013 Frieze New York fair showed that 45,000 visitors spent an estimated \$13 million on accommodation alone. Their estimated spend in shops, restaurants and on other activities was \$69.1 million, and they forked out another \$13.3 million in ancillary industries and support services related to their attendance at the fair.

Looking to Frieze New York might seem a bit ambitious for the Auckland Art Fair, given it has four times the visitor numbers (and it is New York) but it does provide a sense of what is possible.

Of course, making Auckland an art destination is not the work of the fair alone. It means working with Auckland’s non-profit art sector to make sure there are events across the whole city.

Recognising this, the fair

hosts Ngātahi Editions, a collective of leading public non-profit galleries with a focused curatorial programme that engages with local, national and global conversations about contemporary art, design, craft and other creative practices. Ngātahi currently includes Artspace Aotearoa, Corban Estate Arts Centre, Gus Fisher Gallery, McCahon House, Objectspace, St Paul St Gallery, Te Tuhi, and Te Uru Waitākere Contemporary Gallery.

Post feels the sense of collaboration which happens through Ngātahi is important for the city.

Remco de Blaaij, the Director of Artspace Aotearoa says the fair offers “an invaluable opportunity to meet, especially now that other large-scale platforms such as the Auckland Triennale no longer exist.”

**L**iving and working as an artist in a city as expensive as Auckland is becoming increasingly difficult. So, while some artists will get to

eat through their sales, what about our emerging artists? The Art Fair commissions an annual curatorial “Projects” programme involving more emerging artists who wouldn’t usually appear in the gallery sections of the fair. The 2020 programme being curated by Sydney-based Micheal Do. While these artists are paid commission fees, how else do artists benefit from their participation? Nikau Hindin, an artist involved last year, says she “gave out hundreds of my cards and collected hundreds of emails” Hindin’s role at the fair was as someone working to revive Māori tapa. She was there every day, beating the aute (tapa cloth), interacting directly with visitors. She sold all of her available works and, although not interested in signing to a dealer just yet, she thinks the fair helped legitimise her in the eyes of dealers. She has since had shows with Jhana Millers in Wellington and Tim Melville in Auckland.

Ultimately, the Auckland Art Fair seems to mediate between artists, galleries, the general public and art buyers. Placing art in The Cloud, Britomart and other public locations downtown, “it’s about bringing art to the world and not keeping it locked in a box,” Post says. But can Auckland be the next major art-tourism destination? And, as a city, should we be taking this potential more seriously? Go, see something, and be the judge yourself.

**Auckland Art Fair 2020,  
The Cloud, 29 April – 3 May,  
[artfair.co.nz](http://artfair.co.nz)**

**OPPOSITE PAGE —**

Appreciating a Bill Hammond work at the Ivan Anthony stand at Auckland Art Fair 2019. Photograph courtesy of Josef Scott.

**THIS PAGE —**

More visitors at the 2019 fair. Image courtesy of Josef Scott.



# SIGNS OF THE TIMES

At the end of *The Luminaries*, Eleanor Catton acknowledged her debt to the authors of a sexually explicit astrology book, but their subsequent attempt to get in touch was ignored.

TEXT — ELLE HUNT

**Quinn Cox and Stella Starsky have not read *The Luminaries*. They confess to this with the same faint air of apology as many did after it won the Man Booker Prize in 2013. “Is it really 848 pages?” asks Cox.**

He and Starsky, New Yorkers partnered in love and work, are not alone in having balked at Eleanor Catton’s novel — but they may be in also appearing in its acknowledgements. Starsky and Cox are celebrity astrologers to the stars, credited with having taken the field from “new age” to “now age” with their racy 2003 bestseller *Sextrology*.

Known to some as “the Red Bible”, it caused a sensation on publication for its highly specific and sexually explicit assessments of all 12 star signs, split into men and women. A representative (and actually relatively restrained) gem pertaining to my own sign: “Every Pisces female, no matter how many homo

or hen-pecked husbands she hides behind, is fairly itching to play Lady Chatterley to some raw and hunky game-keeper.”

According to Starsky and Cox, *Sextrology* has been translated into 16 languages and sold more than 500 million copies — making it one of the bestselling astrology titles — and counts among its fans Russell Brand, Marc Jacobs, Kate Moss, Cameron Diaz and Charlize Theron. In 2004, it sparked a blogging frenzy when it was spied on a bookshelf behind Bill Clinton as he was being interviewed on CNN.

When critics referred to Catton’s drawing on principles of the zodiac, it is unlikely that anyone had in mind a “wonderfully dirty” exploration of star signs “from fantasies to favourite positions, erogenous zones to emotional needs”. Yet Catton writes (albeit in passing) that she is “indebted” to Starsky

and Cox’s work, distinguishing it from the “extensive and sometimes hilarious” resources she found online.

“She talks about different sites and apps, but we’re the only astrologers that she namechecks,” says Cox. The first they heard of it was from a friend, a whole year after *The Luminaries* was published, in late 2014; Cox used the “Look Inside!” preview on Amazon to see for himself.

Afterwards, they emailed Catton’s agent, introducing themselves and inviting her to get in touch. They never heard back from the agent or from Catton herself. (And neither did I when I contacted them to ask Catton to corroborate Starsky and Cox’s account, if not give an interview).

As Starsky and Cox tell me this story five years later, over coffee at their East London hotel, it is clear that their feelings are still a little hurt, though not from a place of

arrogance — more as if someone you liked and respected blanked you at a party, leading you to wonder if they may not feel the same way about you.

Warm, self-effacing, and cannily in sync (they are the first couple I have ever met who really do finish each other’s sentences), they seem as curious as I am about their response to Catton’s perceived snub — which, whether it was subconscious or not, was to just not read the book. “I’m very surprised I haven’t, because I’m a big reader,” says Starsky, effortlessly chic in an art-gallerist way, wearing all black and her silver hair in a chignon. “But I think at the time I thought, ‘Oh, everyone’s eating our lunch’ — which is ridiculous! It had nothing to do with us, really.”

As astrologers, Starsky and Cox had quickly distinguished themselves with their view that men and women of each sign were distinct from one another, effectively doubling







**ABOVE —**  
*Boar*, 2019 by Teresa HR Lane  
Courtesy of the artist and  
Sanderson Gallery

the zodiac. Devoting 25-odd pages to each gender (they accounted for both heterosexual and same-sex attraction, which was highly progressive at the time; they now consider non-binary identities), *Sextrology* comes in at only a few hundred pages shy of Catton's doorstopper.

Though the sex stuff gets the most attention, the bulk of the book is an "empirical study on steroids", as Cox puts it, drawing on comparative religion, mythology, culture and history to assemble an archetype for each of the 24 signs. "You're doing sort of literary criticism."

The results are oddly engrossing in their specificity. We female Pisces, for example, chew each bite of food many times over, wear our hair wavy, speak out the

sides of our mouth, "flaunt a gay-male pal" and are often somewhat "froggy or fetal" in appearance (think Liza Minnelli). We are inclined to disorders of the brain and feet, and turned on by — among a long list — hairless bodies, long fingers and toes, and "homewrecking".

There is a risk that readers will not recognise themselves in these laundry lists and be turned off, says Starsky, but "75% of the time, we're right on the money. If you clear off a bit of the detail and look at the centrepiece — that will be correct."

The character studies are "powerful enough to sort of isolate" types of people, Cox says — leading him to *The Luminaries*. Catton has spoken of characters representing signs of the zodiac and being modelled on astrological archetypes. The first storyline is of a man who stumbles into a covert council of 12 men; in *Sextrology* there are 12 male character profiles, says Cox. "It did make me think, how much of our work did she actually use? I don't even want to know. We didn't want to bring ourselves more heartache, maybe ... I think this is where I subconsciously didn't read it."

There is no evidence that Catton plagiarised from Starsky and Cox; she referred to many sources, and her grasp of astrological principles goes well beyond what can be gleaned from *Sextrology*. But it seems that — no doubt unbeknown to her, and inadvertently — her silence may have compounded Starsky and Cox's sense of having been insufficiently recognised as ahead of their time.

Starsky and Cox (their professional pseudonyms, Starsky clarifies, "because no one names their children Stella Starsky and Quinn Cox") met as teenagers on a year-abroad

programme with Boston University, and bonded over their shared interest in astrology, metaphysics and the esoteric arts. Both went on to study astrology; Starsky is also a qualified psychologist, and they say Cox has psychic and intuitive abilities. What started out as a side hustle to their careers in fashion led, in 1998, to a gig writing his-and-hers horoscopes for *Teen People* magazine. The editor had asked the pair to guess her sign — "which was awful," says Starsky, grimacing, "but I guessed it. She was like, 'Wow, you're amazing! Do you want a job?' We took on these pseudonyms — and then these pseudonyms took on a life of their own."

A publisher at HarperCollins "secretly" reading *Teen People* suggested that they write a book for adults — "and make it sexy", says Cox. Their connections in the fashion world helped *Sextrology* gain a strong showing in Barneys, Selfridges, Harvey Nichols and Colette, and a lot of attention from the press. In 2006, they even collaborated on an astrology-inspired jewellery line, a full decade before such designs became ubiquitous (they intend to relaunch it this year).

But several other opportunities, for a television show and celebrity representation, fell through. Another book, *Cosmic Coupling*, followed in 2009, around the same time as they started focusing their energies on private consultancy. That now makes up most of their business, with clients committing to 12 monthly sessions plus call-ins (only on Wednesdays: "we have healthy boundaries," says Cox).

To Starsky and Cox, it is "getting back to their roots" in the fashion and entertainment industries — just as the rest of the world has caught up with them. Now astrolo-

gy is no longer elite or even very eccentric. A 2018 study found it is accepted by 29% of American adults. Starsky and Cox link the mainstream, millennial preoccupation with astrology to generalised anxiety about climate change and political instability, coupled with a preoccupation with the self fostered by social media. Popular apps such as The Pattern and Co-Star deliver highly personalised horoscopes in real time, while "astro-influencer" Chani Nicholas has turned a social media following into a *New York Times*-bestseller.

They have never even seen Co-Star: "That's how much of a Luddite I am," says Cox. "It's not a hook-up thing?" But for the new generation of astrologers like Nicholas, reading *Sextrology* would have been a rite of passage. "We made the water safe and warm for them to come in," he says. "Like, 'You don't have to be a kook to be an astrologer, you can be a fully functioning human and be proud of your beliefs.' They do credit us with being the fairy godparents of this new age."

"Which is an honour," adds Starsky.

By casting astrology — once "a little kooky, a little weirdo", says Starsky; "granola-en-crusted", says Cox — through a lens of sex and celebrity, they helped to usher it into the mainstream. But it was, at times, an uphill battle, they say, and others are now reaping the rewards. "Innovators have a tough road," says Cox. "We were slightly ahead of our time and we opened the door for that next generation to be able to do astrology in the 'now age' — as opposed to the new age."

Whether they are guiding the masses with *Sextrology* or working directly with clients, Starsky and Cox say their aim is to help people find a



balance between fate and free will — to work with “what energies are available to them, what they are being cosmically assisted to do”, so as to become fully themselves, says Cox. He makes no distinction between influencing individuals, and influencing their art. “They come to us through our work because it resonates, it’s smart and insightful and funny and those things. That’s how Eleanor Catton reacted to the work and was likewise inspired — it added to her artistic achievement.”

Starsky and Cox are surprised to learn that a television adaptation of *The Luminaries* by BBC Two and TVNZ is coming this year — but not that surprised. Cox tells me that my email out of the blue, asking to talk to them about *The Luminaries*, had in fact been of a piece with other inquiries they had received lately. “Something synchronistic is going on for us this week — on this subject, specifically.”

Yesterday, for example, he and Starsky had met with a television producer who had contacted them about a potential consulting role — of the kind that they could feasibly have played in *The Luminaries* adaptation, they say, had there been a relationship. Not only that, but the show proved to be the same, “very specific” concept that they had had together — and discussed, in detail, the ins and outs of — in Paris five years ago.

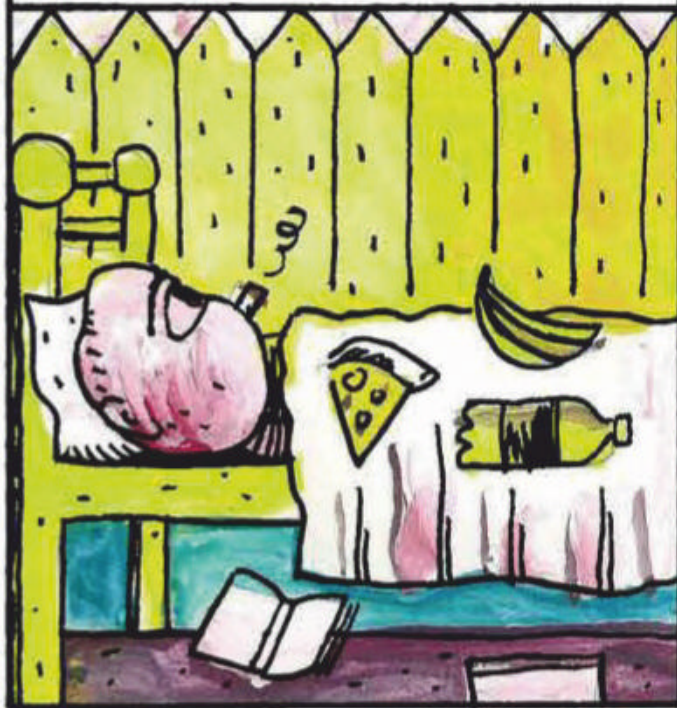
To listen someone telling them about an idea that they had already had was proof enough to Cox of what he calls “the faith factor”, the middle ground between free will and destiny that he and Starsky aim to operate in. “We always say, ‘Most things don’t happen, but everything happens eventually.’” Perhaps even, one day, an email from Eleanor.

# DRAWN CONCLUSIONS

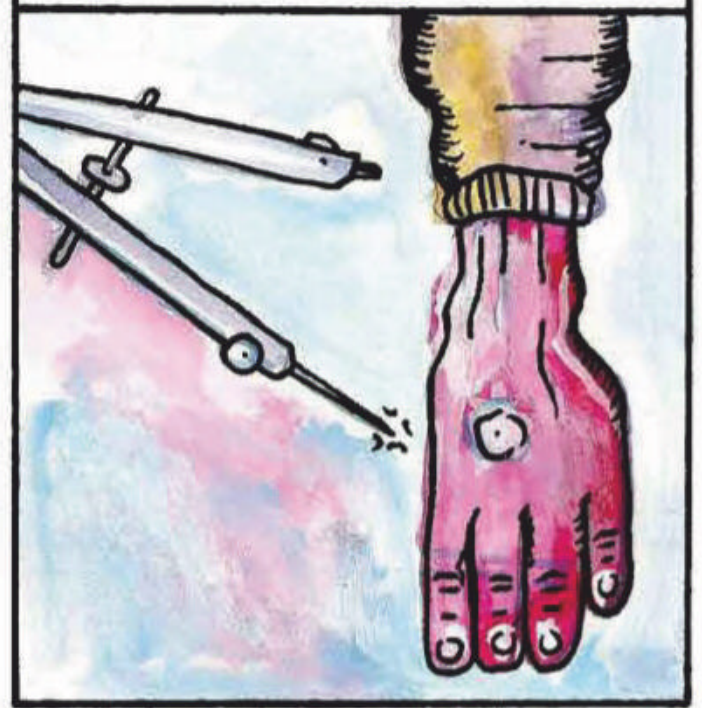
## a graphic book review

2000FT ABOVE WORRY LEVEL • EAMONN MARRA • (VUP, \$30)

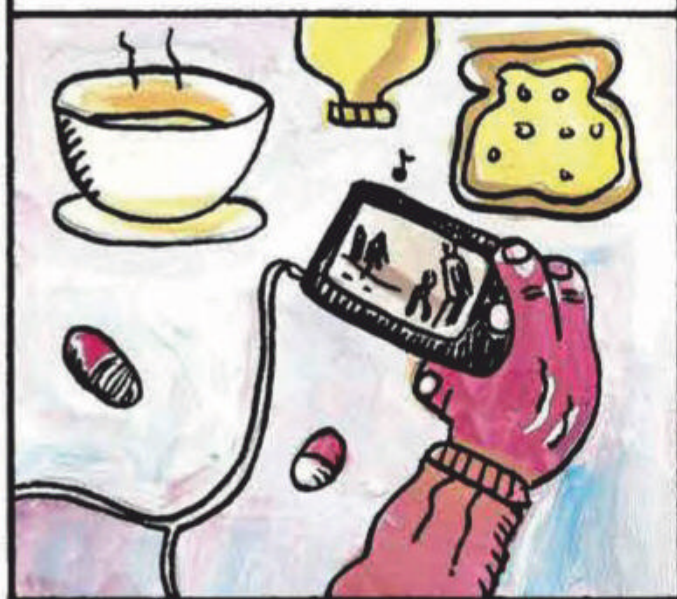
EACH CHAPTER IN 2000ft Above Worry Level IS A SELF-CONTAINED INCIDENT. LIKE A PHILIP GUSTON PAINTING, THESE INCIDENTS ARE RIDDLED WITH BEDSORES, UNWANTED CIGARETTES, AND ABRASIVE HUMOUR.



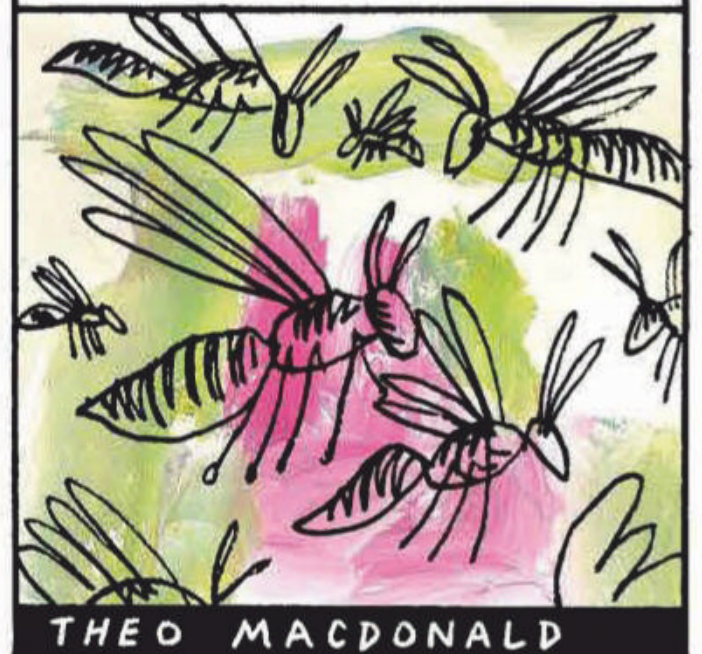
OUR HERO IS A DEPRESSED WRITER AND OBLIGING VEGETARIAN. EVERY SCAB HE PICKS IS DESCRIBED ATTENTIVELY. PAGE AFTER PAGE, EAMONN MARA'S SENSIBILITY GAINS CLARITY IN LUMPY WADS.



THE SETTING IS AN AOTEAROA BESET BY THE PLAGUE OF DEBT. SQUALID FLATS AND ALIEN WINZ OFFICES WILL BE FAMILIAR TO ANY READER WITH AN ARTS DEGREE. SO WILL PANIC-STRICKEN DOCTOR'S VISITS, AND SEVERAL BARISTA JOBS.



THIS NOVEL IS NOT FOR THE SQUEAMISH. LIKE *Peep Show*, OR *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, MARRA LINGERS ON DISCOMFORT. NONETHELESS, 2000ft RESISTS CATEGORISATION BY COUNTERING CONSTANT DESPERATION WITH RARE, ELEGANT TRIUMPHS.



THEO MACDONALD



# HEADY ISSUES

TEXT — HERA LINDSAY BIRD

**T**here's nothing like reading about other people's problems. It puts things, if not in perspective, at least in a wider context of futility. Perhaps it's a lazy categorisation to say everything I've been reading lately has heavy 'mental health awareness week' overtones to it — after all, you could say that about 75% of literature and nobody's going after *Anna Karenina* with the DSM-5. But the beginning of 2020 has brought an influx of amazing books that explore mental health issues with great insight and humour.

**F**ebruary brings two brilliant debut titles from Victoria University Press — *2000ft Above Worry Level* by Eamonn Marra and *Head Girl* by Freya Daly Sadgrove. Sadgrove's poetry is staggeringly good — not only is she one of the funniest people alive, but she has that uncanny knack of saying profoundly true things in the most offhand way, with the air of someone effortlessly throw-

ing a basketball over their shoulder into the hoop. I've been dying for Marra's book ever since I heard his bitterly funny short story "My Friend Rod" on RNZ. There is a kind of magical deadpan quality to his work which is simultaneously hilarious and despairing. His stories have an effortless, compulsive quality to them. Both collections deal heavily with themes of depression and anxiety, but, like, with jokes.

**I**t's been a six-year wait for the new Jenny Offil, whose stunning, fragmentary novel *Dept. of Speculation* ruined everyone's marriages. Her new book, *Weather*, is written in the same characteristic style; grimly funny vignettes slowly escalating in tension. *Weather* is about a woman moonlighting as a fake psychiatrist, answering fan mail for her former mentor. Perfect.

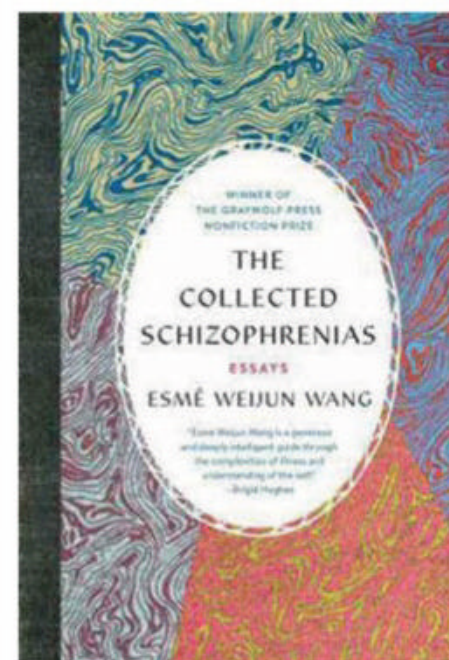
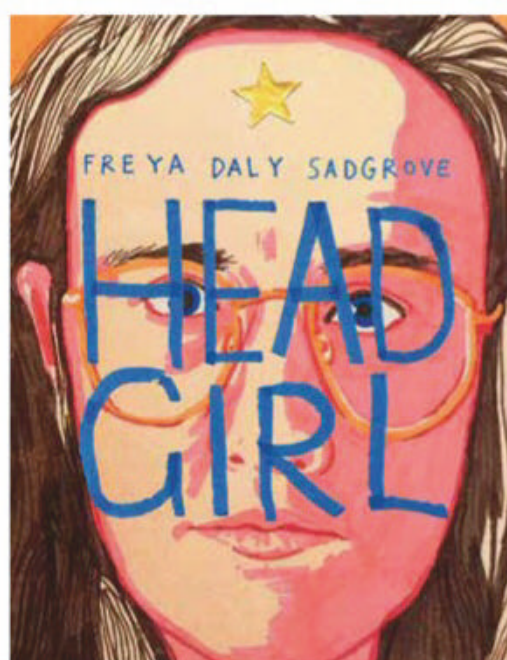
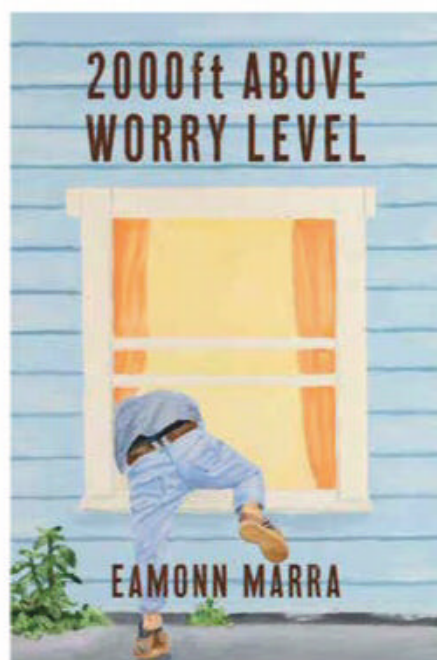
**R**abbits For Food by Binnie Kirshenbaum is a grimly funny novel about Bunny, a writer with depression who

ends up in a New York psych ward after a New Year's dinner party sends her over the brink. The pleasure of this book lies in the banality of day-to-day life within the institution, and the author's wry, morbid sense of humour as she recounts the wince-inducingly earnest art-and-craft sessions and her evolving relationships with the other patients.

**I**n *the Dream House* by Carmen Maria Machado (author of *Her Body & Other Parties*) is an experimental memoir about an abusive lesbian relationship — told in short fragments, exploring the relationship through various concepts like "Dream house as Bildungsroman" and "Dream house as Stoner Comedy". Despite the experimental format, it has all the momentum of a runaway train barrelling down a ravine towards an orphanage. Already one of the best books of the year, and it's only February.

**M**aybe you Should Talk To Someone is a memoir by US psychotherapist Lori Gottlieb which explores her work as a therapist through a series of case studies and her own time on the couch, working through her recent break-up. It's a straightforward, interesting read for Jungian dunces like me, especially the part about the sociopathic scriptwriter who writes the patient/therapist relationship into his hit (undisclosed) TV series. Reads like a novel-length advice column.

**T**he Collected Schizophrenias: Essays by Esme Weijun Wang is part memoir, part cultural history. Wang writes with cool, clinical honesty about her own experience living with schizoaffective disorder (not diagnosed until her 20s), bringing history, neurobiology and all the surrounding cultural baggage of mental illness to bear on her experiences in 13 fascinating essays. M





# TICK, TICK, BOOM

How an Auckland teenager's song went viral from a 15-second video on a sharing app, and what it means for the future of the music industry.

TEXT — PEARL LITTLE

**L**ate last year, Auckland musician Benee (real name Stella Bennett) went viral. A simply choreographed dance to her song “Glitter” became a meme on TikTok, a video-sharing app that lets its 500 million monthly users shoot and post videos with their phones, adding visual and audio effects, including music from artists big and small.

The content on the app is diverse — short comedy skits, instructional cooking videos, cats, political rants — but the videos that have come to define the app are easily replicated dances to 15-second snippets of pop songs. TikTok allows users access to a massive library of officially licensed songs for their videos (Universal Music, Sony Music, and Warner Music all currently license their catalogues) or users can upload their own audio to the app's sound bank to be available to other users.

In November, Rotorua teen Waiata Jennings posted a video on her account dancing to “Glitter”, the fourth single from Benee's debut EP *Fire on Marzz*. The dance Waiata created is perfect for TikTok — simple to learn and fun to do, alone or with a group. It's been recreated by parents holding babies, a teen and her nurse, and groups of school friends. Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern was asked to do it at Rātana and National MP Nicola Wills and a group of Young Nats posted a video of themselves doing the dance with the caption “Anyone heard of TikTok?”

At the time of writing, “Glitter” had been featured in over 522,000 videos on TikTok, some of which have been played millions of times.

More important than its permeation of New Zealand political life is TikTok's impact on popular music charts. Lil Nas X's “Old Town Road”, the longest running No 1 single in the history of the *Billboard* charts, initially found an audience

on the app via the “Yeekaw Challenge” — one of about 100 attempts the rapper made to make the song go viral.

More recently, “The Box”, by the relatively unknown Roddy Ricch, beat Justin Bieber's cynically TikTok-engineered “Yummy” to *Billboard*'s top spot and the popularity of Arizona Zervas's “Roxanne” on the app led to the artist joining Columbia Records, its second major signing of a viral star after Lil Nas X.

TikTok's rapid ascent in music-industry influence raises a lot of questions about the forever changing methods of music discovery. Paul McKessar, Benee's manager, says the brevity of 15-second videos rewards songs that quickly engage the listener, and if a song can make an instant connection on TikTok, it's got a good chance of finding an audience beyond it.

But can you game the system? Was “Glitter” planted? No way, Benee and McKessar both tell me. McKessar only heard of the app when his 14-year-old daughter told him that one of Benee's songs was trending. Benee had no idea either. “People kept telling me that everyone was dancing to my song and I thought, ‘Aw that's so cute,’” she says. “But then I downloaded it and sort of realised the gravity of it.”

McKessar says TikTok is hard to game, but that's why unexpected and eccentric songs can take off on the platform.

This doesn't mean that already-popular songs from Camila Cabello and Ariana Grande don't also soundtrack millions of videos, but because the videos don't directly contribute to chart metrics, the app tends to have a far greater impact on the fortunes of lesser-known artists.

McKessar says the song's blowing up on TikTok has been followed by a related migration to streaming services. Before “Glitter” was big on TikTok, it was being streamed about 50,000 times

a day on Spotify; that figure has grown to half a million in just a few months.

I wondered how Benee felt as an artist about the way her song had grown so big in a way she didn't anticipate and couldn't control. Having your song become popular on TikTok can be stamped onto its identity — it becomes a “TikTok song”. At Laneway Festival, fans were heard asking, “Has she done the TikTok one yet?”

“I think the dance is cool,” she says, unfazed. “People have taught me it and asked me to be in videos with them and I love that and will say yes. We talked about me making a TikTok but I decided I'm happy to just let it be something my fans and people on TikTok can do. I probably would never make a TikTok myself.”

“We talked with the record company about it,” McKessar adds, “and they sort of had to be supportive of what Stella's artistic project and vision is, and they were cool about it in the end. But yeah, Stella did have to say ‘Hey I don't want to be known as a TikTok artist.’”

However, TikTok is more than simply a promotional tool; it provides a level of engagement with music that so many artists revere. For Benee, seeing people from all around the world dancing together and being reached by something she created is, regardless of any flow-on effects, extremely gratifying.

While there are questions to be asked about the permanence of TikTok and the type of promotional model it offers artists — especially given its royalty and licensing arrangements (it pays an astonishingly small licence fee per video made, rather than the per-play rate paid by streaming platforms) — the app will likely continue to shape pop music in 2020.

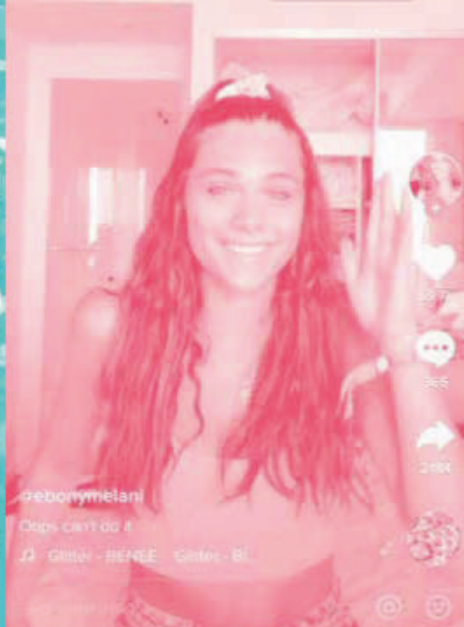
The next breakthrough artist might be just 15 seconds away.

M

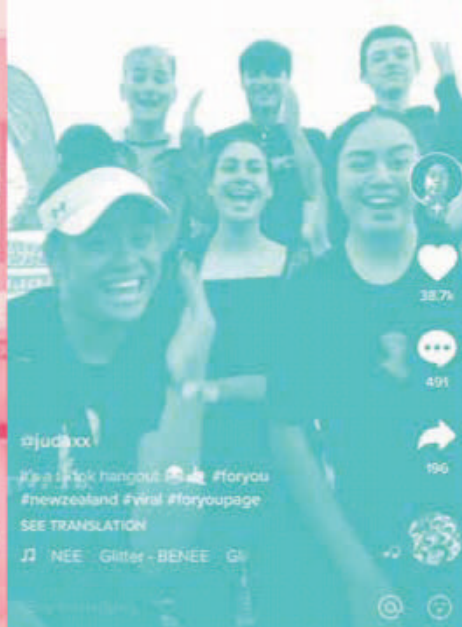




@judaxx  
Thanks for hanging around him  
@walaia.jennings @talmiechlan  
@taylorhightam #foryou #newzealand  
#foryoupage #viral  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



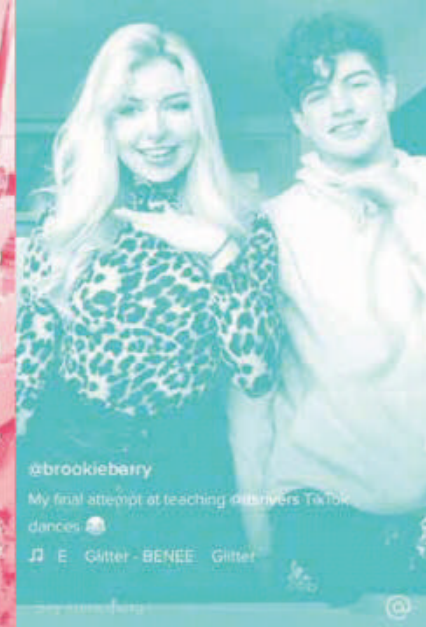
@ebonymelani  
Oops can't do it  
♫ Glitter - BENEE - Glitter - BENEE



@judaxx  
It's a quick hangout 🤗 #foryou  
#newzealand #viral #foryoupage  
SEE TRANSLATION  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@guarindiez  
Guess where I'm going tomorrow 🤔 #ad  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



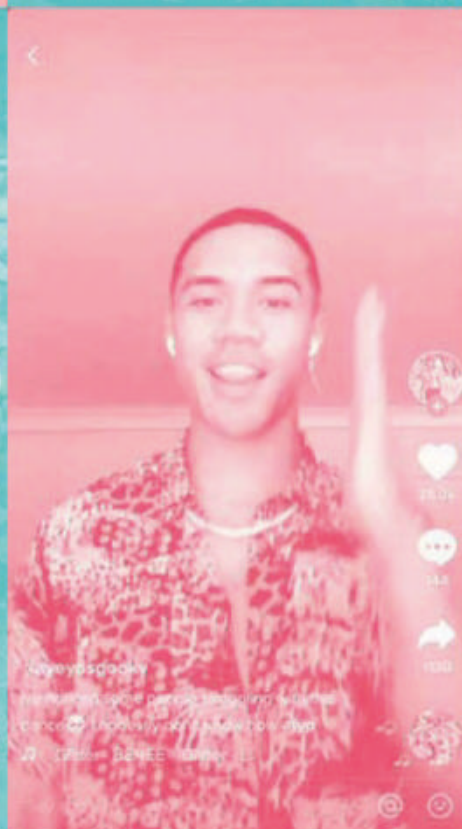
@brookiebarry  
My final attempt at teaching @drivers Taylor dances 🤗  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



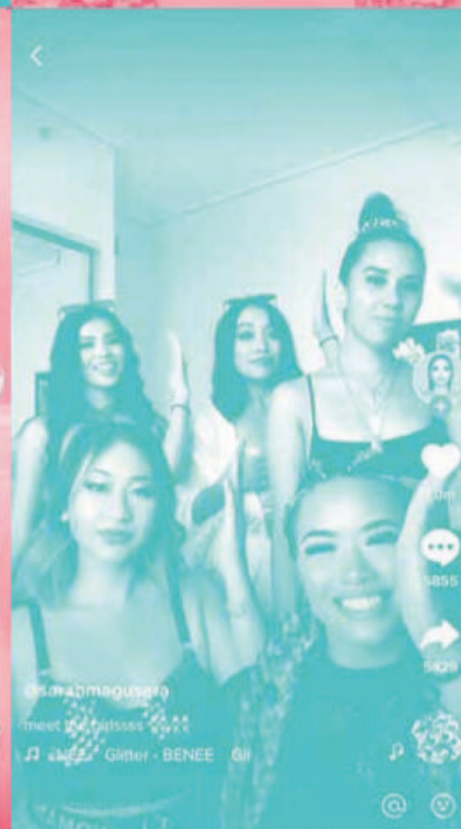
@naughtyjimmy\_  
Big night at the dirty bird? #fyp #trending #viral  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@walaia.jennings  
Couples should duet us #fyp #couples #duet  
#foryou  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@yesyesdooey  
I've been doing this dance for a while  
#foryou #newzealand #viral #foryoupage  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



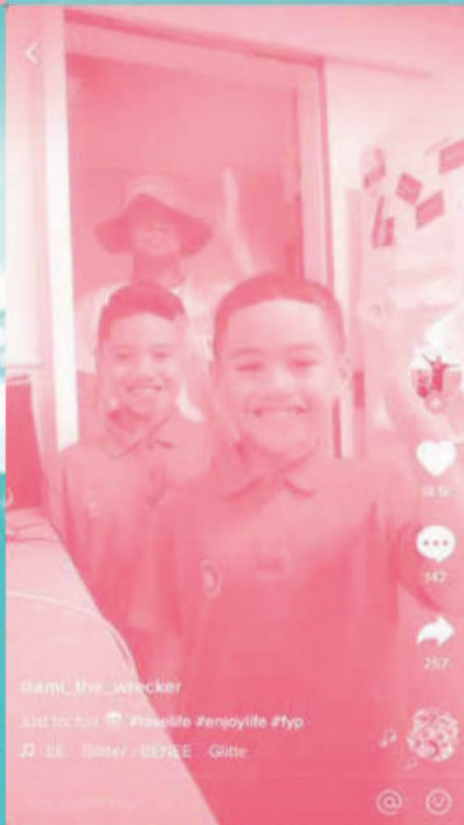
@sarahmaguery  
Meet my misses 🤗  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



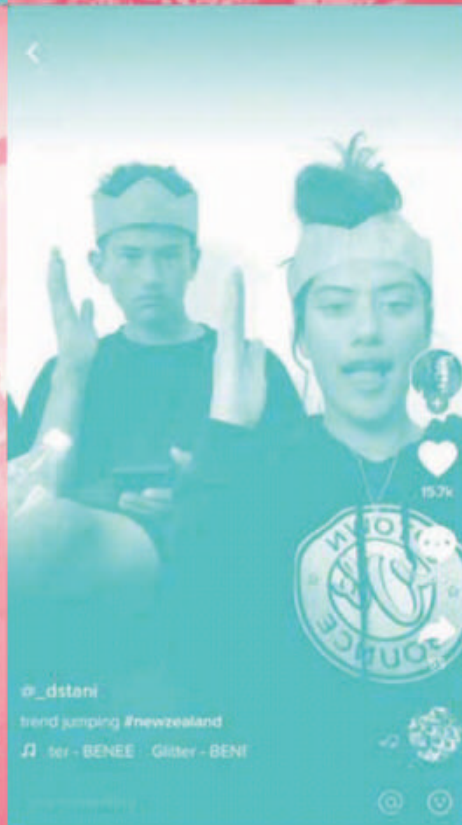
@karl\_kugelmann  
Getting in the Xmas vibes with  
@alex\_kugelmann 🤗 Duet with @singing  
guys!  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



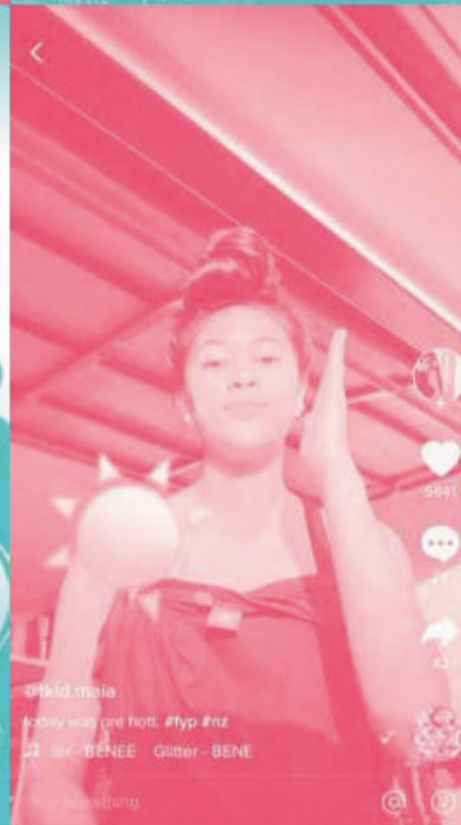
@walaia.jennings  
My trend is popping off 🤗 #foryou #fyp  
#newzealand #australia #indian #girls  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@ami\_the\_wrecker  
Just to fun 🤗 #haslife #enjoylife #fyp  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@\_dstani  
trend jumping #newzealand  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@tkid.malia  
today was pre hott. #fyp #nz  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



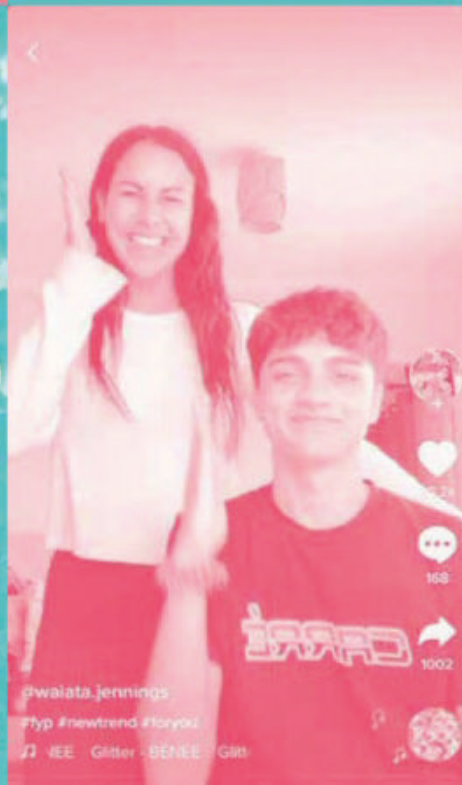
@brookiebarry  
I MET THE STARBUCKS GUY AND PUPPY GUY!  
🤗 @drivers @sheiskings @shatonsky18  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@noahstolz  
@walaia.jennings Dv got u  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@millieandchloeofficial  
dis dance is so cute 🤗 #fyp #foryoupage #foryou  
#dance #glitter #bennee  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@walaia.jennings  
#fyp #newtrend #foryou  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@ojaymalala  
We ran away to make this video 🤗 #fyp  
#foryoupage #samoan (credit to  
@walaia.jennings)  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



@gabbywinn  
This song reminds me of my first love 🤗  
comment who you'd go to  
♫ ENEE Glitter - BENEE - Glitter



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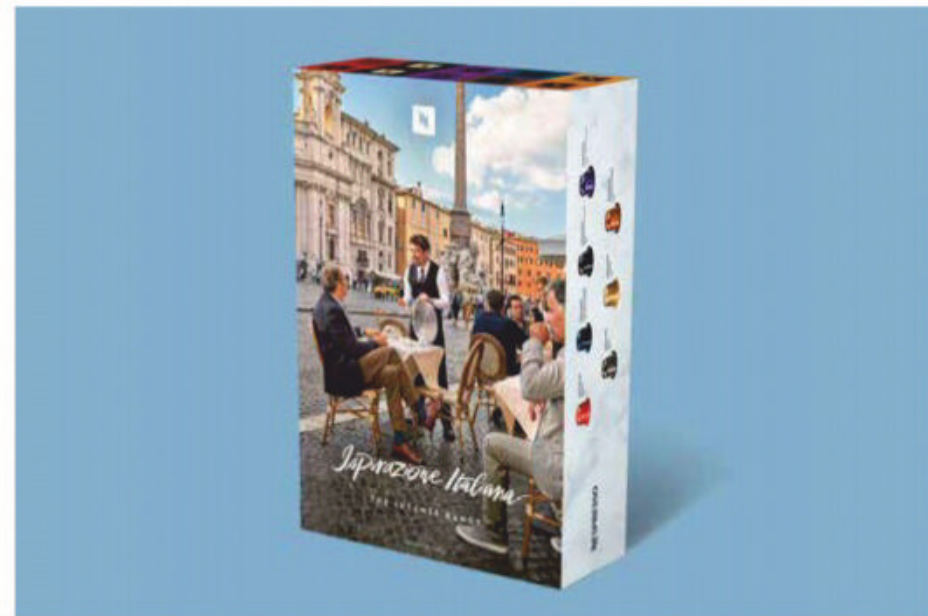
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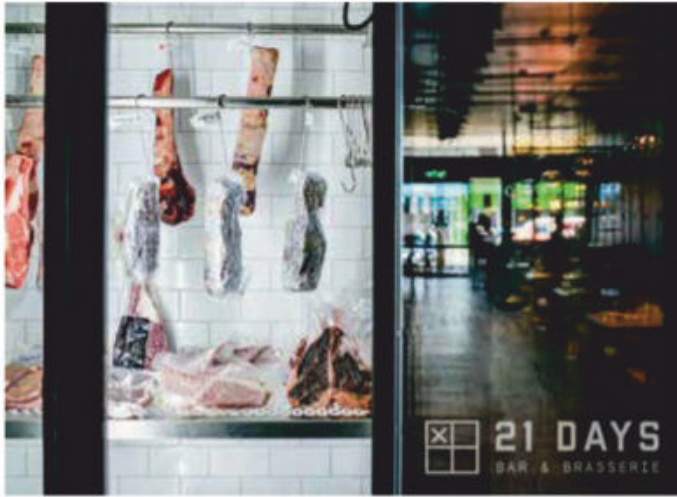
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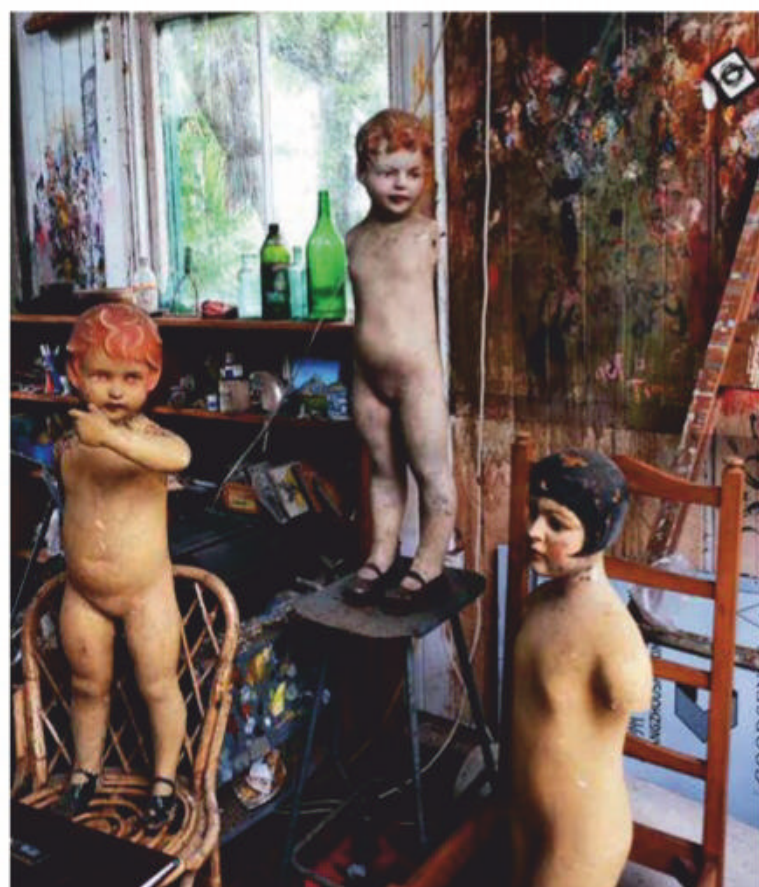
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Waiheke Island, Auckland  
[waihekeartgallery.org.nz](http://waihekeartgallery.org.nz)



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conductor

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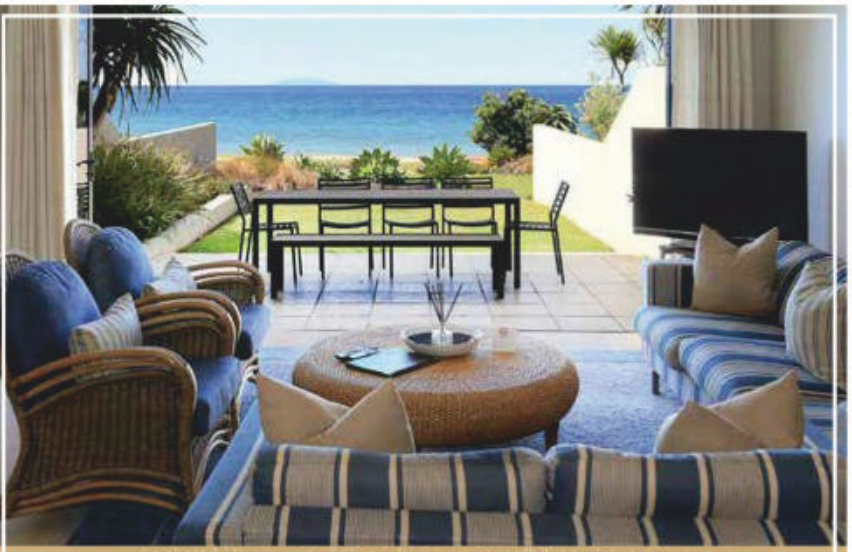
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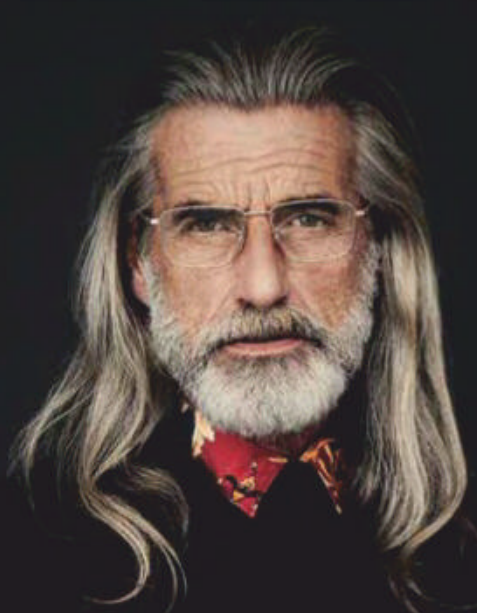


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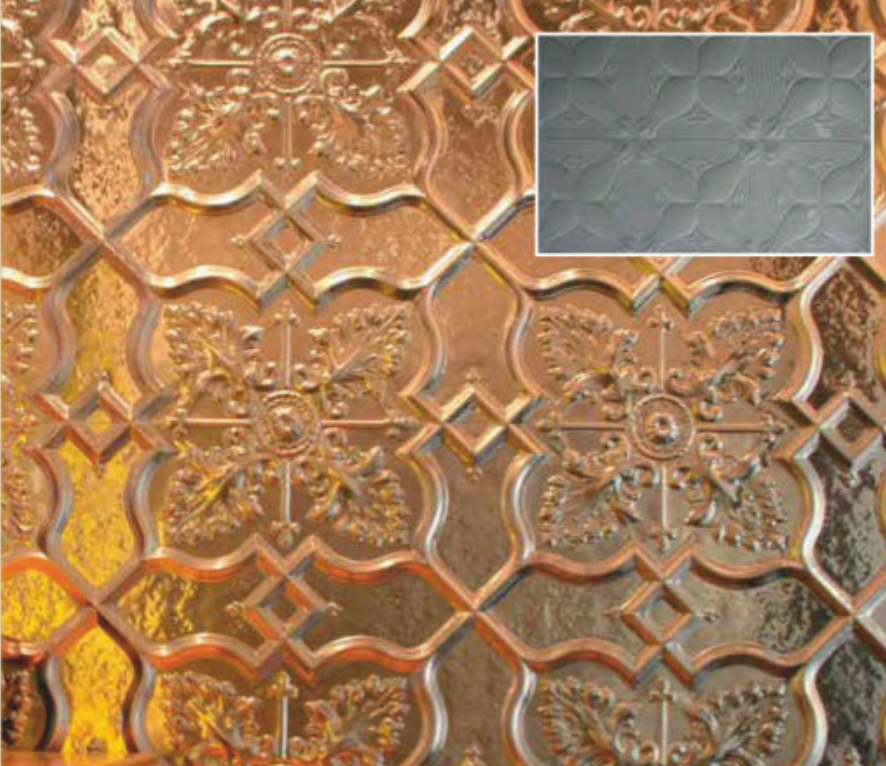
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## PISCES

**FEB 19 – MAR 20**

Remember the David Foster Wallace keynote address “Fishtown 101” (alternative title: “This Is Water”)? It’s an evocative and beautiful reminder about the importance of retaining empathy and awareness during difficult times. It’s also a bit rich, coming from someone who threw tables at women whenever his feelings got hurt. DFW may have been a sensitive Pisces, but that didn’t stop him from using his vulnerability as a weapon. 2020 is a great time to cast aside that bandanna, figure out what cruelties are disguised as kindnesses, and what forms of control are masquerading as freedom. Ask yourself: is this water, or is it fish piss and microbeads?

TEXT — HERA LINDSAY BIRD

ILLUSTRATION — SARAH LARNACH

## ARIES

**MAR 21 – APR 19**

Famous Aries  
Hans Christian Andersen once visited Charles Dickens and overstayed his welcome so badly Dickens wrote on the mirror; “Hans Andersen slept in this room for five weeks – which seemed to the family AGES!” Determination, stubbornness and relentless optimism are all very well if you’re busy punishing fictional mermaids, but a little emotional intelligence wouldn’t go astray. Read the room, Aries.



## CANCER

**JUN 21 – JUL 22**

Famous Cancerian  
Marcel Proust wrote a seven-volume novel about biscuit nostalgia. Reflecting on the past is important for personal growth, but there’s such a thing as overkill.



## LEO

**JUL 23 – AUG 22**

Leo, you Bukowski ass bitch. Cut down on the drinking, do your taxes and let that bluebird fly. Remember; just because it will sound funny in your memoirs doesn’t make it a good idea.



## SCORPIO

**OCT 23 – NOV 21**

Okay, we get it. You’re the Keats of the zodiac – romantic, passionate, tragic, visionary. But have you considered not dying young of tuberculosis in a field of wild violets? Just something to think about.



## SAGITTARIUS

**NOV 22 – DEC 21**

Nostradamus, Nostradamus. We all know the world is ending, but your attention-seeking predictions about eagles and burning towers aren’t helping. Cut the melodrama and do something useful for once.



## TAURUS

**APR 20 – MAY 20**

Shakespeare, you’ve already bought the quill and the pantaloons. Are you ready to get to work or are you just in it for the accessories? If you can’t be bothered following your dreams, at least pay someone to follow them for you.



## VIRGO

**AUG 23 – SEP 22**

Virgo Tolstoy once wrote in his diary, “I’ve fallen in love or imagine I have. Bought a horse that I don’t need at all.” Never mind. We all make mistakes, horse-shaped or otherwise. Giddy-up, sweetheart.



## CAPRICORN

**DEC 22 – JAN 19**

While everyone else is upstairs at the party, you’re down in the basement, adding yet another dialect to your fictional dwarf language. Try coming up for air occasionally. Man cannot live by topographical maps alone.



## GEMINI

**MAY 21 – JUN 20**

Just like Hardy, you’re a sucker for misery. Tess sentenced to death for murder? Too bad, she seemed such a nice girl. You’re fooling no one; try not to take so much joy in other people’s suffering.



## LIBRA

**SEP 23 – OCT 22**

You are a romantic like famous Libran F Scott Fitzgerald, but what’s romantic about your wife burning to death in an asylum? You may be good at fresh starts, but your endings need some revision.



## AQUARIUS

**JAN 20 – FEB 18**

Charles Dickens had nothing to distract him apart from eating mutton and ignoring his 10 children. No wonder he wrote so many books. Put down the sheep fork and stop procrastinating; it’s now or never.





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