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ITALIAN
ISSUE



New wave
wine bars



Dining
alfresco in
Tasmania

GREEN SAUCE
p101
LINGUINE WITH

Puglia. Venice. Milan. Florence. Langhe.



meet our chefs of 2020

■ DAN HONG

MR WONG

Dan Hong loves a culinary mash-up. Calling on his Vietnamese roots, the man behind Mr Wong expertly remixes Western food with mod-Asian flair.

■ LAUREN ELDRIDGE

STOKEHOUSE RESTAURANTS

Everything is better with raspberry peaches, lolly ice-cream and meringue kisses. Just ask Lauren Eldridge, the Stokehouse chef with a sweet tooth, best known for her playful, extraordinary desserts.

■ DUNCAN WELGEMOED

AFRICOLA

Learn from South African-born chef Duncan Welgemoed, a cook who's as intriguing and entertaining as the wildly intoxicating food Africola is known for.

■ SCOTT HUGGINS

PENFOLDS MAGILL ESTATE

Fine dining need not be intimidating. Just ask Scott Huggins, who is ready to celebrate (and elevate!) the best of the season with his distinct style.

■ PALISA ANDERSON

BOON CAFE

Master the ins and outs of Thai flavour with one of the trailblazers behind Chat Thai. Texture, funk, sourness and spice are just the beginning.



■ DAN HUNTER

BRAE

He's gained world-wide acclaim for organic farm and restaurant, Brae, in regional Victoria. Quiz him next on how to go, and grow, your own way.

■ ALANNA SAPWELL

ARC DINING & BAR

Gourmet Traveller Best New Talent Alanna Sapwell hasn't stopped since opening Arc Dining & Bar last year. Lucky for us, nor has her confident, thoughtful cooking.

■ PETER GILMORE

QUAY

At two of Australia's most revered restaurants, Peter Gilmore champions a bold, uniquely Australian cuisine. Can you do it, too? He says you can.

■ LOUIS TIKARAM

STANLEY RESTAURANT

After four years in West Hollywood at EP/LP, Louis Tikaram is back Down Under sharing the secrets and seductive charms of Fijian-Chinese food.

■ O TAMA CAREY

LANKAN FILLING STATION

Hopper-queen O Tama Carey stirs up aromatic soul-warming curries and spicy sharp sambols that celebrate the colourful flavours of Sri Lanka.

A woman with long dark hair, wearing a white chef's coat and a red apron, is smiling and preparing ingredients on a stainless steel table. She is using a knife to chop ingredients on a wooden cutting board. Various fresh ingredients like ginger, garlic, chili peppers, and lemongrass are visible on the table. In the background, there are green limes and fresh basil. The text 'Gourmet 2020 Institute' is overlaid on the image, with 'EXCLUSIVE COOKING EVENTS WITH EXCEPTIONAL CHEFS' in red text to the right of 'Gourmet'.

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8 APRIL

DAN HONG
22 JULY

PETER GILMORE
2 SEPTEMBER

O TAMA CAREY
11 NOVEMBER

■ **MELBOURNE**

LAUREN ELDRIDGE
6 MAY

DAN HUNTER
5 AUGUST

■ **BRISBANE**

ALANNA SAPWELL
27 MAY

LOUIS TIKARAM
23 SEPTEMBER

■ **ADELAIDE**

SCOTT HUGGINS
1 JULY

DUNCAN WELGEMOED
21 OCTOBER

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Food

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MARCH 2020

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Linguine with green sauce (p101)

Recipe Lisa Featherby

Photography James Moffatt

Styling Olivia Blackmore

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF COUNTRY

Gourmet Traveller acknowledges the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation as the traditional custodians of the place we now call Sydney, where this magazine is published. Gourmet Traveller also pays respects to Elders past and present.

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Spaghetti
vongole and
bottarga

p58

PHOTOGRAPHY ALANA LANDSBERRY (PORTRAIT) & CON POULOS (SPAGHETTI).

It took me 28 years to make it to Italy for the first time, flying into Venice's Marco Polo Airport ahead of a two-week, self-guided tour that would see my husband and I work our way down to Florence and Rome before meeting friends on the Amalfi Coast. After years of salivating through various cooking shows and staring enviously at friends' photos, my expectations were sky high.

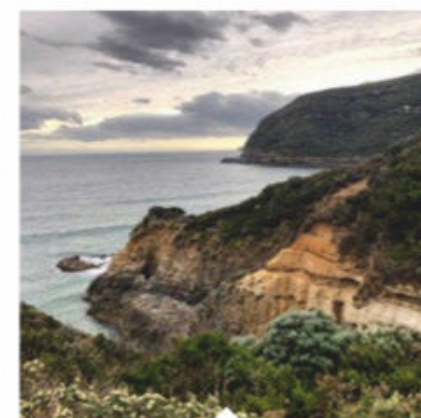
But not once during those two weeks did I come even close to disappointment. Everywhere we went, Italy charmed us. Experiences that in any other country would have incited frustrated meltdowns became amusing diversions. We gorged ourselves as much on history, art and culture, as we did on pizza, pasta and gelato. After two weeks, we had but whet our appetite, resolving to return again as soon as time and finances allowed.

Of course, we weren't the first visitors to fall for Italy's charms – nor will we be the last. Its siren call has been enchanting travellers since the

time of the Roman Empire. Which is perhaps why our Italian issue has become such a fixture of the GT calendar. After more than a decade, it remains our most popular perennial issue, as we continue to explore the flavours of Italy and share new adventures. While some destinations – and cuisines – fall from favour with time, Italy remains constant. Classic but never clichéd. And no matter how many times you revisit, there's always something new to enthrall you.



Where we've been



Point Puer, Tasmania;

Lisa Featherby, food director

This historical region is wild and beautiful, and you'll eat the best apricots of your life from roadside stalls on your way there. @lisafeatherby



Bellingen, NSW;

**Georgie Meredith, writer
& editorial coordinator**

The high-pitched hum of cicadas provides a nostalgic summer soundtrack to this verdant, tropical haven. Never Never Creek's pebble-strewn waters are a perfect escape. @georgiemeredith



Matakana, New Zealand;

Joanna Hunkin, editor

Surrounded by rolling hills, wineries and white-sand beaches, Matakana has long been one of my favourite spots. Just an hour's drive north of Auckland, a weekend visit is a must. @hunkies_news



More than
aperitivi

p114



NICKY PELLEGRINO
writer

Dear Italy, p81

New Zealand-based author Nicky Pellegrino spent childhood summers staying with family in Italy, and continues to travel there year after year. Her bestselling novels *A Year at Hotel Gondola* and *A Dream of Italy* both have an Italian flavour. For this issue, she writes a love letter to the region of Basilicata, still an undiscovered part of the country. “The south to me feels like the real Italy: beautiful but grittier,” she says.



BENITO MARTIN
photographer

More than aperitivi, p114

Photographer Benito Martin developed an eye for light and composition from a young age while growing up in a family-run photography studio. For this issue, Martin played with shadow and depth to match the mood and energy of Australia’s hottest new Italian bars. “I love seeing how different light can look in different parts of the world,” he says. “The way it can transport you to any time or place and bring out emotions.”



HANNAH-ROSE YEE
writer

Southern beauty, p134

London-based Australian writer Hannah-Rose Yee thought she knew a lot about pasta until she travelled to the region of Puglia in southern Italy for this issue. “For the Pugliese, food is a religion,” she says. “I’ve never seen so much reverence and ceremony for a simple plate of orecchiette or a jug of freshly pressed olive oil. For someone who is passionate about eating, it was truly heaven.”



GIOVANNI PILU
chef

Fast, p53

The man behind Sydney’s Pilu at Freshwater brought his Sardinian heritage out of the kitchen and into the pages of *GT* this month to share everyday, fast recipes for home cooks. “One of the things I love about Italian food is that it’s so versatile,” he says. “Whether you’re hosting an elaborate dinner party or preparing a quick and easy weekday meal, there’s an Italian recipe for all occasions. Buon appetito!”

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What we're eating

Gourmet Traveller staffers share their favourite plates of the moment.



CHAR-GRILLED CELERIAC AND CRISP TARO ON CELERIAC CREAM WITH GREEN APPLE GRANITA, Magill Estate
Chef Scott Huggins is behind this clever vegan dish with sweet and earthy flavours. It possesses a delightfully playful mix of warm and cool, luscious creamy texture and crunch. 78 Penfold Rd, Magill, SA. **DAVID SLY, SOUTH AUSTRALIA EDITOR**



ANCHOVY AND EGG ON RYE TOAST, Napier Quarter
Slices of boiled egg with salsa verde and a hollandaise-like mayonnaise steer this toast into almost-breakfast territory. But slivers of salty anchovy, and a glass of chilled red to accompany, remind you you're in long-lunch mode at this Fitzroy favourite. 359 Napier St, Fitzroy, Vic. **JORDAN KRETCHMER, WRITER**



SAFFRON GRAMIGNA, Lulu La Delizia
The pasta hits keep coming at Perth's favourite northern-Italian diner. My latest flour-and-water crush at Joel Valvasori-Pereza's house of carbs: these toothsome noodles, spiced with saffron and sauced with a lush pork sausage, sage and fennel-seed ragù. 5/97 Rokeby Rd, Subiaco, WA. **MAX VEENHUYZEN, WESTERN AUSTRALIA EDITOR**



SPICY RICE NOODLES, CHICKEN AND SPRING ONION, Yoko Dining
Slippery rice noodles loaded up with a chilli-rich, ragù-like sauce that's topped off with a tumble of spring onion, fried shallot and roasted buckwheat. Is it Japanese? Who cares? Pass the chopsticks. Howard Smith Wharves, 2/5 Boundary St, Brisbane, Qld. **FIONA DONNELLY, QUEENSLAND EDITOR**



MARRON CURRY, Momofuku Seiobo
It really is true – all good things come in threes. Here, it starts with fleshy Western Australian crayfish, levels up with a spicy, gutsy, pull-no-punches soffritto sauce, and culminates in a final swipe-through, with coconut bread finished with lime. Count me in. The Star, Level G, 80 Pyrmont St, Pyrmont, NSW. **YVONNE C LAM, DIGITAL EDITOR**



HEIRLOOM TOMATOES, SEAWEED AND CHILLI OIL, Marion
This ode to tomatoes at the height of their seasonal power turbocharges them with the umami-boosting addition of seaweed (mixed with apple cider vinegar), a nori purée and a slightly aniseedy shio kombu. The dish vanishes with tomato season. 53 Gertrude St, Fitzroy, Vic. **MICHAEL HARDEN, VICTORIA EDITOR**

PHOTOGRAPHY FIONA DONNELLY (YOKO DINING), MICHAEL HARDEN (MARION), JORDAN KRETCHMER (NAPIER QUARTER), JASON LOUCAS (MOMOFUKU SEIOBO) & IVANA VALVASORI-PEREZA (LULU LA DELIZIA).

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— MARCH —

NEWS

Edited by JORDAN KRETCHMER & LEE TRAN LAM

CULTURE TRIP

Three of the best Italian tours,
the latest in luxury hotels, and
festivals to mark in your calendar.

Castello di
Reschio

p28

THE LATEST FROM CHEFS AND RESTAURANTS AROUND AUSTRALIA

RESTAURANT NEWS



SYDNEY

Will the long queues outside **Peppe's** in Bondi finally settle down now that a second restaurant, **Peppe's Osteria**, has opened in Waterloo? The new outpost of the vegan pasta joint has taken over Paperbark's old site and as well as Peppe's popular gnocchi, it offers new specials (like ribbon-shaped mafalde with zucchini). There is also natural wine by locals (The Other Right, Jauma) and Italian favourites (Rabasco).

Matteo Downtown channels Milan and other Italian hotspots with its new CBD bar. Expect wine-friendly snacks ('nduja and octopus panini, and baccalà mantecato) and a salumeria section with pecorino and deli meats that staff will slice to order.

ADELAIDE

With a menu that ranges from spicy spaghetti corti d'Assise to the smoky arrosticini skewers of the day, Vincenzo La Montagna draws on his Italian roots at **Little Wolf Osteria**. It's good news for fans who've been waiting for the chef's return (he closed the much-loved Vincenzo's in 2014). And given Little Wolf's vineyard location at Mitolo Wines' estate in McLaren Vale, there's plenty of vermentino and shiraz sagrantino to pair with your meal.

Meet Fino Seppeltsfield's CBD sibling: **Fino Vino**. Sharon Romeo's generous hospitality might steer you towards the squid, pipis and sugar snaps spiced with 'nduja, or a rustic chickpea and tomato dish with bread.



Clockwise from left: squid, pipis and sugarsnap peas (from left) and 'nduja and chickpeas with tomato and sourdough at **Fino Vino**, Adelaide; interiors at **Fino Vino**; smoked trout cannoli, and woodfired oysters at **Matteo Downtown**, Sydney.

EURO STAR

Heidi Bjerkan deserves the spotlight: she was the Norwegian royal family's chef; she started Vippra, an Oslo food market where refugees sell Syrian street food, dumplings and hibiscus-flower tacos; plus, she runs the acclaimed Credo, in Norway's north. The restaurant reminds diners where their food comes from: the walls show portraits of cows and she tries to use every part of an ingredient, even a langoustine's shell. Catch her sustainable cooking approach at Tasting Australia's preview party in Adelaide on 26 March, as well as at the festival's Glasshouse Kitchen event on 1 April. tastingaustralia.com.au



Chef Heidi Bjerkan.

MAKING A MOZZA

Sydney-based cheese queen Kristen Allan imparts her love of dairy in this hands-on workshop where you can learn the art of making three Italian stretched curd cheeses. You'll get to take home your own mozzarella, burrata and stracciatella, and enjoy lunch with Allan and your newfound formaggio friends. **\$185, 15 March at Two Good Co, 255 Wilson St, Eveleigh, NSW, kristenallan.com.au**



Swedish brand Fjällräven has released a new daypack ready for both trekking and checking-in. The Ulvo 23 features a padded computer compartment and mesh shoulder straps. **\$239.95, fjallraven.com**



Top crust

To raise funds for bushfire charities, chefs and familiar faces will join forces with Breville to host a pizza party at Three Blue Ducks in Sydney's Rosebery, with international pizza pro Anthony Falco leading the charge. He'll be joined by chefs Mark LaBrooy (Three Blue Ducks), Analiese Gregory (ex-Franklin), Shannon Martinez (Smith & Daughters), Orazio D'Elia (Matteo) and Trish Greentree (10 William St). Each chef will pair up with a media personality (including *GT* editor Joanna Hunkin) to create their own pizza using ingredients from bushfire-affected towns. **\$50 per head, 6pm-9pm, 23 March, 1/85 Dunning Ave, Rosebery, NSW, bit.ly/raisingdough**



Your restaurant Caterina's is inspired by your student days in Perugia, Italy. What was being in central Italy like? Incredible. Italy was Italy and the closest we had here was Lygon Street: parmigiana and carbonara, and probably bad versions as well. However in Perugia, I got to taste vitello tonnato, tortellini alla panna and real Roman-style pizza.

Did your regulars really chip in to help you buy Caterina's? Yeah, it's crazy. I bought the restaurant to save my job and all the staff. Because I'm in the corporate end of Melbourne, one client gave me \$50,000, one gave me \$20,000, one gave me \$5000. Everybody gave me the money I needed to make the deposit: it was all based on goodwill.

Caterina's celebrates its 25th anniversary in 2020. What's stayed on the menu all these years? Stracciatella: comfort food. Vitello tonnato: an homage to my Italian family. And chocolate pudding: a recipe from a woman who's the equivalent of Stephanie Alexander in Italy.

Tell us about your regular who trades his figs for bottles of wine?

This wonderful customer has a 100-year-old tree. He picks them in the morning and drops them off. I get 70-90 kilograms of figs a year. He's a lawyer, and he gets a buzz out of a restaurant selling his figs.

Do you still serve your mother's plum grappa to diners? My mum learnt the recipe in Italy. She does plum grappa, walnut grappa and coffee grappa. My mother is 82 and I'm trying to get my daughter to learn, because the recipes will be lost.

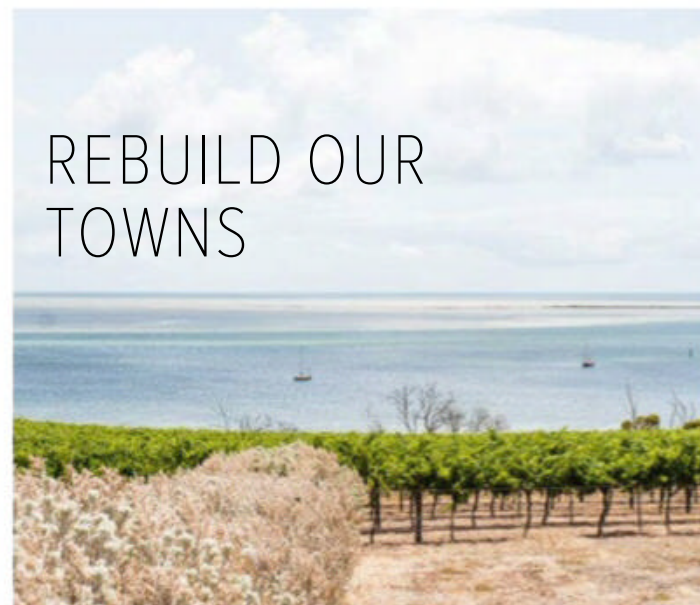
What will you serve at Melbourne Food & Wine Festival's The Big Spaghetti event? Gnocchi. If you get it right, it's amazing, but if you get it wrong, it's a shocker. But we've got it right: with braised lamb, fresh figs from my wonderful friend, and pecorino. The other thing we're doing is strozzapreti: we flavour it with sangiovese, so it's slightly pink, and we're doing it with veal and porcini. Old-school. It's currently on our menu, and it walks out the door. *28 March, The Big Spaghetti, Shed X, Queen Victoria Market, Melbourne, Vic, melbournefoodandwine.com.au*

EAT CRAY LOVE



The 2020 Flinders Island Food and Crayfish Festival will descend on the seafood-focused isles, located off the north-eastern tip of Tasmania from 15-19 April. Highlights from the program include the Friday Food Feast, where all of the island's chefs will cook under one roof; a long-table lunch from Sydney chef Jesse McTavish and Indigenous chef Toni Wood; and a wild gourmet tour and lunch on Vansitartt Island, where you'll feast on oysters, crayfish and saltbush lamb, and arrive by a boat or chopper. foodandcrayfishfestival.com

REBUILD OUR TOWNS



The towns that were recently ravaged by bushfires are beginning to rebuild. Now, many of them are relying on tourists to help bring life back to the area, including South Australia's Kangaroo Island. Australia's third largest island possesses a naturally pristine environment as well as a throng of cellar doors and local producers. Head to False Cape wines for a glass of sustainable cabernet sauvignon while overlooking the vineyard; Dudley Wines to take in the views from its clifftop cellar door; or Bay of Shoals Wines' cellar door, which also has glamping and self-contained accommodation options. Or sample the unique local honey, produced on the island from eucalypts and wild flowers, at Clifford's Honey Farm. The newly opened kitchen-garden café Millie Mae's Pantry, also stocks local honey, as well as olive oil, jam, chutney and sauces. tourkangarooisland.com.au

PROSECCO, PLEASE

People have been clinking glasses of Australian prosecco for around 20 years, with winemakers exporting around \$60-million worth of our local bubbly. But Italians want prosecco to be recognised as a geographical indication rather than a grape variety, similar to Champagne – and the European Union agrees, too. This would prevent wine producers outside Italy from labelling their version of the sparkling white wine as “prosecco”. Australian winemakers are arguing against this move, and researchers at Victoria’s Monash University have received a \$100,000 grant to explore the legality of protecting the geographical indications of wines in trade agreements. Meanwhile, we’ll be raising glasses of both Australian and Italian prosecco alike.





GOOD TIMES PASTA

Recently, a guest turned up to Lucio's for her 30th birthday and asked if she could sit in the Sydney restaurant's front room. "Her mother went into labour with her in that room 30 years ago," says Sally Galletto. It's one of many memorable incidents that have occurred at the Paddington institution she's run with husband Lucio since 1983. There was the time singer Tom Jones had "dinner" after his show: he arrived with his

entourage at 1am and left around 6am. George Harrison from The Beatles also dined there – during more typical business hours – which was a major moment for the restaurant's co-owner and chef. "Lucio has been a Beatles tragic since the beginning," says Galletto. "In fact, the only English he knew growing up came from Beatles lyrics."

The restaurant has also unexpectedly featured in Italian media over the years. In

EXHIBITION NEWS



Sydney will transform into a cross-suburb art park when the Biennale returns for three art-packed months. Over 100 multi-disciplinary artists and performers will descend on Cockatoo Island and local art institutions. Entry is free; 14 March to 8 June, biennaleofsydney.art

January 2008, actor Nicole Kidman and her musician husband Keith Urban dined at Lucio's after announcing she was pregnant with their first child (this meant paparazzi and TV crews were outside, trying to get footage). "Family members living in Italy were stunned to watch Italian Sky News and see Lucio's beaming face on the screen," says Galletto.

Over its 37 years, the restaurant has earned fans for its black handkerchief pasta with seafood (which actor Al Pacino enjoyed), and tagliolini alla granseola (pictured), the crab pasta dish, which has been Lucio's bestseller since its launch. The restaurant is also renowned for its art collection, which started with a Ned Kelly sketch that Sid Nolan scrawled on a docket book after his first lunch at Lucio's. The menu covers were designed by artist John Olsen.

The restaurant is about to face big changes: the family is selling the building, but hopes to retain a three-year lease so it can celebrate its 40th birthday – before rebooting the restaurant in a new format. But Galletto wants to assure diners that "whatever form our new venture takes, both the tagliolini and the black pasta will be safe and reappear."

47 Windsor St, Paddington, NSW, lucios.com.au



1 The Thinking Traveller

Renowned chef Christian F Puglisi will lead a culinary immersion in Sicily. Based out of Rocca delle Tre Contrade (a 12-bedroom luxury villa; pictured), Puglisi will bring his skills from the kitchens of Noma and Relæ together with his Sicilian roots to teach a series of hands-on workshops. There will be masterclasses on sourdough bread, cheesemaking, seafood, charcuterie and low-intervention wines. You'll also get to meet local farmers, take part in a lemon harvest and eat plenty of Sicilian food, from street fare to more traditional recipes. *\$9851.44 per person twin share, 25 April to 2 May, thethinkingtraveller.com/puglisi*

2 Italian Tours: The Road Less Travelled, Puglia

This small group tour explores the southern heel of Italy, and is led by bilingual hosts who possess a true passion for the country. Stay in Lecce, Valle d'Itria, Polignano a Mare and Mattinata, and discover each town's architecture, local wineries and slow-food restaurants. You'll also visit a family-run olive farm, take a private boat trip to the Gargano coast and meet local cheesemakers. With a maximum of 12 guests, plenty of free time built into the itinerary and three nights in each location, this Australian-run tour offers the best of Puglia and beyond. *\$7590 per person twin share, 11-24 September, italiantours.com.au*

3 Epicurious Travel Food, Wine and Walking Tour

This active group tour takes in the stunning mountain vistas and ancient towns of Northern Italy, as much as the beautiful food and wine of each stop. The tour kicks off in Milan, before navigating through the ancient Citta Alta of Bergamo, followed by Franciacorta, the Dolomites (pictured), Follina and medieval Treviso. Each destination has been hand-picked by director Jennifer Wilkinson, and includes luxury accommodation and Michelin-starred restaurant stops along the way. *\$12,330 per person twin share, 6-18 June, epicuriustravel.com.au*



Want to celebrate Italian food locally? Mark your calendars for Melbourne Food and Wine Festival's Italian Festival (Crown River Walk, 20-22 March) and Sydney's Norton Street Italian Festa (Leichhardt, 25 October). melbournefoodandwine.com.au; nortonstreetfesta.com.au

THE LATEST IN LUXURY HOTELS, VILLAS AND LODGES

HOTEL NEWS



NOW OPEN

Sydney chef Brent Savage is now lending a hand at the Maldives' **One&Only Reethi Rah**, an ultra-luxe villa resort located on a private island. Savage is overseeing the menu at the resort's new restaurant Botanica, while his counterpart Nick Hildebrandt is looking after the wine list. On the menu is abundant local produce, with dishes starring wild hand-caught Maldivian rock lobster, pickled wakame, sea succulents, reef fish and finger lime. oneandonlyresorts.com/reethi-rah

Sydney's Burwood boasts a swish new place to stay: **Marsden Hotel**. The boutique accommodation

is a first for the inner-west suburb, and has its own restaurant, Onyx Grill, which showcases premium cuts of steak, fish cooked in a charcoal oven and a host of seasonal sides, plus a rooftop bar and its very own pâtisserie. marsdenhotels.com.au

COMING SOON...

Over in Italy, the Umbrain hills are set to welcome **Castello di Reschio**, a new boutique hotel located within a 1497-hectare pastoral estate. Set on the Umbria-Tuscany border, the hotel houses 36 rooms alongside an organic farm including 5000 olive trees. Enjoy swimming in the estate lake, or activities such as horseriding,

cooking lessons, olive-oil making and truffle hunting. reschio.com

Over in California, **Downtown LA Proper Hotel** is slated to open in the American summer. Taking over an historic property in LA's fashion district, the 148-rooms – styled by cult interior designer Kelly Wearstler – mix vintage influence with local art. properhotel.com

REFRESHES AND RENEWALS

Next month the **Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni** will swing open its doors again. Situated on the shores of Italy's Lake Como within the medieval village of Belgio, the hotel's refresh is the latest chapter in its rich 147-year history. villaserbelloni.com

Locally, Tasmania's UNESCO World Heritage site **Cradle Mountain Lodge** is in the midst of a multi-stage upgrade. The \$10-million boost will restore the 86 cabins with new beds and in-room amenities. cradlemountainlodge.com.au

Clockwise from left: interiors at Downtown LA Proper Hotel; Grand Hotel Villa Serbelloni; Castello di Reschio.

KNOCKOUT WINES

Restaurateur Christian McCabe (Embla, left) and winemaker Patrick Sullivan (right) bring a personal touch to their new Punchin' Bottles shop in Melbourne. Its shelves feature wine from Vino di Anna, an Italian vineyard on the high-altitude slopes of Mount Etna, which they've both worked at. The vineyard is tended to by husband-and-wife team Anna Martens and Eric Narioo (Les Caves de Pyrene) and the bottle-shop owners have good memories of helping out on the estate in Solicchiata, Sicily.

"Everything is done by hand and the work is very physical, so we worked all day and then spent our nights at Cave Ox eating pizza and drinking our weight in wine," says McCabe. "In the vineyards, they have plenty of other plants, too, so eating amazing organic tomatoes straight off the vine is another strong memory."

Back at Punchin' Bottles, other Italian drops in store include skin-contact wines from Friuli (Zisarich, Radikon and Dario Prinčič) and small-batch bottles of Levi Serafino Grappa made from old family recipes and aged in acacia, ash or chestnut oak. The bottle shop will also present in-house tastings with Campania's Cantina Giardino in September, and a visit from Vino di Anna's winemakers is on the cards, too. *Punchin' Bottles, 124 Russell St, Melbourne, Vic, pbwineshop.com.au*



Designer Tom Chan's Unocup is a sustainable coffee cup that uses paper tabs instead of a plastic lid to secure your flat white. Look out for the range (such as this Alexis Kandra version), which will be launched soon. unocup.com



Veneto calling

Chef Nicola Dusi hails from Verona, so it's not surprise The Hardware Club in Melbourne features dishes from the Veneto region, like whipped cod mantecato, which dates back to the 1430s when an Italian crew learnt Norwegian techniques for preparing cod after being shipwrecked in Scandinavia. Dusi also serves sardines in saor: a way for sailors to preserve fish between layers of vinegar and sweet onions. His take (left) is like the original, "but it's served warm with no raw onion breath". *Level 1, 43 Hardware Ln, Melbourne, Vic, thehardwareclub.com*



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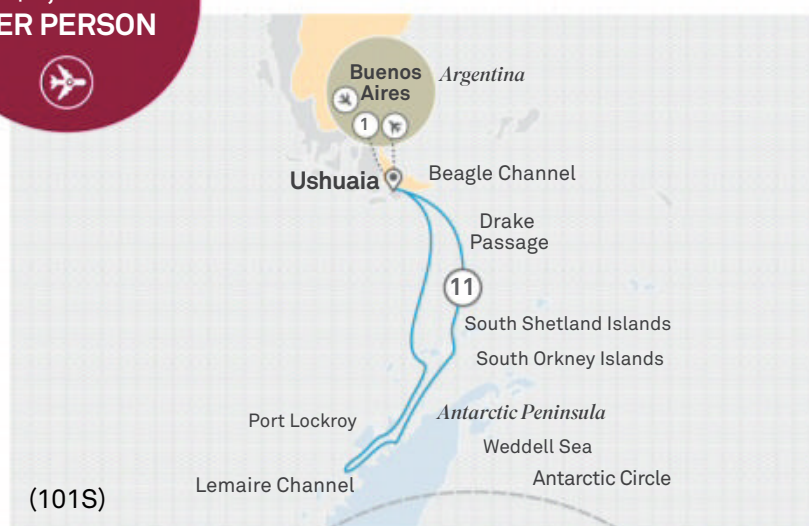
Adriaan Olivier, Discovery Team member



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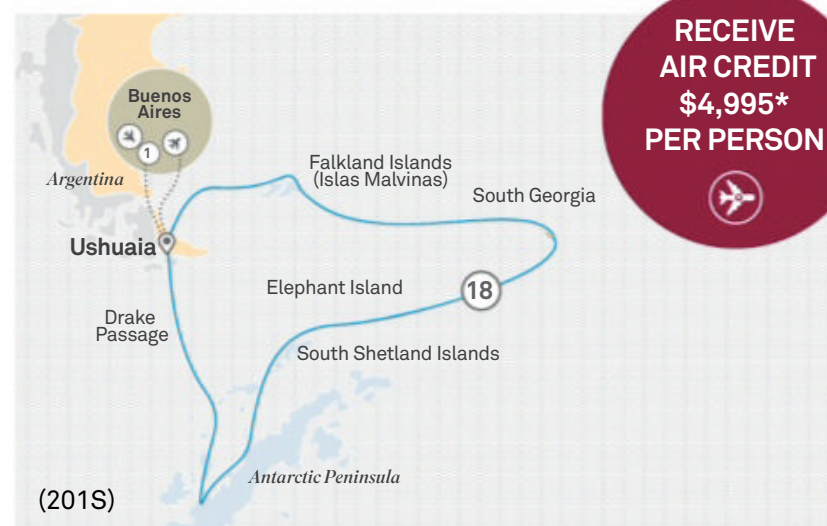
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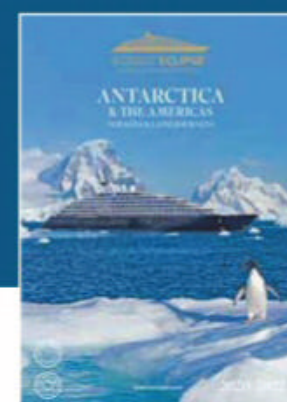
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TRAVELLING WITH

Hamish MacDonald

The award-winning journalist on working in Afghanistan,
the beauty of the human spirit and Sardinian specialties.



I grew up in Jindabyne in the Snowy Mountains of New South Wales. We used to do a lot of road trips as a family. We also did a lot of walking trips in the mountains, back-country stuff; we'd pick wild berries up in the far reaches of the mountains; there was a lot of kayaking on rivers; a lot of making bush pancakes and damper on camping trips. And there might have been an overseas trip or two when we were little, but I have more memories of driving up to Sydney to see family and begging to be allowed to stop at McDonalds to get a hamburger.

When I was 14 or 15 I did an exchange to Germany. I lived outside Munich for part of a school term, and that was the first time I really travelled anywhere on my own. I definitely think I've always had a big appetite for travelling and exploring solo. It wasn't something that ever scared or worried me.

London is where I've lived for more of my adult life than anywhere else and I have an unbelievably soft spot for it. It's such a big, exciting global city. It's so close to so many places, and in such close proximity to so many different cultures and languages, even within the city. At the same time there is such a rich history that belongs to London itself. I think it's a really rare combination of all these things in one place.

I am most comfortable and most happy working in places that other people don't really want to go. I've always loved working in Afghanistan and remote parts of Indonesia, or hiking into the Himalayas for some obscure story, for example. Those sorts of things are probably where I'm my happiest. I think the most challenging places for me to work are where the entire world's media has descended upon one place to cover one particular story, such as going to the US to cover an election in Washington DC. To me those are the strangest experiences because you're right up close, in the thick of the American democratic process, and when you see it at such close proximity you realise how bizarre, and frankly mind-boggling, some of the processes are around these people.

Afghanistan is a really intoxicating place. It's physically very beautiful, and very overwhelming I suppose. The Afghan sense of history is really profound, so the conversations you have are always full of insight and detail, and layered with nuance. As a journalist, that's really exciting. And for all of the bloodshed and difficulty

Just back from...

The NSW South Coast, which was initially a holiday but then turned into work.

Next up...

I genuinely don't know.

“I think the unfortunate reality of the way we tell stories about the world is that you often get a really one-dimensional picture of a place.”

that they deal with every day, there is still an enormous amount of beauty, joy and human spirit on display in really surprising ways. So on a human level there's a lot to connect with. I think the unfortunate reality of the way we tell stories about the world is that you often get a really one-dimensional picture of a place. If you haven't been to Afghanistan, or a similar area, you might have the impression that it's all guns, bombs, death and destruction. And yes those things all exist there, but human life carries on. People go shopping to buy bread; they go to weddings and have funerals; they send their kids to school; they play musical instruments; and they share meals together. Those are the things they often tend to tell you about, rather than the bigger picture of a complex issue.

I've spent lots of time in Italy. I've had lots of friends get married there. I've also spent a lot of European summers in Sardinia. My former co-anchor on Al Jazeera, Barbara Serra, is an Italian journalist who very kindly makes her Sardinian home available to use frequently. I'm a pretty keen bicycle rider, so I've done a lot of riding in different parts of Italy. I completed the Maratona dles Dolomites three times, which is a single-day ride in the Dolomites of about 150 kilometres. I absolutely loved that. It's a beautiful part of the world. I've also been to Carloforte, which is on an island off the south of Sardinia. They have a tuna festival, and I've been there during it. I had some incredible tuna dishes while I was there, but I was simultaneously quite shocked when I was told which parts of the tuna they were. ●

Hamish MacDonald is the new host of Q+A, which airs Monday evenings on the ABC.

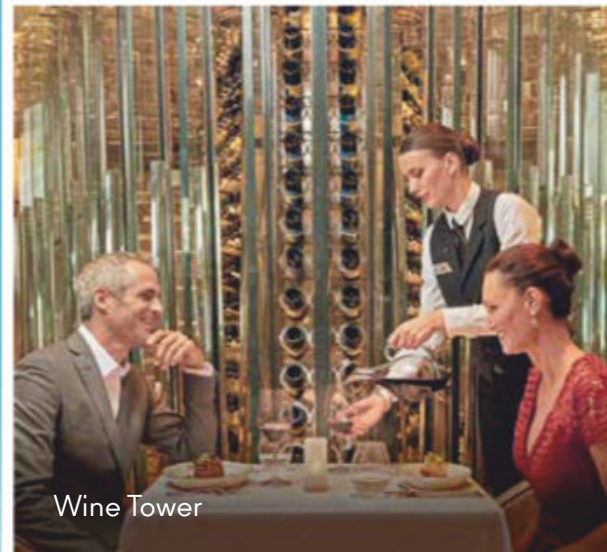
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EATING WITH

Nicole da Silva

The actor on standout auditions, Nutella doughnuts and working with the UN.

What do you remember eating when you were growing up in Sydney? I have Portuguese heritage and meals like bacalhau com grão were my absolute favourites. It's essentially a warm salad: chickpeas, salted cod, potatoes, spinach, onion, olive oil and lemon.

One of your earliest roles was playing an ambulance driver on *All Saints*. How did you feel when you got the gig? I was teaching Speech and Drama at a private girls' school and I got the news

in between classes. I stepped into my car, closed the doors and screamed my head off with excitement.

What was your diet like when acting jobs were lean? I was pretty fond of two-minute noodles and Nesquik. During uni, I got to study close enough to home so I was still able to have Mum's Bolognese, casserole and the bacalhau.

Tell us about your audition for prisoner Franky Doyle on *Wentworth*. In the weeks

leading up to it, I'd get up every morning and do push-ups and cell-like exercise regimes. I bought temporary tattoos. I had my hair slicked back, almost like a lion's mane. I love throwing myself in. That's one of the joys of being an actor.

Your work is seen all over the world, especially through *Wentworth*. Have you had memorable experiences with fans? I get letters thanking the show for having a LGBT character represented and for me, that means everything. If my job can

have that impact on someone's life and give them the courage to celebrate who they are, then that's a good day for me.

Actors often work in bars or restaurants while looking for gigs. Did you? I was a bartender for a very long time and I spent a lot of time writing ideas for stories on coasters. I still have a box full of coasters that have scribbles and ideas on the back. One day, I will try to make sense of those.

Do you have a favourite Italian dish? I'm obsessed with Italian Nutella doughnuts. We'll drive to Raffael's Bakery in Sydney's Haberfield at least once a week to stock up. They also do amazing pizza bases and bread, and that's a staple for us, too.

What's your pizza of choice? A fancy Margherita with a garlicky base and anchovies for a bit of kick.

You shoot parts of *Doctor Doctor* in Mudgee, NSW. Is it a good place to eat? Without a doubt. Roth's Wine Bar do a lot of good woodfired pizza and arancini. Elton's is really good, but honestly, you can't go wrong when you're in Mudgee. It's all delightful.

Do you ever smuggle food on set? I'm known for my on-set bag, which has an array of snacks. I'm not good with the wait between breakfast and lunch, and I'm always partial to cheese and olives.

Tell us about your recent trip to Thailand with the UN to promote women's rights. The UN works with local communities where women experience domestic violence in their own marriages. We sat with the head of the royal police to discuss solutions. It was profound.

Was there a story that stayed with you? There was a 19-year-old girl who'd been married for a little while. She was covered in cuts and bruises, and she simply didn't know she had another choice. At the base level, it's as simple as educating girls to know: you have the right to a different life, to an empowered life, to a better life. ●

Nicole da Silva stars in *Doctor Doctor*, which airs on Nine, and *Wentworth*, which streams on Netflix.

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Salami

Whether sliced, spread or cooked, these five Australian pork salami are our top picks from the world of preserved meats.



- 1 -

SALUMI AUSTRALIA SALSICCIA SARDA

One word describes this Byron Bay-produced salame: moreish. Sweet notes of nutmeg and garlic are balanced with a hint of vinegar, while coarsely ground free-range pork delivers just the right amount of fattiness. Made in the Sardinian style, it's perfect with traditional pane carasau (crispbread). \$50 per kg. salumi.com.au



- 2 -

DE PALMA GHOST PEPPER

De Palma prides itself on sourcing local free-range pork, and uses seven-generation-old family techniques to form the base of all its salami. The ghost pepper here brings just the right amount of tongue-tingling heat, without compromising flavour. Plentiful chunks of fat make this a sound choice for the frying pan. \$65 per kg. depalmasalumi.com.au



- 3 -

LP'S QUALITY MEATS GARLIC & BLACK PEPPER

LP's has closed its Sydney restaurant but the smokehouse lives on, producing some seriously good salami. This French-style saucisson sec is an absolute standout, made with free-range Borrowdale pork and a heady sum of garlic and whole peppercorns. Available from late March. \$50 per kg. lpsqualitymeats.com



- 4 -

PINO'S DOLCE VITA FINE FOODS 'NDUJA

Pronounced "en-doo-yah", this spreadable salame is a Calabrian specialty, one which Pino's has been perfecting for nearly 40 years. Pork and prosciutto trimmings are combined with roasted chillies to create a fiery spread. Top a pizza with generous daubs or slather on crackers garnished with thinly sliced provolone. \$25 per 250gm. pinosdolcevita.com.au



- 5 -

BORGIO PURE PORK AGED SALAMI

Borgio infuses its salami with fennel, nutmeg and a dash of red wine, allowing the sweet meatiness of the pork to truly sing. This Northern Italian-style salame is smooth and mild in flavour, which makes it a simple but effective crowd-pleaser. Bring out the cheese platter – this one is begging to join the party. \$38 per kg. borgio.com.au



Daniel Johnston

Kylie Kwong introduces us to some of her favourite food heroes and the individuals helping to grow a stronger community. This month, we meet chef Daniel Johnston of Don Peppino's in Sydney.



Daniel Johnston is constantly curious in his practice as a chef, and I am drawn to his irreverent, eccentric character. Over the past seven years or so, he has delighted us with his innovative Italian pop-ups around town, yet Dan also offers so much

more with his explorations that go beyond the kitchen.

I love Dan's Italian cooking style – his food, with its "Italian nonna" touch, reminds me of the days I worked at The Restaurant Manfredi. I had the privilege of learning from the formidable Franca, Stefano and Franco Manfredi, with their focus on seasonal ingredients and a handmade, fresh-is-best, cook-to-order mantra.

Dan has an extensive knowledge and understanding of Italian cuisine and culture, and his food is even more delicious because of his generosity of spirit and warmth.



A conscientious chef, "my favourite chef in the world", and an all-round excellent human is how colleagues describe Daniel Johnston – chef and co-owner of Sydney's effervescent Italian eatery, Don Peppino's. So exactly how does a 37-year-old Australian chef manage to earn the respect usually reserved for an Italian nonna? Unending curiosity, an honest love for Italy and a tendency to treat staff like family is a pretty good start.

Johnston worked his way up through the hospitality ranks in the traditional way with apprenticeships and training, before landing at the now-shuttered Vini in Sydney's Surry Hills, which supercharged his passion for Italian cooking. "It was a deep dive into Italy and into its subregional cuisines," says Johnston. "I've spent years researching and visiting Italy. I will read a regional Italian cookbook in bed on a Sunday night because I love it." Vini was also the launch pad for some of his less traditional ventures, including his work with the Full Circle, an off-kilter food collective, which saw Johnston and his friends conjure up temporary restaurants in Surry Hills warehouses and disused restaurants in Potts Point and Leichhardt, all before opening his more semi-permanent fixture, Don Peppino's. "Through all these projects I've done, my main motivation is cooking great food, but also bringing fun and excitement to going out and eating," he says. "In the early days one of the influences was illegal parties and raves... breaking off and doing things differently and feeling excited to be a part of it." Motivation for Johnston also comes through an incessant and sincere curiosity. "A motto of mine lately is 'The more I learn, the less I realise I know'," he says. "So you don't stop."

Walk into Don Peppino's and you instantly feel like part of the gang. Ascend the glowing staircase, and you're just dropping in to see your mates.

It's this approach, together with l'amore for Italian cuisine, which has propelled Johnston back to Italy time and time again. A particularly pertinent visit for Johnston was when he spent four months walking, working and living with families on different properties, particularly in Puglia. "I worked on a couple of farms, learnt how to milk sheep and roll pasta, and ate fruit off the tree, warm from the sun," he says. "I almost didn't come back." And while there's a real romance with Italy, Johnston is also a realist, recognising the dichotomy between its beauty and its flaws. "It's sometimes hard to get Italians to think outside the box," he says. "But they have these beautiful long-lasting traditions – that I'm sure exist in many, many cultures – which are just within the family."

Back in Sydney, Johnston uses tradition as inspiration and takes joy in being able to offer anything from bread rolls filled with caramelised garlic butter through to a cucina povera-style dish of al dente orecchiette with buttery chickpeas. "I'm really happy when I can say to someone, 'Here's a traditional pasta with chickpeas that you probably don't want to order because it sounds boring, but try it and remember that simple things can be really beautiful,'" he says.

Johnston deftly translates these traditions on the plate with a sense of irreverence and fun – the kind of fun that comes from setting up a restaurant in a former nightclub with two best mates, floor manager Tom Merryweather and chef Harry Levy. "Against most people's advice, I went into business with two of my best friends," he says. "We've found a way to be open and straight up with each other."

The camaraderie extends beyond his business partners, as each has employed their friends to work the floor. Walk into Don Peppino's and you instantly feel like part of the gang. Ascend the winding, glowing staircase, and you're just dropping in to see a bunch of mates – mates who are about to show you a damn good time. "When it works, it's a wonderful thing and it feels like we have one of the best restaurants in the entire world," says Johnston.

So what's next for this affable and ephemeral trattoria? The team at Don Peppino's is keen to stick around for as long as possible. "We're still getting the hang of it, we've still got more to do, and if we've still got the energy and motivation, we may as well keep going," he says. "I'm fiercely independent. I always want to put myself in a position where I or the crew can make our own decisions about everything because I don't want to compromise."

Fierce independence and self-reflection have proved to be useful tools for Johnston.

"A big part of my inspiration is these old-school values and traditions. I'm constantly questioning, 'Is it good enough, or is it too simple?' There's a fine line between perfectly simple and incredibly boring, and if you're not on the right side of it, it doesn't work." It's clear that Johnston and Don Peppino's have landed on the right side. ●

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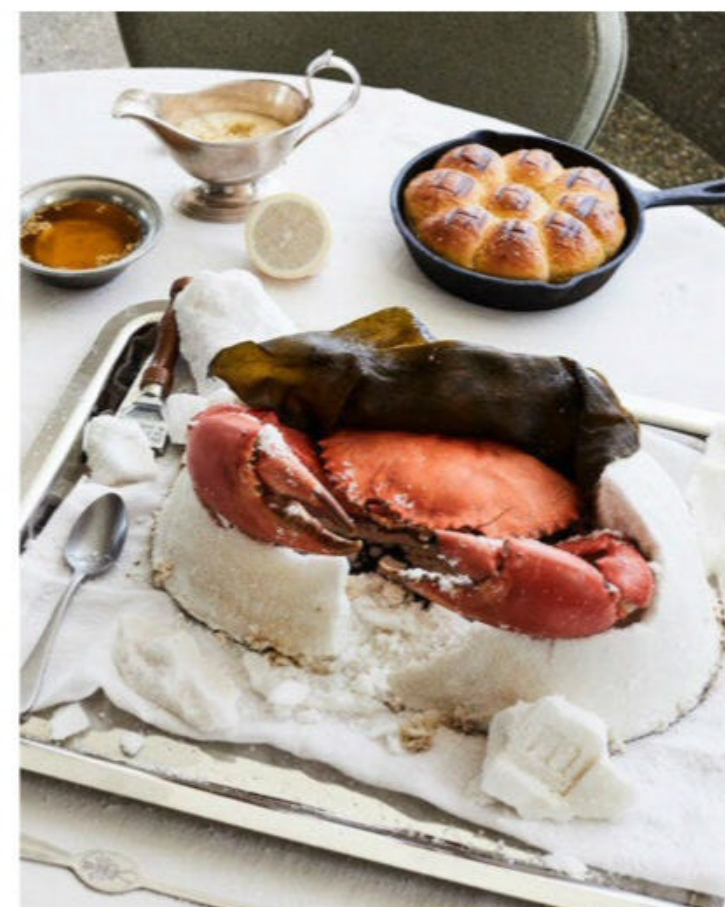
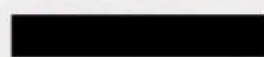


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Great expectations

Coogee Pavilion's much-anticipated Mimi's ups the ante – and the prices, writes **KARLIE VERKERK**.



farmhouse meets Mediterranean retreat, complete with art deco details and 50 shades of linen. It's all 'grammable; even the bathroom.

The open kitchen, led by executive chef Jordan Toft, hums along efficiently. Four long marble benches are flanked by custom Josper grills and ovens at one end, with a service counter at the other. Seasonal produce sits on display, Chez Panisse-style.

On a nice day, the windows all arched and glorious can be opened to allow the ocean air to flood in. The room is calm (and did I mention 'grammable?). In an oasis as peaceful as this, with unflappable service to match, lunch can easily progress into afternoon snacks and a few vintage cocktails, until you're rendered blissfully unaware. Unaware, that is, of the impending bill about to hit the table. ►

Clockwise from above: pipis, pancetta broth and pici; salt-baked mud crab with salted brioche; executive chef Jordan Toft.

Until recent times Coogee has lay dormant; sandwiched between Bondi's buzz and grungy Maroubra, unable to create an identity of its own. All but a couple of fetid hostels and handful of dodgy takeaway shops existed in the beachside suburb. That's until Merivale kingpin Justin Hemmes snapped up the iconic Coogee Pavilion in 2014.

A casual eatery went in on the ground floor, followed by a rooftop bar, and glimmers of life were seen

in the area for the first time in, well, ever. But the middle level remained untouched for six years.

After meticulous planning and a complete redesign, it's now home to Mimi's: Hemmes's most ambitious and perhaps most anticipated project yet. I guess it's only natural to expect great things from a restaurant that took six long years to come to fruition.

No expense has been spared on the fit-out, which is as aesthetically pleasing as the Eastern Suburbs flock that fills it. Think French

Chocolate sabayon tarte with crème de banane cream. Below: the view of Coogee Beach from Mimi's.



Here's the thing: Sydneysiders are used to dropping serious cash in return for a decent meal. Add a coastal location to the mix, and we expect to pay double. But the prices at Mimi's are eye-watering.

Care to kick things off with a "bump" of caviar (wheeled to you on a trolley), and chilled sea urchin, followed by grilled lobster with hand-cut noodles, or suckling piglet? I'd consider liquidating some assets before booking a table.

If Toft's stint at Bert's tells us anything, it's that he favours high-end produce, cooked simply and often over embers. Take, for example, a skewered snack that is barbecued abalone and pancetta. Simple, salty, and \$16 each. Ouch.

The heavy price tag would be far easier to swallow if every dish was perfect. Instead, pipis and a scant tangle of too-thin pici arrive floating in an anaemic broth, supposedly flavoured with pancetta and chilli. Neither of which I could confidently discern.

But there is cause for hope. You might find it on the one-person list in the form of a squab bun, aka char siu bao's Russian cousin. Made with a yeasted sour-cream dough, the three-bite snack

is stuffed with a rich mixture of squab, liver and a good dose of pepper, then meticulously pleated and fried. It's excellent when loaded with sour cream.

Another triumph is the Queensland mud crab, cocooned and baked in a salt crust – a process that involves heating, resting, and heating again until the flesh pulls away from the shell and sets just the right amount. Theatrically unearthed tableside, the meat is sweet and magically seasoned.

A saline Julien Brocard chablis is crab's best friend, and not the only gem to be savoured by the glass. Another is a funky Radikon "Slatnik" from Friuli, a solid match with any of the vegetable-driven dishes. The remainder of the wine list corrals some of the world's best labels and requires deep pockets.

Among the desserts there's a decent mix of fruity, creamy and frozen things, including a super-light yet intense chocolate sabayon tarte with a banana liqueur cream.

There's no doubt Mimi's will bring fresh crowds to Coogee's shore, but with a price point comparable to Quay, the challenge will be keeping them there. ●



Mimi's

Coogee Pavilion, Middle Level, 130a Beach St, Coogee, (02) 9114 7324, merivale.com/venues/mimis
Open Mon-Fri noon-2.30pm, 6pm-9.30pm; Sat & Sun noon-3pm, 6.30pm-9.30pm

Prices Snacks \$9-\$16, entrées \$29-\$62, main courses \$42-\$72, desserts \$25

Vegetarian

Two snacks, three entrées, one main course

Noise Buzzing but not barbaric

Wheelchair access Yes

Minus Expect a large bill

Plus Infallible service and décor



AND ALSO...



WHEN IN ROME

Bustling Italian eatery **Baccomatto Osteria** has relocated from Surry Hills to a new space in Randwick's Newmarket precinct, and you'll be pleased to know their pizza (the dough is risen for 72 hours), and handmade pasta are better than ever. Pop in for a slice of Roman-style pizza, and stay for hand-rolled porchetta and a bowl of rigatoni (above) lavished with hearty, slow-cooked ragu. 2/164 Barker St, Randwick, baccomattoosteria.com.au

PRIME TIME

Old-school charm meets pure gluttony at **The Gidley**, a crackin' new basement steakhouse by the Bistecca crew. There is beef, of course, and boy is it good; the 220-gram spinalis is the pick of the four prime-rib roast cuts. Other highlights include a prawn cocktail with a side of fried prawn heads, and a meticulously layered potato gratin. Settle into a cosy booth and sip juicy reds from Piedmont to Burgundy. 161 King St, Sydney, thegidley.com.au

CITY SLICKER

Martin Place has a new addition with the arrival of **Toppi**. Named after its owner Paola Toppi – her mother opened the infamous Machiavelli – the modern Italian diner is made for corporate power lunches given its central location. It seems the kitchen is still trying to find its feet though, with some dishes yet to meet family standards. Stick to the handmade pastas, such as the spaghetti with delicate blue swimmer crab, bullhorn green chilli and basil, and finish with a Negroni Svegliato kicked up with vermouth-infused espresso. 60 Martin Pl, Sydney, toppi.com.au



ROSETTA



Rosetta is an elegant and relaxed Italian restaurant with a dedication to the finest Australian produce and in-house craftsmanship every step of the way. It offers a seasonally driven menu featuring a range of classic and modern Italian dishes matched to an extensive list of local and Italian wines.

118 HARRINGTON ST SYDNEY | 8, CROWN CASINO, WHITEMAN ST, SOUTHBANK

ROSETTARESTaurant.COM.AU



Euro vision

Modern-Australian osteria Tedesca offers an original menu influenced by Italy and beyond, writes **MICHAEL HARDEN**.

As the lunch crowd begins to arrive, Brigitte Hafner, owner and chef at Mornington Peninsula newcomer Tedesca, is making fettucine. The pasta, part of a five-course menu focused on locally sourced ingredients, is made using eggs from her own chooks. It'll be tossed with mussels from Flinders Pier, zucchini from a nearby farm and a thrillingly clean sauce made from mussel juice, lemon zest, parmesan, a little butter and Cape Schanck olive oil.

Hafner is working at a bespoke, blackened-timber kitchen bench, backdropped by a sizeable brick hearth equipped with a woodfired grill and oven, and crowned with a massive antique stone ram's

head. It's not so much an open kitchen as an extension of the dining room. Guests wander up to the bench to chat to the chef as she rolls and then cuts the dough. It feels less restaurant and more like lunch at a friend's house.

This is the first "real" kitchen Hafner's had in many years. At pioneering wine bar Gertrude Street Enoteca her repertoire was restricted by space. Sixteen years later, it's apparent she's spent the time thinking about exactly what she wanted. Tedesca (Italian for "German") is not only impressively competent but also original: a modern-Australian version of a traditional Italian osteria.

The design comes courtesy of Hafner's husband, architect Patrick

Ness, who has done a superb job modernising the original timber building without losing its integrity. The open-plan space features a long, central bench strewn with vases of flowers from the garden, lamps, glasses and cutlery. The windowpanes are wonky with old glass. There's been money thrown at it but the room is relaxed.

The price tag is also relaxed: it's an all-inclusive \$110. The osteria-style meal starts with antipasto and then runs through pasta, fish, meat, and dessert courses with Vietnamese coffee, filtered rainwater and a tip included. There's only one seating, so the pace is languid.

Ingredients change from week to week, depending on what's

Clockwise from above: the private dining room; King George whiting with sumac, coriander and walnut dressing; general manager James Broadway, and architect and designer Patrick Ness and owner and chef Brigitte Hafner with their daughter Vivienne Ness.

From below: an antique stone ram's head hangs above the woodfired grill and oven; a wood pile at the property's entrance.



available in the area and, while the structure of the meal might be based on an Italian osteria, Tedesca doesn't stick to Italy for its flavours.

There might be dolmades made with vine leaves harvested that morning from Hafner's own garden (she and Ness live two doors down from the restaurant) and filled with a Turkish-style mix of rice, cinnamon, cloves, mint, currants and pine nuts. The texture of the leaves is glorious and they break cleanly when bitten into.

These might be accompanied by a Greek-style fava and horta, the yellow split pea purée accompanied by amaranth, cooked to order in salted water and arriving soft and wilted, flavoured with garlic and lemon juice. It's vibrant stuff, comforting and fortifying, much like the pan-fried haloumi that's served with roasted walnuts, sumac, cucumber, thyme and purslane.

The fish course might be trumpeter, a robust almost meaty fish that takes well to being grilled

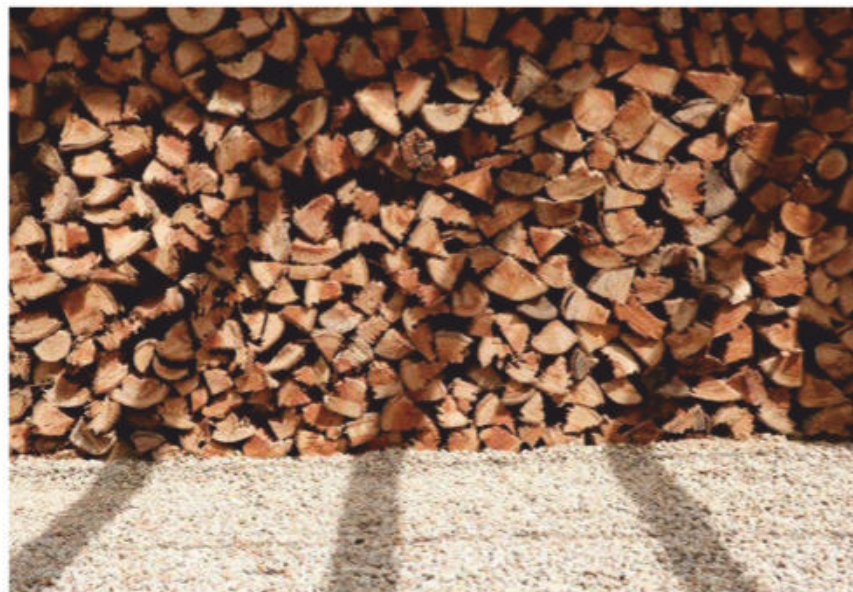
over coals. It's accompanied by mojo rojo, a Canary Island sauce made with grilled red peppers, red chillies, raw and roasted garlic and red wine vinegar. There's a romesco-sauce quality to it, but with a little more kick.

Hafner may be legendary for her talent with pork but if the abbacchio alla Romana is being slow-cooked in the woodfired oven you won't feel short-changed. It's suckling lamb, cut on the bone, cooked with fresh herbs, white wine and stock in a parmesan and breadcrumb crust.

The wine list at Tedesca is assembled by James Broadway, Hafner's business partner at the Gertrude Street Enoteca. It's a compact, clever list that leans towards the biodynamic, hovers around the Mornington Peninsula, but also ranges further. There might be pinot noir from local producer Avani, a skin-contact white blend from Adelaide Hills producer Manon, Tuscan Chianti or French Petit Chablis from Christophe.

A local rosé moscato from Quealy is an ideal match for a dessert like the berry tart, encased in one of the best shortcrust pastries you're ever likely to come across.

Tedesca Osteria is both familiar and something completely new. The sense of relaxed hospitality and Brigitte Hafner given full rein in her own kitchen is a powerfully good combination. Put it on your must-do list. ●



Tedesca Osteria

1175 Mornington-
Flinders Rd,
Red Hill,

tedesca.com.au

Open Fri-Mon
noon-4.30pm;

Sat 6.30pm-late

Prices \$110 for
five courses

Vegetarian

On request

Noise Convivial

Wheelchair

access Yes

Minus The

need for a

designated driver

Plus An original

addition to

the Victorian

dining scene

AND ALSO...



CHAMPAGNE TASTE

Chef Pierre Khodja (Camus) is at the helm of **Pinchy's Champagne & Lobster Bar**. The bar vibe is well served by a multitude of neon signs, a colour scheme that skews pink and gold, and the presence of two bars. The sustainable-seafood menu lists Maine lobster rolls (above), prawn-head rolls with sea urchin aioli, an excellent octopus and potato salad and a crab taco. The huge balcony is prime position when the weather's balmy. Level 1, 200 Bourke St, Melbourne, pinchys.co

CLASSIC HITS

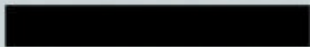
Cook & Norman, the Italian restaurant on Flinders' main street, is now **Donna Maria Ristorante**. The menu's dial is set to "crowd-pleasing" with a greatest hits offering that includes cotoletta alla Milanese, spaghetti ai gamberi, bone marrow and Grana Padano risotto, and kingfish crudo with a lemon and anchovy dressing. The wine list will please the Italophiles. 52 Cook St, Flinders, (03) 5989 0160, donnamaria.com.au

BAKER'S DELIGHT

The team behind Bar Liberty and Capitano has turned its old Rockwell and Sons space into a bakery called **Falco** and taken on a new partner in the process. Christine Tran is a baker with a CV that includes Tivoli Road Bakery and San Francisco's Tartine, and her repertoire runs to hand-shaped, organic flour loaves, pies (including excellent smoked chicken and leek) and chocolate and halva brownies. It's a small-batch bakery so things do sell out quickly. 288 Smith St, Collingwood, falcobakery.com

Bitter brew

Vermouth and amaro stem from a long homemade tradition of experimentation and regional influences, writes MAX ALLEN.



From left: Amarot
Amaro, Macchia
Vermouth Bianco
Maestrale, Scarpa
Vermouth di
Torino and
Meigamma
Vermut Rosso.

Michael Zaccaria grew up in a typical Italian-Australian household. His Calabrian grandfather opened a small music store in Melbourne just after World War II, building it up into a bigger business over the ensuing decades. Relatives of his father's generation still grow grapes and make wine in Calabria. Wine – and music – was always a part of family life. So was vermouth, often drunk as a refreshing aperitivo. And various kinds of amaro, the strong, bittersweet liqueur often served in Italian restaurants and households to aid with digestion.

"Grandfather's favourite drink on a hot day was a bianco vermouth with soda," remembers Zaccaria. "And Dad and my grandfather would always have an amaro after the meal every night. That's what sparked my interest in those drinks: when you're surrounded by something your whole life it imprints itself on your brain. And that interest became a passion."

Zaccaria worked in the family's music business for a while, but in 2017, he gave into his passion and started his own wine-import company, QuelVino. And as well as shipping a wide range of wines from Italy, he also decided to bring in amari and vermouths, from producers as far apart as Piedmont and Sicily.

"I didn't expect to sell all that many," he says. "But they've been much more popular than I thought. I think it's because we're in a phase where Australians have never been more interested in Italian food, wine and culture. And when they go out to dine, they want to drink properly, like an Italian, from aperitivo to digestivo."

Although many other countries produce aromatised wines and bitter herbal liqueurs, Italy has a particularly long and rich tradition of making both drinks, and making them very well.

The modern style of sweet red vermouth was born in Italy in the 1780s, when merchant Antonio Carpano perfected a blend of wine, sugar and alcohol infused with spices, roots and herbs – including *Artemisia absinthium*, or wormwood – in a wine shop in Turin's Piazza Castello. It soon became a huge hit – such a hit with locals, in fact, that other wine producers in Turin jumped on the vermouth bandwagon. Producers such as Cinzano and Martini. You've probably heard of them.

One of the beautiful things about Italian aperitivi and digestivi is that because they're made in the cold mountains of the north to the hot plains of the south, many distinct regional and stylistic differences have evolved. The Amaro that Zaccaria imports is a gently citrusy, aromatic modern amaro from Piedmont with a lovely round perfumed sweetness that balances a core of fine, powdery, chinotto bitterness – a world away from the intensely dark, powerfully thick bitterness of, say, Fernet-Branca, a better known amaro, first developed in Milan in the mid-19th century.

Likewise, the Macchia vermouths that Michael ships from Sardinia, although inspired by Carpano's original Turin model, use local botanicals such as myrtle leaves and berries to create an appealing new spectrum of flavours: the bianco is thrillingly tangy and spicy, with candied peel and fennel characters; the rosso is fabulously pungent and bitter, heading more into amaro territory that you usually encounter in a vermouth.

There are, in fact, countless variations on the bitter herbal wine or spirit-based drink to be found across Italy, especially when you factor in all the homemade examples as well as the commercial brands. And not just in Italy: wherever Italians are to be found.

"Even here in Australia, Grandfather used to make his own walnut liqueur," says Zaccaria. "He had a family friend up in Wangaratta, Victoria and he used to go up and gather all the windfall walnuts off the ground to make his own nocino."

Zaccaria's uncle in Sicily makes his own vermouth using red wine produced from the local nero d'Avola grapes. And one of the most extraordinary vermouths I've ever tasted, Meigamma Vermut Rosso from Sardinia, was only made by winemakers Giuseppe and Barbara Pusceddu for personal consumption, until Michael and other importers convinced the couple to bottle some for sale.

I'm glad they did, because it's fabulous: bone-dry, dark-purple in colour, super-herbal to smell and crammed with savoury, chewy tannins, thanks to the carignano grapes used to make the base. Something that tastes this intense must be good for you, right?

"Look," says Zaccaria with a laugh. "I don't know whether drinking these things does really help you digest your meal. But that's the belief I'm sticking to." ●

Top drops of the month



2019 Curly Flat White Pinot, Macedon Ranges, \$26
If you love really pale, properly dry rosé, try this: early-picked pinot noir, a little skin contact, perfumed and creamy but with good vinous chew, too. curlyflat.com



Non 2 Caramelised Pear and Kombu, Melbourne, \$30
Outstanding non-alcoholic drink made from pears, ginger, tea and a bunch of other stuff. Almost tastes like a really good medium-sweet French farmhouse cider. non.world



2018 Brave New Wine Schadenfreude, Great Southern, \$38
A lip-smacking, succulent, slurpy shiraz. Whole-bunch ferment gives the wine a fine, sappy-snappy quality. Great with steak frites. And mustard. bravenewwine.com.au



2019 Apogee Alto Pinot Gris, Tasmania, \$44
Really beautiful expression of pinot gris with both the crisp, crunchy refreshment and some of the rich, grapey texture the variety is known for. Drink with scallops, pan-fried in butter. apogeetasmania.com



Empirical Spirits Fallen Pony, Copenhagen, \$104
This brilliantly unconventional spirit is distilled from barley, Belgian saison yeast and quince tea kombucha. Sounds mad. Tastes amazing. Imported by highhopeswine.co



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INTRODUCING NEW MAZDA CX-9

It's the SUV that knows how to look after the ones in charge, and the ones in the back. New Mazda CX-9 is ready to take the very best in luxury for you, and your family, to a new level. Enjoy an interior that includes sumptuous new materials, smart connectivity and the latest in safety and technology. Plus, thoughtfully designed features, like one touch walk-in third row switch and hands-free power tailgate, built to make family life effortless. New Mazda CX-9 truly is the seven-seat SUV that gives the whole family the royal treatment. Take a closer look now and see how imagination drives us.



WIN THE ULTIMATE RACE DAY DINING EXPERIENCE

Celebrate the best of autumn days and autumn racing with your chance to win a VIP dining experience at The Byerley at Flemington Racecourse or a double pass to the Super Garden Party on Super Saturday, March 7.

The Super Garden Party is hosted in the Flemington Racecourse gardens, evoking the notion of a traditional garden party with a twist, including entertainment, restaurant pop-ups along with a curated selection of craft beers, wines, ciders and cocktails. A beautifully curated space to Lounge under the Fairhaven marquee or dance to the energetic live music lineup on The Elms stage.

As part of the day's celebrations and culinary experience, Aaron Turner will be taking the reins in the kitchen in The Byerley, stepping away from award-winning *IGNI* for the day to produce a menu worthy of one of the world's greatest horse racing tracks.

In this exclusive offering, we're giving *Gourmet Traveller* readers the opportunity to enjoy the day's racing whilst dining with three friends in a VRC members-only restaurant. The Grand Prize includes a table for four with trackside views and a six course lunch with wines recommended by The Byerley's sommelier. The prize winner and guests will also receive entry to Super Saturday Race Day featuring Super Garden Party festivities and access to the exclusive VRC Club Stand (prize valued at \$1460).



Additional prizes

Gourmet Traveller readers can also win one of 50 double passes to the Super Garden Party which includes entry to the racecourse as well as access to the exclusive VRC Members Club Stand and a food and beverage voucher. Total value per prize \$200 per double pass (incl entry and voucher).

How to enter

Win the ultimate culinary day out on Super Saturday at Flemington Racecourse. Simply tell us in 25 words or less how you would make it a day to remember. *Competition closes Monday, 2 March 2020*

Enter now at Flemington.com.au/SuperGardenPartyCompetition



GOURMET
TRAVELLER



— MARCH —

FAST

GIOVANNI PILU, of Sydney's Pilu, brings his signature Sardinian style to the midweek table.

Spaghetti vongole
and bottarga

p58



Trout with white wine and rosemary SERVES 4

“Basting with white wine during cooking stops the trout from drying out,” says Giovanni Pilu. “Serve with a simple salad or grilled vegetables on the side.”

- 4** rainbow trout (300gm each), cleaned
- 1** spring onion, finely sliced
- 2** garlic cloves, finely sliced
- 2** rosemary sprigs, leaves finely chopped
- 20** green Sicilian olives, pitted and coarsely chopped
- 4** fresh bay leaves
- 250** ml dry white wine
- 2** tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley
- Lemon cheeks, and witlof and parsley salad, to serve**

1 Preheat oven to 180°C. Wash trout inside and out, then pat dry with paper towel. Score on top side with 4 diagonal cuts through to the bone, angled towards the tail.

2 Place trout, scored-side up, on a baking tray. Scatter onion, garlic, rosemary and olives over trout and place a bay leaf

on each trout. Pour over wine, sprinkle with parsley and season to taste. Roast trout, basting well at least every 10 minutes, until just cooked through (20-30 minutes). Check flesh inside the score at the thickest part of the fish; it should be just opaque all the way to the bone. Remove from oven and place trout on a plate.

3 Pour cooking juices into a small saucepan, bring to the boil, then spoon over trout. Serve trout with lemon cheeks and witlof and parsley salad.



Potato salad with chickpeas, fennel, radicchio and anchovy dressing SERVES 4

“This hearty salad can be served as an accompaniment to steak or a piece of fish, or on its own as a meal,” says Pilu.

- 1** kg spunta potatoes, or other firm, waxy potatoes, such as kipfler or small desiree, unpeeled
- 60** ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil
- 2** tbsp red wine vinegar
- 4** anchovy fillets, drained and finely chopped
- 1** tsp Dijon mustard
- 1** garlic clove, very finely chopped
- 200** gm (1 cup) drained and rinsed canned chickpeas
- 1** fennel bulb, very finely shaved with a mandoline, plus torn fennel fronds, to serve
- 1** small radicchio, leaves separated and torn

1 Add potatoes to a saucepan of cold salted water, bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and cook until tender (30 minutes). Transfer to a strainer with a slotted spoon and set aside to drain and cool slightly. When cool enough to handle, peel and cut into 1cm-thick slices. Transfer to a serving bowl.

2 Meanwhile, whisk oil, vinegar, anchovy, mustard and garlic in a bowl or shake well in a jar until combined and emulsified.

3 Add chickpeas, fennel and radicchio to potatoes, pour over dressing and toss to combine. Top with fennel fronds and serve.

“These fritters are the perfect aperitivo snack,” says Pilu.

Zucchini fritters with mint and pecorino

SERVES 4 AS AN ENTRÉE

“These fritters were a favourite after-school snack that my mum used to make for us,” says Pilu. “Sometimes when she visits from Sardinia, she makes them for our kids as well.”

- 35 gm (¼ cup) plain flour, sifted
- 2 tbsp sparkling water
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten
- 60 gm aged Pecorino Sardo (see note), grated
- 1 tbsp finely chopped mint leaves, plus extra leaves to serve
- 1 tbsp marjoram leaves, plus extra leaves to serve
- 4 zucchini, ends trimmed, cut into matchsticks
- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
- Lemon wedges, to serve

1 Add flour into a bowl and whisk in sparkling water until a smooth batter forms. Gradually add eggs, whisking continuously, until incorporated.

Stir in pecorino, mint and marjoram, and season to taste. Gently fold in zucchini, being careful not to break them up.

2 Heat oil to 160°C in a saucepan over medium-high heat. Working in batches, scoop up zucchini mixture in a dessert spoon and, using a second spoon, carefully slide into hot oil and deep-fry until underside is golden (about 4 minutes; be careful, hot oil will spit). Turn and fry until deep golden on the other side (2-3 minutes). Drain on paper towel.

3 Place herbs on a serving plate, top with fritters and season to taste with salt flakes. Serve with lemon wedges.

Note Pecorino Sardo, Sardinian pecorino, is available from select Italian delicatessens. If unavailable, substitute another pecorino. ➤

Fritters All props stylist's own. **Trout** Linen napkin from In Bed Store. All other props stylist's own. **Potato salad** Bowl from Batch Ceramics.

PREVIOUS PAGES

Vongole Bowl (bottom) from Batch Ceramics. All other props stylist's own.

Bruschetta & mussels All props stylist's own.

Herbed ricotta and roasted-tomato bruschetta SERVES 4

“Ricotta is a lovely, delicate fresh cheese and baking it with herbs adds lots of flavour,” says Pilu. “Baking the ricotta also changes its texture, making it a bit firmer. It pairs very well with vine-ripened, blistered tomatoes.”

- 500 gm ricotta**
- 1 tbsp dried oregano**
- 1 tbsp finely chopped rosemary leaves**
- 100 gm (1¼ cups) finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano**
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon**
- 4 thickly cut slices sourdough bread**
- ROASTED TOMATOES**
- 500 gm cherry truss tomatoes**
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra for greasing and drizzling**
- 1 large garlic clove, bruised**
- 1 tsp caster sugar**

1 For roasted tomatoes, preheat oven to 200°C and line a baking tray with baking paper. Place tomatoes in a bowl and toss with oil and garlic. Add sugar and 1 tsp salt, and season to taste with freshly cracked black pepper. Place tomatoes on prepared tray and roast until they begin to collapse and blister (15-20 minutes).

2 Meanwhile, lightly grease a small baking dish. Combine ricotta in a bowl with herbs, parmesan and zest, and season to taste. Place ricotta mixture in baking dish and smooth over surface. Bake until golden (15-18 minutes). Cool.

3 To serve, preheat a char-grill pan over high heat. Grill sourdough until lightly charred (1-2 minutes each side). Drizzle with oil, top with baked ricotta and roasted tomatoes and season to taste.

Mussels and fregola SERVES 4-6

“If you debeard mussels before they’re cooked, you can tear the meat,” says Pilu. “It’s easier to cook the mussel and then the beard comes away easily. The best way to do this is to gently hold the shell of the cooked mussel closed with the beard protruding and then pull lightly on the beard to remove it.”

- 10 baby zucchini with flowers
- 400 gm (2 cups) fregola (see note)
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 1 garlic clove, finely sliced
- 1 small red chilli, finely sliced
- 1 kg black mussels, scrubbed lightly with a scourer
- 100 ml dry white wine
- 200 gm grape tomatoes, halved
- 750 ml (3 cups) fish stock
- 1 tbsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley

1 Remove zucchini from the flowers (reserve), trim ends and thinly slice. Remove and discard stamen from flowers.

2 Add fregola to a large saucepan of boiling salted water and boil until almost cooked (5 minutes). Drain well.

3 Place a large saucepan over medium heat. Add oil and, when hot, add sliced zucchini, garlic and chilli, and

cook until soft but not coloured (2-3 minutes).

4 Increase heat to high, stir in mussels and wine and cook until it starts to boil (1-2 minutes). Cover, shake pan well, then cook, shaking occasionally, until mussels open (2-3 minutes). Remove pan from the heat and remove mussels using a slotted spoon. Gently pry open any unopened mussel shells using a blunt knife such as a butter knife. If the meat smells fine, you can use it; otherwise, discard. Remove the beards, leaving mussels in their shells. Add tomatoes, stock and fregola to the pan,

stir and bring to the boil.

Reduce heat and simmer (5 minutes). Stir in mussels then remove pan from the heat.

5 To serve, stir through parsley and zucchini flowers, and season to taste. Ladle into bowls and drizzle with extra oil.

Note Fregola, Sardinian roasted semolina pasta, is available from select Italian delicatessens and The Essential Ingredient (essentialingredient.com.au). ➤





Crumbed sardines with pecorino and eggplant purée

SERVES 6 AS AN ENTRÉE

“Sardines are an Italian delicacy,” says Pilu. “They are delicious when simply fried and served with a lovely eggplant purée.”

- 150 gm young Pecorino Sardo** (see note), grated
- 18 butterflied sardine fillets,** deboned and trimmed
- Plain flour, for dusting**
- 3 eggs, lightly beaten**
- 210 gm (3 cups) fine fresh breadcrumbs**
- 100 gm rocket**
- Extra-virgin olive oil, for frying and drizzling**
- Strained juice of ½ lemon, plus lemon wedges, to serve**
- EGGPLANT PURÉE**
- 1 large eggplant** (about 500gm)
- ½ garlic clove**
- 2 tsp finely chopped flat-leaf parsley**
- 1 tsp lemon juice (or to taste)**
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil**

1 For eggplant purée, preheat oven to 200°C. Roast eggplant until very soft (20-30 minutes). When cool enough to handle, peel and remove seeds. Add to a blender with garlic, parsley and lemon juice, season to taste, then process until smooth.

With the motor running, drizzle in oil until smooth.

- 2** Place 1 tbsp pecorino on one half of each sardine, then fold over to enclose. Place flour, egg and breadcrumbs in separate bowls. Dust sardines with flour, then dip in egg, shaking off excess, then coat in breadcrumbs. Heat a frying pan over medium-high heat, add oil and, when hot, cook sardines, turning, until light golden (3-5 minutes).
- 3** Meanwhile, toss rocket with lemon juice and a little oil to taste. Season to taste.
- 4** Divide rocket salad among plates, top with sardines and serve with a spoonful of eggplant purée on the side.

Note Pecorino Sardo, Sardinian pecorino, is available from select Italian delicatessens. If unavailable, substitute another pecorino.



Spaghetti vongole and bottarga

SERVES 4

“This is a classic Sardinian pasta dish that can be found in any seaside trattoria,” says Pilu. “The bottarga adds a delicious umami flavour that enhances the sweetness of the vongole.”

- 500 gm dried spaghetti**
- ½ cup (125ml) extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 garlic cloves, finely sliced**
- 1 small red chilli, finely chopped**
- 1 kg vongole**
- 30 ml dry white wine**
- 50 gm bottarga (see note), finely grated on a Microplane**
- Flat-leaf parsley, to serve**
- Crusty bread, to serve**

- 1** Add spaghetti to a large saucepan of boiling salted water and cook until al dente (6-8 minutes). Drain well, reserving 250ml pasta water.
- 2** Meanwhile, heat a large frying pan over medium heat, add 80ml oil and, when hot, add garlic and chilli, and stir until garlic has softened (1 minute). Add vongole and wine, then cover, shake pan well and cook until shells open (1-2 minutes).

- 3** Remove pan from heat and remove vongole using a slotted spoon. Gently pry open any unopened vongole shells using a blunt knife such as a butter knife. If the meat smells fine, you can use it; otherwise, discard.
 - 4** Remove meat from half the shells, then return meat and remaining vongole to the pan. Add half the bottarga and cook for a further minute.
 - 5** Toss spaghetti in sauce to coat, adding a few tablespoons of reserved pasta water as necessary until a creamy consistency (1-2 minutes). Toss through parsley, remaining oil and bottarga, and serve.
- Note** Bottarga (salted, dried and pressed mullet roe) is available from select fishmongers and delicatessens, or from The Essential Ingredient (essentialingredient.com.au).

Warm spiced berries with balsamic vinegar and goat's curd SERVES 6

“Pairing summer berries with goat's curd makes for a different take on strawberries and cream,” says Pilu. “The addition of balsamic makes the perfect salty sweet combination.”

200 gm caster sugar
100 ml balsamic vinegar
6 star anise
1 cinnamon quill
2 bay leaves
250 gm raspberries
250 gm blueberries
500 gm strawberries
GOAT'S CURD
500 gm organic goat's curd
130 gm icing sugar
Finely grated zest of 1 lemon

1 Add sugar and vinegar to a saucepan over low heat and stir until sugar dissolves. Add spices and bay leaves and heat until flavours develop (2-3 minutes). Stir in berries, then set aside to cool.
2 For goat's curd, whisk ingredients in a bowl to combine.
3 To serve, add 2 tbsp berry mixture, then 1 tbsp curd in glasses in alternate layers, finishing with a layer of berry mixture. ●

Berries Glass (on left) from Maison Balzac. All other props stylist's own.
Sardines Plate (bottom) from Batch Ceramics. All other props stylist's own.
Vongole Bowl (bottom) from Batch Ceramics. All other props stylist's own.



Focaccia

This classic olive oil-drenched Italian flatbread is surprisingly simple to make at home. Chef DAVID LOVETT shows us how it's done.

In recent years, Australia (and the world) has fallen back in love with focaccia. The pillowy Italian flatbread makes the perfect starter, side or sandwich base, and celebrates classic Italian flavour combinations through its lavish use of olive oil and toppings such as rosemary, olives and tomatoes. Making it is relatively simple, but imbuing the dough with layers of olive oil is imperative.

“With every touch of the dough you want to add a little bit of olive oil, so you’re essentially just feeding it,” says David Lovett, chef at Ethel Food Store in Brunswick Heads, NSW, and a self-confessed focaccia nerd. Adding the oil slowly ensures that the dough remains moist and light.

Toppings to try

- Finely sliced chat potatoes and rosemary (about 3 chat potatoes and picked leaves from 2 rosemary sprigs).
- Sage or rosemary (leaves from 2 bunches of sage, roughly torn, or picked leaves from 5 rosemary sprigs).
- Chopped potato skins – they crisp up beautifully.
- Halved peaches, plums, grapes or figs and a sprinkling of fennel seeds – perfect served with a cheese platter.
- Pitted cherries or blueberries, dusted with 3-4 tbsp raw sugar – a great dessert to serve with cream.



Step by step

1 Combine 350ml tepid water with 10gm dried yeast and 10gm caster sugar in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook and mix to combine. Add 500gm (3⅓ cups) sifted plain flour and 2 tsp fine sea salt, then mix, scraping down sides occasionally to incorporate all the flour, until a sticky dough forms (8-10 minutes; see tip).

2 To make one large focaccia, oil a 15cm x 25cm x 3cm-deep tray and dust with semolina. Scrape dough into prepared tray with a pastry scraper or rubber spatula.

3 Rub 1 tbsp olive oil over dough ball and set aside to prove until doubled in size (20-30 minutes; the warmer and more humid the room, the quicker it will prove).

4 Stretch dough to fill the tray (it should be soft and pillowy; be gentle to keep as much air in the dough as possible). Using both hands, lift dough from underneath and gently pull and stretch it lengthways, then sideways. If it doesn’t quite reach the edges, that’s fine; as it proves the second time, it will expand further.

5 To make individual focaccia, as pictured opposite, divide dough into 85gm balls and place on prepared tray. Use your fingertips to pat into 1cm-thick rounds. Apply a small amount of olive oil to coat.

6 Preheat oven to 240°C. Drizzle 1½ tbsp olive oil over dough and leave to prove for 10-15 minutes. Using both your hands, make deep indents in the dough with your fingertips (and maybe some big air bubbles, too), then drizzle over

1½ tbsp oil. Set aside to prove for a further 10-12 minutes.

7 Add 250gm halved cherry tomatoes and 2 tsp rosemary leaves, and press into dough slightly. Drizzle over 1½ tbsp olive oil and set aside to prove until dough is just popping over the edge of tray and oil is about to overflow. (If using a tray with different dimensions, aim for the dough to be about 3cm deep.)

8 Season generously with 2-3 tsp salt flakes (for a savoury focaccia). Bake until deep golden and focaccia sounds hollow when tapped on the bottom of the tray (12-15 minutes). Add one final drizzle of oil as soon as focaccia comes out of the oven, then rest in tray for 5 minutes. Turn out on a wire rack to cool for 20-30 minutes, then serve. ●

Tip:

You can also knead the dough by hand on a very lightly floured surface, working it until the flour is incorporated (about 12-15 minutes). Also, remember this is a wet dough, so be careful not to add more flour than the recipe calls for at the kneading stage.

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Eggs in purgatory

Shakshuka's Italian cousin makes for a hell of a good meal any time of the day.

Somewhere between heaven and the underworld lies purgatory, a hellish place of limbo where, it would seem, Italians make delicious baked eggs. Said to represent souls seeking purification, eggs are baked atop a rich, red tomato sauce, symbolising the flames of hell, and finished with a generous dusting of parmesan cheese. Known in Italian as uova in purgatorio, it's traditionally enjoyed for dinner, but is also ideal for brunch or lunch, too.

THE SPICES

The difference between shakshuka and eggs in purgatory is all in the spice. Where shakshuka uses North African and Middle Eastern seasonings such as cumin, cayenne pepper and paprika, the Mediterranean version calls for garlic, salt and dried chilli flakes. Some recipes throw in fresh herbs such as parsley or basil for added flavour.

THE SAUCE

Tomatoes are synonymous with Italian cooking and form the base of this rich sauce. Simmered in a skillet over medium heat, these juicy fruits give this dish its flavour. The question is: fresh or canned? Make your own sugo when tomatoes are at their best, or go for canned when they're out of season. To amplify the fragrant flavours of the tomatoes, season the sauce well with salt.

THE CHEESE

When it comes to the cheese, parmesan or pecorino is the only way to go. Added to the sauce during the simmering process, or used as a garnish, it brings an extra savoury kick to this Neapolitan classic.

THE EGGS

The eggs are cracked into the skillet of red tomato sauce, covered with a lid, and left to cook until the whites are set. The key is not to overcook the eggs – the yolks should remain golden and runny.



Find
it

Sydney's Bel & Brio serves this dish Sicilian-style, adding pork-and-fennel sausages, kale and potatoes. Storia on Queen in Brisbane tops off its version with basil, and serves it with toasted sourdough on the side.

THE ITALIAN PANTRY

Olive oil, passata, pasta, sardines and more. With these staples on hand, it's hard to go wrong with the classics.



Passata

If you don't happen to have a free day (and an ample tomato harvest) to gather the family to make and bottle your own, then this rich, cooked tomato concentrate is the next best thing. Produced in Italy, it makes the perfect base for a simple pizza or pasta dish. *Tomato Passata*, \$10.50 for 690gm, simonjohnson.com

Balsamic vinegar

Hailing from the Emilia-Romagna region of northern Italy, balsamic is the go-to dressing ingredient for a radicchio or rocket salad. *Ponte Vecchio Balsamic Vinegar of Modena*, \$27.95 for 250ml, davidjones.com

Italian olives

These Taggiasche pitted olives are brined and stored in extra-virgin olive oil. Serve them as an antipasto, scattered on a pizza or pressed into focaccia (see p60). *Sommariva Black Pitted Olives*, \$20.75 for 180gm, simonjohnson.com

Risotto rice

Favoured in Venetian cooking, Vialone Nano is a semi-fino rice with an unpolished oval-shaped grain. Its starchy exterior helps to create risotto's creamy texture. *Ferron Vialone Nano IGP rice*, \$13.90 for 1kg, enoteca.com.au

Polenta

Air-dried yellow corn is stoneground to produce a coarse "Bramata"-style grain, which is the perfect foil for rich ragù or pasta sauces. *Moretti Polenta Bramata*, \$5.20 for 500gm, enoteca.com.au



Tomato paste

This double-concentrated paste was the first product introduced by the Fratelli Mutti company in 1899. Use it as a rich flavour base for stocks and braises. *Mutti Tomato Paste Double Concentrate*, \$2.49 for 130gm, harrisfarm.com.au

Canned tomatoes

Celebrate summer tomatoes all year long with these whole and chopped tinned staples. *Mutti Pelati*, \$1.99 for 400gm & *Mutti Polpa*, \$1.69 for 400gm, harrisfarm.com.au

Pasta sauce

Tomatoes, olives, anchovies, capers, garlic, parsley and chilli make the perfect puttanesca sauce to always have on hand. *Simon Johnson Pasta Sauce with Olives & Anchovies*, \$10.50 for 530gm, simonjohnson.com

Dried pasta

With good-quality dried pasta in the pantry, you'll never go hungry. *David Jones Spaghetti*, \$5.95 for 500gm, davidjones.com; *Simon Johnson Organic Giant Fusilli*, \$8.50 for 500gm, simonjohnson.com

Olive oil

This cold-pressed, unfiltered extra-virgin oil is made with olives from the Molise region in Italy's south. *Colonna Amphora Extra-Virgin Olive Oil*, \$57.25 for 750ml, simonjohnson.com

Tinned sardines

Wild-caught *Clupea Pilchardus* sardines are fished from the Mediterranean and preserved in olive oil. *Sardine Pollastrini di Anzio*, \$9 for 100gm, gippslandcheese.com.au

Salt

This sea salt is gathered from naturally occurring basins on the coastline of western Sicily. *Sicilian Sea Salt*, \$6.95 for 500gm, essentialingredient.com.au ●

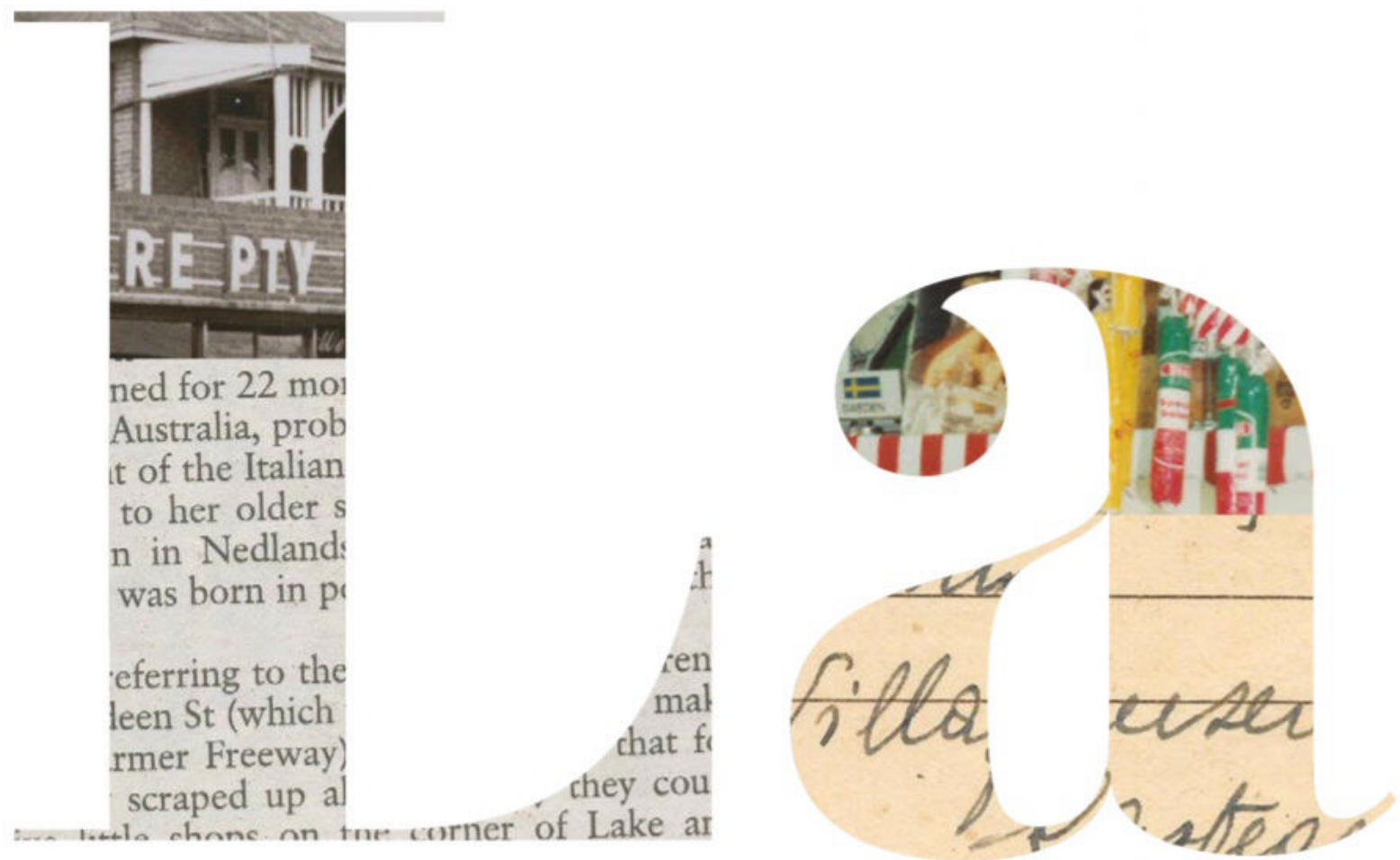


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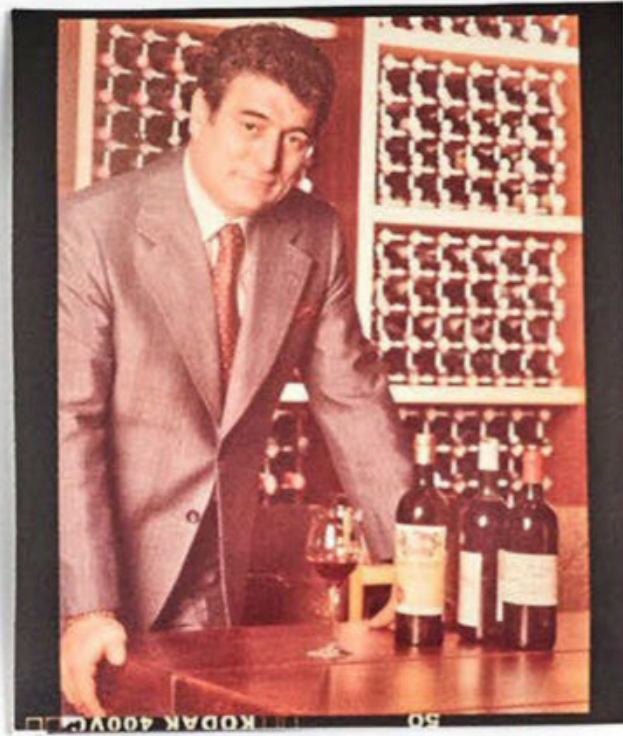
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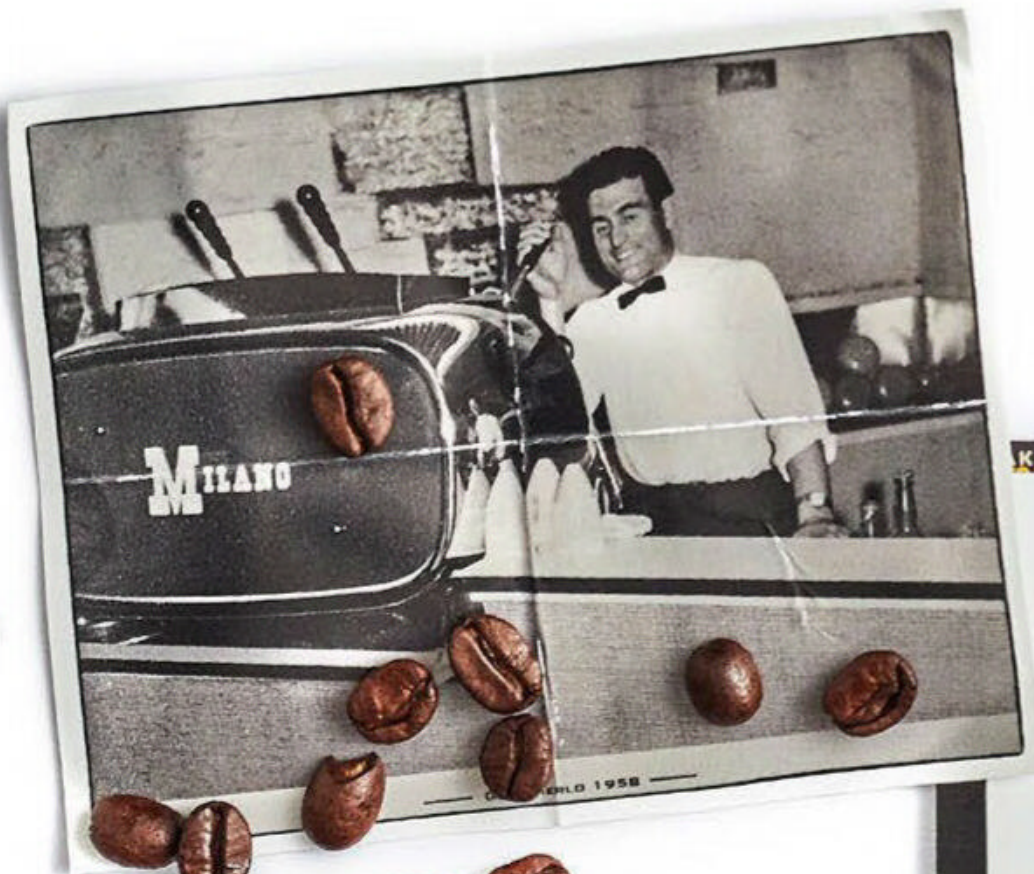
Italian emigration has played a central role in shaping Australia's culinary landscape. We meet three families who have brought a taste of Italy to our national palate.

salma

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“They had to fly a technician up from Sydney to service the La San Marco espresso machine.”



Clockwise from top left: Dean Merlo with his father, Gino Luigi; Gino in the Milano wine cellar; Luciano Luigi outside his trattoria, Merlo's; Gino at work, posing for a portrait, and behind the coffee machine in 1958.

Queensland

THE MERLO FAMILY

by Fiona Donnelly

For many people in Queensland, the Merlo name has become synonymous with coffee. Twenty-eight years after

founding his Brisbane-based café and wholesaling business, Dean Merlo's Merlo Coffee remains independently owned, with 16 stores and 10 torrefazione (roasteries), supplying more than 1500 cafés and restaurants nationally.

But the family's steadily expanding coffee empire is just the latest instalment. The Merlo family legacy stretches back to the 1950s, and the arrival of Luigi Merlo from Italy. It's a history encompassing everything from hand-built guesthouses and groundbreaking espresso bars, to a Brisbane fine-diner which ended up playing host to everyone, from prime ministers to Pope John Paul II and Queen Elizabeth II.

Luigi Merlo was one of tens of thousands of Italian migrants who came to Australia in the grim aftermath of World War II. In 1950, he gambled everything to start a new life on the other side of the world, saying goodbye to his wife and family, and his small trattoria in Tirano near the Swiss-Italian border, setting out for a job cutting sugarcane in Queensland.

The contrast between Mackay and Tirano would have been stark. Yet, by the following year, Luigi Merlo was settled enough to send for Maria and their sons, Gino, Luciano and Gian Luigi.

A decade later, Luigi Merlo's eldest son, Gino, would be frothing cappuccino, presiding over the bustling basement café Milano on Brisbane's Queen Street – a stepping stone to his ownership of Milano, one of the state's first contemporary silver-service restaurants.

The family's push into hospitality was a family affair. Gino's brothers, Luciano and Gian, were on the payroll at both eateries, before Luciano later opened his own inner-city trattoria, Merlo's.

Luigi Merlo's grandson (and Gino's son), Dean Merlo, fought hard to achieve his wins in the coffee world, but he applauds his forebears as truly inspirational grafters.

"I met a man who lived opposite them in Mackay who couldn't believe how hard my family worked," he says. "Within a year, they'd built a guesthouse. My grandfather would get up at 3am and they'd start cutting at 4.30am or 5am and be finished by lunchtime. Then, they'd come home and start building. My grandmother would make the bricks in the morning and they'd lay them in the afternoon."

In the cane off-season, Gino worked at the luxury Hayman Island resort, an experience that opened his eyes to the finer side of food and beverage, sparking his hospitality ambitions.

By 1958, Gino had married and headed for Brisbane. His parents soon followed, buying a boarding house in inner-city West End. And so the scene was set.

Gino's café Milano on Brisbane's main shopping thoroughfare not only had novel treats like handmade gelato and a Carpigiani ice-cream maker, it housed the state's first La San Marco

espresso machine, introducing many to coffee, Italian-style. "We believe it was the first espresso machine in Queensland," says Dean. "They had to fly a technician up from Sydney to service it."

The café menu was simple but tasty – toasted sandwiches, soups, scaloppini. A confection called "a mozzarella" was a big hit. It looked familiar enough to be safe, but featured two ingredients many Brisbanites had not yet encountered – rich Italian ragù and mozzarella.

"It was a thick piece of bread covered with Bolognese sauce and a slice of mozzarella over the top, heated in an oven," says Dean. "It was bloody delicious. We never actually said it was Bolognese. People would just taste it and they'd really love it."

In 1969, the café's landlords took back the lease, which spurred Gino to think even bigger.

Stylish Milano launched in 1970 on the first floor of 78 Queen Street. It was designed by Robin Gibson, the celebrated Brisbane architect behind projects such as the Queensland Art Gallery and Queensland Cultural Centre at South Bank.

With a 37,000-bottle wine cellar, a chef imported from Germany, and glamorous silver-service, Milano was unique, particularly for the calibre of its floor staff.

"These were professionals – career waiters who could speak five languages, carry eight plates and triple their wages with tips every week," says Dean. The food was rich and European, featuring French and Italian influences. The menu rarely changed, offering lobster mornay, steak au poivre, tournedos Rossini and the like. Petits fours came with a cloud of dry ice.

Gino's friendship with wine guru Len Evans and his membership of Evans' legendary Single Bottle Club meant Milano became a notable venue for wine and tastings, another point of difference for a Queensland restaurant.

"You couldn't believe the wine – at one lunch they did a vertical Château d'Yquem tasting across 12 years," recalls Dean, who worked the floor after school and while studying for his law degree.

At 50, Gino retired. It was expected Dean would take over Milano, but instead the restaurant was sold in 1985 and closed a few years later. When Dean returned to Brisbane in 1992 after travels in the US and Europe, he opened Bar Merlo at 344 Queen Street – not far from where his dad had first opened café Milano.

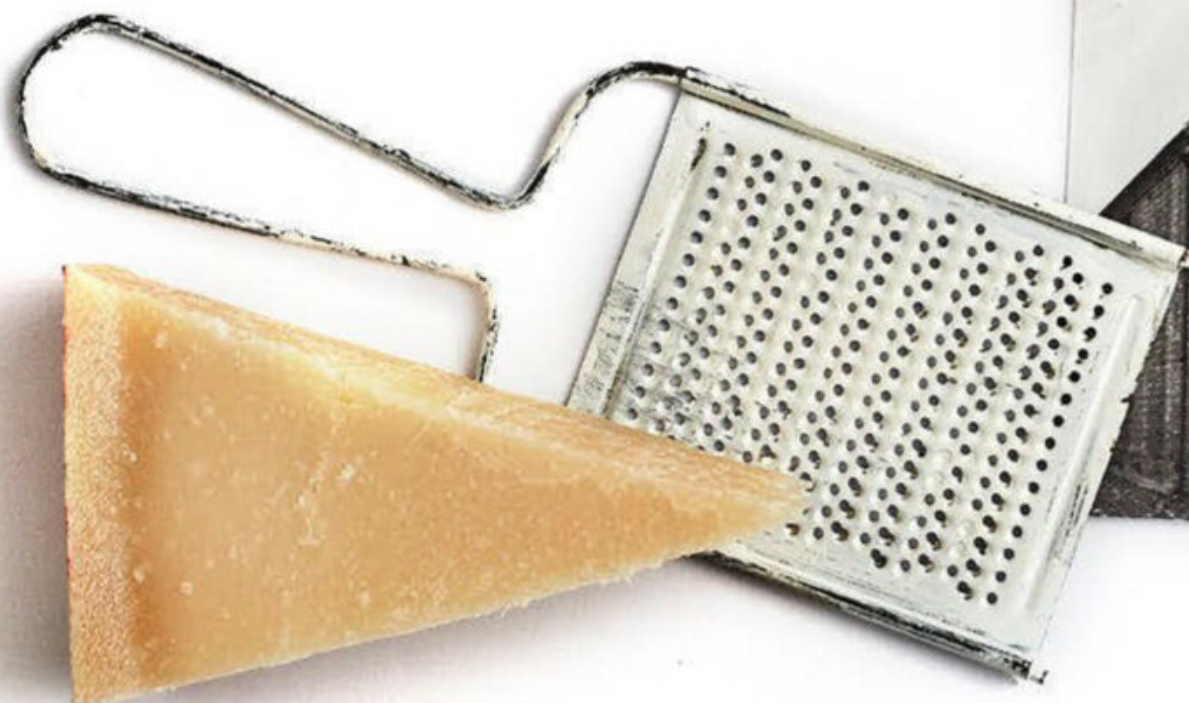
"It was exactly the right thing, at the right time, in the right location," says Dean. "And really, it's never taken a backward step." You can't help thinking his grandfather would have approved.

Merlo Coffee is sold at multiple locations, merlo.com.au ►

"I met a man in Mackay who couldn't believe how hard they worked. Within a year they'd built a guesthouse."



Clockwise from top left: Carlo Valmorbida's passport; La Gina tinned tomatoes; a postcard from Italy to Carlo; scenes from Agostino & Co; King & Godfree; Sirena tinned tuna; Carlo Valmorbida; Agostino & Co; parmesan cheese.



Victoria

THE VALMORBIDA FAMILY

by Lisa Marie Corso

Carlo Valmorbida is remembered as a family man, business owner and one of Melbourne's Italian food pioneers, but his story starts in Northern Italy, where he was a racing driver.

He was a decent one, too, competing in Italy's historic Mille Miglia rally. Carlo knew when to shift gears, take his foot off the pedal and make split-second decisions that paid off – instincts that guided him through life and business off the race track.

He wanted desperately to pursue life on the track, but the wake of World War II led him to think practically. His hometown, Valli del Pasubio in Italy's north, was left ravaged and he needed to earn a sustainable living. He was looking for opportunity and immigrated to Melbourne in December 1949.

Carlo didn't entirely leave his hot-lap dreams behind, however; he came to Australia with a plan. "My grandfather's ambition when he was young was to buy a racing car. He was going to save up the money here, then move back to Italy," says Luca Sbardella, who, along with his cousin, Jamie Valmorbida, are the third generation of Valmorbidas to run Carlton's longstanding Italian food and wine precinct, King & Godfree.

Shortly after arriving in Melbourne, Carlo got a job working as a storeman at the Italian food store Agostino & Co on Swanston Street in Carlton. Alongside the original owner, Frank

Agostino, Carlo helped expand the business, as the demand for Italian food grew as more Italians settled in Melbourne.

"Within a year, there were lines out the door and they started doing home deliveries," explains Jamie. "But they couldn't keep up, and it got to the point where my grandfather wanted to start his own business."

Frank Agostino was getting older and wanted to leave his store in reliable hands. In 1951, he invited Carlo and his brothers to buy him out. By 1954, the Valmorbida brothers had started importing and wholesaling Italian food, including olive oil, Parmigiano-Reggiano, mozzarella, pasta and canned tuna and tomatoes, to the Melbourne community.

"They weren't only supplying Italians, but also Australians," says Jamie. "In the early days, my grandfather would go round to other non-Italian stores and leave a piece of parmesan cheese at their door for free so they could try it, because he was confident they would like it and then want to buy it."



Within a year of arriving in Melbourne, Carlo met his future wife Elsie and was married. “It’s really sweet,” says Luca. “She was teaching him English and at a dance he wrote her a note that said, ‘Here’s one free dance for my beautiful English teacher’.” Elsie still has the handwritten note 70 years later.

They had three children, John, Paul and Luisa, and planned to relocate their family to Italy once they’d saved enough money. In 1955, they purchased King & Godfree in Carlton. It sold Kosher items, but, as the Jewish community moved to the south and eastern suburbs, and more Italians settled in the area, Carlo and Elsie changed its direction to service the neighbourhood.

Eventually, they raised the capital to relocate to Italy in 1960, but when Carlo returned home, something felt off. “He was a man stuck between two countries and realised he really missed Australia and the life they’d created for themselves,” says Luca.

Carlo and Elsie shifted gears and, in November 1960, the family was back in Melbourne. Knowing he was staying for good this time, Carlo was on a mission to represent Italy as best he could by accurately replicating as many of his favourite foods that he’d left behind and introducing them to a new audience.

“He was a man stuck between two countries and realised he really missed Australia and the life they’d created.”

“He started producing and manufacturing Italian food in Melbourne,” says Jamie. He bottled wine, pickled vegetables and made sausages and cheeses, and, with his brothers, started food brands including La Gina canned tomatoes and Sirena tuna. In the 1970s, he introduced Lavazza coffee to the Australian market.

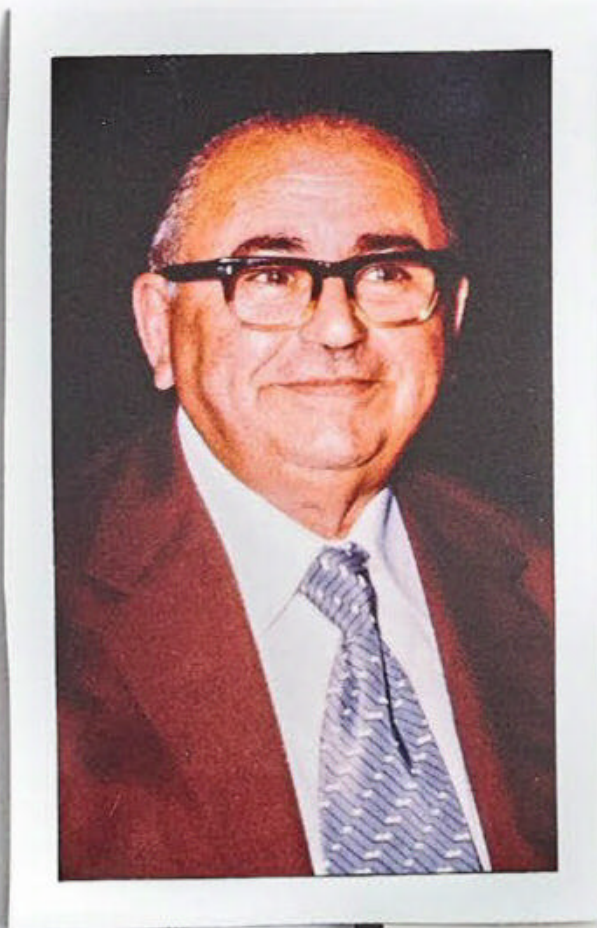
“Our grandparents worked really hard in the shop during the day and did deliveries at night,” says Luca.

Carlo worked until the mid-1990s and the children, who had always had a hand, stepped up to run the business. Carlo passed away in 2010, but King & Godfree remains a family business 65 years later. Jamie and Luca redeveloped the heritage-listed site in 2018.

It includes King & Godfree espresso bar and deli, rooftop bar Johnny’s Green Room, gelateria Pidapipo (run by Lisa Valmorbida) and wine bar Agostino – a nod to Carlo’s first business.

“We wanted it to be a celebration of what we love about Italian food, wine and culture, while respecting the community and our grandparents’ vision,” says Jamie. “We live by their motto that hard work and common sense pay off.”

King & Godfree, 293-297 Lygon St, Carlton, Vic, (03) 9347 1619, kingandgodfree.com ►



Clockwise from top left: John Re; labels of oils distributed by The Re Store; The Re Store in Northbridge; a wine menu from The Re Store; sun-dried tomatoes; a Farnese wine label.



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Western Australia

THE RE FAMILY

by Max Veenhuizen

Born in Fremantle but raised in an Italian household, John Re's destiny as fixer between Europe and Australia almost seems preordained.

The third-eldest of 10 brothers, Re worked in his Sicilian father Giuseppe's food-importing business before striking out on his own to open a no-name Northbridge fruit-and-veg shop with his wife, Maria, in 1929. After seven years of serving the area, the Re family – aided by the proceeds of pawning Maria's engagement ring – relocated to bigger premises on the corner of Lake and Aberdeen streets and opened The Re Store.

While fresh fruit and vegetables remained a major part of the business, the expansion allowed the Res to diversify their offering, starting by importing new products to cater to the area's growing, predominantly European, population. Many of these new arrivals were also Italian, so pasta, olive oil and proper parmesan cheese were, unsurprisingly, among the goods the Res brought to Perth.

Less expected, however, was the way that non-Italians (gradually) embraced these products. Balsamic vinegar would eventually share cupboard space with "typical" vinegar varieties like white and brown. Jars of good-quality sun-dried tomatoes and pickled eggplants were available for curious eaters whose families weren't already making their own.

Over the years, the range grew to include non-Italian cheeses such as brie, camembert and Emmental, which, for the most part, many customers had never tried before.

Acquainting people to the pleasures of the European table remains integral to The Re Store experience, both at the Northbridge mothership and its West Leederville spin-off, originally opened in 1952, but relocated in the early 1970s after the original store was demolished to make way for the construction of the Mitchell Freeway.

"I always feel Perth is a great multicultural society because the population was never that big," says Moreno Berti, the Re's grandson and, with brother Lorenzo and sister Maria Milani, part of the family's third-generation group of owners.

"You were forced to be friends with all different nationalities because you couldn't just keep to being Italian or Greek. When I first went to Melbourne, the thing I thought was weird was seeing Italians only hanging out with Italians. Different groups weren't mixing. Because the communities were so small in Perth, you had to."

Although John learned the ropes about food importing from his father, he was also blessed with a strong entrepreneurial

streak. Throughout his career, he sold cooking oils and tinned goods under successful house brands (and, for good measure, came up with label and artwork concepts). On a date that's since been lost to history, the Res gave Perth its first taste of the continental roll. Consisting of cold cuts, cheese, salad and condiments crammed into a white roll, it's the west's answer to regional American-Italian sandwiches such as the hoagie, hero and muffuletta.

This creative thinking wasn't just limited to foodstuffs, either, with the Res also having influenced Perth's drinks scene. The original 1936 expansion allowed the Res to begin roasting coffee beans using a small Probat roaster purchased from England. These early experiments led to the establishment of Braziliano, the state's first coffee brand and a gateway to European-style coffee for Western Australians. "To get to the café culture we have now, it was a long, hard slog," says Moreno.

The Res also played key roles in changing the state's attitudes to drinking. When the second, licensed, store opened in Leederville, its airy, family-friendly setting was a marked departure from the seedy liquor stores that dominated the market during the 1950s. Farnese wines – another Re brand, this time named after the municipality north-west of Rome – introduced many Western Australians to the idea that wine could be an enjoyable part of day-to-day life. At a time when wine options were more or less limited to bulk wines or expensive premium bottles, the idea of being able to take home well-priced white wines, sherry or Renmark special red was a game-changer. The source of the wines, incidentally, were German winemakers whom Re had met when he interned at South Australia's Loveday, a detention camp for European interns during World War II. (John's incarceration, however, meant Maria had to run the shop and raise their young family by herself.)

Yet for all this pioneering spirit, Moreno is uncomfortable making any absolute claims about what his grandparents and those before him brought to Perth's communal dining table.

"They saw an opportunity," says Moreno. "If it hadn't been them, then it would have been someone else. We were just the ones who recognised it at the time and we managed to help introduce some gourmet goods to the public."

The Re Store, 72 Lake St, Northbridge, WA, (08) 9328 1877; 231 Oxford St, West Leederville, WA, (08) 9444 9644. ●

**"I always feel
Perth is a great
multicultural
society because
the population
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that big."**

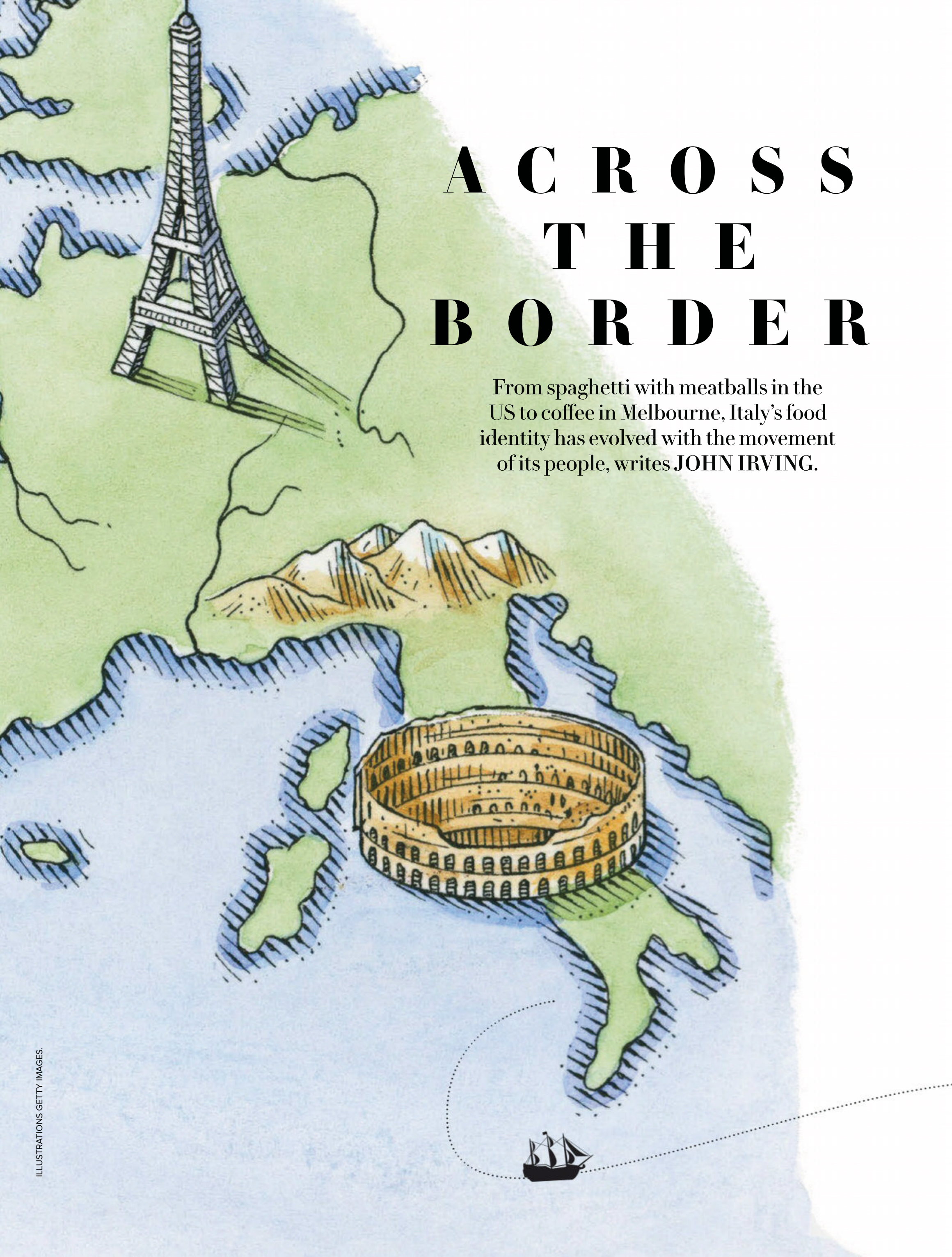
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A C R O S S T H E B O R D E R

From spaghetti with meatballs in the US to coffee in Melbourne, Italy's food identity has evolved with the movement of its people, writes JOHN IRVING.

When Pellegrino Artusi published his cookbook *La Scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiare bene* (Science in the Kitchen and the Art of Eating Well) in 1891, Italy had only

been unified politically for 30 years. His aim was to unify the country gastronomically by collecting its regional recipes. His readership was urban, middle-class and literate, but even as he wrote – and for different reasons – food was also on the minds of other Italians. Namely the peasants who, victims of a nationwide agrarian crisis, were fleeing the country to seek fortune across Europe and beyond. They might as well have been from a different planet.

Between 1876 and 1914, about eight million Italians sailed to “La Merica” – not so much a geographical entity as a dream of a better life. It was their hunger that shaped the popular image of Italian food worldwide. Their wonder at the abundance they found on reaching their destinations transpires from their letters home. “Here everyone, from the richest to the poorest, eats meat, bread and soup every day,” wrote one new Venetian arrival in Argentina.

Regional and family ties and shared skills made some emigrants stick together. As author Primo Levi wrote, “Anywhere in the world, you’ll find a Neapolitan making pizza and a man from Biella building walls.” In Peron and Fremantle in Western Australia, Sicilians and Pugliese established themselves as lobster fishermen. Queensland received the inhabitants of the village of Conzano in Piedmont, who emigrated there to work as cane cutters in the sugar plantations. Today menus at the functions of the Piemonteis Association of Queensland feature dishes such as lingua con bagnet (calf’s tongue with parsley sauce) and friciulin

To underscore their newfound prosperity, Italian communities in the USA added extra oomph to their dishes. Hence spaghetti with meatballs, fettuccine Alfredo and chicken parmesan.

dos (sweet semolina fritters) whose names are incomprehensible to Italians from other regions. They still “eat in dialect”.

Other emigrants adapted to local demand. People from Barga in northern Tuscany monopolised the fish-and-chips business in Western Scotland (families who have since returned to the small town now stage an annual “Pesce e patate” festival). In London, Italian restaurateurs catered for the tastes of their British clientele. The speciality of Isola Bella, established in 1923, was suprême de poulard, while La Famiglia offered “French cuisine with Italian names”.

Little Italies popped up everywhere from Manhattan in New York City to Boca, the port district of Buenos Aires, and, later, Lygon Street in Melbourne. To the outsider these neighbourhoods

appeared homogeneous, but inside they were babels of different dialects. “What do we have in Little Italy if not a number of villages?” asked the migration historian Amy Bernardy in 1911.

Through interaction at street markets, food shops and eateries, enclaves coalesced. At the table diversity produced uniformity in a culinary model based on P-words universally identified with Italy: pasta, pizza, parmesan, prosciutto. Not to mention pomodoro and peperoncino, which had originated

in the Americas anyway, proof of the fact that the evolution of food identity is nothing if not a conversation between cultures.

To underscore their newfound prosperity, Italian communities in the USA added extra oomph to their dishes with local high-protein ingredients. Hence hybrid recipes such as spaghetti with meatballs,



fettuccine Alfredo and chicken parmesan. Not dishes that an Italian would recognise, let alone eat, but now mainstays of the world's idea of Italian food.

Pasta is arguably the foodstuff that best evokes the idea of Italianità, Italianism. Its consumption abroad became a badge of "diversity". Locals stereotyped Italian newcomers derisively as "macaroni", but ended up instilling in them a sense of national as opposed to regional origin.

The postwar years, Italians left their devastated nation in their hordes in a second major exodus. Many settled in Britain, where their arrival coincided with that of the Gaggia coffee machine, invented in Milan in 1947. Coffee bars sprang up in bombed-out city centres as the Brits fell in love with the cappuccino, and trattorias with chequered tablecloths proliferated in London's Soho. In 1954, while Kingsley Amis was pooh-poohing spaghetti as "coagulated flour-and-water" in his comic novel *Lucky Jim*,

Elizabeth David was introducing the public to "real" Italian country cooking with her classic *Italian Food*.

Cucina povera became fashionable, deserving of serious interest, and even polenta, a symbol of rural poverty gained star-billing on restaurant menus. More recently, non-Italian TV cooks like Nigella Lawson and Jamie Oliver have romanticised Italian food with a surfeit of colour and peasant chic. "A land of mammas and nonnas," is how John Dickie, author of the Italian food-history book *Delizia!*, describes Oliver's vision.

The food-and-wine writer Matthew Fort fears fallout on restaurants in Italy itself. "Tourists bring the experience of Italian food that they've enjoyed in their homelands," he told me. "This bears little resemblance to the true food of Italy. Increasing numbers of chefs and restaurateurs are giving up the struggle to preserve the purity of local dishes, and give the tourist-customers what they want – the Italian food they have in their home country." ●

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Dear Italy...

Four writers recall the moment they lost their hearts to Italy – and the regions that stole them.

A love letter to... **BASILICATA**

By Nicky Pellegrino

This place isn't mine but I feel like I belong to it. A pale-pink house with its back to bare-ridged mountains and its face turned towards the sea. Green lizards lazing on warm rocks, bougainvillea rioting over a pergola, a shingle beach at the end of the garden.

It took me a while to fall in love with Basilicata. At first it was only the little pink house that drew me back thanks to the cousin who has kindly let me have it whenever I asked. But year after year I kept returning until eventually there was nowhere else I would rather be.

Basilicata lies in the south of Italy, the instep between the toe and the heel of this boot-shaped country. It doesn't have the showy appeal of other better-known regions; not the swagger of Naples, the riches of Florence or Rome, the romance of Venice. This is a land touched by poverty. It is a place of scarred beauty.

My corner of Basilicata is the Costa di Maratea, a short stretch of rocky coastline that nudges Calabria at its southern end. Around the coast there is a road made of hairpin bends with dizzying views across the Tyrrhenian Sea. A road that leads down to a small harbour with a cluster of seafood restaurants, with fishing boats moored alongside sleek yachts and old men sitting beneath trees, playing card games on summer evenings. A road that veers upwards to Maratea itself, a hilltop town of steep, narrow lanes and 44 churches, some dating back to the 15th century.

High above, on the peak of Monte San Biagio, is a giant statue of Christ the Redeemer, 21 dramatic metres of reinforced concrete and marble, standing with its arms stretched wide. Illuminated at night this tall, white figure seems to hover over the small town.

Admittedly there isn't a lot to do in this part of Basilicata. Perhaps a kayak tour through the sea caves or a visit to the Grotta delle Meraviglie, a cavern beneath the coast road that is filled with limestone columns and stalactites. There isn't much in the way of shopping either, a few artisan linens and bright ceramics to buy.

Mostly in Basilicata we try to live like locals. Drink a coffee in the piazza, take a stroll for a gelato, buy wild asparagus and baby artichokes from trucks at the roadside, cook a bit, eat a lot.

The food here hasn't strayed too far from tradition. There is lots of Lucanica pork sausage, waxy caciocavallo cheese, meat from the large-horned Podolica cattle that graze the mountains with bells around their necks, the smoky sweetness of dried, crushed Senise peppers scattered over almost anything, from seafood to pasta dishes. All to be enjoyed with the local wine, Aglianico del Vulturno, a peppery earthy red and then chased with a glass of the digestion-enhancing herbal liquor Amaro Lucano.

My life has been punctuated by visits to Basilicata. I celebrated my 40th birthday here and my 20th wedding anniversary. Years ago it felt as if no one else had discovered this stretch of southern Italy, now it's not as rare to hear other foreign voices.

Part of the reason for that is the town of Matera, famous for its sassi, the cave homes that were once squalid, cramped places and have now been transformed into atmospheric hotels – my pick is Sextantio Le Grotte Della Civita where you can dine by candlelight in a deconsecrated rock church. Matera is an experience like no other, to be there feels like walking through history. But with scenes from the latest Bond film shot in its historic centre, it is only going to get more populated and fabulous. It already has Basilicata's only current Michelin-starred restaurant, Vitantonio Lombardo.

The Costa di Maratea is almost three hours' drive away from all of that action and here life moves slowly and quietly, nothing seems to change much. I was young and living in England the first time I visited. Now I'm middle-aged and based on the other side of the world. But I will always find reasons to return to this place that never tried too hard to win my heart but won it anyway. ►

A love letter to...
FLORENCE

by Emiko Davies

It was October 2001, two weeks shy of my 21st birthday. I was headed to Florence from Providence, Rhode Island, where I was doing my bachelor's degree in Fine Art, to spend a semester in an Italian printmaking studio. I had just a suitcase and a few Italian lessons behind me. I had no idea where I would stay the night, let alone live for the next few months, but a cheap bed in a villa run by nuns did the trick, and I scoured expat hangouts for handmade signs advertising rooms for rent until I found a warm, quirky share-apartment near Santa Croce. When I first walked in and saw three smiling girls from Mexico, Chile and Denmark cooking in the kitchen together, I knew it was the place for me.

It rained a lot – it was autumn and November is a historically significant month for floods – but even the cold, wet days couldn't dampen my enthusiasm about absolutely everything around me. Yes, I was there for the art and the history, but I found just about any reason to fall in love with Florence, and ultimately it was the little things that I found so exquisitely irresistible. The reflections of palazzi in deep puddles of uneven pavement. Cappuccini made by a white-moustachioed, bow-tied barista. Sticky-bottomed cornetti pumped with still-warm pastry cream, handed over at the back door of a bustling, unmarked bakery in the wee hours of the morning. The twinkling, curly street lights in Piazza Santa Croce at night-time as I walked home. During the Sunday market, the old couple in Piazza Santo Spirito that very slowly make necci, warm chestnut flour crêpes rolled up with sheep's-milk ricotta and wrapped in paper. Little round glasses of red wine that warm the cheeks after getting caught in the pouring rain. Learning how to appreciate unsalted, stale Tuscan bread.

I was besotted with Florence after that beautiful, wet autumn, so a few years later I came back to experience the city in all the other seasons and found even more ways to fall in love with it all over again (and this time around, a handsome Tuscan sommelier was involved; his presence

contributed to my Florentine love affair, and I later married him inside the red tapestry-draped room of Palazzo Vecchio).

A warm, steaming panino of boiled lampredotto, abomasum tripe, dripping with salsa verde and chilli, eaten on the street as a mid-morning snack. Boiled chestnuts dipped in red wine. Fabulous elderly signore dressed in their best floor-length fur coats for an afternoon passeggiata under the city's Christmas lights. A mission to try the ribollita, a wintry cavolo nero, bean and stale bread soup, in every trattoria. Discovering white truffles on a humble fried egg. The chill of mid-February brightened up with sweet (usually deep-fried) things dusted in sugar.

The sight of long-stemmed pointed Tuscan artichokes spilling out of their crates at the market and watching the hills around Florence come to life with spring colours. The creamiest fresh ricotta ever. Broad bean pods in a basket to peel and eat raw with pecorino while waiting on pasta. Easter holidays, feasting, fireworks. Wisteria perfuming unexpected places.

Seriously good tomatoes and Saturn peaches that make sweltering, humid summers, crowds and mosquitoes all worth it. Ripe melon layered with prosciutto as an entire meal, and alternating that with panzanella salad for months. Gelato more than once a day. Aperitivo. Long days with late-night strolls along the river and rooftop bars to cool off. Small, green, jammy Tuscan figs and wild porcini (sometimes with a few undesirable tenants in them). Succumbing to schiacciata all'uva, sweet focaccia made with wine grapes, seeds and all, at any Florentine bakery in September. Ruby-tinted new wine and then new olive oil, just pressed, sludgy and impossibly green, on toasted Tuscan bread with a pinch of salt (the best snack ever invented), signalling autumn.

I could not bear to leave and kept finding excuses to stay longer to do it all over again. That year seems to have turned into 15 – and I still have not tired of falling in love with Florence every season. ►

I found just about any reason to fall in love with Florence, and ultimately it was the little things that I found so exquisitely irresistible.



A love letter to...

BRESCIA

By Joanna Savill

The Italians call it “seconda casa”. Australians would call it a weekender, a holiday house, or maybe just our place... in the country, up the coast, in Provence, or where the family came from in Greece, Croatia or Sicily.

But I’ll go with the Italian expression. In my case, my second home is a lesser-known northern city called Brescia and a small apartment in Garda Bresciano, the western shores of nearby Lake Garda.

Not far from Milan, the capital of the Lombardy region, Brescia is a surprising city with an extraordinary history. Etruscans, Romans, the Venetians and of course, the Lombards were here. The living legacy of these great cultures and civilisations can be seen in Brescia’s UNESCO World Heritage-listed Santa Giulia complex and the nearby Roman capitolium.

This is a place of pasta, rice and polenta, cheeses, soft and sharp, from the surrounding mountains, butter (and plenty of it), game meats, lake fish, porcini in autumn, excellent wine and some of Italy’s most acclaimed chefs, restaurants and food artisans. And my Italian-now-Australian husband... hence the connection.

As mass tourism engulfs Italy from heel and toe right up to its boot straps, there’s much to be said for finding your own little corner to explore, away from the backpacks, selfie sticks and pizza, pasta and gelato-frenzied hordes. That said, Brescia has great pizza. At La Cascina dei Saporì in the small town of Rezzato, *New Pizza* champion Antonio Pappalardo slow ferments stoneground flour from his mixes of ancient grains to make light, airy bases, topping them with seasonal vegetables, and creatively combined meats and cheeses.

(Pappalardo has worked with Sydney’s Stefano Manfredi, also originally from Brescia, on Manfredi’s Pizzaperta restaurants.)

Pasta? A no-brainer: in any trattoria across Brescia, you’ll find casoncelli – fresh egg pasta “caskets” wrapping a meat, breadcrumb and parmesan mix or a filling of piquant local Bagoss cheese, both versions dressed with burnt butter and sage.

And some of the best gelato I’ve ever tasted (and believe me, it’s a regular pastime) comes from a modern gelateria in suburban Brescia called Bedussi.

Beyond the city, Brescia’s playground is its provincia, the almost 5000-square-kilometre administrative region surrounding it, which takes in three key landforms: mountain, lake and plain.

Chief among its lakes is Garda, site of our little apartment, with its Mediterranean microclimate and produce (olive groves, citrus trees and caper bushes), grand 19th-century villas, mountain trails, glorious views and its less-glorious history as the site of Mussolini’s Italian Social Republic – the Nazi puppet state established in the final throes of World War II.

To spend time there is a source of great pleasure: lake swims, mountain walks, pebble-beach afternoons, meals of fish with bigoli (fat, house-made spaghetti) at the trattoria over the way, alpine cheeses, freshwater sardines from the fisherman’s stall in the square, spiedo bresciano ready-roasted from the butcher’s (a mix of meats spit-roasted with butter and sage) to serve on polenta taragna – yellow cornmeal darkened with grains of buckwheat.

And always, if not a Pirlo (Brescia’s Spritz), a local Lugana or Garda Classico, there’s a glass of Franciacorta, Italy’s answer to Champagne, made on the mineral-rich soils by Lake Iseo next door. At the base of the Franciacorta hills, at the Osteria della Villetta in Palazzolo sull’Oglio, I’m happy to have every local produce-focused course with una bollicina (literally “bubbles”).

Which brings me to the plains... la pianura, la bassa bresciana, the lowlands and pastures of the Po Valley running down towards other Lombardy provincial centres like Mantua – notable for the three-starred Dal Pescatore run by the hospitable Nadia Santini and family.

Another favourite is Crema – the provincial town chosen by director Luca Guadagnino as the location for his film, *Call Me by Your Name*, which also featured Lake Garda’s Sirmione.

This is another Lombardy, winding along the Po river and its tributaries to the Emilia-Romagna region.

In Emilia-Romagna, you’ll find many more places

of my heart: Bologna, where I first lived in Italy as a student, a city nicknamed “the red, the fat, the learned” for its communist and anti-fascist past, its Lambrusco, mortadella, tortellini, bomboloni and tagliatelle al ragù, and its ancient university.

There’s Ferrara with elderly ladies in fur coats riding their bicycles in the piazza. And Parma, which gave the world prosciutto di Parma and Parmigiano-Reggiano.

And finally, there’s Modena, home to the finest aged balsamic and the marvellous Massimo Bottura and his brilliant wife Lara Gilmore... But that would be another (Italian) story. ►

**This is a place of some of
Italy’s most acclaimed chefs,
restaurants and food artisans.**

A love letter to...

LANGHE

By David Prior

Mention Piedmont's Langhe region to a lover of food and wine, and watch their eyes go as misty as the region's ever-present fog. "At the foot of the mountain" is the literal translation of Piedmont, Italy's most north-western region. Hemmed on three sides by a razor ridge, with the Swiss and French Alps to the north and west, and Liguria to the south, it is these isolating yet incubating barriers that make the region an anomaly. Piedmont is a cradle and at the heart of it are the hills and valleys called the Langhe, the terroir of Italy's most nuanced wines (think Barolo, Barbaresco). It's where you'll find Italy's gastronomic holy grail, home to some of the country's finest osterias, and the region's legendary white truffles.

It is also the place where I had my coming of age. In the early 2000s, post-high school, I moved from Brisbane to Sydney and bounced around working in cafés. From there I fell into helping out on photo shoots for magazines (including this one). Magazines were something I had collected as a teen and it was through their pages I travelled the world. It was on one of those shoots that a couple of chefs talked about a "university of food and wine" that had just opened in Italy. A Google search revealed it to be at a castle in Piedmont, set among rolling hills cross-hatched with vineyards. With little to lose, I wrote to the faculty and applied for a scholarship. By a miracle a few weeks later, I was living in the charming town of Bra, embarking on a degree in Gastronomic Science.

When I first moved to Piedmont, it was not on the traveller's map as it is now. Turin, its capital, was considered to be a kind of European Detroit, and the region itself lacked the postcard familiarity of Italy's centre, the sophistication of the north, and the sun-soaked chaos of the south. It was an unusual dichotomy of faded regal elegance and industry. But it was also the home of a storied food culture, albeit one that remained enigmatic, and nowhere more so than the Langhe.

Even entering the region before the roads wind into the hills, there is a kind of foreboding talisman of its insulated nature: a bombed-out bridge from

the Savoy era with arched gateways on either side, and a ghost of a crossing over the Tenero River.

Bra is often referred to as the Gateway of the Langhe. It's the kind of town that has a raw-milk vending machine, and it's no surprise that it is at the centre of the Slow Food movement. It felt like I was living at the edge of a gastronomically enchanted forest.

It was there that I spent weekends exploring. Prying open the doors of cantinas whose structured Barolos are so sought after and their winemaking secrets so secret that they had little interest in tourists, especially students. Ticking off a list of family-run restaurants who each had a take on regional pastas such as yolk-enriched tajarin, agnolotti del plin (a meat-stuffed bundle) or gnocchi al Castelmagno with a sauce like besciamella but made solely of the rare, cave-ripened blue cheese.

We'd shop at markets for regional oddities like hunchback cardoons, the conical-shaped peperone di Carmagnola, blond onions or bizarre red celery. In every local town, we'd visit butchers, each with different specialities of sausages and cuts: beef from the Piedmontese cattle, rare chicken breeds. Here, they indulge in serious offal, everything from the cockscomb in the challenging finanzaia to the raw meat dishes that make steak tartare seem pedestrian.

Mornings were spent in cafés with bicerin, a traditional drink from Turin made of chocolate, coffee and cream. Then there are the pasticcerie making all manner of delicate pastries, a legacy from the French regal times. Almost everything sweet comes from the almond, cherry, walnut and hazelnut groves that hem the local vineyards. Marron glacé, and gianduja, the heavenly union of hazelnut and chocolate, both hail from here.

And finally, come autumn, there's the fun of hunting one of nature's joys, tartufo bianco, the white truffle. It's the perfect metaphor for the region: elusive and enchanting, coveted and elegant yet inherently earthy. Something that needs to be experienced in situ. The hunt began for me in the Langhe, and the taste will never leave my mouth. ●

A scenic view of a hillside. In the foreground, a lush green vineyard with rows of grapevines stretches across the slope. Behind the vineyard, a cluster of white houses with red-tiled roofs is nestled. In the background, a hillside rises, topped by a town with a prominent tower. The scene is bathed in the warm, golden light of a sunset or sunrise, creating a hazy, atmospheric effect.

The white truffle is the perfect metaphor for the region: elusive and enchanting, coveted and elegant yet inherently earthy.

Brodetto has come a long way from its humble beginnings as a fisherman's stew, writes **JOHN IRVING**. Today, variations on the traditional staple dot Italy's Adriatic coast.



Recipe LISA FEATHERBY

Photography NIC GOSSAGE

Catch of the day

Brodetto

p91

Styling LYNSEY FRYERS



Housed on the ground floor of an anonymous building in an anonymous suburb of the fishing port of Fano in Italy's Marche region, Maria Tena's brilliant seafood restaurant, unimaginatively named Da Maria, doesn't look like a restaurant at all. Outside, the only clue to its identity is a nondescript sign over the door saying "Bar Trattoria – Pesce Fresco." If it weren't cluttered with the esoteric wood, glass and metal sculptures of Maria's daughter, Domenica, the interior – a single room with pink-and-white-tiled walls, a few tables and a bar counter – would be no less modest. The place seems an unlikely sanctuary for a piscine pilgrimage but I, like other devotees, make a point of eating there whenever I'm passing through.

It's Domenica who answers the phone when one calls to book. Her tone is always apologetic and she speaks as if she's reading from a script. "We only serve fish but today's catch was nothing special and we haven't much to offer. Ma se vi accontentate..." Loosely translated, that means, "Come if you're prepared to make do with what we've got." She repeats the same litany every time but I know from experience that Maria, a tiny woman in a tiny kitchen – three gas rings, a few earthenware pots, a grill and a granite worktop – is sure to rustle up something special. That something is often brodetto, the fish stew of the Adriatic.

Brodetto (variously known, depending on dialect, as brodeto, boreto, broeto, brudèt, vredòtte, vrudàtte or bredette) originated among fishermen who would cook their meals at sea with part of

their catch – small fish of no commercial value or damaged by the nets – and the few condiments available on board. Close relatives of the fish stews of the Tyrrhenian to the west – Provençal bouillabaisse, Ligurian buridda, Tuscan cacciucco – from which they differ for their thicker texture, multifarious takes on brodetto dot Italy's eastern Adriatic coast, from Trieste in Friuli-Venezia Giulia to Vasto in Abruzzo.

As early as the 16th century, the proto-celebrity chef Bartolomeo Scappi declared himself a fan. "Fishermen from Chioggia and Venice make better stews than in any other coastal area," he wrote in his *Opera*, one of the first Italian recipe collections. "I believe fishermen are abler with fish than cooks," he added, "because they cook it as soon as they catch it."

Five centuries on, Maria echoes Scappi's words. "If fish isn't fresh, alive even, I send it back to the harbour. I wouldn't even give it to the cat." Now approaching 90, Maria has been cooking fish for over half a century, ever since she came down from her village in the hills near Urbino to marry a Fano fisherman. For her, freshness isn't just a trite cliché, it's part of her culinary technique.

The brodetti of the northern Adriatic tend to feature single species of fish, not only from the sea but also from the area's lagoons and rivers. In *Opera*, Scappi provides a recipe for rombo in pottaggio, turbot stew, that lives on today in the form of boreto a la graisana, a speciality of Grado; east of Venice, brodeto de gò is made only with gobies; the chief ingredient in the brodeto polesano of the Po delta is eel; and in Ravenna's brodetto alla ravennate, mantis shrimps and cuttlefish prevail.

It's in Maria's Marche that the most colourful, variegated brodetti are to be found, and in Fano itself there's an Accademia del Brodetto, founded by a group of restaurateurs and academics to codify the different recipes. From Gabicce in the north of the region to San Benedetto del Tronto in the south, fishing villages and ports run into one another and it's difficult to tell where one ends and the next begins. But each has its own version of brodetto and locals swear that theirs is the real McCoy in

**Five centuries on, Maria echoes Scappi's words.
"If fish isn't fresh, alive even, I send it back to
the harbour. I wouldn't even give it to the cat."**



PREVIOUS PAGES
Left: Fishing rods on
the pier in Fano, Italy.

Brodetto Pietra
Chalon tile from
Surface Gallery (used
throughout). All other
props stylist's own.



open displays of that very Italian sense of fierce local pride, campanilismo (literally, an attachment to the bell tower of one's place of birth). In Ancona, which once rivalled Venice as an Adriatic seafaring power, I remember seeing two old-timers almost coming to blows in an argument over their respective recipes.

As a rule of thumb, from Ancona northwards brodetto is made with 13 types of fish (any permutation of the likes of scorpion fish, monkfish, greater weever, sole, red mullet, turbot, hake, John Dory, grey mullet, skate, octopus, squid, scampi, king prawn and razor-shell), supposedly one for each of the participants at the Last Supper, tomato and a splash of vinegar, whereas southwards it contains nine types, which are rolled in flour to thicken the stew. In Porto Recanati, they eschew tomato and add saffron, which gives a lovely golden colour, but in San Benedetto del Tronto they enrich their vrudette with green peppers and tomatoes, a reminder of the days in which vegetables were boarded on boats to add vitamins to the fishermen's diet, and masa, a mixture of water and vinegar, with which they quenched their thirst (captains being loath to let them drink wine on the job). Another "southern" usage that begins roughly in San Benedetto and spills over into Abruzzo is the addition of peperoncino.

Ultimately, though, brodetto is a classic case of a dish that came into being as a way of making virtue of necessity. Which is why a friend of mine, the Marche food-and-wine writer Antonio Attorre, likens it to a jazz standard, a theme open to infinite variations, and also why, albeit following a guiding thread, no two brodetti are alike.

Back in Fano, Maria's interpretation is simplicity itself. In a closely observed ritual and with perfect timing, she plops the fish she happens to have at hand in order of firmness of flesh and size – and according to season – into a light soffritto, finely chopped onion and parsley softened in extra-virgin olive oil in one of her earthenware pots. She then pours over them a sauce of strained fish stock, tomato and more onion and parsley. A splash of white wine vinegar and all that remains is to leave the stew to simmer for an hour or so over the smouldering embers of the charcoal grill. "That's all there is to it," says Maria. "The brodetto cooks itself."

The resulting flavour is the sum of the parts, elemental with all the fleshy sweetness of marine life, bearing out the pronouncement of Domenica, who's an Eastern philosophy buff and talks like Confucius. "A good brodetto shouldn't taste of fish, it should taste of the sea." ●



Brodetto

**SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 20 MINS //
COOK 2 HRS 15 MINS (PLUS SOAKING)**

Here, we've sourced local, sustainable Australian seafood. Pictured p89.

- 1 kg whole white-fleshed fish (about 2 fish), such as yellowfin bream**
- 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- 1 small fennel bulb, coarsely chopped, plus fennel fronds, torn, to serve**
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped**
- 1 garlic clove, thinly sliced**
- 150 ml dry white wine**
- 400 gm canned crushed tomatoes**
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar**
- 400 gm black mussels, scrubbed, debearded**
- 200 gm clams, soaked in cold water for 15 minutes**
- 8 raw prawns**
- 1 calamari, cleaned, thinly sliced**
- Crusty bread, to serve**

1 Remove heads from fish and reserve. Remove fillets from fish, cut flesh into 5cm pieces and refrigerate until required. Reserve bones.

2 Coarsely chop fish heads and bones and add to a

saucepan. Cover completely with water and bring to the boil over medium-high heat, skimming surface, then reduce heat to low and simmer until stock has a good fishy flavour (1 hour). Strain and reserve.

3 Heat oil in a saucepan over low-medium heat, add fennel, onion and garlic, and cook until very tender (20-30 minutes). Increase heat to high, add wine and simmer (5 minutes). Add tomato, vinegar and 600ml stock (or enough to create a thin sauce), bring to a simmer over medium-high heat and simmer until well flavoured (25-35 minutes). Pass through a mouli or blend until fine, and strain through a sieve into a clean saucepan.

4 Bring to a simmer over medium heat. Add mussels and clams, cover, and cook until they start to open (2 minutes). Remove shellfish and set aside. Bring back to a simmer over medium heat, add fish and poach (1 minute), then add prawns and calamari, and cook until seafood is cooked (2-3 minutes). Return shellfish to the pan and stir gently. Season to taste, drizzle with oil, top with fennel fronds and serve with crusty bread.

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Freshly picked

From urban laneways to the green valleys of the Wairarapa, Wellington's breweries and distilleries are flush with innovation and history.

Ben Shewry's affection for Wellington's wine and brewing scene is keenly felt. In 2018 he embarked on a collaboration with the Garage Project and Attica to create Bliss, a craft brew with branding inspired by artist Ross Murray's own '80s backyard barbecue memories. For Shewry, Bliss was a great opportunity not only to innovate but also to share Garage Project's pioneering approach with Australians. Calling on a range of artists and illustrators, the Project's brews and wines are as recognisable for their branding as for their award-winning flavours. Their creators, meanwhile, who were among Wellington's original craft brewers, still work from a converted disused garage in the hillside suburb of Te Aro. For Shewry, Garage Project is symbolic of the flush of taprooms, micro-breweries and distilleries that are revolutionising Wellington's dining scene.

Reid + Reid

Brothers Nick and Chris Reid have perfected a range of gins based on native New Zealand botanicals, using experience gained in their years in the winemaking game. Produced in a shed on their parents' property, it's well worth a try. Their vermouth is on its game too. reidandreid.co.nz

Parrot dog

Just metres from Lyall Bay, Parrot dog brewery is setting new benchmarks for Wellington craft brewers – and worth seeking out. Stop in for bistro food and 15 beers on tap or drop into the Nice takeaway shop for complimentary tastings and takeaways. parrotdog.co.nz

Lighthouse Gin

Set in the picturesque Martinborough district (just over an hour's drive from Wellington) is a tiny distillery with New Zealand's first female gin maker, Rachel Hall, at the helm. Lighthouse Gin reflects both the area's entrepreneurial spirit and Hall's hard work, right down to the local Yen Ben lemons used in distilling – which Hall zests herself. Taste it in Martinborough village at Wine Bank. lighthousegin.co.nz

See more of Ben Shewry's Wellington trip at gourmettraveller.com.au



Reid + Reid Gin.
Clockwise from below:
Wharekauhau Country
Estate, a seasonal dish by
Marc Soper, Ben Shewry
in Martinborough.



STAY



Wharekauhau Escape

The first thing that strikes you about Wharekauhau Country Estate is the sheer privacy and remote location of the Palliser Bay property. Make no mistake, this is no ordinary lodge. While its unpretentious styling and welcoming staff make you feel like you're staying at a sprawling family estate, the service and outstanding food and wine confirm Wharekauhau's status as one of New Zealand's outstanding luxury lodges. Executive Chef Marc Soper teams up with local producers to offer seasonal delicacies including Big Glory Bay salmon, juicy citrus and even local kelp, and draws on the lodge's own kitchen garden for the freshest asparagus, beets and greens. Wharekauhau offers guests a brilliant taste of the region's bountiful produce. wharekauhau.co.nz

— MARCH —

FOOD

Buon appetito!

Italian autumn dishes, recipes from Fico in Hobart, wine-bar dining, and classic Venetian desserts.

Squid-ink spaghetti with crab, chilli and tomato

p118

As summer draws to an end it's time to
use up the last of those beautiful tomatoes
and leafy herbs, and create dishes that
celebrate the changing of the seasons.

Recipes LISA FEATHERBY

Italian

Photography ALICIA TAYLOR

accents

Styling LUCY TWEED





Rocket and
parsley pasta
dough

p102

**Insalata
of tomato,
mozzarella
and basil with
anchovies**



**Melon and
mint sorbetto
with lonza**



Insalata & sorbetto
All props stylist's own.
PREVIOUS PAGES
Left: Background
painted in half-
strength wood
smoke, chalk now,
and Irish linen interno
lime washes all by
Porter's Paints (used
throughout). All other
props stylist's own.





Insalata of tomato, mozzarella and basil with anchovies

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 15 MINS

When you're only using a few ingredients, it's important to use the best you can find. For this insalata, bring everything to room temperature before serving to maximise the flavours. You could also toss through torn day-old bread to make it more substantial.

- 
- 1 kg best-quality mixed green and red tomatoes, coarsely chopped or sliced
 - 2 mozzarella (about 250gm each), preferably buffalo milk, torn
 - Extra-virgin olive oil, for drizzling
 - Large handful of basil leaves, to serve
 - Splash of red wine vinegar, to serve
 - Good-quality anchovy fillets (such as Ortiz), torn, and crusty bread, to serve

- 1 Arrange tomatoes and mozzarella on a serving plate. Dress generously with oil and season to taste. Set aside for 1-2 minutes.
- 2 Scatter basil over salad, add a splash of vinegar and serve with anchovies and crusty bread.

Try swapping out the tomatoes for ripe peaches in the insalata – they make a beautiful variation on this salad.

●

Melon and mint sorbetto with lonza

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 20 MINS // COOK 5 MINS (PLUS COOLING, FREEZING)

You could serve this sorbet as a dessert on its own, but here, we've paired it with sliced cured meat for a fresh take on the classic melon and mint starter.

Thinly sliced lonza (see note) and mint, to serve

MELON AND MINT SORBETTO

- 100 gm caster sugar
- 100 gm liquid glucose
- 1 honeydew melon (about 1kg), 500gm flesh coarsely chopped for sorbet, remainder finely sliced, to serve

1 Bring sugar, glucose and 200ml water to the boil in a saucepan, stirring to dissolve, then set aside to cool completely. Blend melon in a blender or food processor until a smooth purée. Add syrup, stir to combine, then strain mixture through a fine sieve. Churn in an ice-cream machine, then freeze until required. Sorbetto is best served the day it's made.

2 Arrange sliced melon on plates, top with scoops of sorbetto and scatter over mint. Season to taste and serve with lonza.

Note Lonza, Italian salt-cured pork loin, is available from select delicatessens. If unavailable, substitute prosciutto such as San Daniele. ►



Egg-drop soup

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 25 MINS // COOK 2 HRS 5 MINS (PLUS COOLING)

The beauty of this simple dish is making your chicken stock from scratch. Another way of finishing it would be to add a variety of herbs, such as basil or tarragon, and serving each bowl of soup with a poached egg. While the fried shallots aren't a traditional element, we like the depth of flavour and texture they bring.

- 6 eggs**
- Large handful of flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped, to serve**
- Finely grated parmesan, to serve**
- CHICKEN STOCK**
- 1 chicken carcass**
- 40 gm piece pancetta**
- 1 onion, coarsely chopped**
- 1 fresh bay leaf**
- 2 celery stalks, coarsely chopped**
- FRIED SHALLOTS**
- 60 ml (¼ cup) olive oil**
- 6 golden shallots, thinly sliced**

- 1** For stock, place ingredients in a large saucepan and cover completely with cold water. Bring to the boil over high heat, skimming scum from surface, then reduce heat to low-medium and simmer until stock is deeply flavoured (1½-2 hours). Set aside in pan to cool. Strain and season to taste. Transfer 5 litres stock to a clean saucepan (freeze remainder for another use).
- 2** Meanwhile, for fried shallots, heat oil in a small saucepan over medium-high heat to 160°C. Fry shallots, in 2 batches, stirring occasionally, until crisp and

golden (2-3 minutes). Drain in a metal sieve. Reserve shallots and oil separately (drizzle a little oil over soup to serve or reserve for another use).

3 Bring stock to a simmer over medium heat. Whisk eggs in a bowl until combined. Gently stir soup, then gradually drizzle in egg, allowing egg to set into little clouds or streaks through the soup (the key is to not overstir the eggs).

4 To serve, divide soup among bowls, scatter over parsley and parmesan and fried shallots.



Egg-drop soup All props stylist's own.
Linguine All props stylist's own.

Linguine with green sauce

SERVES 4-6 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 20 MINS (PLUS RESTING, COOLING)

While we absolutely love a classic pesto sauce, we've varied it here by using walnuts and adding blanched spinach. The spinach gives this pasta a real boost of fresh flavour and a bright, verdant appearance.

PASTA DOUGH

400 gm "00" flour

4 small eggs

GREEN SAUCE

25 gm (¼ cup) walnuts, plus extra coarsely chopped walnuts to serve

1 bunch English spinach

1 large bunch basil, plus extra leaves to serve

1 handful mint leaves

2 tbsp finely grated parmesan, plus extra to serve

80 ml (⅓ cup) extra-virgin olive oil

1 For pasta dough, combine flour, eggs and 2 tsp cold water in a food processor and process until crumbs start to form, then turn out onto a floured surface and knead until smooth and elastic (5 minutes). Cover and set aside to rest (20 minutes).

2 For sauce, preheat oven to 150°C. Roast walnuts on a tray until golden (5-7 minutes). Cool, then coarsely chop.

3 Meanwhile, blanch spinach, basil and mint in a large saucepan of boiling water until bright green (10-20 seconds). Remove with a slotted spoon and refresh in iced water (reserve pan with water for pasta). Drain and squeeze out excess water.

4 Blend spinach, basil, mint, parmesan, oil and walnuts in a blender until smooth.

5 Divide pasta dough into 6 pieces. Working with one piece at a time, flatten, then roll through a pasta machine, starting at the widest setting and dusting with flour as necessary. Fold in half and repeat until pasta is smooth and silky, then continue rolling and folding, reducing the settings notch by notch, until dough is 2mm thick. Set sheets aside on a lightly floured tray to rest (20 minutes), then roll up and thinly slice into 5mm widths.

6 Bring reserved pan of water back to the boil over high heat and season to taste with salt, then cook pasta until al dente (2-3 minutes). Drain, reserving 250ml pasta water.

7 Add pasta and sauce back to pan and stir well to combine. Toss pasta and extra pasta water, if needed, until pasta is well coated in sauce. To serve, top pasta with parmesan, walnuts and basil. ►





Lamb cutlets with salsa verde

Green ravioli with pecorino and butter sauce

MAKES 12 RAVIOLI // PREP TIME 30 MINS // COOK 10 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

When making your own pasta, it's worth keeping the sauce simple and letting the pasta be the hero. If you can't find fresh pecorino, use an equal amount of well-drained ricotta mixed with grated ricotta salata or aged pecorino. Rocket and parsley pasta dough pictured p97.

- 200 gm fresh pecorino (see note), coarsely grated
- 1 egg, lightly whisked, for eggwash
- 100 gm butter
- 3 tsp thyme leaves
- 50 ml dry white wine
- Purslane and thyme sprigs, to serve
- Shaved aged pecorino, to serve
- ROCKET AND PARSLEY PASTA DOUGH
- 2 bunches rocket, trimmed
- 1 cup (firmly packed) flat-leaf parsley
- 510 gm "00" flour
- 1 egg

1 For pasta dough, blanch rocket and parsley in a saucepan of boiling water until bright green (1 minute). Drain and refresh in iced water, then squeeze out excess water. Transfer to a food processor and process until finely chopped. Add flour and egg, and process until a dough forms. Transfer to a floured surface and knead until smooth, adding extra flour or water as necessary, to form a smooth dough. Cover with a damp cloth and set aside to rest (30 minutes).

2 Line a tray with baking paper. Divide pasta dough into 6 pieces. Working with one piece at a time, flatten, then roll through a pasta machine, starting on the widest setting and dusting with flour as necessary. Fold in half and repeat until pasta is smooth and silky, then continue rolling and folding, reducing the settings

notch by notch, until dough is 1-2mm thick. Cut out squares with an 8cm-square cutter and place on prepared tray. Repeat with each piece of dough, separating each layer of squares with a sheet of baking paper and covering with a damp tea towel until all dough is rolled and cut.

3 Working in batches, place half the pasta squares in a row and place 1 heaped tsp fresh pecorino into centre of each. Brush edges with eggwash, then place another square on top. Starting closely around filling, press outwards to seal completely, then trim to a 7cm square with a pasta cutter. Place on a tray lined with baking paper, separating each layer with more baking paper, then refrigerate until required.

4 Heat butter in a wide deep frying pan over high heat. Add thyme leaves and toss to combine until tender (2 minutes). Add white wine and bring to a simmer, then season to taste.

5 Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until just cooked (2-3 minutes). Remove with a slotted spoon and add to pan with sauce, tossing gently to coat in the sauce.

6 To serve, divide ravioli among bowls, spoon over butter sauce, and top with purslane, thyme and aged pecorino.

Note Fresh pecorino is available from select Italian cheese shops and delicatessens.

Lamb cutlets with salsa verde

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 20 MINS // COOK 6 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

Salsa verde (literally, "green sauce") is a ubiquitous condiment in Italian cooking. It's simply herbs pounded with garlic, anchovies, vinegar and olive oil, and adds a flavour punch to any dish. It's particularly good with grilled meats and fish. You can just use parsley, but we've added oregano for extra flavour.

- 12 lamb cutlets, French-trimmed
- Olive oil, for brushing
- ½ tsp finely ground fennel seeds
- ½ tsp finely ground black pepper
- Baked potatoes or crusty Italian bread (optional), to serve
- SALSA VERDE
- 1 cup (firmly packed) flat-leaf parsley, coarsely chopped
- 2 tbsp coarsely chopped oregano
- 2 garlic cloves, coarsely chopped
- 2 tsp baby capers in vinegar, rinsed
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 2 anchovy fillets
- 1 tsp white wine vinegar
- 60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil

1 For salsa verde, pound all ingredients (except oil) with a large mortar and pestle to a coarse paste. Add oil and stir to combine, then season to taste.

2 Preheat a barbecue to high or a char-grill pan over high heat. Brush lamb with oil, rub with fennel seeds, and season to taste. Barbecue lamb, turning halfway, until cooked to medium-rare (2-3 minutes each side). Set aside to rest in a warm place (5 minutes).

3 Serve lamb with salsa verde and baked potatoes or crusty Italian bread. ●



When making your own
pasta, it's worth keeping the
sauce simple and letting
the pasta be the hero.

Green ravioli
with pecorino
and butter sauce

Lamb & ravioli All
props stylist's own.



Recipes **FEDERICA ANDRISANI & OSKAR ROSSI**

Words **MICHAEL HARDEN**

Photography **ALICIA TAYLOR**

Styling **JERRIE-JOY REDMAN-LLOYD**

Drink suggestions **PHILLIP POUSSART**

Under the Tasmanian sun

At Meadowbank vineyard in the Derwent Valley,
chefs **FEDERICA ANDRISANI** and **OSKAR ROSSI**
of Hobart's Fico prepare a leisurely lunch for friends.



One of the great strengths of Federica Andrisani and Oskar Rossi's cooking is their ability to distil multiple influences into simple, direct flavours. At Fico, their Hobart restaurant, they combine Andrisani's Italian heritage, her time working at Michelin-starred restaurants in Italy, and Rossi's experience working in Italy and at restaurants like Vue de Monde with a shared passion for Tasmanian produce to original, delicious effect.

The recipes they've created for this issue reflect those influences but with a homespun approach, perfect for a Sunday lunch, in this case with their friends in the Meadowbank vineyard, just outside of Hobart in the Derwent Valley.

"We wanted it to be really simple food, something like you'd eat in a vineyard in Tuscany," says Andrisani. "The inspiration is from my background – the pizza frita is something you'd eat in Naples. It's about using local products like the green tomatoes and zucchini flowers, so the recipes are seasonal, something you can cook at home and something like my mum would make."

"It's definitely a menu for the home chef in that it's simpler than the way we cook at Fico," says Rossi. "But it's still Fico food that reflects our particular journey."

So what exactly is "Fico food"? "It's not easy to describe the style," says Andrisani. "It's very much our food with a strong identity – it comes from our different cultures, our families and our experience. But the landscape and the ingredients of Tasmania have a huge influence, too."

One of the challenges – and some would say advantages – of cooking in Tasmania is that the supply chain for ingredients can be volatile. Mussels might be available at the beginning of the week but not by its end because of bad weather, and the supply of vegetables is strictly seasonal. It makes for nimble chefs.

"You have to have a winning format for a dish to be successful, but here, it also has to be interchangeable for what is available on the day," says Rossi. So, if mussels aren't available for the pasta, they might use sea urchin or octopus or clams. Same goes for the summer truffles accompanying the carne cruda.

"You can get a similar nutty flavour by slicing button or Swiss brown mushrooms really thinly on a mandoline and then dressing them with lemon juice and olive oil," says Rossi.

"It's how my family cooked," says Andrisani. "Using what was the best on the day."

Fico, 151 Macquarie St, Hobart, Tas, (03) 6245 3391, ficosfco.net

Grilled sardine skewers with pine-nut sauce and onion dressing

SERVES 6 // PREP TIME 30 MINS // COOK 6 HRS 50 MINS

"The ingredients in this dish are a classic combination from southern Italy, where an early-morning trip to the fish markets will yield the best sardines," says Federica Andrisani. "We like to skewer the fish because it allows for more controlled cooking, so the centre is just warmed through and not overcooked."

Pictured p109.

- 18 sardine fillets (about 350gm), halved lengthways**
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil**
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed**
- 2 tbsp marjoram leaves, and fried shallots, to serve**
- ONION DRESSING**
- 1 kg onions, halved**
- 100 gm currants**
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil**

- PINE-NUT SAUCE**
- 100 gm pine nuts**
- 100 ml milk**
- 50 ml grapeseed oil**

1 For onion dressing, preheat oven to 110°C. Place onion in a casserole with 2 litres water or enough to cover, then cover and bake until tender (5-6 hours).

Strain liquid (discard onion), then transfer to a saucepan over medium heat and cook until reduced to about 100ml and a sweet, sticky caramel forms (35-40 minutes). Dry-roast currants in a frying pan over medium-high heat until lightly roasted (1-2 minutes). Combine currants with onion reduction and oil. Season to taste and cover until required.

2 Roll up sardines, skin-side out, starting from tail end. Thread 6 sardine rolls onto each metal skewer, cover and set aside.

3 For pine-nut sauce, dry-roast pine nuts in a frying pan over medium heat, tossing frequently, until golden (2-3 minutes). Set aside to cool. Blend in a blender with milk until smooth, then

gradually add oil in a thin, steady stream until smooth. Season to taste with salt.

4 Preheat a barbecue, preferably charcoal, to high or a non-stick frying pan over high heat. Combine oil and garlic in a bowl, then brush over sardines and season to taste. Grill sardine skewers, turning, until light golden and just warm in the middle (1-2 minutes).

5 To serve, spoon pine-nut sauce on plates then top with sardine skewers. Drizzle over dressing to taste and garnish with marjoram and fried shallots.

Wine suggestion 2017 Le Coste Bianchetto, Lazio, Italy.

Pizza frita with bagna cauda and Parmigiano-Reggiano

SERVES 6-8 // PREP TIME 30 MINS // COOK 30 MINS (PLUS PROVING)

“This recipe reminds me of Napoli,” says Andrisani. “Usually, we eat pizza frita in the street with our hands – it’s one of the best fast foods you can find.” Start this recipe one day ahead to make the poolish (a starter that improves the flavour and texture of the dough).

Canola oil, for deep-frying
Finely grated Parmigiano-Reggiano, to serve
POOLISH

50 gm ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) “00” flour
 $\frac{1}{8}$ tsp dried yeast

PIZZA DOUGH

480 gm “00” flour

1 tsp caster sugar

$\frac{1}{2}$ tsp dried yeast

2 tsp extra-virgin olive oil,
plus extra for greasing

BAGNA CAUDA

160 gm anchovy fillets

1 garlic clove, finely chopped
Finely grated zest and juice
of $\frac{1}{2}$ lemon

100 ml milk

90 ml extra-virgin olive oil

1 For poolish, combine flour, yeast and 50ml water in a small bowl. Cover and refrigerate (overnight).

2 For dough, combine flour, sugar, yeast and poolish in the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook. Gradually incorporate oil and 340ml water on low speed, alternating oil and water, until dough comes together (2-2 $\frac{1}{2}$ minutes). Turn out onto a lightly floured surface and knead until a smooth dough forms (about 5 minutes). Add 1 tsp salt and knead until combined. Form into a ball

and place in an oiled bowl, then cover and set aside to prove in a warm place until doubled in size (1 $\frac{1}{2}$ hours). Divide dough into 24 balls, then set aside on a lightly oiled tray to prove again until light and aerated (20 minutes).

3 Meanwhile, for bagna cauda, blend anchovies, garlic, lemon zest and juice and milk with a hand-held blender until smooth, then gradually add oil in a thin, steady stream and blend until mixture is thick and emulsified.

4 Preheat oil in a large saucepan to 180°C. Roll out dough balls one at a time on a lightly floured surface until 2mm thick. Deep-fry, in batches, carefully spooning oil over so dough puffs up (2-3 minutes; be careful, hot oil will spit). Remove with a slotted spoon and place on a tray lined with paper towel.

5 To serve, spoon a generous amount of bagna cauda onto each pizza frita and top with grated Parmigiano-Reggiano.

Wine suggestion 2019 Meadowbank Harvest Sparkling, Tasmania. ►

“This recipe reminds me of Napoli,” says Andrisani. “It’s one of the best fast foods you can find.”

Pizza frita

Plates from Blue Chapel Pottery. All other props stylist’s own.

PREVIOUS PAGES

Right: Assorted chairs (used throughout) from The Drill Hall Emporium.

PREVIOUS

PAGES Right:

Meadowbank director Mardi Ellis (from left), Fico sous chef Glenn Byrnes, Fico chef and co-owner Federica Andrisani, Meadowbank’s Alex Deane (seated) and Fico chef and co-owner Oskar Rossi.

Opposite: Meadowbank farm and vineyard.

**“This simple dish relies
on only two things:
great-quality beef and
truffles, which we’re lucky
to have in Tasmania,”
says Rossi.**

**Grilled sardine
skewers with
pine-nut sauce
and onion
dressing**

p106





Green tomato carpaccio with goat's curd and lovage

SERVES 6 // PREP TIME 15 MINS

“Green tomatoes are often overlooked, but they have a great crunch and acidity to them,” says Oskar Rossi. “Pairing them with a fresh cheese is perfect.”

- 250 gm fresh goat's curd** (see note)
- 4 large green or under-ripe tomatoes**
- 180 gm mixed heirloom cherry tomatoes**
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil**
- 1 garlic clove, finely sliced**
- 1 small golden shallot, finely chopped**
- 1 lovage sprig, coarsely chopped, to serve**
- Chive tops, to serve**

1 Season curd to taste with salt and pepper. Set aside. Thinly slice green tomatoes into rounds and cut cherry tomatoes variously into halves and quarters.

2 Whisk oil, garlic and shallot in bowl and season to taste.

3 To serve, spread curd thinly over a serving plate. Arrange green tomato slices on top, working from the outside in, then scatter over cherry tomatoes. Spoon over dressing, season to taste and garnish with lovage and chives.

Note Fico uses Tongola “Curdy” goat's curd from Tasmania (tongola.com.au)

Wine suggestion 2017 Foradori Manzoni Bianco, Trentino, Italy.

Carne cruda and summer truffle

SERVES 6 // PREP TIME 10 MINS

“This is a very simple dish that anyone can prepare in minutes. It relies on only two things: great-quality beef and truffles, which we're lucky to have in Tasmania,” says Rossi. “You can adapt the seasonings you add to the beef but be careful not to overpower the delicate flavour of the truffle.”

- 400 gm good-quality beef fillet, such as eye fillet**
- Finely grated zest and juice of ½ lemon**
- ½ bunch chives, finely chopped**
- ½ cup flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped**
- 30 gm salted capers, rinsed**
- 1 garlic clove, finely chopped**
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil**
- 20 gm summer truffle, to serve**
- Warm ciabatta (optional), to serve**

1 Depending on the cut of beef you are using, remove any sinew or large pieces of fat. Finely dice beef and run your knife through it a couple of times (you don't want it to be too fine; it needs to retain some texture). Combine beef in a bowl with remaining ingredients and stir with a fork until well incorporated. Season to taste.

2 To serve, spoon beef onto a platter and form into a round or press beef mixture into a metal ring mould and shape. Finish with a generous shaving of truffle and serve with ciabatta.

Wine suggestion 2017 Cantina Giardino Rosato, Campania, Italy. ►

Carne cruda, carpaccio & skewers Plates from Blue Chapel Pottery. Salt dish from The Drill Hall Emporium. All other props stylist's own.





Chicken alla brace, fresh figs and fig-leaf oil

SERVES 4-6 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 2 HRS 30 MINS (PLUS BRINING, CHILLING, RESTING)

“We use a konro grill to cook the chicken,” says Rossi. “They’re light and portable, and can be fired with either charcoal or natural wood, which is essential to the final flavour of the bird. At Fico, we use pigeons, but chicken also works very well.” Start this recipe one day ahead to brine the chicken and make the fig-leaf oil.

40 gm sea salt

**1 chicken (1.6kg),
butterflied**

**50 ml extra-virgin olive oil,
plus extra for macerating**

4 figs

**1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
Purple basil leaves, to serve
FIG-LEAF OIL**

100 ml grapeseed oil

**8 fig leaves, finely chopped
CHICKEN JUS**

1 kg chicken wings

2 onions, quartered

**1 garlic bulb,
split horizontally
Canola oil, for roasting**

200 ml dry white wine

1 bunch thyme

1 Stir salt and 200ml boiling water in a large bowl until salt dissolves. Add 1.8 litres cold water and refrigerate until chilled (1 hour). Combine brine and chicken in a container just large enough to fit chicken and refrigerate (8 hours or overnight).

2 Meanwhile, for fig-leaf oil, heat oil in a saucepan over medium heat until just hot (1 minute). Place fig leaves in a heatproof bowl, pour over hot oil

and refrigerate (overnight). Strain through a fine sieve into a jug and set aside (discard solids).

3 For jus, preheat oven to 200°C. Roast chicken, onion and garlic in a roasting pan with a little oil until golden brown (40 minutes). Transfer solids to a large saucepan with a slotted spoon, then deglaze roasting pan with wine, scraping base of pan, and add to saucepan. Add 1.5 litres cold water and thyme to pan, then bring to the boil over high heat. Reduce heat to medium and simmer until liquid has reduced to about 250ml (1½ hours). Strain (discard solids), then reduce liquid to a thick sauce (8-10 minutes).

4 Meanwhile, drain chicken and pat dry thoroughly with paper towel. Rub with oil and 1 tsp ground black pepper. Cover and leave at room temperature for 1 hour before cooking.

5 Quarter figs lengthways and place in a bowl. Add balsamic vinegar and a little extra oil, season to taste and stir to combine. Set aside to macerate.

6 Preheat a barbecue to medium-high. Brush excess

marinade from chicken, then grill, skin-side down, until dark golden (5-10 minutes). Turn over and grill until cooked through or when juices run clear when thickest part of thigh is pierced with a skewer (40-45 minutes). Cover and rest in a warm place (30 minutes).

7 Meanwhile, warm figs on barbecue and reheat sauce. Carve chicken and arrange on a serving plate, spoon over warm sauce, top with figs and finish with fig-leaf oil and basil leaves to serve.

Wine suggestion 2019
Meadowbank Gamay, Tasmania.

Chicken Ceramic bowl & sauce pot from Miss Arthur. Pewter plate from The Drill Hall Emporium. All other props stylist’s own.
Saffron tagliolini Plates from Blue Chapel Pottery. All other props stylist’s own.



GT travelled to Tasmania with the kind assistance of Tourism Tasmania (discovertasmania.com.au) and shot at Meadowbank farm and vineyard (meadowbank.com.au).

Saffron tagliolini with mussels, basil and lemon

SERVES 6 // PREP TIME 40 MINS // COOK 15 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

“In this dish, the most important thing is the cooking of the pasta. It’s always better to be a little bit under than over,” says Andrisani. “For pasta dough, you can mix by hand, but we recommend the machine method for a more consistent dough.”

Extra-virgin olive oil, to serve
PASTA DOUGH

500 gm (3⅓ cups) “00” flour

3 eggs, lightly beaten

6 egg yolks, lightly beaten

Semolina, for dusting

MUSSEL SAUCE

1 kg mussels, scrubbed, beards removed

50 ml dry white wine

100 ml extra-virgin olive oil

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

Large pinch of saffron threads

Zest and juice of 2 lemons
½ cup finely chopped basil, plus extra leaves to serve

1 For pasta dough, add flour to the bowl of an electric mixer fitted with a dough hook, and mix, gradually adding eggs, yolks and 20ml water until dough comes together. Turn out onto a lightly floured surface, knead into a ball, then wrap and refrigerate (1 hour).

2 To make tagliolini, cut dough into 4 pieces. Working with one piece at a time, flatten dough so it fits through a pasta machine on its widest setting. Laminate dough by rolling dough four times on widest setting, then folding it over and re-rolling. Roll dough, reducing settings notch by notch and keeping edges square until about 1.5mm thick. Repeat with remaining dough, then cut into 30cm lengths and roll through the fine cutter on pasta machine.

Sprinkle with semolina, divide into 100gm portions, then place on a tray dusted with semolina and refrigerate until required.

3 For mussel sauce, heat a large saucepan over high heat. Add mussels and wine, cover, then cook until mussels have just opened (2-3 minutes). Remove mussels from shells

and reserve (discard shells). Strain cooking liquid. Heat half the oil in a frying pan over medium heat. Add garlic and fry until fragrant (1-2 minutes). Add 100ml mussel cooking water and saffron, then cover, reduce heat to low and simmer to infuse saffron (10 minutes). Return mussel meat to pan.

4 Cook tagliolini in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente (20-50 seconds). Drain, then add to mussel sauce in pan. Add zest and remaining oil, tossing until sauce emulsifies and coats pasta. Stir through lemon juice and basil, and season to taste. To serve, top with basil leaves, drizzle over oil, and season to taste with ground black pepper.

Wine suggestion 2017
Cantina Giardino Rosato, Campania, Italy. ►



Lemon torta caprese
Dessert bowls from Blue Chapel Pottery. Small bowl from Miss Arthur. All other props stylist's own.



Federica Andrisani (from left), Mardi and Gracie Ellis. Right, from top: Sue Ellis, Meadowbank's founder Gerald Ellis, Mardi Ellis, Oskar Rossi, Federica Andrisani, Alex Deane and Gracie Ellis. Gracie Ellis (from left), Fico's Phillip Poussart, Glenn Byrnes and Sue Ellis. Opposite: Meadowbank's vineyard.





Lemon torta caprese with blackberries and limoncello gelato

SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 25 MINS // COOK 40 MINS (PLUS COOLING, FREEZING)

“My mum always cooked this cake on Sundays when I was growing up. It is a classic torta from Capri, where it’s made with Amalfi lemons,” says Andrisani. “It also has the added benefit of being completely gluten-free.” Start this recipe one day ahead to make the gelato. Pictured p112.

- Blackberries, halved, to serve
- Hibiscus powder (see note), to serve
- LIMONCELLO GELATO**
- 10 egg yolks
- 75 gm ($\frac{1}{3}$ cup) caster sugar
- 560 ml ($2\frac{1}{4}$ cups) pouring cream
- 560 ml ($2\frac{1}{4}$ cups) milk
- 1 tsp vanilla-bean extract
- 80 ml limoncello
- TORTA CAPRESE**
- 250 gm almond meal
- 250 gm caster sugar
- Finely grated zest of 2 lemons
- $\frac{1}{2}$ tsp gluten-free baking powder
- 4 eggs
- 200 gm softened butter
- 50 gm white chocolate, melted

1 For gelato, whisk yolks and sugar in a bowl until pale. Stir in cream, milk and vanilla, then transfer mixture to a saucepan. Stir continuously over medium heat until mixture reaches 80°C on a thermometer (10-12 minutes). Add limoncello and cook for a further 1 minute. Remove from heat and pour into a bowl placed over ice to cool. Once cooled, churn in an ice-cream maker, then cover and freeze (overnight).

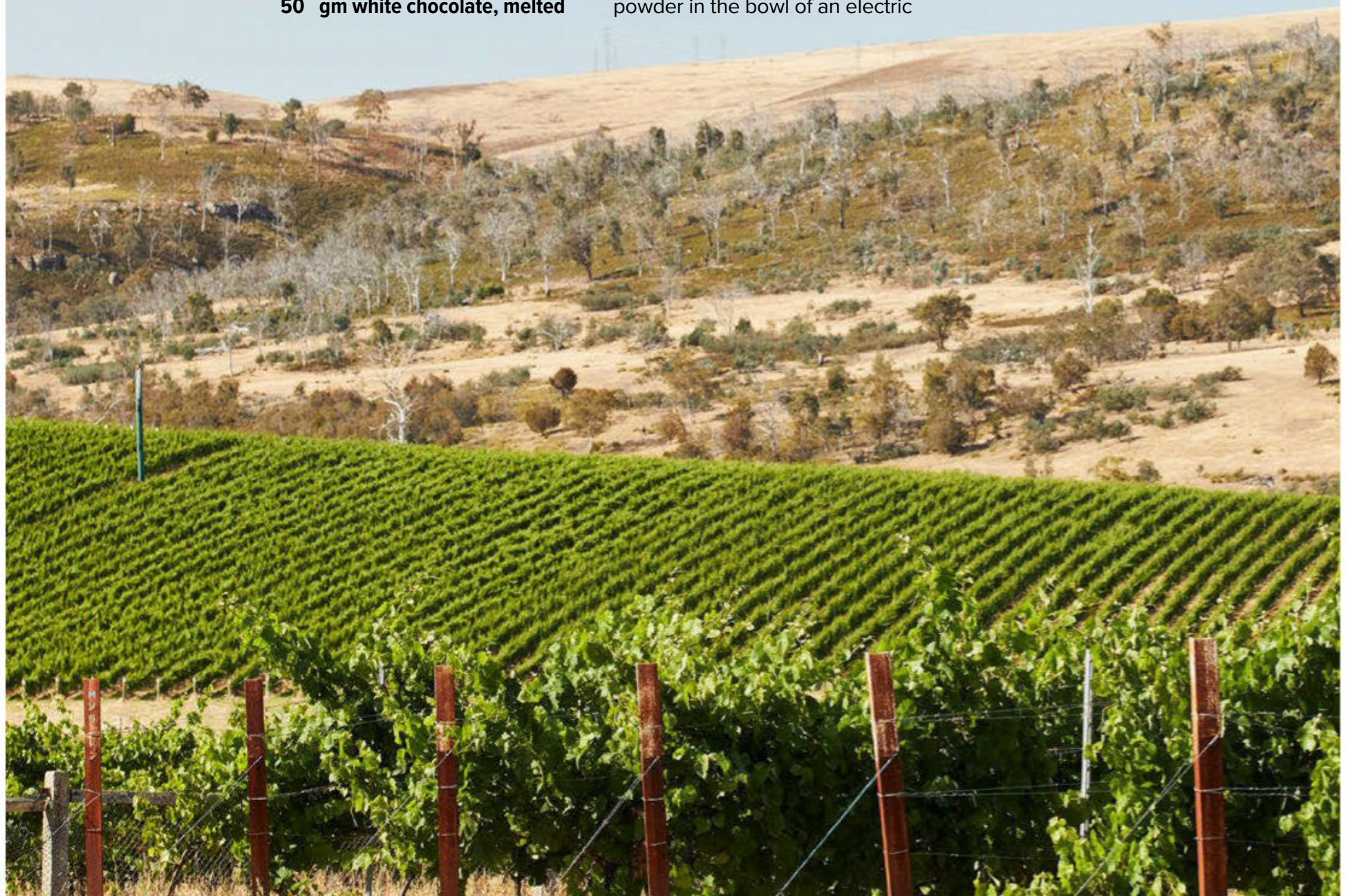
2 For torta caprese, preheat oven to 180°C and line a 22cm-square cake tin with baking paper. Combine almond meal, sugar, lemon zest and baking powder in the bowl of an electric

mixer. Add eggs and butter and beat until light and fluffy. Fold in white chocolate. Transfer mixture to prepared tin, smooth top, then bake until a skewer withdraws clean (30-40 minutes). Remove and cool in tin.

3 To serve, slice torta and place in bowls. Top with berries and a spoonful of gelato, then dust with hibiscus powder.

Note To make hibiscus powder, grind dried hibiscus flowers with a spice grinder or in a small blender until finely ground. Hibiscus flowers are available from health-food stores.

Wine suggestion 2019 Meadowbank Harvest Sparkling, Tasmania. ●



More than APERITIVI

A new wave of wine bars is adding brio to old-school eating and drinking. Here, six chefs shake up the art of the enoteca.

Photography BENITO MARTIN

Styling JERRIE-JOY REDMAN-LLOYD

Ragazzi's
tuna crudo &
Lucano Spritz

p116



Recipes **NICOLA DUCI, MIKE EGGERT, GIACOMO FAVOTTO,
DAVID FISHER, GEOFF MARTIN & SCOTT WILLIAMS**

**Lagotto's
agrodolce
capsicum with
buffalo mozzarella
& Lagotto Spritz**

p116

SCOTT WILLIAMS

Ragazzi's tuna crudo

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 40 MINS // COOK 20 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

“We use sustainable tuna such as yellowfin from Australia’s east coast,” says Scott Williams. “You will only need a small portion so there’s no need to break the bank, or the ocean.” Pictured p114.

- Vegetable oil, for deep-frying

150 gm sashimi-grade yellowfin tuna loin, cut into 1cm dice

½ Granny Smith apple, cut into 5mm dice

1½ tbsp thinly sliced chives

Kewpie mayonnaise, to serve

Soba cha (see note), to serve

Crostini, to serve

PASTA FRITTA DOUGH

¼ tsp dried yeast

½ tsp extra-virgin olive oil

50 gm rye flour, sifted

50 gm “00” flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting

CRUDO DRESSING

3½ tsp grapeseed oil

3½ tsp extra-virgin olive oil

2½ tsp white soy sauce (see note)

2 tsp Moscatel vinegar
- (see note), or chardonnay or Champagne vinegar

½ tsp Korean fish sauce

½ tsp wasabi oil (see note)

Small pinch of white pepper
- 1 For dough, mix yeast and oil in a jug with 50ml tepid water. Combine flours and ½ tsp salt in a bowl. Slowly add wet mixture into flour mixture with a fork until a wet dough forms. Turn out onto a work surface and knead until a smooth dough (2 minutes). Cover and rest (30 minutes). Dusting with flour as necessary, feed dough through a pasta machine, starting at the widest setting, then reducing settings notch by notch until pasta is 2mm thick. Dust with flour, cut into 4cm-5cm pieces and set aside on a tray.

- 2 For crudo dressing, whisk ingredients in a small jug or jar. Dressing will keep refrigerated for a week.

3 Heat oil in a deep-fryer to 170°C. Deep-fry pasta fritta, in batches, turning once, until golden and crisp (1½-2 minutes; be careful, hot oil will spit). Drain on paper towel and season to taste with salt flakes while hot.

4 Combine tuna, apple and chives in a bowl, and coat with half the dressing. Season with extra dressing to taste.

5 Spread mayonnaise on pasta fritta, top with tuna crudo, sprinkle over soba cha and serve with crostini.

Note Soba cha (roasted buckwheat) and white soy sauce are available from Japanese grocers. If soba cha is unavailable, roast buckwheat kernels in a low oven until golden. Moscatel, chardonnay and Champagne vinegar is available from The Essential Ingredient (essentialIngredient.com.au). Wasabi oil is available from Good Grub Hub (goodgrubhub.com).

MATT SWIEBODA

Ragazzi's Lucano Spritz

MAKES 1

“Amaro Lucano comes from Basilicata and is made with over 30 herbs,” says Matt Swieboda. Pictured p114.

- 30 ml Amaro Lucano

45 ml dry prosecco, such as Zanotto Col Fondo

30 ml sparkling water

2 orange slices, to serve

- 1 Place ice in a Spritz or wine glass. Add amaro and prosecco, then top with sparkling water and garnish with orange slices to serve.

DAVID FISHER

Lagotto's agrodolce capsicum with buffalo mozzarella

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 30 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

“This is an easy dish that’s versatile,” says David Fisher. “While I love it with mozzarella, it’s also the perfect accompaniment for anything grilled on the barbecue.” The capsicum can be made a day ahead as the flavours will only improve with time. Pictured p115.

- 120 ml (½ cup) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

4 yellow capsicum, cut into strips

40 gm raisins

30 gm roasted slivered almonds

20 gm caster sugar

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

60 ml (¼ cup) white wine vinegar

2 buffalo mozzarella (125gm each), torn

Focaccia (see masterclass p60), to serve
- 1 Heat oil in a large frying pan over medium heat and fry capsicum, stirring occasionally, until soft and beginning to caramelise at the edges but not brown (20-25 minutes). Add raisins, almonds, sugar and garlic and stir-fry until combined (3-4 minutes). Add vinegar and cook until evaporated (1-2 minutes). Season to taste. Cool slightly until warm or room temperature, or refrigerate overnight.

2 To serve, transfer capsicum to a platter, top with mozzarella, drizzle with oil and season to taste. Serve with focaccia.

KATIE MCCORMACK

Lagotto Spritz

MAKES 1

“While Aperol Spritz is an old faithful, I like something a little less sweet,” says Katie McCormack. “We do a Spritz with limoncello, which flies out the bar.” Pictured p115.

- 45 ml limoncello, such as Applewood Distillery

15 ml lemon juice

75 ml brut prosecco

A dash of soda, to serve

Lemon thyme, to serve

- 1 Place ice in a Spritz or wine glass, layer ingredients and garnish with lemon thyme to serve. ➤



This page: Mixing glass & stirring spoon from Bar Geek. Tumblers from Hub Furniture. All props stylist's own. **Opposite:** Coaster in gold from The DEA Store. Doilies from Bar Geek. Glass from Hub Furniture (used throughout). **PREVIOUS PAGES** Terrazzo from Surface Gallery (used throughout). Curtain from West Elm. Glasses (with Lagotto Spritz; used throughout) from Villeroy & Boch. All other props stylist's own.



MICHAEL BADR

Marameo's Rosemary Gin Fizz

MAKES 1

"Who doesn't love a bit of gin and bubbles?" says Michael Badr. "It's the perfect way to start, end or just at any time!"

- 30 ml gin, such as Melbourne Gin Company
- 15 ml lemon juice
- 15 ml sugar syrup (see note)
- Soda water, to serve
- Rosemary sprig and lemon slice, to serve

1 Place ice into a Spritz or wine glass. Add gin, lemon juice and sugar syrup, top with soda to taste and garnish with rosemary to serve.

Note For sugar syrup, combine equal quantities caster sugar and boiling water in a jug and stir to dissolve.

GEOFF MARTIN

Marameo's squid-ink spaghetti with crab, chilli and tomato

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 45 MINS // COOK 10 MINS (PLUS RESTING)

"This dish can be enjoyed at any time of year," says Geoff Martin. "If you can't find Western Australian blue swimmer crab, spanner or mud crabs are great alternatives."

- 500 gm ripe tomatoes (about 4 tomatoes), tops and bases scored
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 2 garlic cloves, thinly sliced
- 1 birdseye chilli, finely chopped
- 400 gm raw blue swimmer crabmeat
- 75 ml dry white wine
- 250 ml (1 cup) fish stock
- ¼ cup (loosely packed) flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped
- ¼ cup (loosely packed) basil, coarsely torn
- 2-3 tbsp tobiko roe (see note), to serve
- SQUID-INK SPAGHETTI**
- 210 gm lightly beaten egg (from about 4 eggs)
- 3 tsp squid ink (see note)
- 500 gm (3⅓ cups) "00" flour, sifted, plus extra for dusting

1 For spaghetti, whisk egg and squid ink in a bowl. Add flour and a pinch of salt to a separate bowl. Create a well in the centre of the flour, pour in egg mixture and 2 tsp water and mix with a fork to form a dough. Turn out onto a surface, and knead until smooth and elastic. Wrap dough and rest (1 hour). Divide dough into 4, then working with one piece at a time, and dusting with flour as necessary, feed through a pasta machine, starting at the widest setting, rolling and folding once or twice, then reducing notch by notch until pasta is 2mm thick, then use the spaghetti attachment (or use a chitarra tool) and cut into spaghetti. Dust with flour to prevent pasta sticking together, cover and refrigerate in small mounds on a tray until required.

2 Blanch tomatoes in a saucepan of boiling water until skins split (20-30 seconds), then refresh in iced water.

Drain and when cool enough to handle, peel skin. Quarter tomatoes and remove centre and core, then dice remaining flesh. Refrigerate until required.

3 Cook spaghetti in a large saucepan of boiling salted water, stirring frequently, until cooked al dente (3-4 minutes).

4 Meanwhile, combine olive oil, garlic, chilli and crabmeat in a large deep frying pan over high heat and cook until crab is just cooked (1-2 minutes). Deglaze pan with wine, scraping base, then add fish stock and tomato.

5 Drain pasta (reserve pasta water), then add to sauce and simmer (1-2 minutes). Add parsley and basil. Season to taste, drizzle over oil to taste, and stir, adding pasta water as needed, until sauce emulsifies and thickens to coat the pasta. Top with roe and serve.

Note Tobiko roe and squid ink are available from select fishmongers.

Spaghetti Pink curtain from West Elm. All other props stylist's own. **Chicken** Candle holder from The DEA Store. All other props stylist's own.

MIKE EGGERT

Bar Totti's chicken wings with honey and rosemary

SERVES 4-6 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 15 MINS (PLUS BRINING)

"This is my take on an agrodolce dish, with sweet and sour flavours" says Mike Eggert. "We have great charred roasted wings and we pair it with sweet honey and lots of grilled lemon."

- 1 kg chicken wingettes
 - 100 ml honey
 - Finely grated zest of 2 lemons
 - 2 tbsp coarsely chopped rosemary
 - Baby rocket, to serve
- BRINE**
- 80 gm fine salt
 - 60 gm brown sugar

1 For brine, combine salt and sugar with 2 litres water and stir until dissolved. Pour over chicken and refrigerate to brine (2 hours).

2 Preheat a barbecue or hibachi grill to medium, or grill plate over medium heat. Remove chicken from brine and pat dry with paper towel. Skewer wings onto soaked wooden skewers or metal skewers.

3 Combine honey, zest and rosemary in a bowl. Grill wings, brushing with honey mixture occasionally, until charred and cooked through and a golden charred roasted glaze has built up on the wings (8-12 minutes). Season to taste.

4 Meanwhile, cut zested lemons in half and grill (1-2 minutes).

5 To serve, scatter rocket onto a platter, place skewers on top and pour over any chicken juices from resting. Squeeze over grilled lemons and serve.



SAM EGERTON

Bar Totti's Garden Spritz

MAKES 1

"This is a super-simple and super-delicious take on the modern world of Spritz-style drinks," says Sam Egerton.

- 15 ml Rinomato Aperitivo, infused with a dill sprig (2 hours)
- 15 ml Lillet Blanc
- 20 ml lemon juice
- 90 ml prosecco

1 Place ice in a Spritz glass. Add Rinomato, Lillet, lemon juice and prosecco. Serve. ►



NICOLA DUCI

The Hardware Club's paccheri with octopus alla Luciana

SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 30 MINS // COOK 3 HRS (PLUS COOLING)

"Octopus alla Luciana, an ancient Neapolitan recipe from the port of Santa Lucia, can be found on the table of most families for Sunday lunch," says Nicola Duci. "It's normally served as an entrée with mozzarella, but we decided to turn it into a delicious pasta dish."

- 50 gm (½ cup) coarse breadcrumbs
- 2 tbsp extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tsp dried oregano
- 500 gm paccheri, or other dried tubular pasta
- 50 gm butter
- Chilli flakes or chilli oil, to serve
- BRAISED OCTOPUS**
- 1 octopus (about 1kg), head on, or 1kg octopus legs
- 200 ml dry white wine
- 20 ml brandy
- 400 gm canned crushed tomatoes
- 4-5 ripe Roma tomatoes or other ripe tomatoes, coarsely chopped
- 1 tbsp thyme leaves

- MOZZARELLA CREAM**
- 60 gm buffalo mozzarella (about ½ mozzarella)
- 180 gm double cream (about 45% milk fat), at room temperature
- Few drops of chardonnay vinegar

1 For braised octopus, bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and add a generous handful of salt. Once it starts boiling, carefully add octopus and gently boil over medium heat until octopus feels firm to the touch (8-10 minutes). Remove octopus and cool briefly. Reserve 1 litre cooking liquid and return to saucepan. Add wine, brandy, canned and chopped tomatoes, and thyme and slowly bring to a simmer, then reduce heat to low, return

octopus to pan and cook until a small knife inserted in the thickest part of octopus pierces through with almost no resistance (2½ hours). Remove octopus from liquid and cool briefly (10-15 minutes), then cut into small pieces. Return octopus to pan and keep warm.

2 Meanwhile, preheat oven to 180°C. Toss breadcrumbs in oil and roast in oven until golden (10-15 minutes). Stir in oregano.

3 Cook pasta in a large saucepan of boiling salted water until al dente (2 minutes less than packet instructions), then drain, add to octopus and stir over medium heat to combine (1-2 minutes). Add butter and stir for a further 2 minutes.

4 For mozzarella cream, combine ingredients in a bowl and season to taste.

5 To serve, spoon mozzarella cream onto plates, divide pasta onto each plate and top with remaining sauce. Sprinkle with breadcrumbs, season to taste, and add a pinch of chilli flakes or a drizzle of chilli oil.

Note Chardonnay vinegar is available from The Essential Ingredient (essentialingredient.com.au).

This page: Glass (with Spritz Veneziano) from The DEA Store. Jigger & stirrer from Bar Geek. Tumbler from Hub Furniture. All other props stylist's own. **Octopus** All props stylist's own.

MARIAH MOSCA

The Hardware Club's Spritz Veneziano

MAKES 1

"The Spritz Veneziano is the original Spritz founded in Venice," says Mariah Mosca. "We use Select Aperitivo, which has a slight bitterness."

- 90 ml prosecco (three parts)
- 60 ml Select Aperitivo (two parts)
- 30 ml soda water (one part)
- Orange slice and green olive, to serve

1 Place ice into a Spritz glass and layer ingredients. Garnish with an orange slice and olive to serve. ➤

The Hardware Club's Spritz Veneziano



GIACOMO FAVOTTO

Ciao Papi's grilled fish with salsa verde

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 25 MINS // COOK 25 MINS

“Eating this way feels as much Italian as it does coastal Australian,” says Giacomo Favotto. “If you’re lucky enough to get a red emperor caught by Chris Bolton, it will change your life. I also like to serve this with a side of grilled squash and ricotta salata.”

- 1** large fish (about 1.5kg),
such as pink snapper
or red emperor
Olive oil, for brushing
- SALSA VERDE**
- 3** cups (firmly packed)
flat-leaf parsley,
coarsely chopped
- 2½** tsp capers,
coarsely chopped
- 2** anchovy fillets,
coarsely chopped
- 1** small garlic clove,
finely chopped
- ½** green chilli (optional),
finely chopped
- 100** ml extra-virgin olive oil
- 1½** tsp white wine vinegar
- 3** tsp lemon juice

- 1** For salsa verde, combine parsley, capers, anchovies, garlic and chilli. Stir in oil, vinegar and lemon juice.
- 2** Preheat a barbecue, preferably charcoal, to medium. Pat fish dry with paper towel so skin is as dry as possible, then brush with oil and season to taste with sea salt. Grill fish, turning once, until flesh pulls away from the bone or internal temperature is 50°C when tested with a meat thermometer at the flesh nearest the bone (10-15 minutes).
- 3** Dress fish with salsa verde and serve.



IAN TRINKLE

Ciao Papi's Campari and orange granita

SERVES 4 // PREP TIME 10 MINS (PLUS FREEZING)

"This is a great after-dinner dessert/cocktail," says Ian Trinkle. "We wanted to use up all the empty orange shells after watching our orange-juice machine split oranges in half." Start this recipe one day ahead to make the granita.

- 75 ml Campari
- 25 ml Cointreau
- 225 ml apple juice
- 75 ml lemon juice
- 75 ml passionfruit juice (from about 6 passionfruit)
- 25 ml sugar syrup (see note)
- 4 oranges, halved (skins reserved) and juiced, plus orange wedges to serve

1 Mix ingredients (except orange halves) in a large bowl, pour into a tray and freeze overnight.

2 Freeze orange halves to chill (1 hour). Scrape frozen mixture into ice crystals with a fork, then spoon into orange halves. Serve on ice with orange wedges and a classic Italian digestif such as Amaro Montenegro on the side.

Note For sugar syrup, combine equal quantities caster sugar and boiling water in a jug and stir to dissolve. ●

Granita Curtain from West Elm. All other props stylist's own. **Fish** Glasses from Hub Furniture. All other props stylist's own.



Sweet satisfaction

In his book *Venetian Republic*, NINO ZOCCALI traces the recipes of the Republic of Venice. Here, he shares desserts steeped in history.



Croatian
blackberry
crumble

p127



My fascination with Venice goes back a long way. Many years ago, when I was just 21 and had completed a 12-month sabbatical in Southern Italy, I found myself on my way to London. I had a little time up my sleeve, so I asked my learned older cousin, Liliana Di Certo, for advice on what I thought would be a difficult question – where should my next stop in Italy be? I'd been to Rome and Milan several times, but hadn't ventured far beyond these cities or the southern region of Calabria, the birthplace of my father. "Liliana, I only have a few days. Where do you think I should go: Florence or Venice?" She didn't hesitate. "Venice. You are going to Venice and I am going to organise it. In Florence, you have to line up to see the art. Yes, it's amazing when you get in and see it, but in Venice, *everything* is art." And so my obsession with the floating city was born. Little did I know that Venice would continue to lure and inspire me for decades to come. Since my first visit as a wide-eyed Italo-Australian boy from Bunbury, Western Australia, I've built a career as an Italian chef and restaurateur, and returned frequently.

Boats in
Split, Croatia.
PREVIOUS PAGES
Left: Venice canals.

Osteria alle Testiere pistachio cake with pistachio gelato

SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 30 MINS // COOK 1 HR 30 MINS (PLUS CHILLING, COOLING)

"Osteria alle Testiere's desserts are some of the very best in Venice, and none more so than their pistachio cake," says Nino Zoccali. Start this recipe one day ahead to make the pistachio gelato.

- 300 gm pistachio kernels, skin on
- 6 eggs
- 250 gm caster sugar
- 150 gm softened butter, plus extra for greasing
- 100 gm potato flour, sifted
- 1 tsp baking powder, sifted
- icing sugar, for dusting
- PISTACHIO GELATO**
- 500 ml (2 cups) milk
- 5 egg yolks
- 50 gm honey
- 150 gm ($\frac{2}{3}$ cup) caster sugar
- 100 gm ($\frac{3}{4}$ cup) pistachio nuts, peeled
- 150 ml pouring cream
- 2 tbsp pure pistachio paste (see note)

1 For pistachio gelato, bring milk to a simmer in a pan over low heat. Whisk egg yolks, honey and sugar in a heatproof bowl until thick and creamy. Pour milk over egg mixture and stir until combined. Place the heatproof bowl over a pan of simmering water and, stirring regularly, bring to 85°C on a pastry thermometer (15-20 minutes; the mixture should coat the back of a spoon). Strain mixture through a fine sieve into a clean container and chill overnight

in the refrigerator. Process pistachios in a food processor until a fine meal. Lightly whip cream and fold in pistachio meal and pistachio paste. Place chilled mixture in a gelato machine and churn until just set, then add cream and pistachio mix and churn again until set (2 minutes). Transfer gelato into a plastic or metal container and store in the freezer until ready to use.

2 Preheat oven to 160°C and grease and line a 26cm-round cake tin. Process pistachios in a food processor until a fine meal. Beat eggs and sugar until pale, then beat in butter until well combined. Combine potato flour and baking powder and slowly add to mixture, then gradually stir in pistachio meal.

3 Pour mixture into prepared tin and bake until cooked and a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake comes out clean (55 minutes to 1 hour). Allow cake to cool, then remove from the tin. Once completely cool, dust cake with icing sugar, slice and serve with gelato.

Note Pure pistachio paste is available from Natural Moreish (maxriver.com.au).





Croatian blackberry crumble

**SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 20 MINS
// COOK 50 MINS**

“In many parts of the world, fruit crumble desserts like this one are reserved for the cold of winter,” says Zoccali. “Not in this case, as blackberries are at their best in summer, and this Croatian staple is beautifully light.” Pictured p125.

- 150 gm (1 cup) plain flour**
- ⅓ tsp baking powder**
- 170 gm cold butter, diced, plus extra for greasing**
- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar**
- 2 egg yolks**
- 1 tsp icing sugar, for dusting**
- Vanilla-bean gelato or cream, to serve**
- BLACKBERRY FILLING**
- 2 eggwhites**
- 110 gm (½ cup) caster sugar**
- 500 gm blackberries**
- Scraped seeds from ½ vanilla bean**
- 1 tsp lemon zest**

- 1** Preheat oven to 180°C and grease a 20cm-diameter pie dish. For pastry, mix flour, baking powder, butter, sugar and egg yolks in a food processor until a dough ball forms. Turn out and set aside one-third of dough to make the topping. Firmly press remaining dough into the base and side of prepared dish to form a crust.
- 2** For blackberry filling, whisk eggwhites and sugar until soft peaks form. Fold in berries, vanilla seeds and zest and pour into the pie dish.
- 3** Crumble reserved pastry dough over the top of the blackberry filling. Bake crumble in the oven until golden (about 50 minutes).
- 4** Allow to cool a little, then dust with icing sugar. Serve with vanilla-bean gelato. ➤

Venetian carnival fritters

SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 15 MINS // COOK 20 MINS (PLUS SOAKING)

“You will find these in Veneto during the annual Carnevale period,” says Zoccali. “They are best served warm with an espresso.”

- | | |
|--|--|
| 250 gm (1¼ cups) sultanas | 175 ml milk |
| 4 egg yolks | 80 ml (⅓ cup) eggwhites (2-3 eggs) |
| 500 gm (3⅓ cups) “00” flour, plus extra for dusting | Grapeseed oil or vegetable oil, for deep-frying |
| 2 tsp baking powder | |
| 400 gm caster sugar | |
| 100 ml rum | |
| Juice and finely grated zest of 1 orange | |
| Finely grated zest of 1 lemon | |
| 175 ml vegetable oil | |
- 1** Soak sultanas in warm water (1 hour). Drain and dry on paper towel, then dust with a little flour to absorb any excess moisture.

- 2** Combine egg yolks, flour, baking powder and half the sugar. Add rum, orange juice and zest, lemon zest, vegetable oil, milk and sultanas, and beat until smooth. Whisk eggwhites until stiff peaks form, then fold through the batter.
- 3** Heat grapeseed oil in a saucepan to 180°C. Using a tablespoon, spoon the batter into the hot oil, in batches, and cook, turning once, until brown (2-3 minutes each side; be careful, hot oil will spit).
- 4** To serve, remove fritters from oil and roll in remaining sugar.

Venetian crema rosada

SERVES 10 // PREP TIME 10 MINS //
COOK 1 HR (PLUS COOLING,
SOAKING, SETTING, CHILLING)

“This crème caramel, or crema rosada, is found throughout Veneto,” says Zoccali. “Its name refers to rosolio, the rose-scented liqueur used in the traditional recipe.”

100 gm (1¼ cups) flaked almonds
120 gm raisins
Rum, for soaking
12 eggs
150 gm caster sugar
600 ml milk
600 ml pouring cream
1 tbsp rosolio liqueur, or any preferred liqueur or rum
100 gm maraschino cherries (optional)

1 Preheat oven to 170°C. Arrange almonds evenly on a baking tray and roast until golden brown (8-10 minutes). Remove almonds from tray and cool completely.

2 Reduce oven to 150°C. Put raisins in a bowl with enough rum to just cover them and set aside to soak. In a large bowl, mix eggs with 2 tbsp sugar until a pale cream colour. Add milk, cream and liqueur and combine with a spatula.

3 Place remaining sugar in a small, wide saucepan and cook over low heat until a deep caramel colour (3-5 minutes; do not stir). Pour caramel into a 23cm-diameter x 10cm-deep ovenproof glass bowl, covering base evenly. Set in a cool place.

4 Pour cream mix into the bowl, making sure it is evenly distributed. Place bowl in a deep roasting tin and pour hot water into the tin until it reaches three-quarters of the way up the side of the bowl. Bake in oven for 45 minutes; the flan should still wobble in the centre when gently shaken. Remove from tin and refrigerate until completely chilled. Run a small knife around the edge, then turn out onto a serving plate. Serve with rum-soaked raisins, cherries and roasted almonds.



Carrot, hazelnut and spelt cake with hazelnut gelato

SERVES 8 // PREP TIME 40 MINS //
COOK 1 HR 20 MINS (PLUS
FREEZING, RESTING)

“The town of Chioggia, commonly referred to as ‘Little Venice’, has been very important to Venice throughout history,” says Zoccali. “It supplies her with super-premium, fresh seafood and its highly sought-after carrots.”

HAZELNUT GELATO

- 670 ml milk
- 145 gm caster sugar
- 30 gm skim-milk powder
- 50 gm dextrose (see note)
- 100 gm hazelnut paste (see note)

CHOCOLATE ICING

- 200 gm dark chocolate (70% cocoa solids)
 - 200 ml thickened cream
- ## CARROT, HAZELNUT AND SPELT CAKE

- 5 eggs, separated
- 220 gm (1 cup) caster sugar
- 410 gm coarsely grated carrot
- 295 gm ground hazelnuts
- 60 gm spelt flour
- ½ tsp baking powder
- ½ tsp ground cinnamon
- 20 ml rum
- 1 tsp vanilla-bean paste

1 For hazelnut gelato, half fill the base pan of a double boiler with water and bring to a simmer. Place milk in double boiler over medium heat. When milk reaches 40°C on a pastry thermometer, add dry ingredients and raise heat to 65°C. Continue cooking for 30 minutes at 65°C, stirring regularly. Blend mixture with a stick blender, then churn in an ice-cream machine to -4°C. Freeze until required.

2 Meanwhile, for icing, place chocolate in a heatproof bowl. Bring cream to a simmer in a saucepan over low heat, then pour cream over chocolate and leave to stand for 30 seconds, then stir through. Cover and leave at room temperature until thickened (2 hours).

3 For cake, preheat oven to 160°C and grease a 25cm springform cake tin. Whisk eggwhites and a pinch of salt in a stainless-steel bowl until light and fluffy soft peaks form. Slowly add 75gm sugar, increasing speed to high, until stiff peaks form. In another bowl, beat egg yolks and 60ml hot water with an electric mixer on medium speed until light and foamy. Slowly add remaining sugar and then beat on high speed until pale and thick (3 minutes). In another bowl, combine carrot, ground hazelnuts, flour, baking powder,

cinnamon, rum and vanilla-bean paste. Fold eggwhites into the whipped egg yolks until combined, then fold into the carrot mixture in two batches.

4 Pour batter into prepared tin. Bake until cooked and a skewer inserted into the centre of the cake withdraws clean (50 minutes). Remove from tin and cool on a wire rack. Using a spatula, spread the chocolate icing evenly over cake. Serve with gelato.

Note Dextrose and hazelnut paste can be bought at select delicatessens and grocers. ●

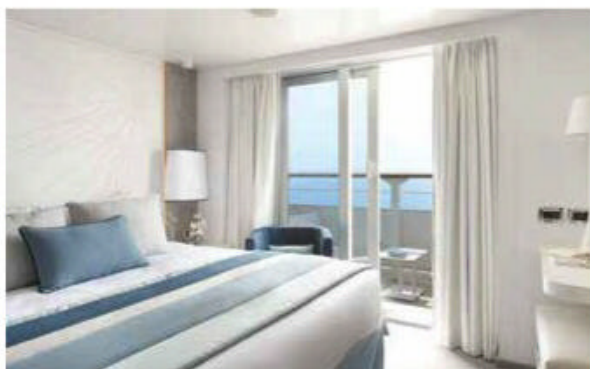


This extract from Venetian Republic by Nino Zoccali with food photography by Alan Benson and location photography by Andrea Butti (Murdoch Books, \$49.99, hbk) has been reproduced with minor GT style edits.



AWAKEN

YOUR SENSE OF WONDER



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— MARCH —

TRAVEL

Bel paese

Exploring Puglia, Milan's dining scene, Venissa vineyard, and Monterosso al Mare in Cinque Terre.

Milan, Italy

p142



The art of... la dolce vita

A trip to Italy isn't merely a holiday. It's a lesson in how to live a little bit better, and ANNA HART intends to never stop learning.

Of all the countries I owe a debt of gratitude to, Italy tops the list. Italy has been a true friend to this itinerant writer, and has picked me up and put me back on my feet more times than I can remember. Holidays to Italy *work*.

Arriving in Italy feels like being welcomed into an effortlessly glamorous and unpretentious party, where our hosts just want us to eat their splendid food, drink their glorious wine, relax in their salubrious surroundings. In short, a trip to Italy does everything a holiday is meant to do.

And best of all, Italy restores the body, replenishes the spirit



Anna is a travel and lifestyle journalist, and author of the travel memoir *Departures*.
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and resets the mind without making a fuss about it. Not for Italy, the patronising lingo of wellness-oriented breaks. Italy delivers superlative food and wine, awe-inspiring architecture, soul-stirring art and music, and life-affirmingly beautiful scenery. I know that technically we're supposed to turn to self-help meccas such as Tulum, Sedona and Ubud when our spirits have been savaged by the world. But whatever it is that souls are made of, Italy is the thread that stitches me together again.

My first taste of Italy was Venice, which I rolled into on the train, on a lengthier European

farmers after a triumphant haggle over tomatoes; I heard chefs shouting at fishmongers the way only lovers do; I saw baristas impose espressos on passing office workers, as if they know best, their customers shrugging in submission. In Bologna, I marvelled as these masters of good living infused pleasure and passion into every verbal interaction. I learnt there that we can play life straight or we can play it for laughs; Bologna plays life with passion and mischief.

A wintry weekend in Naples with a friend, with a side-helping of a (blissfully crowd-free, in off-season) Pompeii is also one of my most cherished travel memories. In a particularly bleak midwinter, Naples was a glorious buffet of Baroque melodrama, red wine, ragù and subterranean gothic creepiness. All Italian cities wear their hearts on their sleeve, but Naples's heart is the darkest. And I fell hard for Italy's grittiest and most polarising city, where the spectre of the Camorra lingers, homelessness is rife, the museums and galleries shout the tragic history of mass incineration, political skirmishes and moral corruption.

Because somehow, the darkness only made the lightness shine brighter, the turquoise of the Bay of Naples a little more dazzling, the wine a little redder, the Pompeian frescoes more ornate. Through its devastating history and gritty devotion to earthly pleasures, Naples taught me that life brings both pleasure and pain, but there is always pizza.

More recently, there was a trip to the Amalfi Coast to meet friends travelling from New Zealand, during a period that retrospectively I can see was a bout of clinical depression. In truth, I'd been dreading this trip, assailed by

social anxiety that I had nothing to contribute to the group, that I was burnt out and depleted and would only be a drag. But Italy picked up the slack. Positano was so dazzling that I didn't need to be. The food was so delicious that nobody noticed if my dinnertime chat was subpar. And, when I finally relaxed in the realisation that Italy had this covered, that our holiday would be a rip-roaring success regardless of my mood, Italy gently reacquainted my benumbed soul with my senses. Through Aperol Spritzes, sea swims, the laughter of my friends as they ordered

There was a confidence about living the good life that was wholly unique. I felt, right away, that I was among experts in living well.

another bottle of prosecco, I slowly recovered my joie de vivre. Italy lifted my spirits out of the gutters in Glasgow, dusted them off with a bracing speedboat trip, and plonked me atop a roof terrace in Capri. That trip to the Amalfi Coast taught me that it's okay to arrive in your holiday destination crawling on your knees; you can still leave walking on air. I learnt on that trip how to truly *holiday*, as opposed to the harder graft of travelling.

So yes, Italy has taught me how to live a little better. And, by being the perfect destination, Italy taught me how to travel. ●

jaunt. And compared to neighbouring nations, there was a confidence about living the good life that was wholly unique. I felt, right away, that I was among experts in living well. Even as an impoverished student, Venice wined and dined me in style, as I tucked into pumpkin and sage tortelloni and sipped Montepulciano d'Abruzzo that tasted so good I couldn't believe I could afford it. Later, wandering around what felt like a vast, immersive archaeological museum, my own minor life woes – impending exam results, a boy who hadn't texted, my bad dye job – were all gently but firmly put in perspective. Italians live large, and by living large, we can make our troubles seem small. My paltry worries shrunk away – embarrassed – amidst the grandeur of Piazza San Marco. Venice taught me how to silence my thoughts, by pitting them against something much bigger.

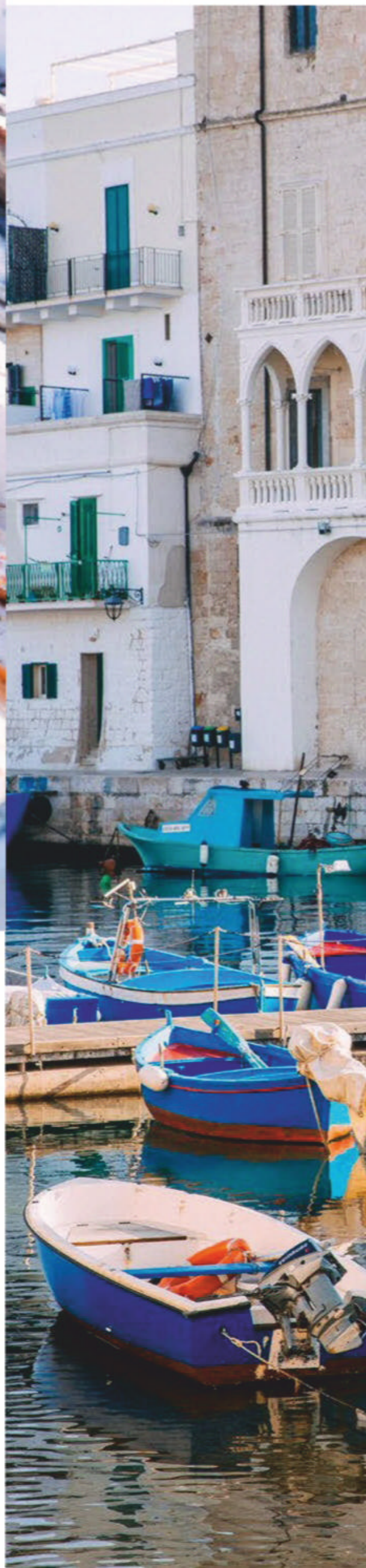
Then there was the trip to Bologna, where my boyfriend and I found The Market Where Everyone Flirts With Each Other. There was not a single exchange we witnessed that wasn't playful, cajoling, passionate. I watched old women giggle girlishly at bearded





Southern beauty

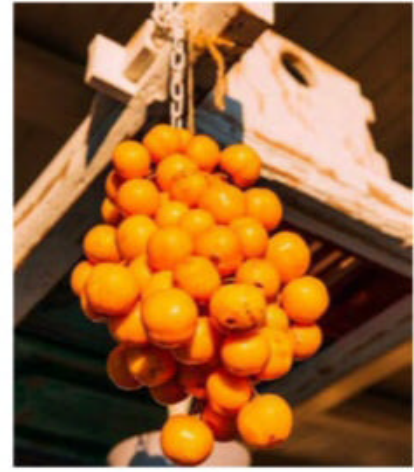
In Puglia, the heel of Italy's boot, HANNAH-ROSE YEE
discovers a land of vineyards, ancient olive groves,
and dream-like vistas.



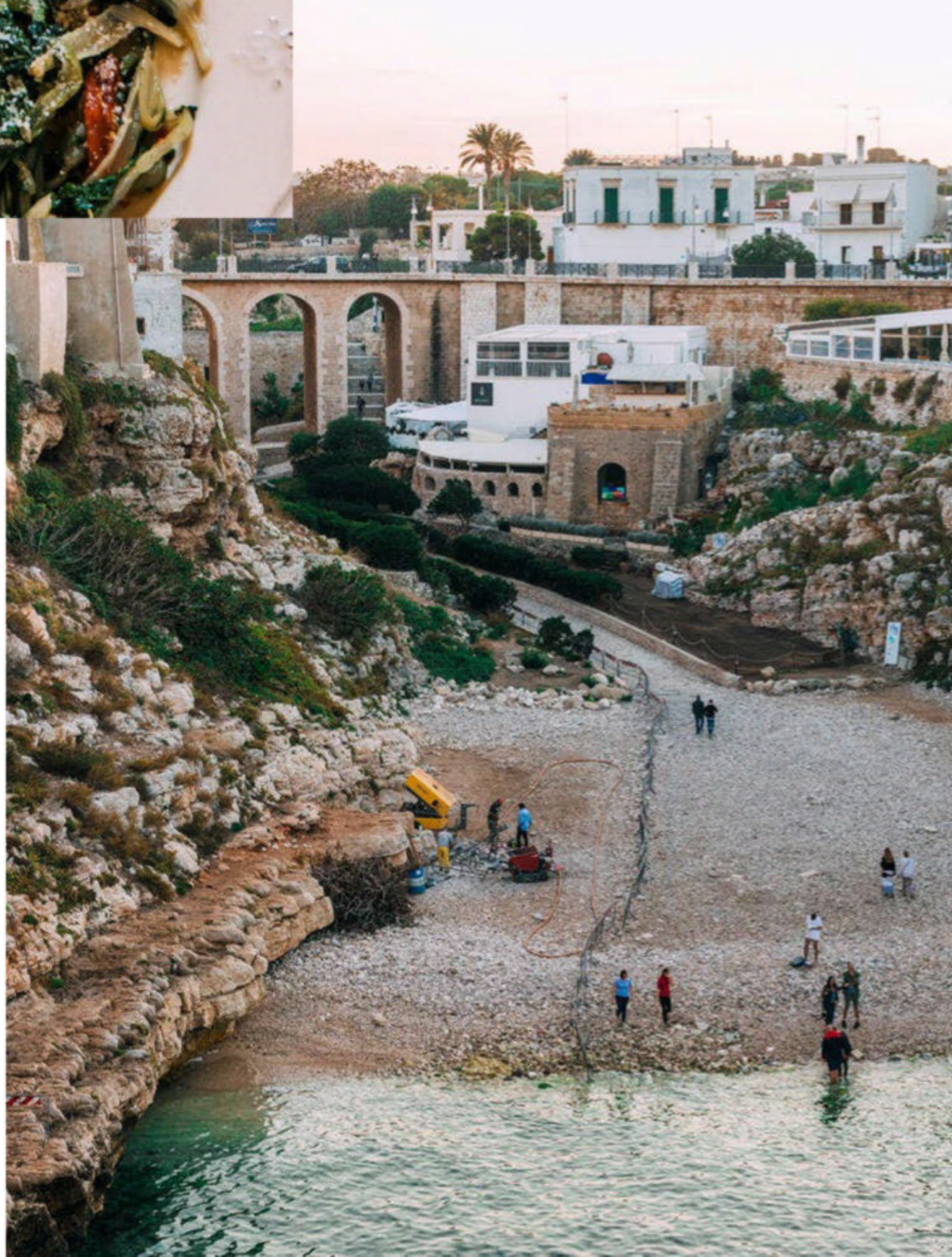
Photography **JACK SINGLE**



From far left: fresh seafood; fishing boats;
and local grilled octopus, all in Monopoli.



Cacti at Masseria Montenapoleone. Clockwise from above: local dishes such as mozzarella and rocket (from left), crostini with mozzarella and tomato, and sautéed cime di rapa with parmesan, tomato and garlic; winter tomatoes; olive trees; cooking with chef Gianna in Lecce; Polignano a Mare.





Here he is, Giorgio the cheesemaker, come to rescue my burrata. To make the Pugliese specialty you need a pair of strong but nimble hands and a certain deftness in your wrist. I am equipped with neither. Giorgio watches as I take the milk, thickened with heat and acid whey, stretching it in my hands before peeling off a chunk to fill with a spoonful of stracciatella – those creamy, torn-up pieces of mozzarella that ooze lasciviously as soon as you pierce them. My big, clumsy fingers fumble with the opening of the burrata, struggling to twist it closed. This is when the cheesemaker takes my hands in his and, like some kind of Italian Patrick Swayze in *Ghost*, guides me through each movement. Stretch, pull, dollop, twist. He takes my burrata and plunks it into a bowl of water to cool. That's lunch, everybody.

This small, family-run dairy farm just a short drive from Alberobello, a town in the middle of Puglia famous for its conical-shaped cottages, is fairly indicative of the culinary stylings of the region. The farm is run by just a handful of staff who make the cheese – big fat balls of burrata, the salty-sweet caciocavallo – for sale periodically throughout the week. If you're having a party, call the cheesemaker and give him advance notice. He'll prepare your burrata that afternoon, swiftly and with a great deal more skill than me, so that it's ready for your table in the evening. You might serve it with a brace of tomatoes bursting with flavour and a dish of fava beans, mashed into a silky pulp, or maybe a bowl of salted chickpeas, sizzled until golden and crisp.

This is cucina povera, or peasant food. The Pugliese have been eating like this for centuries, favouring simple vegetable and pasta dishes supplemented with the occasional bit of local seafood or meat. It's honest, hearty food that, courtesy

of tourism interest overlapping with the boom in farm-to-table cooking, has made Puglia such a popular travel destination.

Italy has been a holiday hotspot for as long as there have been people taking vacations. What Puglia offers, courtesy of its spread of towns dotted across the heel of the country's boot, is a little taste of everything that makes an Italian trip so sweet. You can swim at Polignano a Mare beach, sip natural wine at vineyards outside Lecce and taste olive oil harvested from 3000-year-old trees planted by the Romans. Sure, you could book your next holiday to Tuscany, but just think of the crowds. And Amalfi? You might as well set fire to a pile of money right now. Puglia has sun, sand and susumaniello, a variety of grape that makes for a very drinkable rosé. What more do you need?

"You go to different regions in Italy and they specialise in one thing or another," says Max, our guide on my Luxury Escapes tour of the region. "Here, they have *everything*." He means it: Puglia produces around 80 per cent of Europe's pasta and 40 per cent of Italy's olive oil. "Italians think they have the best food in the world, and all Italians when they're on holiday go to the south of Italy. So you could argue that the south of Italy has the best food in Italy and, therefore, the best food in the world."

My Luxury Escapes tour starts in Lecce, a city famous for its intricate baroque architecture and a delicious morning coffee ritual involving an icy shot of espresso sticky with almond syrup. The light in Lecce is creamy and fresh, bouncing off the limestone like a ping-pong ball. A few beads of sweat form on my forehead as Max and I hustle through Lecce's cobblestoned streets after Gianna, Lecce's chicest chef. Destination: the market.

Gianna leans her head forward, inspecting the morning's produce. There's an abundance of seasonal fruit and vegetables: the first artichokes of the year, waxy persimmons and quinces. "Ah," she says, grinning, pointing at a bushel of red fruit strung up from the rafters. These, she explains, are winter tomatoes, a Puglia-specific variety with a firm skin, meaning they can stay ripe for a whole year when hung just so.

She grabs a handful, along with some basil and garlic, and we're off again in the direction of her kitchen. We're going to make pasta.

The sauce is simple she explains, splashing some olive oil into a heavy pan. In go the wedges of garlic and the winter tomatoes, sliced in half.

"That's it," she says, turning the heat as low as possible. She counsels me to ignore the pavlovian temptation to stir and let the heat and fat work their magic on the tomatoes. As they begin to sigh open in the pan, Gianna starts measuring out flour and water, the two ingredients needed to make pasta.

There's a soothing, sensual rhythm to working pasta dough, not dissimilar to the pull-and-twist involved in preparing burrata. You pinch, knead and roll, rinsing and repeating until you have a firm, yellow dough. To make orecchiette, a curved, dish-like pasta shape from Puglia named after its similarity in appearance to an ear, you take a small cube of dough, press down with the ►

You can swim at Polignano a Mare, sip natural wine at vineyards outside Lecce and taste olive oil harvested from 3000-year-old trees planted by the Romans.



Cacti at Masseria
Montenapoleone.
Opposite: the
coastline at
Polignano a Mare.



bottom of your knife, roll it out and then invert the shape by pushing it down onto your thumb. The deep ridges of orecchiette are perfect for retaining sauce, making it the kind of pasta you want to drench in glossy, salty, tomato juices.

I am as bad at making orecchiette as I am at making burrata. (Both require hand-eye coordination, of which I have none.) Marco, Gianna's sous chef, surveys my misshapen orecchiette – less ear-shaped and more like sad, deflated balloons – grimly. Before long, he quite literally takes matters into his own hands and steps in to help me. “If you are struggling, I recommend to drink more wine,” Gianna says encouragingly, topping up my glass.

Now this, I am good at. Puglia is Italy's largest winemaking region, producing 17 per cent of the country's total vino output. In the past, this wine was produced in bulk and happily drunk by locals, rarely exported. But today, the Pugliese method of production – simple, using native grapes and biodynamic methods – is in demand across the world. There are four grapes worth

noting: negroamaro, a red variety grown on the Salento coast; primitivo, a rich and spicy red; susumaniello, one for all the rosé lovers and grown mostly in the vineyards outside Lecce; and verdea, light and chic, the kind of white wine the heroine of a Nancy Meyers film would drink by the bottle.

Puglia has always been sun-drenched and fertile, which is why it's a particularly good place to make wine. But these are also particularly good conditions to make olive oil. It was the Romans who first realised that when they started planting trees up and down the Appian Way, the ancient road that connected Naples with Brindisi, 300 kilometres to the east. Their goal was fuel: olive oil powered light sources and tools, giving them the wherewithal to march down the world's first super highway and set off, at Brindisi port, for destinations as far flung as the Balkans and Asia. Today, there are about 60 million gnarly and twisted olive trees in the region, all of which are protected by airtight laws. If you want to build a house on a piece of land bearing Roman olive trees, you better be prepared to build it in the shade of the grove. According to Pugliese law, no olive tree can be uprooted.

**“If you are struggling,
I recommend to drink
more wine,” Gianna says
encouragingly, topping
up my glass.**

There are plenty of modern highways in Puglia today. But if you happen to be driving town to town, between the white-washed corners of Ostuni and the hills of Cisternino, say, you may find the quickest route is on the same 2300-year-old road that those Roman soldiers once marched down. As we speed along the Appian Way one morning, past fields of fennel and cime di rapa – that curly-leafed, bitter broccoli that goes so ►



Clockwise from left: a fisherman in Monopoli; an olive grove; seafood marinara spaghetti on the Fasano coastline.



well with a plate of orecchiette – Max draws attention to certain trees that look withered and dry, their branches bearing no fruit.

These trees have been infected with *Xylella*, a deadly bacteria spread by insects that sucks out the liquid from olive trees, drying them to a husk. Once that happens, the plant will most likely never produce olives again. According to reports, more than 5000 square kilometres of Puglian land has been infected since 2013, with some 11 million trees believed to be at risk. There is no known cure.

The worst affected areas are down near Lecce, where scientists are on regular patrol, inspecting plantations for any hint of infection. Further north, in the dusty valleys outside Ostuni, the trees are healthier. So healthy, in fact, that when we visit one family-owned farm, workers are busy scooping purple-green fruits into baskets to be pressed. This masseria is the site of one of the region's oldest olive trees, a wizened old crone of a bush propped up with bricks as it bends towards the sun. The whitewashed masseria building is home to a fascinating history of olive-oil production, with tools dating back to the Roman era. Today, the owner is a seventh-generation oil man, whose family has lived and worked on the property for more than 200 years.

In Puglia, they call olive oil liquid gold, but it's actually kind of thick and green. Pour out a nip of high-quality stuff – something in a heavy, dark glass bottle that bears the label extra-virgin – and you'll see what I mean. Made from just-ripened fruit with only the faintest hint of purple blush, it should be smooth, yes, but also a little spicy and bitter, too. It should be complicated and evolve in your throat. It should be the kind of thing you want to douse a hunk of crusty bread in.

Back in Roman times, olive oil was the fuel of the region. Even today, the oil is still the thing, an agricultural endeavour pursued with a near-religious fervour. There are 240,000 olive farms in the area and olive trees outnumber people 15 to one. There's a carafe of olive oil on practically every table, an olive tree in almost every backyard. In this, a region with more olive trees than square kilometres, you can't look out a window and not see at least one, all sun-bleached trunk and sage-green leaves.

The bacteria hasn't made it to Masseria Montenapoleone yet, a farmhouse hotel outside of Fasano, either. The trees here stretch as far as the eye can see and further still, feathered green leaves reaching out to touch the horizon. Owner Giuliano takes me on a walk through the property at dusk, when the air is still and heavy with the scent of lemon and rosemary, and the sun is gallantly protesting its bedtime like a raucous toddler. Finally, it bids farewell in a tantrum of orange and pink and blue. (Italy! Even the sunsets are dramatic.)

There's a crisp kick to the breeze as we walk through Giuliano's olive groves. He is explaining the importance of conservation. That, when it comes to the olive trees, Giuliano believes it is Masseria Montenapoleone's vocation to nurture them for the next millennium and the one after that, just as the Romans did.

"We could talk about olive oil for another hour," he jokes. "Olive oil and humans have been together for so long. Humans have to take care of the trees. That's why we have trees that have been here for thousands of years." He walks ahead of me on the path and for a second, as the horizon darkens, I lose sight of him amidst the tangle of olive trees, swaying in the wind. ●



Luxury Escapes organised GT's travel to Puglia. The tour company offers a seven- or nine-day trip through Puglia, beginning in Lecce and taking in towns including Ostuni, Monopoli, Polignano a Mare and Alberobello, with the possible extension to Matera.
luxuryescapes.com/tours



Extend your stay

Now more than ever, travel is a true luxury, so it's important to take considered, sustainably-minded trips where possible. To make the most of the air miles, pack more into your Puglia adventure with these add-ons and extra journeys.



WEEKEND IN ROME

On a high-speed railway route you can make it from Bari to Rome in less than four hours. Whether it's your first time in the Italian city or the umpteenth, prepare to be dazzled by the majesty of the Trevi Fountain and the Colosseum before heading to the vibrant Trastevere quarter for a plate of cacio e pepe, the creamy, peppery Roman specialty, at Trattoria Da Enzo.

TRAIN TO VENICE

Jump on a train in Brindisi and in eight-and-a-half very scenic hours you'll find yourself strolling along the canals of Venice. Learn all about the city's history at the Palazzo Ducale museum, then get a ferry to the bustling region of Cannaregio and secure a canal-side table at Paradiso Perduto, a jazz club and seafood restaurant serving fritto misto and jugs of prosecco.

FERRY TO DUBROVNIK

The Croatian harbour city's medieval old town has attracted tourists for decades, long before it became globally famous as the real-life iteration of *Game of Thrones*' King's Landing. Book a berth on an overnight ferry in Bari and wake up in Dubrovnik in the morning, ready to traverse the walled city before retiring to the Hotel Excelsior for sundowners overlooking the Adriatic Sea.



A CHEF'S GUIDE TO...

Milan, Italy

From a classic osteria to an izakaya bar, chef DIEGO ROSSI takes us on a culinary tour of his favourite city venues.

The name of his restaurant might mean tripe, but Diego Rossi likes to eat vegetables when he goes out. Contradictory? Perhaps, but sidestepping expectations is a trademark of this firebrand Italian chef.

Born in Verona, Rossi is the cooking force behind Trippa, Milan's "people's trattoria" renowned for its democratic, produce-driven and affordable approach to feeding guests. When he's not in the kitchen, this is where you'll find Rossi eating and drinking.



Come say ciao!

When you say, "I'm going to eat in a trattoria", your imagination goes towards an old place with a grandmother in the kitchen cooking big portions. With Trippa, I wanted to bring the concept of the trattoria into today's world. You will still find the signs of a traditional trattoria: the service is casual, the colours

warm and the food affordable. But in the service style and kitchen, we try to bring it forward. There is a stronger focus on the ingredients. The menu is very seasonal. And we like to create new dishes using forgotten products.

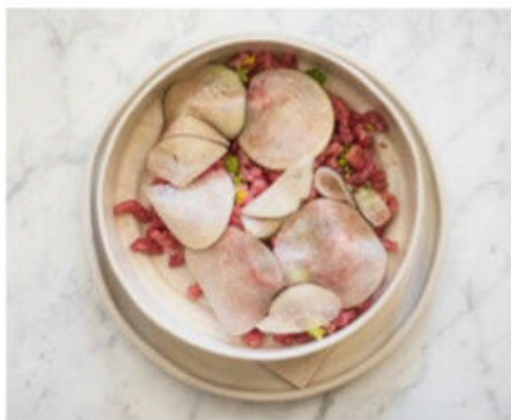
"We need more restaurants like this"

Nebbia was opened in the centre of Milan by three young friends: chefs Federico Fiore and Mattia Grilli, and restaurant manager Marco Marone, who worked in Michelin-starred restaurants such as Le Chateaubriand in Paris. It's casual and, with its big, bright dining room, reminds me more of a French bistro than a trattoria. The food is Italian both in generosity and flavour.

Vegetables, as nature intended

The name of my restaurant is Trippa, but I usually only eat vegetables, which is why I love Tipografia Alimentare. The menu focuses on vegetables, and dishes are highly seasonal and cooked and seasoned very simply. The produce is as natural and ethical as possible and this philosophy extends beyond the food to the wine and beer. The coffee is great, too. It has a hipster vibe including random vintage furniture, but it's not pretentious. The service is simple, and the people are very kind. You feel good when you are here.

Clockwise from right: sheep tartare with marinated black turnip at Tipografia Alimentare; bao "del giorno" at Kanpai; Marco Marone (from left), Mattia Grilli and Federico Fiore of Nebbia. Opposite: Duomo di Milano.



Classic Italian

Rovello 18 is an old and charming restaurant with simple, classic Italian food. You might start with charcuterie or some sausage with polenta and then move to homemade pastas and grilled meat or fish. It's like an osteria, only a little more chic. It's old-school romance at its best.

Late-night snacks and sake

After service, you'll usually find me at Kanpai, a Japanese izakaya open until 2am. I love the vibe and the food, and the owner is a good friend. It serves typical izakaya dishes:



agedashi tofu, karaage chicken, okonomiyaki. I always order the natto, a traditional dish of fermented soybeans. It's super-funky, but I love it.

Countryside escape

My favourite is Trattoria del Gallo, a very typical countryside trattoria only 20 minutes by car from the centre of Milan. This is where you can eat authentic and simple Lombardy cuisine like cotoletta and risotto alla Milanese. Its wine cellar is as deep as its history – the restaurant dates back to 1870 – with old, hard-to-find bottles as well as natural wine. It's beautiful in summer to sit in the garden and it's cosy in winter. It's the kind of place to visit on Sunday for a long family lunch.

Drinking cocktails in style

For cocktails, I love to visit 1930. It's a very special place for me. As you can probably guess from the name, everything is in the style of the 1930s. The music is always good – usually swing or live piano. It's a secret speakeasy, with no website or online address. You first enter through a very ugly bar, then are brought to a door hidden in the back. In summer, I love Ceresio 7, a rooftop bar with a swimming pool. The bartender is one of the best in Italy. You can drink great cocktails with a beautiful view of Milan.

Natural wine and solidarity

New natural wine bar and shop, E/N Enoteca Naturale is very special. The building – an abandoned 1940s school – is located in one of the most beautiful places in Milan, the pedestrian-only Via Santa Croce, and has a huge, lovely garden, which is hard to find in the city centre. But it's not only special because of its beauty: the bar promotes social inclusion of asylum seekers with traineeships. The staff are young and passionate about natural wine.

Learn about Italy's best natural winemakers

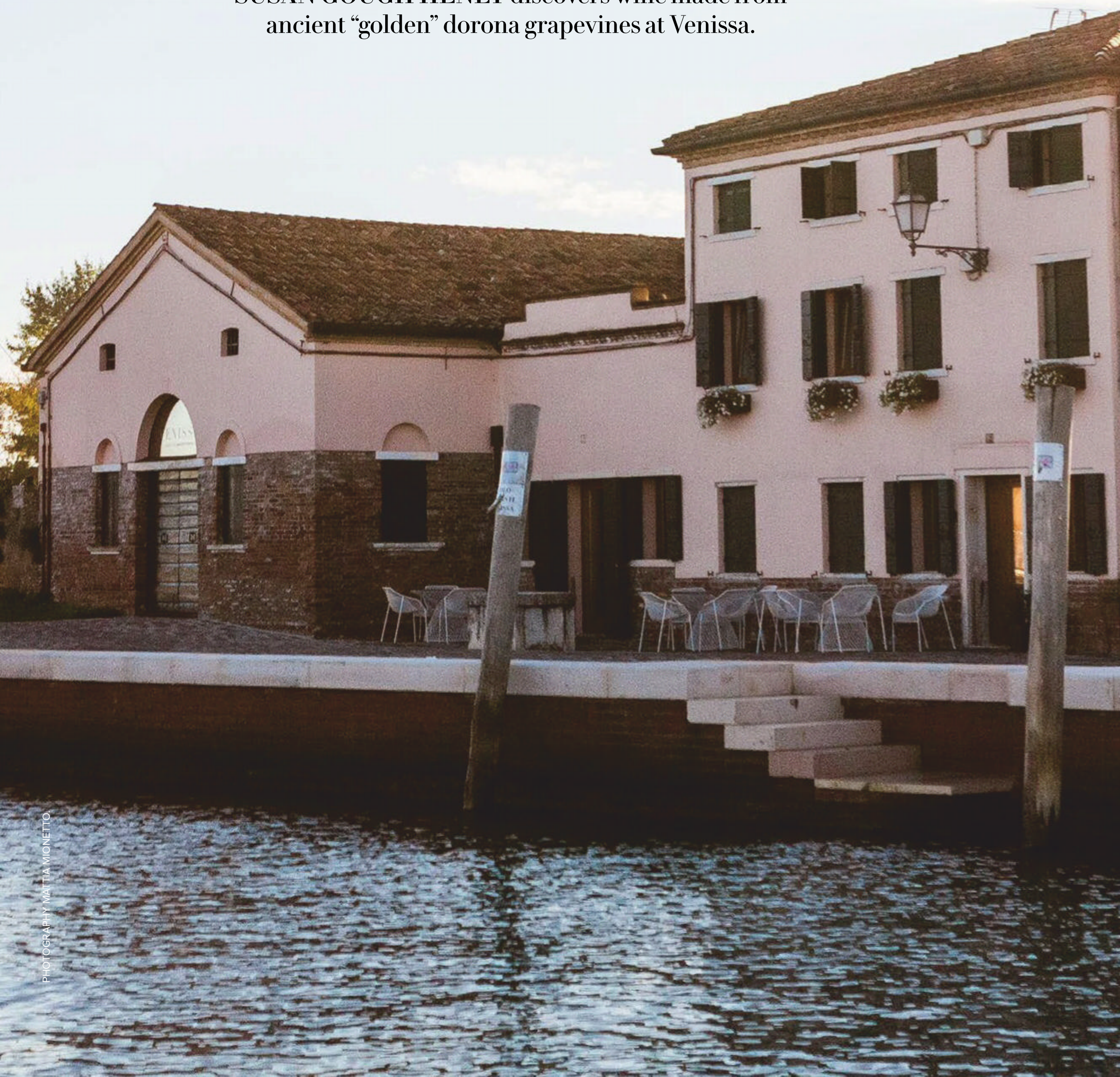
If you love natural wine like me, you must visit Vinoir, a relaxed enoteca near the canal. The owner, Gianluca Ladu, is one of the most important sommeliers in the city and was one of the first to sell natural wine in Milan. He's hardcore: very prepared, passionate and uncompromising. He only pours natural wine, and with each bottle there is a story. His storytelling is reason enough to visit, really. ●

As told to Jessica Rigg for **The Local Tongue**. For more chef's guides from around the world, see thelocaltongue.com

GOLD COAST



On Mazzorbo island in Venice, but far from the crowds,
SUSAN GOUGH HENLY discovers wine made from
ancient “golden” dorona grapevines at Venissa.



It's dusk and the Venetian lagoon shimmers all around us, the last rays of sunshine burnishing the bell towers and salt marshes and the occasional cormorant drying its wings. The vaporetto has taken us from the jangled crowds of the Grand Canal, past the glass factories of Murano and out across this wide silvery expanse towards the island of Mazzorbo, home to Venissa, the last and only commercial vineyard of dorona grapes.

Turns out that vines have grown in and around Venice for centuries. They were planted with Venice's very own dorona, or "golden", grape variety, which adapted well to the saltiness of the lagoon. In the year 1100, records show that vineyards were dotted throughout Piazza San Marco and other campi, or fields, of the city. (The ghosts of this ploughed earth remain in the term campo that is used to denote many squares in Venice.) While San Marco's vines were pulled out long ago to make way for palazzi, vineyards in the outer islands continued producing wine for generations. All remaining vines were lost in the great flood of 1966. Or so it seemed.

About 18 years ago, however, Gianluca Bisol, the president of one of Italy's renowned prosecco wineries, discovered some dorona vines growing next to the church of Santa Maria Assunta on the island of Torcello. After tracking down another 88 vines in private gardens dotted around islands in the northern lagoon, the Bisol family decided to replant an abandoned walled vineyard on Mazzorbo from propagated cuttings. Their goal: to restore the ancient winemaking tradition of La Serenissima.

"Viticulture has always been very important to us," explains Bisol's 32-year-old son Matteo, managing director of Venissa. "We're Italian so we could never survive without our local wine."

This walled vineyard has now become the centre of a slow-travel project which includes a Michelin-starred restaurant, a contemporary osteria, and a boutique hotel, which offers a range of immersive experiences far from Venice's tourist hordes.

Quite apart from its recent flooding, Venice has for many years been drowning in over-tourism. While banning cruise ships would make the biggest impact, there's also a place for thoughtful small-scale alternatives, such as Venissa, which honour long-standing traditions and offer a palpable sense of place.

As the water bus drops us at the Mazzorbo terminal, a sense of calm descends upon us. We pass a fisherman and amble along a serene canal-side street before arriving at the salmon-pink stucco and red-brick building that is Venissa. The five-room country inn and its two restaurants have been reimagined by architect Mariano Zanon from the lagoon home of the walled Scarpa Volo wine estate, abandoned more than 50 years ago.

At its heart is a remarkable biodiverse two-hectare campo overlooked by a 15th-century bell tower. Matteo

shows us around, pointing to the rows of 4000 dorona grapevines interspersed with 40 local herbs. He explains that they only planted vines on half of the space, leaving the rest for an orchard, grasses and vegetable plots, which are tended by local retirees. Red roses perfume the air, but also work as disease indicators.

Conventional wisdom says that vines do best with little access to water so their roots must plunge deep into the soil to seek nutrients. Yet here they are surrounded by salty water that often floods their root systems. The secret, we learn, is that these vines have learned how to grow horizontally to find fresh water while the ever-present salinity adds its own form of stress and unique flavour profiles.

"We decided that the best place to drink such an unusual wine was right in front of the vineyard," says Matteo as he guides us to their 25-seat, one-Michelin-starred restaurant set in a glass cube fashioned from a former toolshed. The food is an equal match to the wine, with chef Chiara Pavan, named Italy's best female chef for 2019, at the helm. Her innovative cuisine might include soft-shell crab, cuttlefish, clams, and an array of local fish and foraged herbs of the lagoon, not to mention the garden's exquisite tender artichokes, string beans, tomatoes and onions.

"The whole history of Venice can be found in this bottle," says Matteo. Here is Venetian wine reminiscent of what was served at the Doges' banquets.

Above: Venissa's guests can visit the nearby isle of Burano. Opposite, clockwise from top left: Chefs pick herbs in Venissa's vineyards; Venissa wine on the osteria's terrace; a boat ferries guests from Venice to dine at Venissa. PREVIOUS PAGES Venissa and its walled vineyard.





The last of Venice's goldbeaters creates gold-leaf wine labels that are baked onto bottles in Murano's glass-firing ovens. It's a local tradition that, like winemaking, had almost disappeared.

The Bisol family works with Tuscan wine consultant Roberto Cipresso, an expert in viticultural history. "We make this white wine just like a long-lasting red, with lots of skin contact," says Matteo. "It's the way Venetians have always done it, so they could preserve the wine without refrigeration or underground cellars. It's very fresh and acidic, yet has a unique bittersweet, salty character that speaks of this place."

They also produce a Rosso Venissa red wine from a blend of merlot and carménère grapes grown in a 50-year-old vineyard rented from the Swarovski family



"We're Italian so we could never survive without our local wine."

on their nearby private island, Santa Cristina. And Matteo has even created the delicious Venusa beer, fragrant with lagoon herbs.

The next day we explore the lagoon on an old bragozzo with a fisherman who shows us how he harvests moeche, or soft-shell crabs. We could have also taken a gondola class with Burano's rowing club or learned how to make essi biscotti with the local ladies, if there'd been time.

That night we feast on rosemary tagliatelle with a ragù of local duck, guinea fowl and quail on the patio of the osteria. And later, we fall asleep on a sublime Piero Lissoni-designed bed in our spacious suite. The next morning we enjoy excellent coffee and the kitchen's freshly baked breads with house-made jam.

"We want our guests to experience what we like to do ourselves, so we created activities that are not really available to tourists... most are through our personal relationships," says Matteo. "I think the right type of tourism is where travellers experience 'true things' that keep the traditions of Venice alive. It's important to have the right balance between visitors and the local community." Venissa has certainly found it.

Venissa, Fondamenta Santa Caterina 3, Venice, Italy, venissa.it ●

Getting there

Venissa is a 35-minute ride by water taxi from Marco Polo Airport in Venice.

Perth,
WA

CHECKING IN

The Ritz-Carlton, Perth

We take the guesswork out of local travel with our tips on where to stay, eat, drink and play. This month, *GT* hits the west coast.



Quick
look

Where

1 Barrack St, Perth
ritzcarlton.com/perth

Facilities

Prices from \$362
per night for a
standard room

Pool Yes

Hotel bar Yes

Restaurant Yes

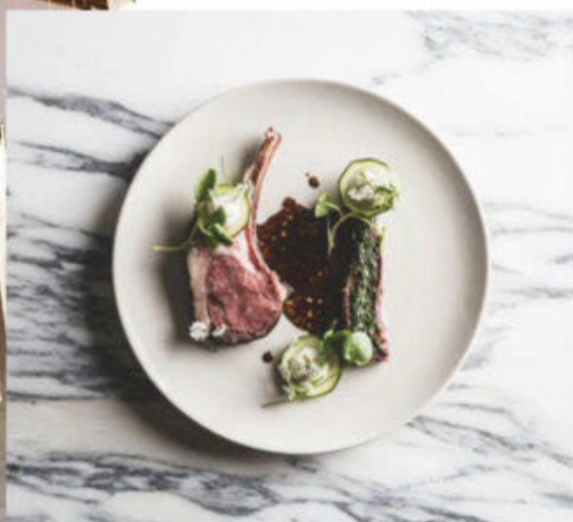
Room service Yes

Concierge 24hr

Overlooking the Swan River and sitting at the edge of Elizabeth Quay, The Ritz-Carlton, Perth offers a boutique feel with all the luxuries that you'd expect from the high-end brand. It's hard not to be impressed by its size (there are 205 rooms within the glossy high-rise tower) and while it's one of Perth's largest places to stay, the space is far from formulaic. A relaxed Western Australian vibe is evident throughout the hotel, from the 10,000 pieces of Kimberley sandstone on the lobby walls to the abstract aerial images that panel the rooms. Each element creates a sense of calm normally associated with being far from the city, despite being in the heart of the CBD. The bathrooms are a highlight – each with a double vanity, towering rain shower and freestanding bathtub. Check in and soak it up. ritzcarlton.com

STAY

WORDS LAURA JACOBS. PHOTOGRAPHY THOMAS DAVIDSON (ISLAND MARKET),
LAURA JACOBS (BATHROOM & LOBBY) & GETTY IMAGES (ROTTNEST ISLAND).



Clockwise from above: details in the lobby of The Ritz-Carlton, Perth; Mottainai lamb at Hearth; Island Market, Trigg Beach; the basin at Rottnest Island; the bathroom of a deluxe double room at The Ritz-Carlton, Perth. Opposite: Hearth's dining room.

DAY TRIP

With the coast located only 20 minutes from the city, it can be hard to choose what part of the long stretch of beach to go to. **Cottesloe Beach** is well known for many reasons, with lunch spots such as Il Lido, The Beach Club and Canteen Pizza ready to satisfy any cravings between swims. To get away from the weekend crowds, head north to **Trigg Beach** for fantastic fish and chips at Island Market on the water's edge. Still not enough coastline? A one-hour ferry will get you to **Rottnest Island**, traditionally known as Wadjemup, a haven in the summer for locals and tourist alike. Ferries depart daily from Barrack Street Jetty, less than a minute's walk from The Ritz-Carlton, Perth.



DRINK

Small-batch wine and beer fill the drinks menu of **Tiny's**, an impeccably decorated bar and restaurant in the CBD. Terrazzo countertops, wood panelling and tons of greenery create the perfect spot for a glass before dinner. tinysbar.com

EXPERIENCE

Walking into the **Spa at The Ritz-Carlton, Perth** is similar to the feeling you experience before falling asleep. It's a dream-like space perfect for taking an hour (or four) to yourself. It's not just the native-Australian tea served on arrival or the signature massage that incorporates rose quartz crystals, aromatherapy oils and lymphatic breathing, but the addition of vitality pools, a yoga studio and saunas that will guarantee a return visit. Pick up LaGaia Unedited products to continue the dream at home. ritzcarlton.com

EAT

Breakfast

Take a stroll up Barrack Street into the heart of the city to **Post**, hidden within the heritage State Buildings. Named after its former location at Perth's original General Post Office, this all-day osteria is popular in the mornings for its Mano a Mano coffee, but be sure to indulge in something more substantial. With its seasonal menu that covers all the classics, it's well worth it. postperth.com

Lunch

Despite numerous changes of ownership, **Balthazar's** reputation continues to shine, making it an institution worth visiting. The lunch menu includes seafood spaghetti, a showcase of what the coastal waters of the west have to offer, liberally coated in prawn oil; or girello carpaccio with rich cheddar cream and enoki mushrooms. balthazar.com.au

Dinner

As its name suggests, **Hearth** is all about open fire. Abrolhos Islands scallops are hidden under shaved boab tuber and paired with a smoky hit of charred avocado, while the Mottainai lamb arrives with a rendered crust, made possible by the heat of an open flame. Despite its 180 seats, impossibly high ceilings and suede furnishings keep the noise level of the dining space to a low hum. It's the perfect setting for chef Jed Gerrard's locally sourced menu, which comes with a map of each ingredient's WA origin. hearthrestaurant.com.au ●



La Casa del Gigante Luxury Collection

Named after Monterosso's Il Gigante rock sculpture, this private villa is a favourite among design lovers for its rich Italian history. The home was designed by famed Italian architect Claudio Andreani and interiors are by Piero Pinto. Via Privata Montale 13



Monterosso Al Mare's beach.

Monterosso al Mare

One of five Cinque Terre villages, this town is known for its beach and Genoese cuisine, writes **LISA MARIE CORSO**.



SHOP

Fabbrica d'Arte Monterosso

Carry-on baggage exists for the very reason that you'll end up in a shop like this on your travels. Featuring the work of local artists and ceramicists, every piece is curated and handmade to reflect the offerings of Cinque Terre ranging from ceramic anchovies to terracotta sculptures of Monterosso's 14th-century church, San Giovanni Battista. Via Roma 9



DRINK

Enoteca Internazionale

If there's one thing we should all embrace on holiday, it's aperitivo. The Babieri family takes aperitivo seriously and as custodians of the oldest wine bar and shop in the village, has an extensive wine menu that showcases the best wine suppliers throughout the Cinque Terre. Tastings are available and well partnered with their antipasti board. Via Roma 63



Getting there

Take an **intercity train from Florence, Milan, Rome or Turin**, then a **direct local train from La Spezia or Genoa**.



EAT

Il Bocconcino

Visit this hole-in-the-wall takeaway spot, located near the town's train station, for paper cones filled with fritto misto di mare (deep-fried seafood; above). The line may be long but it moves quickly; order the combination cone with locally sourced calamari, scallops, prawns and the region's best catch, anchovies. Via Fegina 52

L'Osteria

In larger cities such as Rome, but especially in smaller towns like Monterosso, making a dinner booking is essential. L'Osteria is a small family-run restaurant that specialises in regional seafood dishes including baked whole anchovies with tomatoes, pasta vongole, and squid-ink ravioli stuffed with sea bass and served with scampi. Via Vittorio Emanuele 5

Focacceria Antonio Enoteca

Whether you're dining in or packing a slice to eat in the mountains on the area's hiking trails, this focacceria is the place to go. The menu includes the region's farinata, made with chickpea flour, and focaccia, all freshly baked every morning and sold by the slice. Toppings include pesto, sausage, potato, mozzarella and anchovy. Via Fegina 124

If you're hoping to recline on a striped deckchair with an Aperol Spritz in hand or keen for a relaxing ocean swim, then Fegina beach awaits you. It's the biggest beach in all of Cinque Terre and the only sand-covered option in the area.

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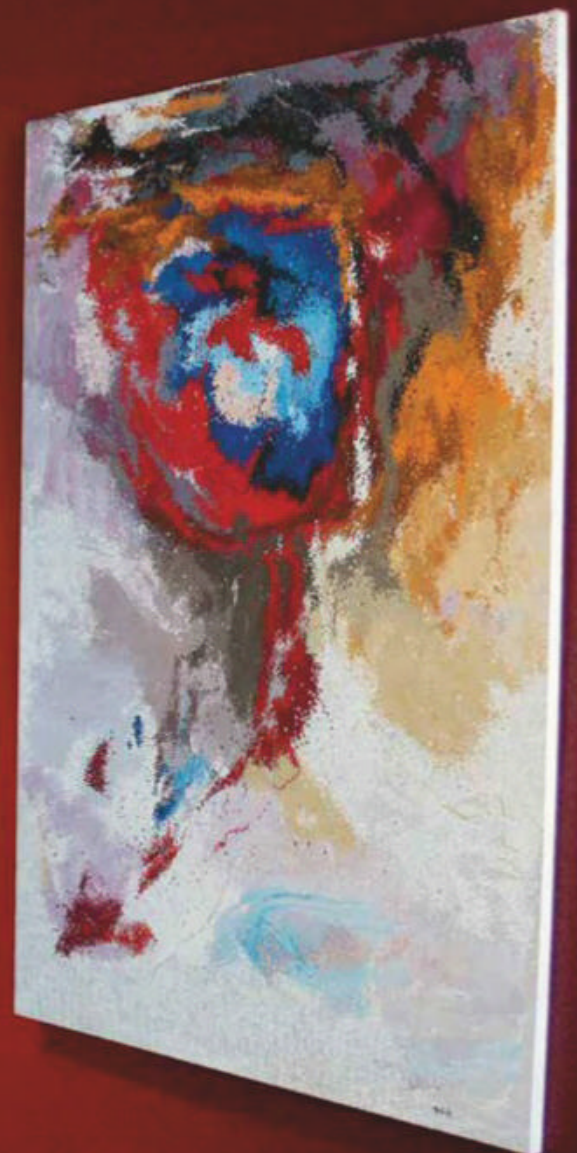
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Channel retro Italian vibes with this bold and bright vase. Space Age 1970s Murano glass vase, \$861, 1stdibs.com



Gourmet Traveller Italian: Big Flavours, Classic Dishes (Bauer Media Books, \$59.99, hbk). magshop.com.au/australian-gourmet-traveller-italian

Embrace European luxury and elegance with these classic Italian designs.



Missoni Home for Spence & Lyda Inntil sofa, POA, spenceandlyda.com.au

Alessi Pulcina espresso coffee maker, from \$149, alessiaustralia.com.au



The
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New in style, design and technology.

Made from New Zealand wool, this rug is graphic art for the floor. Alquati+Corso Madame C rug, \$4275.54, 1stdibs.com



Add colour and interest to a living space with a seductive emerald-green chair. Mario Bellini Camaleonda chair, \$8610.45, 1stdibs.com



Keep your bathrobe stylish with Missoni's signature pattern in monochromatic towelling. Missoni Home Keith bathrobe, \$550, top3.com.au

Set a rustic alfresco table with these handcrafted pewter-rimmed plates. Valpelitro pewter dinner plate, \$95, warustica.com.au



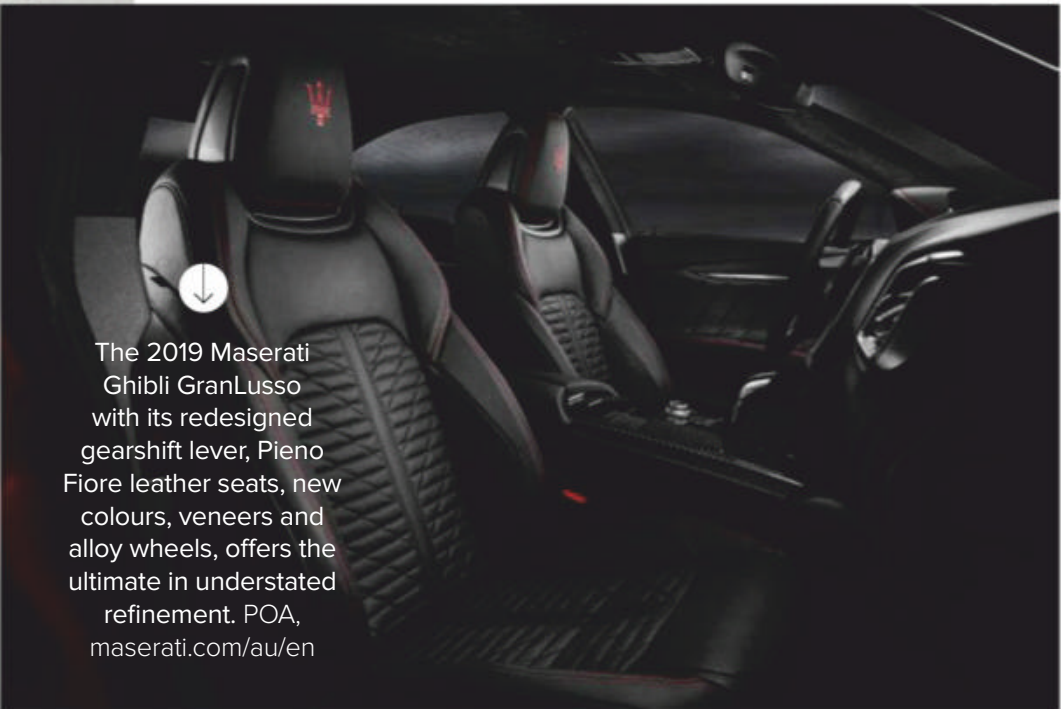
There's no excuse for a bland bottle opener with this handsome number. Alessi Alessandro M corkscrew, \$95, alessiaustralia.com.au

Gio Ponti for Domus Nova coffee table, \$3300, moderntimes.com.au



This hand-painted raised bowl will add visual appeal to your table or cabinet. Ettore Sottsass for Bitossi ceramic bowl, POA, hubfurniture.com.au

The 2019 Maserati Ghibli GranLusso with its redesigned gearshift lever, Pieno Fiore leather seats, new colours, veneers and alloy wheels, offers the ultimate in understated refinement. POA, maserati.com/au/en





Essential Cabin in Berry \$980

AN ODE TO ICELAND: RIMOWA REVEALS NEW SEASONAL COLOURS

Rare is the destination that captures the imagination as wholeheartedly as Iceland. A must-see for intrepid travellers the world over, the country's majestic fjords are the inspiration behind two crisp new RIMOWA colourways. Glacier Blue is an icy shade that nods to Hvalfjörður, one of Iceland's most acclaimed fjords, while Berry is a deep, subdued purple that takes its cues from flora in the region.

A staple of seasoned travellers, RIMOWA has been at the forefront of luggage innovation for over 120 years. From iconic aluminium cases to modern advancements in colourful polycarbonate, the marque has always stayed in step with the modern traveller's needs. With a proud history of production in Cologne, Germany, RIMOWA has this time sought colour inspiration from further afield. These seasonal hues are the latest example of on-trend travel pieces that pay homage to the world's most alluring places. Considered some of the most breath-taking scenery in Iceland, Hvalfjörður lies 50 kilometres beyond the quirky capital of Reykjavik and is known for its expansive landscapes and soaring volcanic mountains. Visitors marvel at Glymur, the 198-metre-tall waterfall along the Botnsá river, that cascades over rocky ridges topped with lush greenery in the summer.

Ample hiking trails along the 30-kilometer fjord offer close encounters with native wildlife and unique flora. In winter, the topography transforms into a snow-capped spectacle made for budding travel photographers. It is this unique breed of remote, untamed wilderness that draws modern explorers to this part of the world.

Pulling from the fjord's palette, the new Glacier Blue and Berry colours continue RIMOWA's seasonal release of expertly-matched hues. While regularly available in the RIMOWA Essential line, the seasonal colours are also to be released in the ultra-lightweight Essential Lite for the very first time.

Weighing 30% less than the RIMOWA Essential, the RIMOWA Essential Lite is the brand's lightest suitcase yet. Expert engineering ensures supreme portability without compromising on durability for even the most rigorous journeys. The RIMOWA Essential Lite comes in Glacier Blue, a statement-making shade seen in every detail from the lustrous exterior to the matching badge. Available in both cabin and check-in sizes, the cases make a colourful addition to any type of trip –perhaps even one as far-flung as Iceland.



Polignano a Mare,
Puglia, Italy.

Jewel statement

Pack for a stylish Mediterranean escape with Italian designer pieces in blush and emerald.

1 Valentino T-shirt, \$640, from Net-a-Porter. **2** Bottega Veneta mules, \$990, from Net-a-Porter. **3** Bracelet with gems, \$17,500, from Dolce & Gabbana. **4** Mini Vara bow bag, \$1750, from Salvatore Ferragamo. **5** Marni selvedge-denim jeans, \$718, from Matches Fashion. **6** Missoni glitter knit top, \$830, from Farfetch. **7** Miu Miu cat-eye sunglasses, \$405, from My Theresa. **8** Oversized sweatshirt with Gucci Tennis, \$1400, from Gucci. **9** Marni leather A-line skirt, \$2827, from Matches Fashion. **10** Miu Miu silk blouse, \$1085, from My Theresa. **11** Prada La Femme L'eau EDT, \$205 for 100ml, from Prada. **12** Marni fisherman sandals, \$953, from Matches Fashion. **13** Missoni embroidered trousers, \$2080, from Farfetch. **14** Prada visor, \$280, from Net-a-Porter. **15** Prada A-line denim dress, \$765, from Matches Fashion.

Gourmet shopping

They're the flavours of the month, so put these items at the top of your wish list.



Abercrombie & Kent Explore the coast of Italy on an Abercrombie & Kent expedition cruise, uncovering the treasures of Rome, Florence, Venice, Sicily and more. 13 days from \$18,835, abercrombiekent.com.au



La Cornue Renowned globally for exquisite craftsmanship, French cuisine company La Cornue's range of Chateau cookers, built by hand in Paris since 1908, are a true symbol of French refinement. lacornue.com.au



Flinders Island Food & Crayfish Festival Experience culinary adventures on this beautiful Tasmanian island, which will be showcasing local food and produce from 15-19 April. foodandcrayfishfestival.com



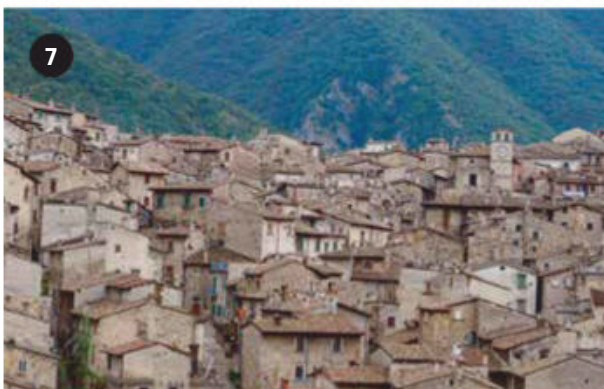
Harvey Norman The Multi Pro Sense Food Processor by Kenwood handles all your food processing needs in one appliance, which includes a blender, scales and a powerful motor. \$579, harveynorman.com.au



Omega worked closely with Daniel Craig to create 007's latest on-screen watch. This stylish 42mm timepiece is crafted from strong yet lightweight Grade 2 Titanium. \$13,075, omegawatches.com



Parisi The Real Kitchen Mixer by Newform combines traditional styling with modern functionality due to its swivel spout and pull-out with dual-spray function. Made in Italy. \$945, parisi.com.au



Touring Abruzzo Experience the beauty, food and culture of central and southern Italy including Abruzzo, Molise, Puglia, Basilicata and now Sardinia in 2020 on small-group tours. touringabruzzo.com



República Organic's Biodegradable Coffee Pods are compatible with Nespresso machines and decompose in approximately 730 days. Delicious and good for our planet. \$5 at Coles, republicaorganic.com.au



Wayfarer Experiences' walk packages provide travellers looking for a richer European experience an easy way to achieve multiple walks in multiple countries. wayfarerexperiences.com.au

Aqua therapy

From moisturisers to serums, hydration is the key to unlocking a glowing complexion.

1 This water-based serum is packed with highly concentrated actives to help boost hydration and skin radiance. Liberty Belle Rx Glam Squad, \$144, libertybellerx.com.au **2** The peptides in this face cream deliver a luminous, even complexion. Babor ReVersive Pro Youth Cream, \$282, babor.com.au **3** A protective and brightening antioxidant-rich oil designed to defend against environmental stressors including pollution and UV. Bybi Buriti Booster, \$23, sephora.com.au **4** An overnight gel mask with traditional Chinese herbs that act as a barrier to moisturise the skin and minimise the signs of ageing. Yora Revitalise Face Mask, \$155, yora.com.au **5** A refreshing face mist that locks in moisture to restore hydration. Yora Refresh Face Mist, \$115, yora.com.au **6** A silky, non-foaming formulation that contains powerful AHAs to refine skin texture without stripping the skin's lipid barrier. Dermalist Ultra Hydrating Lactic Cleanser, \$69, dermalist.com **7** This age-defying face oil is enriched with an abundance of omega-rich oils to help achieve youthful and radiant skin. Edible Beauty & Exotic Seed of Youth Anti-Ageing Oil, \$64, ediblebeautyaustralia.com

Wake-up call

Make the daily grind that little bit more refined with these time-honoured tools of the trade for a top morning brew.



Clockwise from top left: Kinto 4-cup brewer stand set, \$245, from Coffee Parts. Espresso coffee beans, \$29.99 for 1kg, from Vittoria. Coffee clip, \$92 as part of The Tea Set, from Seed & Sprout. Bialetti Moka Express 6-cup espresso maker, \$45, from Peter's of Kensington. Espresso cup in milk, \$23, from Mud Australia. Timemore Chestnut manual coffee grinder in golden/walnut, \$269, from Coffee Parts.

PHOTOGRAPHY WILL HORNER. STYLING & MERCHANDISING LAURA JACOBS. ALL PROPS STYLIST'S OWN.

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rebuild ourtowns

• AUSSIES LENDING A HAND •

The practical things you can do to help rebuild Australia, one town at a time

There's not a single Australian who hasn't had their hearts broken by the horrific bushfires that have swept through our country. The road to rebuild will be long but as a nation we will: brick by brick, fence by fence. Bauer Media launched this campaign to help our neighbours in their time of need.

Each week we will shine a spotlight on a town telling our generous readers how they can help, from the best fundraisers to donate to that specifically benefit the locals, to products they can buy from that town or region that support small businesses there. We'll highlight the farmers who need fencing supplies, the schools which are short of books and pencils, the yoga school that needs mats or how to plan a getaway to the region when the time is right to bolster their local tourism industry.

The Rebuild Our Towns campaign is centred on the fact that practical help doesn't have to cost a fortune. Our love and thoughts go out to every person, but actions speak louder than words, so join us to make a difference and help our heartland heal.

Go to rebuildourtowns.com.au and watch as we move from one town to another over the coming months



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