

— JANUARY —

NEWS

Edited by **JORDAN KRETCHMER**

**Kata Kita,
Melbourne**

p18



FEELING '22

Hot restaurant openings, test your food knowledge with our culinary quiz, big ticket events and a new summer-ready drink to try.

THE LATEST FROM CHEFS AND RESTAURANTS AROUND AUSTRALIA

RESTAURANT NEWS



Clockwise from left: Kata Kita's dining room and the Indonesian-style hot and spicy crab; snacks at the Champagne Bar at QT Melbourne; the kitchen and counterseats at Wilma.



MELBOURNE

Kata Kita is the second restaurant from the Sanusi family, opening on La Trobe Street in Melbourne's CBD. Showcasing Indonesian hospitality by combining traditional recipes with locally sourced produce, order up babi guling (five-hour slow-roasted spiced pork) with lawar (vegetables with coconut and fried shallot sambal); and Indonesian-style hot and spicy crab. The family also want to familiarise people with bebek goreng madura, a slowly simmered duck dish, served with lemongrass and galangal sambal.

Also in the CBD, **QT Melbourne** is bringing an extra hit of luxury to its lobby, with the arrival of the Champagne Bar. Bottles of vintage Champagne and Martinis can be enjoyed alongside the new snack menu replete with lobster rolls and oysters.

Connie's Pizza is moving on up to a bigger home above Heartbreaker. The late-night hole-in-the-wall will now be able to seat more than 70 guests, and also has a rooftop deck with views over Lonsdale Street, from which you can enjoy 18-inch pizze, eggplant parmigiana and baked clams along with classic cocktails by The Everleigh Bottling Co.

CANBERRA

The capital has welcomed newcomer **Wilma**, which has been pitched as a progressive Asian barbecue restaurant. Headed up by James Viles (ex-Biota Dining) along with Brendan Hill (ex-Aria), the pair will serve up hot smoked char siu pork and glazed chilli beef ribs alongside XO pippies and sashimi to the sprawling 200-seat restaurant and bar.



Clockwise from above: watermelon, molasses and goat's cheese; and burrata with peaches and hazelnut at Il Pontile; Bay Nine's tokoroten with kuromitsu and kinako; crab salad at Rothwell's; Paloma Wine Bar's Alex and Karla Munoz Labart.



SYDNEY

Sydney is having a real Mediterranean moment. **Beau**, a new laneway wine bar and deli spin-off by the Nomad crew, will serve lunch-ready manoush topped with spiced lamb shoulder and zhoug; and Ortiz anchovies and shanklish in the front deli. Later in the day, the wine bar will offer cheese, house-made charcuterie, a cold seafood bar and left-of-centre wines on tap.

Il Pontile is bringing a slice of the Italian seaside to Woolloomooloo's finger wharves. Chef Mario Percuoco – a Naples-born chef whose father opened Buon Ricordo in Paddington in the '80s – is on the pans. Menu standouts include linguine al cartoccio (pasta in a paper parcel with mixed seafood) and sweet layered sfogliatelle.

Potts Point has welcomed **Bones Ramen**, a new pint-sized restaurant by Mike Mu Sung, who also owns the nearby Farmhouse. Chef Jacob Riwaka (ex-Rising Sun and Cornersmith) has crafted a short and sharp menu that features four ramens and four snacks, which may include celeriac chashu with Jerusalem artichoke, shiitake and oyster mushroom broth; or pork shoyu with soy egg, watercress and bamboo shoots.

Bay Nine Omakase has opened at Campbells Cove, the waterfront dining precinct in The Rocks. Chef Tomohiro Marshall Oguro, who honed his sushi-making skills at Sushi-E and Stephen Hodges' Fish Face, has spent the last two years forging strong relationships with seafood suppliers. The restaurant features a 10-seat counter dining experience alongside a handful of smaller floor tables.



QUEENSLAND

Dan Clark's second venue **Rothwell's Bar & Grill** sees the 1889 Enoteca owner joined by chef Ben Russell (ex-Aria) to deliver an elegant dining room and refined classics to a historic CBD building. Expect spaghetti crowned with sea urchin and caviar, fruits de mer platters, Moreton Bay bugs with café de Paris butter, and lattice pastry-wrapped beef Wellington, accompanied by grand chandeliers, U-shaped booths and polished silverware.

Finally, the owners of Burleigh Heads' Labart have opened **Paloma Wine Bar**. Chef Alex Munoz Labart's menu offers European-leaning small plates, such as fried school prawns; pig's-head risoni; and burrata with white anchovies and peppers on toast. You'll also find steak frites, plus the 'la burger', which sees a permanent menu spot for Labart's much-loved lockdown burger. Wine-wise, expect both old and new world producers, many available by the glass.





FOR GOODNESS SAKE

If you're not familiar with the wonders of sake, this new edition from the mountains of the Aichi Prefecture is the ideal introduction. Sake Sake's Junmai is a contemporary take – replete with its Jonathan Zawada-designed label and unusual food pairing suggestions – on 2500 years of tradition. Direct from Sekiya Brewery, it uses rice, water and koji to create bright, balanced pure sake, with blossoming floral notes and a subtle, savoury backbone. \$69, sakesake.me

Christmas may be over but there's still time to treat yourself with a subscription to *Gourmet Traveller* and the chance to win a share of up to \$200k cash.

magshop.com.au/xmas28

ON THE PASS with PAULA PANTANO, LOLA'S LEVEL 1



Can you tell us about how you developed the menu at Lola's Level 1?

When I met [the owners] Manny and Marco, the idea was to do something more Mediterranean, not just Italian. I'm from Argentina but I have a Spanish background in my family, so I grew up in an Italian-Spanish environment. I'm not afraid to see new things, to learn new things, and to taste.

What are some of your favourite dishes on the menu?

I love the socarrat. It's a crisp rice, which is not like a risotto or a paella – it's a bit different. It took me a while to train the staff to do it because it's quite tricky. I also love the pan tumaca, which is like a bruschetta, the only difference is we grate the tomato. That dish reminds me of my childhood.

So much of Spanish cooking is about preserved goods, such as anchovies and jamón. How did you settle on the perfect ones to use?

It took me a long time to find the right anchovies. There are brands that are super famous, but to me too salty. Once I did a tasting of 15 different types of Cantabrian anchovies – it was insane. I tried the Don Bocarte – they are amazing, so delicate and elegant. The flavour is beautiful but not too overpowering, and the olive oil they use is of an amazing quality, too.

You also cook with a charcoal grill. How did that come about?

When I arrived in the kitchen there was only a flat grill. I said, unless I have a charcoal, I'm not going to be here. Now we're planning to increase the size of it, because charcoal is the life of the menu.

Lola's Level 1, 180-186 Campbell Pde, Bondi Beach, lolaslevel1.com.au

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THE CULINARY QUIZ

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| 1. Which Italian cheese is named after sheep's milk? | 2. In wine terms, what does <i>blanc de blancs</i> mean? | 3. Jollof rice is considered the national dish of which country? |
| 4. Campari, red vermouth and soda water are the three ingredients for which classic cocktail? | 5. What does <i>bánh mì</i> translate to? | 6. Which celebrity does not have their own cooking show – Lady Gaga, Paris Hilton or Selena Gomez? |
| 7. Now considered a culinary delicacy, what were Akoya originally farmed for? | 8. True or false: jackfruit is the largest tree-borne fruit in the world. | 9. Name two types of Japanese noodles. |
| 10. What are juvenile oysters known as? | 11. Name the three main types of grapes used to make Champagne. | 12. What's the name for a Korean paste made from fermented soybeans and salt? |
| 13. Which famed New York restaurant recently overhauled its menu to be entirely vegan? | 14. Which of these is not a pasta shape: mantecato, conchiglie, mafaldine? | 15. What are the four key flavour profiles found in Thai cooking? |
| 16. In which year was <i>Gourmet Traveller</i> first published: 1982, 1966 or 1971? | 17. Where was Neil Perry's first restaurant? | 18. In the 1996 film <i>Big Night</i> , what is the centrepiece of the feast? |

Answers on page 22

THREE OF A KIND SUMMER EVENTS WORTH BOOKING

1 Sydney Festival

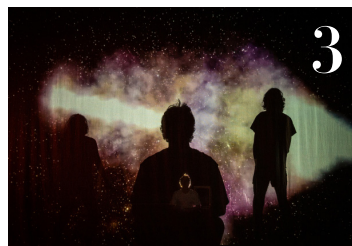
After spirits were dampened last year, Sydney Festival is poised to return in all its theatrical glory. Highlights include Sydney Symphony Under the Stars, a 22-night music series called Speakers Corner, and free performances dotted throughout the city. *January 6-30, sydneyfestival.org.au*

2 Australian Open

This grand slam event returns to remind everyone just how well Melbourne does sports and culture combined. While the athletic prowess and fierce competition is the centrepiece of the event, you can also expect well-curated dining experiences by Shane Delia, Ben Shewry, Nornie Bero and more. *January 17-30, ausopen.com*

3 Mona Foma

Tasmania's annual summer festival will take place across two weekends in both Launceston and Hobart. Mona Foma artistic director and Violent Femmes bassist Brian Ritchie has curated the dual city festival with boundary-pushing art, theatre and music. *January 21-23 (Launceston); January 28-30 (Hobart), mofo.net.au*

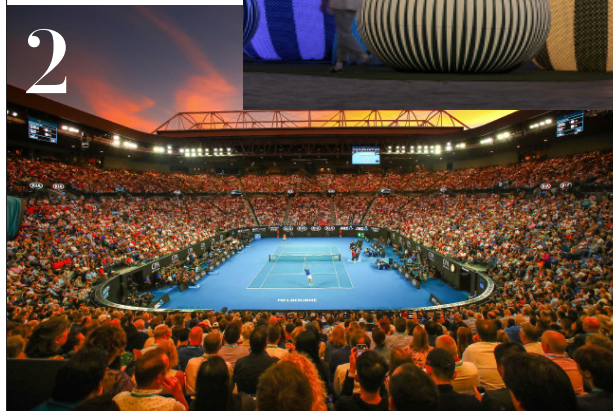


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RECIPES FOR SUCCESS

Food For Everyone founder and artist Gemma Leslie has just released a third round of her recipe-meets-charity posters. Made in collaboration with long-standing and upcoming chefs and authors, the series creates visual representations of recipes, with half of all profits from sales being donated to food banks, including OzHarvest, SecondBite and Asylum Seeker Resource Centre. The latest series of A2 posters includes recipes by Guillaume Brahimi (apple tarte Tatin with vanilla bean crème anglaise), author Emiko Davies (tagliolini al limone) and this month's *Gourmet Traveller* cover star Simon Gloftis (Hellenika's htapodi). Growing since its inception last year, Food For Everyone now includes plates, a colouring book and tea towels. "It began as a project to raise money for those struggling at the height of the pandemic, and today we're a social enterprise partnering with food banks across the country," says Leslie. \$90, foodforeveryone.org.au



CRÈME DE LA CRÈME

Spreadable cheese may sound like something that should only appear in children's lunch boxes, but hold that thought and trust cheesemonger Anthony Femia. Finca Valdivieso is a family-run dairy that began making Manchego in 1880 and its Manchego cream cheese combines summer truffle harvested from Soria with the raw milk cheese. It is now being exclusively imported by Melbourne's Maker and Monger. "It's best served alongside lightly toasted crusty sourdough that's been rubbed with fresh garlic and thinly sliced Iberico jamón," says Femia. \$25, makerandmonger.com.au

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- Answers** 1. Pecorino 2. Champagne made exclusively from white grapes
 3. Nigeria 4. Americano 5. In bread 6. Lady Gaga 7. Pearls 8. True
 9. Ramen, udon, soba, yakisoba, sōmen and hiyamugi are all possible answers
 10. Spat 11. Chardonnay, pinot noir and pinot meunier 12. Doenjang
 13. Eleven Madison Park 14. Mantecato 15. Sour, salty, spicy and sweet
 16. 1966 17. Bondi (Blue Water Grill) 18. A timballo (baked pasta dish)
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BOOK NOW

Fresh from a successful season in Melbourne, *Moulin Rouge! The Musical* will touch down at Sydney's Capitol Theatre in May. moulinrougemusical.com



PREMIUM MARKET

When Anthony Puharich opened Victor Churchill in Sydney 12 years ago, he didn't anticipate the global recognition the butchery would receive. Now, with some time to reflect and grow, he's brought the concept to Melbourne.

"They say, 'If it ain't broke don't fix it,' and Victor Churchill has been referred to as the most beautiful butcher shop in the world, so I've applied the same thinking," says Puharich. "But I never would have gotten away with a copycat version of the Sydney shop. I had to give Melbourne their own thing. It's got tweaks and improvements for them to feel proud of."

The familiarity of Churchill's avant-garde meat market remains in all its marble-floored and copper-accented glory, with the spectacle of butchers at work and fat-marbled steaks arranged artfully, the scent of rotisserie-cooked chickens filling the room. "You walk in and know it's Victor Churchill – Melbourne has the salt brick dry-ageing room and the wooden chopping blocks; the butchers are still on display too. The single biggest difference is the 12-seater bar we've created," says Puharich. People will be able to take a seat and enjoy dry-aged steaks grilled over coals, or a selection of house-made charcuterie with a glass of Champagne or shiraz. Along with the obvious signatures, there will also be brasserie-style starter plates, such as steak tartare, carpaccio, oysters and even lobster freshly plucked from the tank.

The evolution of the store hasn't been linear or fast moving. "I was meant to open Victor Churchill New York with Anthony Bourdain – I'd met Anthony when he was here filming *No Reservations* and we became friends," says Puharich. The pair started planning, but reported leasing complications followed by Bourdain's untimely death meant this plan never eventuated. "I didn't think about expansion for a couple of years [after that]," says Puharich. Eventually he began searching for the right location and building. A Melbourne shop made sense, given Vic's Meats (the meat supply arm of the business) has been working with restaurants in the state for more than 17 years, including Flowerdrum, Grossi, Stokehouse, Attica, Brae and MoVida.

"There's all these great chefs that I've had long relationships with," says Puharich. After relocating to Melbourne to ensure the smooth opening, Puharich is hopeful the reception of the High Street store in Armadale is as appreciated as Sydney has been. "I love Melbourne, and they know their stuff down here," says Puharich. "There's a reason why they were next."
953 High St, Armadale, Vic, victorchurchill.com