

KITCHEN CONFIDENTIAL

Chef's guide to ... ST KILDA

ASHLEE SKRZELINSKI

*Pullman Melbourne on
Swanston executive chef*



BISTRO VOLIERE

I love this little French gem. Its menu changes regularly and includes all the classics inspired by Parisian bistro cuisine. The bistro's grand interior features beautiful old-style high ceilings and a long mosaic bar that will instantly transport you to Saint Germain des Près. I can never go past the Tortelloni à la Truffe: truffle mushroom filled tortelloni, creamy blue cheese sauce, parmesan and herb shards; or the Confit de Canard: confit duck on the bone, duck croquette, Dutch carrots, confit onion, orange reduction, duck jus. They also have a beautiful French wine list, which complements the menu perfectly. C'est Magnifique!

The George, 129 Fitzroy St

CICCIOLINA

An oldie but a goodie, this St Kilda fixture has been around for almost 20 years and evokes immediate feelings of warmth, hospitality and comfort. Cicciolina's menu always features a delicious range of modern Italian-Australian dishes. You must try the squid ink spaghetti, spanner crab, nduja and tomato sugo – it is so good. I love this restaurant's homely feel with the large comfy red booths and fabulous service. They also have an impressive selection of non-alcoholic cocktails.

130 Acland St

MYA TIGER AT HOTEL ESPLANADE

This lively Cantonese restaurant can be found at the top of the Hotel Esplanade's majestic staircase and offers stunning views and authentic cuisine. The restaurant's inviting interior is said to be inspired by the Chinese cook-shops established in St Kilda during Victoria's 1850s gold rush era. The menu features an array of dishes, and they also do a fabulous Yum Cha on Sundays. I can't go past the Peking duck here.

11 The Esplanade

DONOVANS

A St Kilda institution, I love how homely this restaurant is and that you're right by the sea. The menu celebrates fresh local ingredients, which I love. I'm a big fan of cooking over charcoal and a whole section of the menu is dedicated to this style. The chargrilled whole baby snapper studded with lemon and fennel served with Chimichurri sauce is a highlight.

40 Jacka Blvd



**16.5
20**

LOVEABLE AND EXCITING

REVIEW

KARA MONSSEN

FORGET what they said on The Simpsons, you can make friends with salad; especially at Little Picket.

I'd even go steady or move in with what's plucked from the patch here, slicked simply with sweet honey mustard and a twinkle of sea salt.

I'm sure this isn't exactly what the surfers pined over at the Lorne Bowls Club in years gone by, unless it accidentally ended up on their plates breathing nutrients into their fish and chip or chicken parma dinners.

Yet the tide's turned in Lorne.

With the Range Rovers, oat lattes and sea of navy-striped cabanas on the main beach are a new wave of hospo folk coming to town.

On one end of the scale there's billionaire Justin Hemmes who will soon open Sydney's famed Totti's at the Lorne Hotel.

On the other, there's Jo Barrett: one half of the former Oakridge dream team and eco-queen who lived her most sustainable lockdown life eating bugs, pond-grown fish and veg inside Joost Bakker's Future Food System experiment at Federation Square.

After a Flinders Island reboot,

LITTLE PICKET

• 35 Mount Joy Parade, Lorne

• littlepicket.com.au

Open: Fri-Sat: dinner, Sun: lunch

Go-to dish: Halloumi with honey, lemon and fennel

Try this if you like: Future Food System

Price: Small (\$15-\$30) Large (\$35-\$41) Dessert (\$14-\$16)

she's planted a stake (ahem, a whole white picket fence) in the coastal town with new partner Dave Osgood, by taking over the lease of the bowlo's restaurant and bar.

If Lorne was fast-becoming the poor man's Portsea, Little Picket has reclaimed some of its beachy charm.

The timber clubhouse walls celebrate bowls heroes with bronze plaques and leaderboards, the carpets a schmick classroom blue and the kitchen and bar act more like hole-in-the-wall school canteens.

While those floor-to-

ceiling glass windows give the 70-odd punters inside the simple dining room a view of the green, where you can hurl a ball down before or after your tucker.

Barrett doesn't stray too far from her learnings, with all of Little P's 10 or so dishes made from ingredients farmed, fished or foraged locally. The menu is dictated by what's fresh and best, rotating every fortnight or so, with new desserts also scrawled on a blackboard in the dining room. The same ethos extends to wine, which is largely affordable, and where everything aside from magnums (\$140), is between \$50-\$98 a bottle and up to \$14 by the glass.

All other bites are made from scratch, including the halloumi (\$18) made from Shultz dairy milk sizzled until sweet and smothered in a lacquer of Otways honey, lemon, and fried capers. Do not share this.

Pork dimmies (\$15; a menu request from a



HALLOUMI WITH HONEY, LEMON AND FENNEL

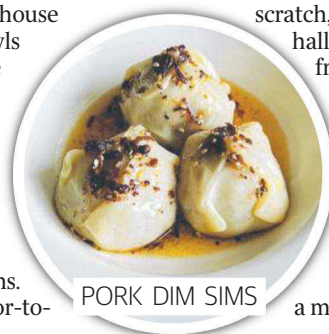
club member) look different to the tuck shop finds – slippery, steamed white orbs bouncing with well-seasoned pork and cabbage, finished with a lip-tingling crunchy chilli oil.

Dampen the heat with one of the four brews on tap, tinnies from the fridge or even the elite "I can't believe its not beer" non-alcoholic Hiatus pacific ale if you're driving.

Lunch meat mortadella (\$18) takes a new turn, with Barrett flexing her Flinders Island contacts to score wallaby from its culling program to turn the gamy meat into confetti-fine slices with a powerful rocket pepper punch.

While it looks barbecued to smithereens, the quail (\$39) is delightfully plump and tender, rocking a Middle Eastern profile heaped with rice, herbs and hazelnut puree.

Barrett masterfully pushes every ingredient to its absolute, pleasurable limit with poise and control. Small yet mighty, Little Picket is a loveable, exciting and wholesome addition to Lorne's dining circuit that's worth the drive from Melbourne – even for the salad.



PORK DIM SIMS

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Young gun gastronomes

CHEFFING is usually a young person's game.

Some get a taste for cooking from hours spent in their parents or grandparent's kitchens, others take their first paid gigs around 14 when they're of legal working age (and some extra keen kids even lie about their age to get in the door).

Melbourne is blessed with amazing culinary talent, with these fresh young faces already making industry waves.

TRISTAN SPAIN

Vue de monde chef de partie
SPAIN may be only 22, but he's impressed the right people by landing a spot on the Aussie team for the Bocuse D'Or competition (currently sweating it out at the finals in Lyon with team leader Alex McIntosh). The Young Chefs Club of Victoria chair didn't make the initial team, despite being named the comp's best commis. Instead a last-minute move saw him paired with McIntosh (Sou'West Brewery, Torquay).

Spain leads the meat section at the Rialto fine diner, where he's not only nailing his patch but enjoying the interaction with guests, sharing the origins story of creations such as kangaroo "rooshi" sushi at the pass.



JOANE YEOH
Kōri Ice Cream
co-founder
LAST year was a huge one for dessert queen

Joane Yeoh, with 2023 already looking up. The former Coda pastry chef opened Japanese ice



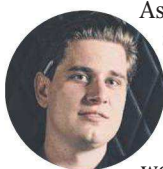
Tristan Spain and Alex McIntosh are competing in the Bocuse D'Or in Lyon. Picture: David Geraghty

cream shop Kōri in Hawthorn with Lux Bite co-founder Bernard Chu. Now the 29-year-old has launched Kōri Dessert Bar, out of the same Glenferrie Rd shop. The summertime-only space will be a cool haven for treats such as seasonal parfaits, chilled drinks such as a grapefruit and pocari (Japanese sports drink) soda, and a secret off-menu sweets selection. Her first creation? A nacho-inspired dessert with corn chips, soy caramel and kewpie avocado ice cream. Watch this space.



SARAH CREMONA
The Ritz-Carlton
Melbourne chef de
partie

The Melbourne Food and Wine Host Plus Scholarship winner has moved from Pt Leo Estate to work under Aussie culinary royalty Mark Best and Michael Greenlaw at The Ritz-Carlton.



As part of the scholarship, Best is also Cremona's mentor. The wine lover and WSET student will also do work experience at New Zealand's Amisfield Restaurant and Cellar Door.

PIETER BUIJSSE

Jackalope Hotel executive chef
Pt Leo Estate star Pieter Buijsse has stepped up to call the shots at Jackalope. He moved into the role last year, but this autumn

we'll see his creations come to the fore when he crafts new menus for Doot Doot Doot and Rare Hare.



FRANKIE COX
Green On founder, chef

NEW York chef-to-the-stars turned wellness warrior Frankie Cox hasn't stopped since returning from the States. Not only has her salad bar Green On found its groove in the last 13 months, Cox also has plans to expand her empire in the next year. Green On is hoping to close its sustainability loop by looking at its waste, such as cardboard boxes and yoghurt tubs, as resources for others.

Dumplings driven to fun extremes



Amy Evans and Brian Anderson.

DUMPLINGS are the love language of many. While chef Brian Anderson is happy to look to his Singaporean roots, he's having more fun playing with modern flavours at his new Geelong dumpling bar.

Bahjong is Anderson and partner Amy Evans' second restaurant in the regional city, after opening Baah Lah Dining in January 2020.

"We wanted to make this one fun, it's

not about the traditional type of dumpling," Evans said. "Brian's honed in and mastered the tradition, but now he's channelling his creative side and making this his own."

Out-of-the-box flavours include a lamb kebab and potato, chives and sour cream dumplings, the latter riffing on a bowl of hot wedges. He's also made a dessert dumpling filled with coconut custard.

Bahjong has 12 flavours that'll change often depending on the season and his mood.

"Brian is an ideas guy, they keep popping up," Evans said.

Zara Fitzgibbon will take the reins as head chef at the Little Malop St venue, while Anderson oversees both restaurants as executive chef. Evans will lead the front of house team at Bahjong. Bahjong, 82 Little Malop St, Geelong

Wine reviews

CHARDONNAY

These new-age drops take a leaf from their bold and boisterous past while delivering a fresh take on our favourite white variety.



2020 COPPERHEAD CHARDONNAY: \$27

The good folk at this family-run, small-scale Yarra Valley winery take what we love about chardonnay and dial up the drama. This deep, golden drop is a war of ripe fruit, minerals, oak, weight and textural structure, creamy fullness and zippy citrus tying it together. Think peaches and green apples, harnessed by lemon. Every sip delivers a new experience. Wildly affordable and very much worth your time and money.

Cellar door,
copperheadwines.com.au



2018 TOKAR ESTATE WHITE LABEL: \$30

There's fruit, oak, minerality and firm acidity in this Yarra Valley drop, yet wonderful balance and poise. Abundant with white nectarines, toasted cashews and white florals on the nose, it's all green apples, baking spices, soft oak, minerality with refreshing citrus nipping at its heels.

Uplifting, fresh, with weight and complexity that's worth a ponder.

Cellar door,
tokarestate.com.au

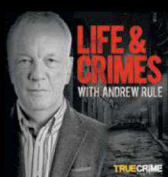
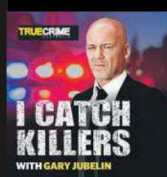


2021 BOYDELL'S RESERVE: \$45

Gushing with ripe stone fruit, this intense yet harmonious Hunter Valley wine is one for the OG chardy lovers. Peaches, nectarines, honey, green apple and baking spices form an enticing nose, leading into a weighty palate that's all green apple, almond meal, minerality and toast with hints of lemon freshness. Mouthfilling, well-rounded that'll do well alone or with grilled white fish or prawn linguine.

boydells.com.au

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