

A U S T R A L I A N

# GOURMET TRAVELLER

**Hot  
100** The trends  
of the moment

Chongqing noodles

## **SPICY NOODLES!**

How to matcha  
COOL RESTAURANTS  
Australia's hippest new hotel  
NATURAL WINE 101

**A YEAR'S WORTH OF INSPIRATION**



# THE *Hot*

PHOTOGRAPHY ANDREW FINLAYSON

Gather round, thrillseekers. We've got the latest on the greatest going on right now in the worlds of food, wine, and adventure. Consider this your go-to guide for good times in the year ahead.

EDITED BY HELEN ANDERSON & PAT NOURSE WORDS MAX ALLEN, LYDIA BELL, EMMA BREHENY, RICHARD CORNISH, FIONA DONNELLY, LARISSA DUBECKI, LARA DUNSTON, MICHAEL HARDEN, KENDALL HILL, NATASHA INCHLEY, BRIAN JOHNSTON, LEE TRAN LAM, KIMBERLEY MAI, SOPHIE McCOMAS, SHANE MITCHELL, JENI PORTER, JARED RICHARDS, BESHA RODELL, CHLOE SACHDEV, MAGGIE SCARDIFIELD, EMMA SLOLEY, DAVID SLY, OLIVER STRAND, SAMANTHA TEAGUE, MAX VEENHUYZEN







KAGOSHIMA-STYLE  
TONKOTSU RAMEN  
BY CHEF JIRO ANMA

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IT'S A WILD WORLD

Old India hands who love Kerala are venturing into the northern part of the tranquil southern state. In December, the eco-hotel group CGH Earth opened a rainforest retreat called Wayanad Wild, near Lakkidi in the Western Ghats. Guest cottages are barely visible in the jungle, and guides arrange treks and rafting trips on the region's wild rivers. Travellers combine a jungle stay with backwater cruising by rice barge, a high-end camp in Thattekad bird sanctuary, beach time on the remote coastline of Neeleshwar, and swing by the colonial-era jewel of Fort Cochin. [experiencetravelgroup.com](http://experiencetravelgroup.com)

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RAMEN  
TO THAT

Here's how Ramen Lab works: the noodle counter is tiny, crowded and standing room only; the chef changes every month, along with the menu; and there's always a wait. Less a restaurant than a permanent pop-up, Ramen Lab is a side project by Sun Noodle, a family-owned noodle maker that fuels New York's excellent ramen scene. On the edge of Little Italy, it's a showcase for some of the most celebrated ramen chefs in the world, a chance to taste the noodles they're eating in Tokyo, or Kagoshima or Los Angeles. Typically, each chef is in residence for the first three weeks of the month (follow the Instagram account @ramenlab for details). Order the signature ramen and a can of sake – as pure a culinary experience as you'll find anywhere. [ramen-lab.com](http://ramen-lab.com)



THE ROBEY,  
CHICAGO

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THOROUGHLY MODERNIST

Tucked in Northwest Tower, a converted Art Deco office building in Chicago's Wicker Park district, The Robey has 69 industrial-chic rooms with skyline views. For Grupo Habita's second property north of the border, the Mexican boutique hotel group chose a city known for jazz, Modernist cuisine, and vibrant Latino culture. Mid-Century chrome furniture from West Loop yard sales and antique markets punctuate the pared-down interiors, while a sprawling rooftop terrace features a cocktail lounge with potent Mojitos and a pool that's equally as cool. [therobey.com](http://therobey.com)



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PHOTOGRAPHY: ADRIAN GAUT (THE ROBEY), AKIRA HIRATSUKA (RAMEN)  
& DOMINIC LORRIMER (POOR TOMS GIN)

**MAKING WAVES** If a surfboard's too cumbersome to take on your next beach holiday, pack a handplane in your hand luggage instead. Sydney company WAW (Wave After Wave) makes handcrafted bodysurfing handplanes from reclaimed and sustainable timbers. "For each handplane sold, we also plant a tree," says founder and environmentally conscious carpenter Rikki Gillbey. "It's another great reason to pack light." \$149.95 each. [wawhandplanes.com.au](http://wawhandplanes.com.au)



SALAR DE UYUNI SALT  
FLATS, BOLIVIA

ONE-NIGHT STANDS

It's the ultimate bivouac for those who'd rather follow their dreams than an Instagram feed. A new travel service called Blink promises to deliver "hyper-personalised experiences" almost anywhere on Earth. Choose your ideal destination, style of luxury digs (yurt, dome etc) and amenities – perhaps an Andean pisco bar in Chile's Valley of the Moon? – and Blink makes it happen. Launched by leading British travel agent Black Tomato in December, the service promises totally customisable travel, right down to the brand of toiletries in bathrooms and the labels in your portable cellar. Its pop-up lodges have already colonised Oman's Musandam Peninsula, the dunes of the Sahara and an unpronounceable glacier in Iceland. Then they disappear without trace, the same experience never repeated. The cost of absolute freedom? Budget on at least \$80,000 for a party of six for three days. Airfares extra. [blacktomato.com/blink](http://blacktomato.com/blink)

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SPITTING IMAGE

Keen to reduce their waste, the organisers of last year's Rootstock wine festival in Sydney came up with the idea of distilling the contents of the popular event's many spit buckets – hundreds of litres of expectorated chardonnay and pinot and amber wines and cloudy wines. The result, processed at nearby Poor Toms Gin, is a fine grappa (some bottled as is, some matured in cask) tentatively named Disco Pash – because, as distiller Griffin Blumer quipped, "it's like a kiss from a stranger in a nightclub". [poortomsgin.com.au](http://poortomsgin.com.au)



**GRAPPA ATTENTION**  
From left: Griffin Blumer,  
Marcel Thompson  
and Jesse Kennedy  
of Poor Toms Gin.



**HISTORY IN THE BAKING**

Clockwise from below:  
1550s (riberries and  
pepperberry leaf); 1880s  
(black pudding, Earl Grey  
tea cream and unripe pear);  
1930s (chicken soup, matzo  
ball and schmaltz).

**TARTS FROM THE PAST**

Ben Shewry's Imperfect History of Ripponlea as Told by Tarts is a high-concept dish that actually flies. Recreating moments in the story of Ripponlea – the Melbourne suburb Attica calls home – it arrives in three lidded containers, each holding a two-bite tart. The tarts reference indigenous history via native pepper and riberies, use fresh cheese and rosemary to honour the man who built Ripponlea mansion, and celebrate the suburb's Jewish population with matzo, schmaltz and chicken-soup jelly. Clever and tasty. [attica.com.au](http://attica.com.au)

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**GORILLA TACTICS**

Rwanda is emerging as one of Africa's most exciting wildlife destinations thanks to a couple of recent interesting projects. Wilderness Safaris will open a new eco-luxe camp, Bisate Lodge, this year near Volcanoes National Park – prime territory for viewing mountain gorillas. The camp will have just six forest villas in a 27-hectare amphitheatre of an eroded volcanic cone. (Abercrombie & Kent's Gorillas of Rwanda private journey includes a stay at Bisate Lodge.) Meanwhile, the staged reintroduction of threatened wildlife in Akagera National Park in Rwanda's north-east has given the nation's oldest park a new lease on life, starting with successfully re-establishing lions. The park's Ruzizi Tented Lodge has recently added a family and a treetop tent. [wilderness-safaris.com](http://wilderness-safaris.com); [akagerarwandanationalpark.com](http://akagerarwandanationalpark.com)

PHOTOGRAPHY MARTIN REFTTEL & JESSICA REFTTEL EVANS (ATTICA) & DANA ALLEN (BISATE LODGE)



BISATE LODGE,  
RWANDA

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**RUTHERGLEN REVIVAL**

Siblings Eliza, Angela and Nicholas Brown are bringing refreshing energy and style to the Rutherglen region in north-east Victoria. The acclaimed Terrace Restaurant at All Saints Estate, a local produce-driven café at St Leonards Vineyard and the neighbourhood's best bar, Thousand Pound in Rutherglen itself, are all theirs. Now they've acquired beautifully dilapidated Mount Ophir Estate, turning some of the property's buildings (including an impressive tower) into the kind of luxury accommodation the area needs. [allsaintswine.com.au](http://allsaintswine.com.au); [thousandpound.com.au](http://thousandpound.com.au); [mountophirstate.com.au](http://mountophirstate.com.au)

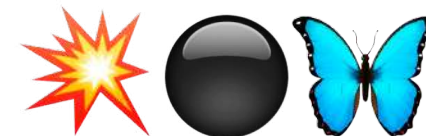
MACQ 01, HOBART

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**BEDTIME STORIES**

Australia's first "storytelling" hotel opens next month on Hobart's riverfront and, on paper, it reads like a bestseller. Macq 01 is a modern replica of the Macquarie Wharf Shed 1 it replaced, with 114 rooms and suites that channel the stories of colourful characters who have shaped the city. Conceived by the Federal Group (Wrest Point casino, Saffire Freycinet), Macq 01 will also feature two restaurants and a Story Bar paying tribute to Hobart's legends and its best drops. [macq01.com.au](http://macq01.com.au)

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**SYMBOLIC GESTURE** Explosion. Black dot. Butterfly. Menu descriptions that are terse to the point of opacity are nothing new in the restaurant world, but Gaggan, Bangkok's celebrated neo-Indian eatery, takes things a step further, listing its tasting (at the beginning of the meal, at any rate) entirely in emoji. Lightning bolt, rainbow, dancing lady indeed. [eatatgaggan.com](http://eatatgaggan.com)



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## SHANGHAI SURPRISE

The Chinese concept *yang yun* translates as “nourishing cloud”, a philosophical appreciation of the natural world and its rhythms. It’s also the inspiration behind the fourth Aman resort in China, opening later this year. Amanyangyun is a conservation passion project that took a decade to complete, and involved the relocation of a camphor wood forest, as well as Ming and Qing dynasty-era structures, brick by brick, from Jiangxi Province to a suburb of Shanghai. In a garden that now shelters these fragrant venerable trees, 26 reassembled villas and 24 contemporary suites are fitted with fireplaces and inner courtyards. At the central Nan Shufang pavilion, guests can experience a tea ceremony or take calligraphy lessons. [aman.com](http://aman.com)

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## STRING THEORY

Grilled. Poached. Pan-fried. Some people even try to cook red meat sous-vide. But roasting it à la ficelle offers a touch of MacGyver-like genius as well as a great result. A leg of lamb spinning gently at the end of a piece of twine (*ficelle* is French for string) in front of the coals has been one of the most talked-about sights in the open kitchen at Fred’s in Sydney. “It hangs in front of one of our fires and if you give it a little nudge, it just gently turns and turns and cooks evenly all the way around,” says American-born chef Danielle Alvarez. We’re hooked. [merivale.com.au](http://merivale.com.au)

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## RED CHINA

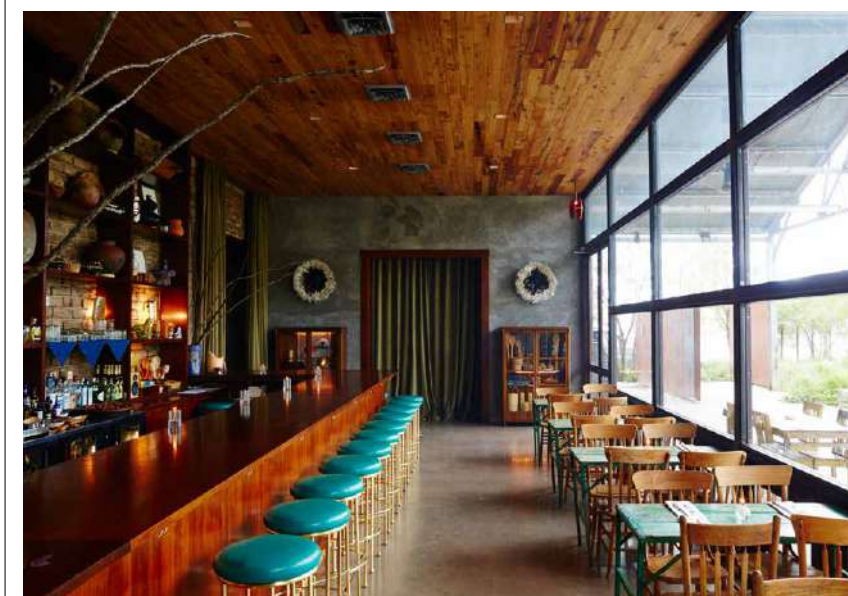
Débuting a brand-new wine at \$500 a bottle seems like a naked play for the wine speculation dollar, but the story of Ao Yun, the first foray into winemaking in China from French luxury giant Moët Hennessy, is much more interesting than it may initially seem. Made from mostly cabernet sauvignon grapes hand-picked from vines terraced on vertiginous slopes high in Yunnan province, the wine has a fascinating backstory. An array of challenges ranging from altitude to access meant that the 2013 vintage, now on sale, was made the old-fashioned way, the organic fruit hand-sorted and vinified in amphorae originally made for the Chinese spirit baiju. Long story short: one of the world’s biggest wine conglomerates has made a wine that might unite the natural-wine crowd and Bordeaux-loving classicists in their admiration. Or at least those of them who are willing to part with \$500 a bottle. [moet-hennessy-collection.com.au](http://moet-hennessy-collection.com.au)

PHOTOGRAPHY NINA DIETZER & NICOLE FRANZEN (THE CAPRI) ILLUSTRATION LARA PORTER

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## WESTERN UNION

Deep in the heart of West Texas, in the desert city of Marfa, chef Rocky Barnette and collector Virginia Lebermann are the American food couple to know next. Lebermann co-founded the non-profit arts and culture institution Ballroom Marfa and owns The Capri, a restaurant and performance space, where Barnette showcases pre-conquest Mesoamerican cooking techniques. Barnette is a tequila fanatic who regularly hops across the border to source Chihuahuan Desert ingredients such as jicama, huitlacoche, epazote and amaranth for an “eat when it’s ready” menu that appeals to this remote arts community in Big Bend country. Order chilled Modelos or Lone Star longnecks to pair with his prickly pear-braised rabbit tamales, calabaza squash-masa fritters, and turkey in black-garlic mole Poblano. [thunderbirdmarfa.com](http://thunderbirdmarfa.com)



## CRAFTY ARTS

Clockwise from top left: The Capri from the garden; the lounge; the dining room; watermelon radishes; Rocky Barnette and Virginia Lebermann.





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## BIRD OF PARADISE

Yeah, it's a hundred-dollar chicken. Or \$578 Hong Kong dollars to be precise. But it's really something – trussed with care so it's roasted to a rich, deep gold all over, stuffed with button mushrooms, spinach, chicken liver and a bouquet of rosemary, thyme and flat-leaf parsley. The flavour of the bird itself is excellent – in a city where the term “jet-fresh” is used without irony, it's pleasing to see a Western restaurant finding a good local product rather than simply flying everything in from Paris or Tokyo – and the accompanying petits pois à la Française and pommes Anna are impeccable. It's served whole, from beak to claw, which prompts the intriguing question: are Hong Kong's finest chicken feet now served in a French restaurant? [belonsoho.com](http://belonsoho.com)



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## HIGH SPIRITS

Over the past 18 months or so, enterprising local spirits-slingers have raised the bar with their pre-packaged cocktails. The Everleigh Bottling Co's range of four core classics is – as you'd expect from this bastion of bartending – flawless and beautiful; The Aussie Tipple Company range, meanwhile, uses exclusively local artisan spirits from top distillers such as Belgrove in Tassie; and the seasonal concoctions from New World Projects (aka Starward Whisky in Melbourne) are outstanding. [theeverleigh.com](http://theeverleigh.com); [aussietipple.com](http://aussietipple.com); [starward.com.au](http://starward.com.au)

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## CORKER VINO

Thanks to the invention of the Coravin – a gadget that inserts a thin spike through the cork and extracts a glassful of wine, replacing the empty space with inert gas, keeping the remaining wine fresh for months – an increasing number of restaurants are now selling rare wines by the glass, and at appropriately rarefied prices. At the time of writing, Grossi Fiorentino was offering 10-year-old Sassicaia for \$96 a glass, and the Royal Mail was pouring 20-year-old Château d'Yquem as part of its \$250 French wine dégustation pairing. And Coravin has just launched a screwcap version, meaning all those fine Australian and Kiwi wines that moved away from cork from the early 2000s can now also be offered by the glass. [coravin.com](http://coravin.com)

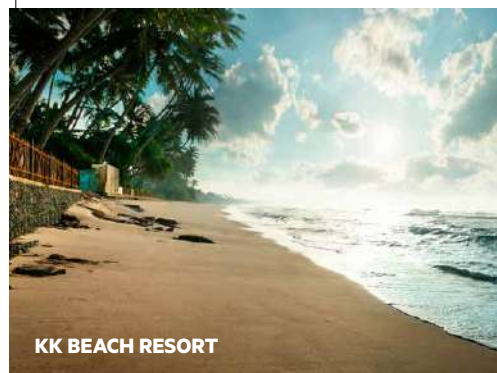
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**LONG JUMP** Qantas's new kangaroo route – direct 17-hour Dreamliner flights from Perth to London, launching in March next year – recalibrates the Australian long-haul experience, and looks set to transform tourism in Western Australia. Local operators are salivating at the prospect of planeloads of cashed-up Britons on their doorstep. Meanwhile, Qantas CEO Alan Joyce has hinted at the thrilling possibility of direct flights from Sydney to New York by 2022. [qantas.com.au](http://qantas.com.au)

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## SRI LANKA SIZZLES

The Sri Lankan capital, Colombo, is bursting with new-build hotels – Shangri-La, Sheraton, ITC and Hyatt among them – but small and stylish lodgings continue to be Sri Lanka's strong suit. New to the island is the 30-villa Water Garden Sigiriya, designed by Bawa protégé Channa Baswatte near the ancient Sigiriya rock fortress ([watergardensigiriya.com](http://watergardensigiriya.com)). Just south of Galle at Habaraduwa, the exclusive KK Beach Resort has just six suites with sweeping Indian Ocean views ([kkbeach.com](http://kkbeach.com)). And in the high country, three converted tea planters' bungalows will open later this year near Kandy, Ella and Nuwara Eliya ([teardrop-hotels.com](http://teardrop-hotels.com)).



PHOTOGRAPHY RICHARD JAMES TAYLOR (BELMOND) & RODNEY MACUJA (EVERLEIGH)





MOMOFUKU,  
LAS VEGAS

TABLES IN VEGAS

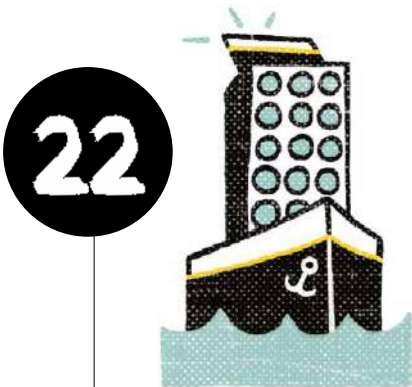
Momofuku's new Las Vegas outpost isn't an exact analogue of its New York City cousins, whether it be the free-wheeling Ssäm and Noodle Bar or the fine-diner Ko, though it shares some personality traits from those eateries. The 200-seat restaurant's lengthy menu reads like a David Chang greatest hits album, with everything from the comfort of a bowl of ginger and spring onion noodles to the gluttony of the legendary bo ssäm, a slow-cooked hunk of pork that can feed 10. Everything on the menu bursts with that umami-focused swagger that made Chang's name, and, in its own way, Momofuku fits right in with Vegas's brand of debauchery – where else might eating a dinner comprised entirely of fried chicken and caviar feel quite so appropriate? High-rollers can rent a raised private room (lined with custom peach-themed carpet, naturally) that looks out over the Strip, and the rest of us can slurp that famed porky ramen under a canine-themed David Choe mural. It's a new face of Vegas cool, and we're all in. [vegas.momofuku.com](http://vegas.momofuku.com)



WHITE DESERT CAMP  
DOME, ANTARCTICA

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**POLAR EXTREMES** Luxury has reached Earth's final frontier. After an opulent makeover to mark its 10th birthday, White Desert Camp – the only company in the world to fly into Antarctica by private jet – offers affluent adventurers fur-lined dining settings and Saarinen chairs at its stunning bivouac of six sleeping domes with ensuites on the White Continent. Guests strike out from the Antarctic camp to take overnight hikes to the South Pole. The camp is accessible only in November and December by private jet from Cape Town, on single- or eight-day itineraries. [white-desert.com](http://white-desert.com)



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ALL AT SEA

If you've ever fancied running away to sea, please form an orderly line. Crystal CEO Edie Rodriguez has revealed there are already about 250 people on the waitlist to buy an apartment aboard the line's three new ocean-going ships, the first of which is due to launch in 2022. Each of the thousand-passenger ships will feature one private deck of about 48 apartments, in what Rodriguez predicts will be a "game-changer" for the industry. Potential buyers can get a sneak peek at the floating flats when Crystal's display suite opens in Miami in December. [crystalcruises.com](http://crystalcruises.com)



EMMA SHEARER

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BREAD WINNER

The sourdough loaves that wowed diners at Magill Estate Restaurant are now sold in a suburban market – but only on Wednesdays and Saturdays, and queues form early. Gifted pâtissier Emma Shearer applies the smarts that established her fame at Magill in her boutique bakery The Lost Loaf, in an urban renewal development in Bowden. The bread is baked on a mezzanine level above the market floor, along with a changing array of pastries sold from an antique bread trolley – but it's her perfect baguettes that make customers swoon. *Plant 4, Third St, Bowden, SA*

PHOTOGRAPHY GABRIELLE STABLE (MOMOFUKU), LOOP FILMS (WHITE DESERT CAMP) & JONATHAN VAN DER KNAAP (LOST LOAF) ILLUSTRATION LARA PORTER



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## COFFEE EXPRESS

Filter coffee is a staple in speciality cafés, but it can be time-consuming to make. Now there's a speedier alternative: the SP9 by Marco. It brews coffee like a pour-over, producing consistent single-serve filters, using your favourite manual brewing device – a Kalita or V60, say. But instead of having to painstakingly stand there pouring the hot water, you can press go and walk away – the SP9 does it for you. “The SP9 allows us to sell more filter coffee,” says Nawar Adra, owner of Collective Roasting Solutions in Sydney. “We can make fresh, fast filters from multiple roasters and multiple single origins, while still having time to chat to the customers.”

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## DESIGNER LABELS

Among the low-intervention wine set, high-impact labels are making waves. Bottles from Jauma, Momento Mori and Domaine Mămărută are works of art in their own right. The prize for most memorable design of the last vintage, though, goes to Patrick Sullivan's Pink Pound rosé: the Speedo-clad cherub with a singlet tan on the bottle is nearly as intriguing as what's inside. [patrickssullivan.com.au](http://patrickssullivan.com.au)



JALAKARA TOWER ROOM, ANDAMAN

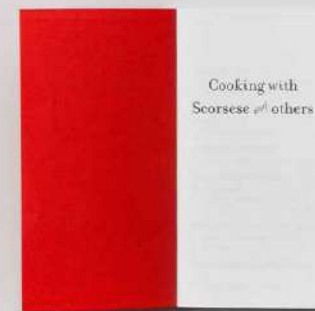
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JALAKARA POOL AND BAR

## TREASURE ISLANDS

A little like the Maldives before tourism changed everything, the Andaman is a remote archipelago of more than 300 islands in the Indian Ocean, about 1,000 kilometres east of Kolkata, ringed by reefs and some of the world's most exquisite beaches. They're destined to top travel lists in the future, but for the moment gourmet travellers seeking upscale digs stay at Jalakara, a boho-chic seven-room retreat near Radhanagar beach on Havelock Island. There's no WiFi or television but great food, a spa, film nights, yoga classes – and a giant hammock for lounging. Also on Havelock, Taj Hotels is due to open Taj Exotica Resort & Spa Andaman Islands later this year, with 75 timber villas with pitched roofs, inspired by the homes of the local Jarawa tribe. [jalakara.info](http://jalakara.info); [tajhotels.com](http://tajhotels.com)



## SCREEN PRINTING

Each volume of *Cooking with Scorsese and Others* plucks more than a dozen food scenes from the silver screen for your indulgence. Feast your eyes on courtesan au chocolat at Mendl's (*The Grand Budapest Hotel*), rice omelettes with Sonny (*Tampopo*), Julia Child's potato gratin (*Julie & Julia*), gazpacho à la Almodóvar (*Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown*) and more.

Volumes one and two are now available in hardcover for \$13 each. [hatopress.net](http://hatopress.net)

PHOTOGRAPHY ED REEVE (ANDAMAN), CHRIS JANSEN (PATRICK SULLIVAN) & ANDREW THOMAS LEE (STAPLEHOUSE) ILLUSTRATION EMMA CHU

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## SOUTHERN HOSPITALITY

There's a tragic but ultimately heartwarming backstory to Atlanta's Staplehouse. The original chef and co-owner, Ryan Hider, died of cancer at 36 before the restaurant opened. The business now supports The Giving Kitchen, a non-profit that helps hospitality folks in need. But even without that context, it's an easy place to love. Chef Ryan Smith, who's been running kitchens for some of the region's other great chefs for the past decade (Hugh Acheson and Linton Hopkins among them), tinkers with notions of what Southern food can be: the aged duck may come with blue barley and collard greens, but clams get their kick from a caramel infused with the tang of fish sauce. Smith is a master at combinations that are clever rather than tricky – chicken liver mousse is reimagined as a rich savoury tart, while oysters grilled with butter imbued with the toasty flavour of popcorn offer a glorious slurp of brine and nostalgia. Sometimes doing good and tasting good are in magnificent harmony. [staplehouse.com](http://staplehouse.com)



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## ARTISAN FINDS IN CHILE

Adventurous importers Lucy Kendall and Alice L'Estrange of Cultivar Fine Wines have travelled through the old wine-growing corners of Chile and brought back treasure: aromatic whites and fresh reds, rustic and honest, produced on a tiny scale and, until recently, destined for local consumption. The star style is pipeño, a light, highly quaffable red made from the old país grape, grown in 250-year-old vineyards and fermented in large barrels made from local raulí, a native Chilean beech. [cultivarwines.com.au](http://cultivarwines.com.au)

