

PERSONAL OZ

Food & Travel



Set for a taste of southern charm

SO you thought Nashville was just about music? Aussie chefs (although to be fair, one's a charming Kiwi) **Morgan McGlone** and **Aaron Turner** are about to launch their vision of Nashville spicy fried chicken and fish in Fitzroy's Gertrude Street with a diner named Belle's. Turner, who used to run the acclaimed Loam restaurant, has been in the US for a year and will continue to live there. He's been cooking at Husk in Nashville, owned by the acclaimed chef **Sean Brock**. McGlone, who was a **Luke Mangan** lieutenant in Sydney before going to the US years ago, will be hands on at what they're calling "a Nashville hot chicken and natural wine bar". Expect spicy fried proteins with beans, potato salad and — if they can find them in Australia — collard greens. There may be southern whisky involved, too. While McGlone will run the kitchen, Turner will be back for only six weeks before returning to Nashville, where he has "a project under way". McGlone also has plans for something in L.A. "Aaron and I will to-and-fro, but there will always be one of us here."

NEED more convincing of the US influence on our food scene? Take a look at Merivale Group's massive project at the Coogee Pavilion in Sydney. Cuban-American chef **Danielle Alvarez**, who joined the company from Chez Panisse in San Francisco, will be running the breakfast menu at Coogee until her Merivale restaurant in Paddington is launched next

year. And Australian chef **Jordan Toft** has come home from many years in L.A. where he's been head chef at The Eveleigh, to be Coogee's executive chef. He'll get his own space at the Pavilion next year. Coogee Pav stage one opens in two weeks with a pizzeria, juice bar and seafood cafe.

IN a world of celebrity chefs, the craft of the restaurateur often gets overshadowed. So it is that we salute another Melbourne restaurateur this week who clocked up 20 years. **Matteo Pignatelli** opened his eponymous North Fitzroy restaurant in 1994, taking over premises that already had a few pages in the history of Melbourne dining: the one-time Mietta's. Pignatelli bought it as a pizzeria with his wife, **Franca**, cooking Italian food. There have been several chefs and landlords over the years, but it has always been a switched-on restaurant with a well-informed operator. A glass of Prosecco is in order.

TAKE a dash of Supernormal. Throw in a good splash of Chin Chin and another of Coda. Season with Gingerboy, and whatayagot? Into the hotly contested CBD Melbourne pan-Asian paradise steps Lucy Liu this Friday. **Michael Lambie** lieutenant **Zac Cribbes** will be head chef. First Bite took a quick look as builders were completing the massive refit of what was once PM 24. A key structural change has been to create the restaurant's entrance from Oliver Lane.

IT'S a senior staff clean-out at Melbourne's The Point since Chengcheng (Aust) Enterprise Melbourne Pty Ltd bought the restaurant a few months ago. First executive chef **Justin Wise** decamped. Now general manager **Bryan Lloyd** has also packed his bags. Lloyd made a reputation as the fastidious British maitre d' at Vue de Monde for many years. Wise is planning menus, kitchen and staff for his first client as a consultant, Meatmother, which has taken over the former Little Hunter premises in Melbourne. "Yes, it's going to be a specialty American smokehouse restaurant," says Wise, "but the menu needs to be a lot broader than (Richmond's) Meatmother."

2012 WYNNS COONAWARRA SHIRAZ \$20

The best Wynns shiraz I've tasted for a while, with enough intense dark fruit richness to make it a great match for steak and chips right now, but also enough firm tannin to make it a safe bet in the cellar. And at this price (I've seen it advertised as low as \$12 a bottle), you can afford to stash a few away.

The mark-up: Because it's so widely available in bottle shops, you don't see this on many restaurant wine lists, but if you do, expect to pay about \$40.

wynns.com.au

MAX ALLEN

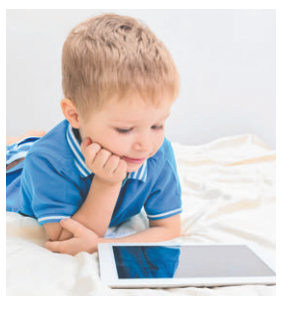
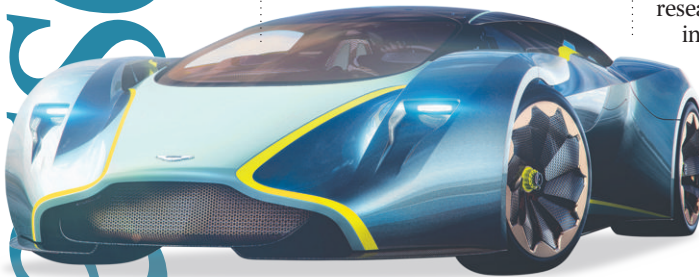


MAX FACTOR

essentials

CARS ASTON Martin has come up with a virtual GT racer for the popular PlayStation racing game **Gran Turismo** in the shape of the stunning Design Prototype 100 Vision Gran Turismo. Created in-house by the brand's design team, ideas in the DPI00 such as its light shapes will feed into future sports cars. The virtual car features active aerodynamics, a fully functioning suspension system and state-of-the-art electronics together with a 600kW turbocharged V12 behind the cabin. The DPI00, which was launched at the recent **Goodwood Festival of Speed** in Britain, will be available for gamers to download this month.

PHILIP KING



HEALTH PARENTS can lay off a little: **smartphones and tablet devices before bed** may not be detrimental to kids' sleep. "A lot of people assume there's a direct link," says Michael Gradisar, a clinical psychologist from Flinders University. "There's been a series of studies done at Flinders University and other research institutions internationally that shows technology use in the bedroom doesn't have big effects on **young people's sleep**." He says an hour before bed does not seem to have a significant impact on sleep — but anything longer than two hours is not good.

SEAN PARNELL

ALE BREWING giant CUB is making a renewed pitch to the fast-growing craft-beer segment with **Crown Golden Ale**, which is described as having a "subtle bitterness that appeals to a wide variety of palates" as well as being **more approachable than traditional English ales**.

"We've brewed it locally with our climate in mind," says Crown head brewer **Tully Hadley**. The company will be hoping drinkers don't confuse the new suds with its last attempt to extend the Crown brand via the ill-fated **Crown Gold**, a mid-strength beer that sank without trace.

BLAIR SPEEDY



FITNESS WANT to spend a week with the **Wallabies** in the British Isles in November? The Australian Rugby Union and sponsor Swisse is offering the prize for two fans. They will fly to Dublin to watch the team play Ireland then spend a week with the team in London ahead of their Test against England. Flights, accommodation and transfers are included. The winners will get the chance to see the Captain's Run (training session and media conference) before the Test, and to **talk tactics with coach Ewen McKenzie**. Buy a Swisse product online or at Woolworths and complete the form at swisse.com.au/win-a-week-with-the-wallabies-on-tour.

NICOLE JEFFERY

GADGETS LOCAL start-up Locl has launched an iPhone app that **lets people buy and sell items in their local area**. The app uses location technology to prioritise items nearby. There may be occasions you'd buy on eBay or through Amazon, but there could be others where you prefer something nearby. It's not just small items. Locl says it's selling cars, and even three properties have been listed. The app also features private in-app chatting that behaves like SMS. You can follow particular sellers and be alerted to nearby sales. An Android version is on the way. loclapp.com

CHRIS GRIFFITH



IN PERSONAL OZ TOMORROW FASHION & STYLE

Key trends for men from Paris and Milan



FOOD SOME folks reckon pasta is better as a home-cooked dish. Don't always agree. But mussels? Put it this way. You can take a pack of new-season, pot-ready **Kinkawooka mussels** (no debearding or scrubbing required), whack them in a pan with some sauteed shallots and a splash of white wine, leave them for, oh, five minutes max, stir through some cream and chopped parsley (hold the salt) and it's **all over bar the slurping**. Or you can spend upwards of \$30 a plate for the restaurant version. Serve with bread. Kinkawookashellfish.com.au

NECIA WILDEN



QUICK BITE

Tony Tomatoes

NECIA WILDEN

The pitch: Real pizza that raises the bar for Adelaide from the team behind the fabulously successful Ruby Red Flamingo. **The reality:** Tony Tomatoes is a fun, good-value modern pizza joint that ticks all the boxes — an island bar for quick eats, a big family-friendly dining room with tomato-hued carpet, pizzaiolos on view in the kitchen and a menu of sharing starters ahead of the main game.

The cuisine: The ovens are electric, not wood-fired, which maybe explains why you'll eat better pizza elsewhere, but they're good enough. We found the most flavour in the crisp, rye-based "Superleggera" crust, one of four styles available (and yes, one of them is gluten-free). **Highlights:** The Gamberetti topping on a classic crust, a crowd-pleasing combo of mozzarella, taleggio, Oz prawns, speck and asparagus. The pizza



stands on every table, the savoury incarnation of the cake stand. The bill. **Lowlights:** The bloke who seats us is brusque (yes, we heard you the first time that you need our table back by 730). **The damage:** Excellent Sicilian green olives are a complimentary starter and everything else is a bargain. No wonder there are queues.

tonytomatoes.com.au



The QT Gold Coast boutique hotel lobby is lifestyle central

LOBBY REVOLUTION

High-end and hip hotels are redefining their public spaces, to dramatic effect

SUSAN KUROSAWA

TRAVEL EDITOR

and there has had to be a constant evolution of the way hotel public spaces are configured.

All the rage this decade is the transformation of lobbies into hubs of kinetic energy with "socialisation areas" and "productivity pods" that work as mobile offices, with nooks for meetings and computer access and streamlined check-in desks that feature no more than laptops or iPads and casually dressed staff. (Some budget properties are even experimenting with self-service kiosks like those at airports.)

Around this axis will be bars, restaurants and "lifestyle shops", often selling hotel-branded wares, integrated into the heart of things rather than sequestered behind doors and walls with limited opening hours. The grab-and-go cafe or coffee stall is popping up, too, as guests take breakfast on the hop.

At the fab QT Gold Coast boutique hotel, the lobby is lifestyle central. The receptionists have clearly just stepped out of professional hair and make-up sessions, Betty Boop lips and all. The lobby has hanging oval lights in yellow and orange that look like

hovering spacecraft; there are splashes of lime and cherry in rugs and soft furnishings, replica modernist chairs and tables shaped like toadstools. Guests segue from check-in to cafe to bar as if drifting through an emporium.

Similarly, the

stutteringly named Hotel Hotel in Canberra eschews the idea of a classic lobby and devotes its big entry-level floor to sweeping spaces with the feel of an art gallery cum exhibition space, myriad seating areas, a library devoted to art and lifestyle, and flexible dining. Its new

Monster Kitchen and Bar opens from 6.30am to 1pm so you can get a house-special yabby jaffle or a violet-infused gin almost around the clock.

Singapore is emerging as Asia's most remarkable destination for design-driven hotels. The newish Parkroyal on Pickering at the edge of Chinatown has a lobby made for lingerers. There's flexible chillout or work spaces, with screened desks and alcoves, relaxation chairs that look at least as comfortable as, say, business-class airline seating, "growing walls" of thriving ferns and broad-leafed creepers, water channels and mirror-shine surfaces that create a rippling, aqueous effect.

The Westin Singapore, in tune with another trend in Asia's mixed-use commercial buildings, has its lobby above an office tower on level 32. So added to the inventory of lobby advancements comes the prospect of an encircling city panorama viewed from various buzzy spaces, such as bars, day spas and bistros. These aerial lobbies can be found in Japan at Tokyo's Park Hyatt and Mandarin Oriental plus at Osaka's Marriott Miyako; and, in mainland

China, Four Seasons Guangzhou. But the vertigo-prone perhaps should not apply — in Hong Kong, the Ritz-Carlton lobby is on cloud-scrapping level 103.

For those who prefer a more intimate arrival, British-based Firmdale Hotels encapsulates the cosy idea of residential lobbies at its eight London properties and its Crosby Street Hotel in New York.

Instead of foyers there are drawing rooms, honesty bars housed in, say, a handpainted Rajasthan cabinet, open fires, original artwork and chic touches from the group's co-owner and design guru, Kit Kemp.

Many hotels of similar size are paying homage to Kemp's eclectic style and doing away with hefty reception desks, identikit furnishings and traditional trimmings.

In the US, Marriott Hotels is harnessing Gen-Y power, involving Boston college students. According to the *Boston Globe*, "The students designed a lobby fit for a new generation of travellers. A touchscreen map features the best places to eat and see in the city, tables go from work stations to presentation tables with video screens, and there's a communal area with a charging mat that reveals where others at the hotel have travelled to recently, emphasising the social media element that has become an essential hotel communication tool."

Coming soon, perhaps, to a hotel near you.