

HOTEL HOTEL,
25 EDINBURGH AVE, CANBERRA
(02) 6287 6287
monsterkitchen.com.au

- + Daily 6.30am-1am
- + Bookings recommended
- + Licensed, bar
- + E \$18-\$23 M \$28-\$36 D \$18-\$20
- + Cards AE DC MC V EFT
- + Private room
- + Wheelchair friendly
- + Chefs Sean McConnell & Daniel Flatt

Club sandwiches. Hushed, clubby surrounds. Mature waiters. Tablecloths. Monster isn't having a bar of it. This is an entirely new kind of lobby restaurant. Just as Hotel Hotel celebrates Canberra at its most creative, with wild design and a vigorous engagement with the arts scene, Monster puts a spotlight on the region's produce. Three Mills toast with preserves from Lake George at breakfast, say, or a tartare of Boxgum Grazing beef made rich at lunch with avocado and miso-cured egg yolk and served with a dramatic, hanky-sized black-rice crisp. Or the local wine served alongside the inventive and big-flavoured likes of juicy, lightly spicy fried quail and Japanese mayo or flat-iron steak with chimichurri and fried okra at dinner. Could the service use a dash more organisation and hotel polish? Certainly. Could the menu change a bit more often? Deploy a lighter touch? Sure, but who would risk losing the signature yabby jaffle?

Otis Dining Hall

AUSTRALIAN

29 JARDINE ST, KINGSTON
(02) 6260 6066
thisisotis.com.au

- + Lunch Tue-Sat noon-2pm; dinner Tue-Sat 5.30pm-10pm
- + Bookings recommended
- + Licensed, bar
- + E \$16-\$19 M \$28-\$42 D \$16-\$19
- + Cards AE MC V EFT
- + Wheelchair friendly
- + Chefs Damian Brabender & Adam Wilson

Classic French bistro cuisine gets a Mod Oz makeover in a former Belgian beer bar. It sounds like a recipe for confusion, but former Sage chef Damian Brabender makes it cohesive. An Antipodean take on steak tartare stands out – the earthy qualities of salted wallaby complemented by pickled vine leaves, macadamia floss and a smoky burnt-onion emulsion – while sheep's curd provides the acidity that ties together the unlikely pairing of raw tuna and watermelon cut into identical cubes. Rump of local lamb is well matched by the spice of an eggplant purée and tart heirloom tomatoes, while a take on a Magnum, with lemon and meringue, celebrates the corner shop as much as the bistro. There's comfort and atmosphere, thanks to broad leather dining chairs, plenty of wood panelling and Art Deco fittings. The floor team is polite and enthusiastic if not entirely polished, and the focused wine list showcases Canberra's best.

Ottoman Cuisine

TURKISH

9 BROUGHTON ST, BARTON
(02) 6273 6111
ottomancuisine.com.au

- + Lunch Tue-Fri noon-2.30pm; dinner Tue-Sat 6pm-10pm
- + Bookings essential
- + Licensed & BYO
- + E \$18-\$26 M \$33-\$36 D \$12-\$16
- + Cards AE MC V EFT
- + Private room
- + Wheelchair friendly
- + Chef Serif Kaya

With owner Serif Kaya clocking up nearly 25 years at the helm, Ottoman has enjoyed leadership stability unknown in the nation's capital. His command shines through in consistent and confident service, generous servings and quality produce. Ottoman accommodates a broad church. The country's movers and shakers focus on business over a banquet menu that includes fine meze such as a smoky baba ghanoush and char-grilled mushrooms followed by spicy lamb kofte. Away from the flames, there are zucchini flowers filled with goat's cheese, and the classic dolma of salmon and prawn meat wrapped in vine leaves and deep fried. Desserts include a standout orange and semolina cake that goes nicely with a Turkish coffee. Heavyweight wines from Henschke, Clonakilla and Grant Burge match the big flavours, while the large dining space looking out onto palm trees and water features still creates a big-occasion buzz.