



BURLEIGH PAVILION



LANKAN FILLING STATION



RICK STEIN AT BANNISTERS

# AUSTRALIA'S 25 HOTTEST RESTAURANTS

NU NU

—These restaurants bring the sizzle to the Australian dining scene. Here is our definitive guide to the very best places to eat and drink now—

#### WORDS

JO COOK  
LARISSA DUBECKI  
SAM MCCUE  
JO MCKAY  
CELESTE MITCHELL  
YASMIN NOONE  
MAX VEENHUYZEN





LANKAN FILLING STATION

## COOL + CASUAL

*Great food in a relaxed setting – good times are guaranteed.*

### LANKAN FILLING STATION NSW

> This eagerly anticipated opening by maverick chef O Tama Carey celebrating Sri Lanka's hoppers – a bowl-shaped savoury pancake with a doughy crumpet-like centre – is hopping for all the right reasons. With a laid-back, community canteen vibe, it's the sort of place where mopping up a spicy sambol or prawn curry with a plain, egg or string hopper feels like the most natural thing to do. Don't forget to try the sides and wash it all down with an on-tap rosé wine or sweet Sri Lankan coffee made with condensed milk.

[lankanfillingstation.com.au](http://lankanfillingstation.com.au)

### SUNDA VIC

> With its laneway entrance, industrial fit-out and a natural-leaning wine list, Sunda ticks every modern Melbourne restaurant box, but it's chef Khanh Nguyen's South-East Asian food that's the real star of this show. The roti with Vegemite curry gets top billing (deservedly) but there's also a thrilling level of skill in dishes such as the parfait-like crab "otak otak" or a rock oyster with Tasmanian pepperleaf, curry oil and a coconut vinaigrette.

[sunda.com.au](http://sunda.com.au)



SUNDA

**PM EAT & DRINK** NT

> Part of the hip new Austin Lane precinct, PM Eat & Drink is all golden timber, polished concrete and giant monochrome murals of sea creatures. The decor provides the perfect backdrop to the kind of food the cool crowd hanker for on a steamy evening – think small plates of fresh, mostly local, seafood (grilled or raw) and light vegetable dishes including luscious stracciatella cheese with roast tomatoes and crisp fried basil leaves, followed by a range of creamy and fruit-focused desserts.

[pmeatdrink.com](http://pmeatdrink.com)



THE AGRARIAN KITCHEN EATERY

**LULU LA DELIZIA** WA

> There are pasta bars and then there's Lulu La Delizia, an intimate trattoria where imaginative culinary combinations offer carb-loading of a higher order. Yet Perth's "restaurant to beat" is about more than just eggs, flour and water. Savoury seafood doughnuts and thickly cut, gin-cured kingfish boom with flavour while warm service speaks to a commitment to hospitality.

[lululadelizia.com.au](http://lululadelizia.com.au)

**THE AGRARIAN KITCHEN EATERY** TAS

> An offshoot of The Agrarian Kitchen Cooking School, this stunning light-filled restaurant is set in an old asylum 35 minutes' drive north-west of Hobart. Cult dishes include sourdough-battered potato cakes and anything featuring their house-made cheeses (it could be ricotta, burrata, stracciatella), while the drinks menu offers excellent local labels such as Two Metre Tall beers or Meadowbank wines. Don't miss the house-made charcuterie and country style cakes, tarts and slices full of seasonal fruits, also made in-house.

[theagrariankitchen.com](http://theagrariankitchen.com)



AFRICOLA

**NU NU** QLD

> Nothing says "holidays" like tucking into wok-fried mud crab while feeling the sand between your toes. Nu Nu in Palm Cove marries the bounty of North Queensland's waters and tablelands with lip-smacking Asian flavours. Celebrity chef Nick Holloway has designed an innovative menu that dances from crispy chook feet and reef bug schnitzel to a whole fried baby barramundi with Thai basil and tamarind caramel.

[nunu.com.au](http://nunu.com.au)

**AFRICOLA** SA

> It would be perfectly acceptable to come to this East End eatery for the atmosphere alone: it's bustling, cool, energetic and fun. But the knockout menu is every inch as good as the vibe. Every dish is a power-punch of flavour and aroma – whole flounder is doused in anchovy sauce, wood-oven cauliflower comes smothered in rich nutty tahini and an intense, expertly charred peri-peri chicken is a lesson in what peri-peri should be.

[africola.com.au](http://africola.com.au)

# SMART DINING

*For an upscale experience that doesn't break the bank, try these special menu options.*

## STOKEHOUSE Q QLD

> There's no finer address in Brisbane than River Quay, where Stokehouse Q tickles the mangroves of the Brisbane River – it's dining in chic, yet relaxed Queensland style. The food features hyper-local ingredients like Fraser Isle spanner crab with cornbread and lemon myrtle or miso-glazed barramundi belly, and you can finish on granny's favourite dessert reimagined as "The Bombe". A great value way to enjoy the restaurant is to book in for lunch and watch the CityCats criss-cross the river while you enjoy two courses and a glass of wine for \$39.

[stokehouseq.com.au](http://stokehouseq.com.au)

## SPICE TEMPLE NSW

> The fruit of celebrity chef Neil Perry's long-standing passion for Asian flavours, this moody subterranean restaurant in the Sydney CBD pays homage to regional Chinese cuisine with dishes like Guangxi-style crisp roast pork belly and steamed flathead, the Hangzhou way. Pull up a chair at the bar to enjoy their excellent weekday lunch deal, which features a selection of dim sum and noodles for around \$15 each.

[spicetemple.com.au](http://spicetemple.com.au)

## STILLWATER TAS

> Expect a slick dining experience at this hatted restaurant in Launceston. Craig Will's seasonally mindful menus can be enjoyed any time but you can't go wrong with the chef's daily lunch set menu, which clocks in at \$65.

[stillwater.com.au](http://stillwater.com.au)

STOKEHOUSE Q



## ATLAS DINING VIC

> It sounds like a recipe for disaster. Chef Charlie Carrington changes cuisine every four months at his South Yarra restaurant, jumping from Vietnamese to Mexican, Israeli to Peruvian, faster than you can say "frequent flyer points". But this culinary race around the world, showcasing the beauty of fire-based cooking and Carrington's imagination, really works – especially when you factor in the five-course set menu for \$60.

[atlasdining.com.au](http://atlasdining.com.au)

## RICK STEIN AT BANNISTERS NSW

> Extending the celebrity chef's famed passion for local seafood and produce, his Port Stephens venue serves up dishes such as marinated Coffs Harbour yellowfin tuna bathed in passionfruit, chilli, lime and coriander, and Terrigal kingfish fillet served with clams, peas and asparagus. The Friday lunch deal gets you an entrée and main with a glass of wine for \$65 per person.

[bannisters.com.au/port-stephens](http://bannisters.com.au/port-stephens)



# FAMILY FRIENDLY

*Hit up these places with the whole tribe for a fun, stress-free meal that everyone will enjoy.*



RECCOLAB

## SHARK FIN INN VIC

> This convivial home of Cantonese feasting in Chinatown is a bona fide Melbourne institution. Daily yum cha is the big drawcard, with weekends witnessing multi-generational crowds clashing chopsticks over lazy Susans as a battalion of waiters ferry dim sum around the room. From classic sesame prawn toast and spring rolls to the endless array of the perfectly pleated dumplings, it all adds up to an excellent meal.

[sharkfin.com.au](http://sharkfin.com.au)

## MONSTERELLA WA

> Open seven nights a week. A child-friendly setting. The offer of BYO. Is it any wonder this cosy wood-fired pizzeria is perpetually abuzz? Delicious pizza aside, juicy Abruzzo-style grilled lamb skewers and handmade pasta (spaghetti and meatballs, anyone?) further endear this suburban favourite to its fans.

[monsterella.com.au](http://monsterella.com.au)

## THREE BLUE DUCKS NSW

> Set on an 80-acre working farm, this sustainable dining experience includes a café, produce store and restaurant with an environmentally-conscious menu. The children's menu is thoughtfully conceived and kids are encouraged to run free here – which means parents can sit back and relax. If you fancy a picnic in the fields, pre-order a hamper of local cheeses, charcuterie, parfait and bread. They also have locations in Bronte, Roseberry and Brisbane.

[threeblueducks.com/byron](http://threeblueducks.com/byron)

## RECCOLAB NSW

> This inner Sydney restaurant smashes out crowd-pleasing pizzas in a modern, sun-drenched setting, but it's the focaccia col formaggio di Recco (an obscure Ligurian specialty of baked cheesy bread) that will keep you coming back; it's the only restaurant in Australia to serve it. Not only do they offer pint-sized versions of their pizzas and house-made pastas on the children's menu, kids will love watching the pizzaiolo in action at the woodfired oven.

[reccolab.com.au](http://reccolab.com.au)

## BURLEIGH PAVILION QLD

> Shake off the sand, rinse yourself under the showers and climb the stairs to this massive new venue housing a restaurant as well as a more casual terrace area. So close to Burleigh's breakers you can feel the spray, the vibe here is casual-chic (expect a selfie show) and the pub grub is elevated into a produce-led menu to match the million dollar views – "French dip" steak sandwich, anyone? The \$10 kids menu will seal the deal for anyone eating out with the clan.

[burleighpavilion.com](http://burleighpavilion.com)



RICK STEIN AT BANNISTERS

# PUBS & WINE BARS

**Gourmet dining is no afterthought at these trendy watering holes.**

## CARLTON WINE ROOM VIC

A trio of industry heavyweights have turned an ageing neighbourhood bar and bistro into the hottest ticket in town. This graceful multi-level corner Victorian is now the proud home of a 100-strong wine list that flexes through styles and regions like a gymnast and a menu of produce-driven mod-Oz share plates such as mussels with cucumber, agrodolce dressing, mint. The atmosphere is as conducive to drinks and snacks as it is to a set-menu dinner.

[thecarltonwineroom.com.au](http://thecarltonwineroom.com.au)

## TOTTI'S NSW

Merivale's new restaurant at The Royal Bondi is designed to transport you straight to Italy, where sharing a meal with family and friends is what life is all about. Embrace alfresco dining in the courtyard under an olive tree or dine inside at generously spaced tables – no awkward banging of chairs here. Dine on a balloon of woodfired bread served with herbed rockmelon antipasto, pappardelle with lamb ragu and a Neapolitan ice cream sandwich.

[merivale.com/venues/tottis](http://merivale.com/venues/tottis)

## ROCHESTER HOTEL VIC

This classic corner pub in the hipster heart of Fitzroy is decorated with rock'n'roll paraphernalia and boasts a leafy beer garden where the fundamentals of craft brews and live music are very much intact. The Rochy's secret weapon is chef Mischa Tropp, whose menu is inspired by his southern Indian heritage. Expect dishes such as eggplant achar, Kerala fried chicken wings and fish thali to bring the punch.

[rochey.com.au](http://rochey.com.au)

THE ROCHESTER HOTEL



TOTTI'S BONDI

## POLY NSW

This Surry Hills newcomer is a wine bar first and restaurant second but the culinary offerings are wonderfully refined. Its centrepiece open kitchen is responsible for cooking up a short but generous, ever-changing snack menu – think slow-grilled enoki with potato dashi or blood-sausage pie. Order your poison from the 15-page organic and biodynamic wine, sake, cocktails and beer list. Then, match your share plates accordingly.

[polysurryhills.com.au](http://polysurryhills.com.au)

## FOR SPECIAL OCCASIONS...

### QUAY NSW

Peter Gilmore may have retired the famous Snow Egg, but its replacement – the White Coral, a pillowy white chocolate and mango concoction – is no less worthy. The stylish décor and entire menu of artful, ingredient-led dishes at this Sydney institution have also had a makeover but the epic views and flawless service remain intact.

[quay.com.au](http://quay.com.au)

### ORANA SA

Jock Zonfrillo's innovative tasting menu features hyper-local ingredients like Murray River cod and Port Lincoln squid, alongside native ingredients such as green ants, white aspen and wattleseed, served up in an intimate dining room.

[restaurantorana.com](http://restaurantorana.com)

### WASABI QLD

Expect culinary theatre performed through a Japanese lens, against the backdrop of the Noosa River. Here, the menu celebrates local produce and hard-to-source ingredients such as Japanese varieties of plum, chilli and prickly ash from the restaurant's own farm.

[wasabisb.com](http://wasabisb.com)

### ATTICA VIC

It's not easy getting a booking at Australia's only entry on the World's 50 Best Restaurants list, but it's worth the effort. Ben Shewry's idiosyncratic Australiana-style fine dining menu sees a parade of dishes that might include ant-crust-ed lamington, a "Vegemite" scroll (surprise: it's not Vegemite) and even possum sausages.

[attica.com.au](http://attica.com.au)