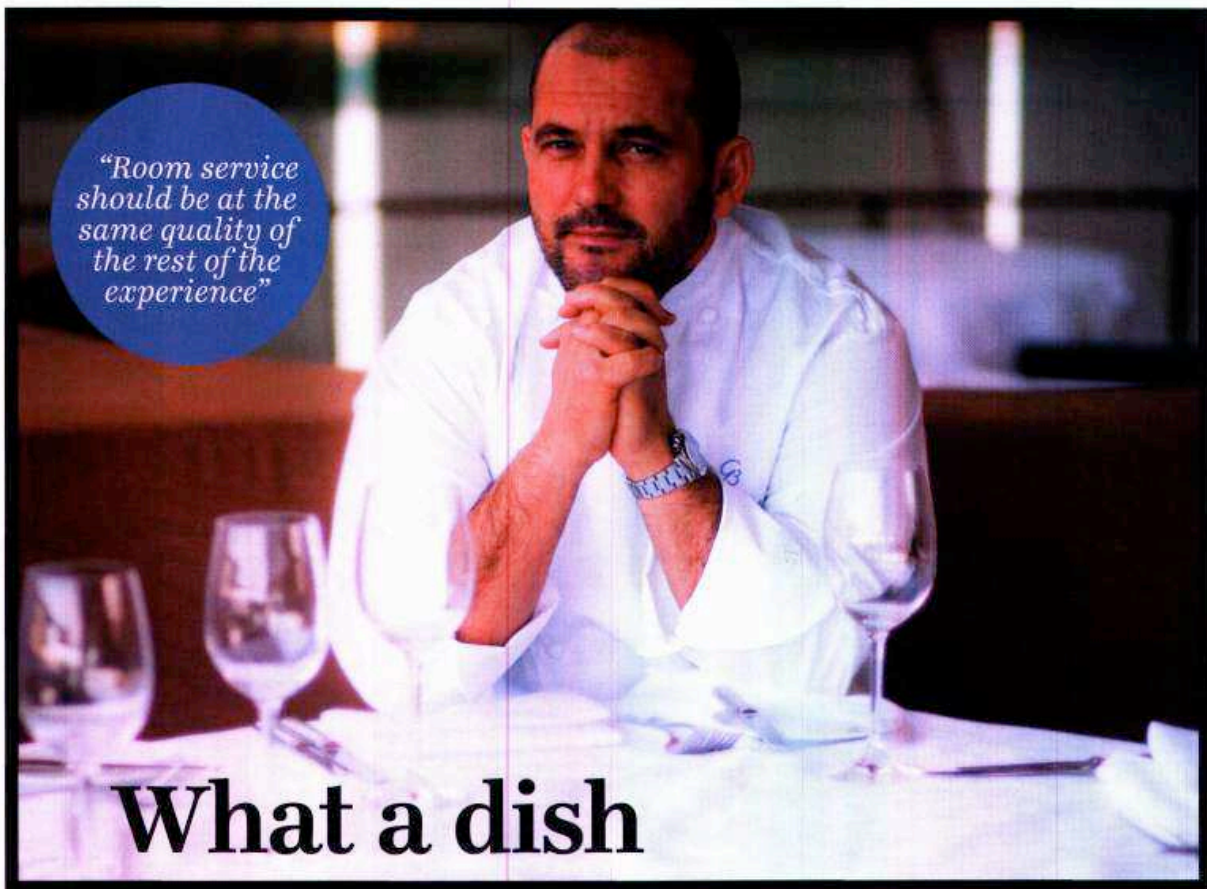




TRAVEL SMARTER **SHORTCUTS**

# ***Eat & drink***

*"It's kind of the ultimate gift for someone, to cook for them." – Curtis Stone, chef*



## **What a dish**

*Hotels have been adding all kinds of ingredients to their recipe for success – now Guillaume Brahimi is one of them, says **Tori Clapham***

**T**here's no denying we're a nation of foodies – a fact any savvy hotelier knows only too well. No surprises then that Melbourne's Crown Towers, one of the savviest of all, has upped the culinary ante with a very welcome food initiative: a new in-room menu designed by not one, but two celebrity chefs – Guillaume Brahimi and Neil Perry.

"I don't think that other hotels in Australia are up to scratch, they just stick to the classics: one pizza, one club sandwich, you know," Brahimi explains to AT. "We are trying to bring some love into the hotel room. Room service should be at the same quality as the rest of the experience."

Crown isn't the only hotel polishing their silver service – Sydney's Shangri-La has also cooked up a new initiative in the hopes of getting our attention, with a concept they've

coined the 'Chefs' Surprise'. Book in for the 10-course degustation – if you can, it reputedly sells out fast – and you'll receive 10 dishes, each created by a different chef. Risky? Perhaps. But decadence sells. Just like Adriano Zumbo's 'dessert train', now found in Sydney's luxury casino and hotel complex, The Star – designed in case you can't stop at one world-class dessert... hey, we'd like to try a little of them all, too.

Gold Coast's Palazzo Versace is now also offering cooking master classes, where you can learn inside trade secrets to sufficiently leave dinner guests in awe of your cooking skills.

What will they think of next? Complimentary spa treatments, perhaps – hand delivered by Brahimi himself? Hey, it's just a suggestion...





**INSIDE SCOOP**



**NO AUSSIE SUMMER IS COMPLETE WITHOUT A HEALTHY DOSE OF ICE-CREAM. THESE GELATERIAS OFFER FLAVOURS THAT ARE ANYTHING BUT VANILLA...**

**Vegemite**

**GELATERIA CREMONA, BRISBANE, QLD**  
It doesn't get much more Aussie than this. If you're around Brisbane this Australia Day, visit Gelateria Cremona for a patriotic scoop of their Vegemite or Lamington-inspired gelato. But, if the jarred stuff is anything to go by, we doubt any overseas visitors will appreciate the genius behind it.

**Fish and chips**

**KAILIS FISH MARKET CAFÉ, FREMANTLE, WA**  
Combining two summer essentials – ice-cream and fish and chips, this unlikely match is a must-try for visitors. Made with real batter at award-winning Perth gelateria, Il Gelato, this controversial flavour is available exclusively at the Freo café.

**Bacon**

**FRUGII, CANBERRA, ACT**  
We're not sure if it's better or worse for you than the real deal, but a scoop is said to fill your mouth with a subtle salty and smoky sensation. Infused with actual smoked bacon, it's become a favourite at Canberra's Fishwick Fresh Food Markets and Capital Regional Farmers Markets, where you can sample Frugii's other experimental flavours such as gorgonzola or laksa.

**Persian pistachio**

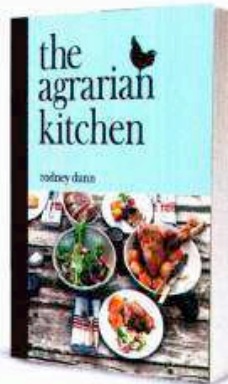
**EVERCREAM GELATI, HAHNDORF, SA**  
Combining pistachio nuts, cardamom, rosewater and saffron, this rich concoction has been likened to an Indian kulfi (a frozen eggless dessert). Break up the intense flavours with a scoop of their extra virgin olive oil sorbet.

**Peanut butter and jelly**

**JOCK'S ICE CREAM, MELBOURNE, VIC**  
Dubbed the Obama Rama, this American sandwich-staple is served in ice-cream form, combining sweet and savoury flavours like its breadly originator. Time your visit right and you can sample their famed 'sweetcorn and caramel' too.

**GINGERLY CHARACTER**

If you've had your fill of ciders, this is our pick for summery swills – the humble ginger beer with a grown-up twist. Made by the folk at newly-formed Brookvale Union on Sydney's northern beaches, this four per cent brew is sweet, acidic and dangerously refreshing, with bitey Bilpin-grown ginger. \$7 per 500ml bottle, [brookvaleunion.com.au](http://brookvaleunion.com.au)



**Feast your eyes on this...**

If your travels don't quite reach the award-winning Agrarian Kitchen in Tassie's Derwent Valley, this may just be the next best thing. The sustainable, farm-based cooking school has released its first recipe book, detailing how to create seasonal sensations from plank-grilled trumpeter fish in summer to quince-syrup dumplings in winter, yum! \$59.99; [theagrariankitchen.com](http://theagrariankitchen.com)



**EATING EXPEDITION**

Daphne Hatzistavros migrated from Greece as a 14-year-old with her family and settled in Melbourne's eastern fringes. Inspired by an upbringing rich in cooking, she spent much of her adult life running takeaway bars and market stalls, until six years ago.

"I wanted to open somewhere dedicated to traditional Greek cooking, where people could pick up authentic ingredients and be inspired to cook traditional Greek cuisine," says Daphne.

So, Alpha Food Market was born – a Santorini-blue delicatessen with

everything from fettas, olives and oils, to frozen spinach pastries, bougatsa (traditional custard pie) and coffee beans, which have journeyed across the Atlantic to Oakleigh. It's just one of the authentic Greek eateries in this Melbourne suburb, which celebrity chef Maeve O'Meara has described as "a total Hellenic immersion". In fact, she's added Oakleigh (and a host of other destinations) to her Gourmet Safaris for 2014. Book in for a behind-the-scenes taste-test of Oakleigh's best. From \$115 per person; [gourmetsafaris.com.au](http://gourmetsafaris.com.au)







## HOME OF WINE

New Sydney-based cellar door, restaurant and bar Nomad has opened with a bang (and a purpose-built cheese and charcuterie room). The restaurant's star-studded cast includes Nathan Sisi as head chef (previously of Heston Blumenthal's London restaurant Dinner), resident master of wine Rob Geddes (author of the annual Australian Wine Vintages series), and Al Yazbek (of Toko fame). It's worth a visit if you like keeping up with Sydney's latest and greatest - expect sophisticated wine and a lively atmosphere. [restaurantnomad.com.au](http://restaurantnomad.com.au)

## TRAVEL SMARTER **SHORTCUTS**

### POCKET-SIZED CONCIERGE

Booking website Lime&Tonic has released a new app for Melburnians, Sydney-siders and visitors alike, for special 'off-menu' dining experiences. Think progressive dinners across the city, custom-made degustations and extra special requests. Members can create a profile with their preferences to receive weekly updates on dining suggestions. Nice! [limeandtonic.com](http://limeandtonic.com)

### COASTAL COOK-UP... FROM HOME

Tasty recipes set by Australia's most iconic beach - what a delicious combo! Check out Bondi Harvest on Youtube for online cooking classes (a new video is released every Thursday), and pay a visit to Bondi Beach without leaving home. [youtube.com/bondiharvest](http://youtube.com/bondiharvest)