

# DINING in Melbourne

When compiling a list of Melbourne's top restaurants, Jacklyn Lloyd's biggest challenge was trying to settle on such a small shortlist. Here are her painstakingly edited recommendations.

## ARINTJI

**Federation Square,  
Corner Flinders and Swanston Streets,  
Melbourne**

Tel: +61 3 9663 9900

Arintji has recently welcomed new head chef, Peter Ojansuu, who has injected a new energy into this much-loved Melbourne restaurant, which is set to host a new team of staff who will offer diners a relaxed dining experience – complemented by Federation Square's lively atmosphere. Take a seat out on the terrace and enjoy Ojansuu's refined menu, washed down with a glass of local sparkling.

## COOKIE

**252 Swanston Street  
Melbourne**

Tel: +61 3 9663 7660

Situated right in the heart of Melbourne's CBD, Cookie is the venue where you'll find locals chatting away over cocktails and 'oyster bombs' – fresh oysters served with pickled chilli, garlic and lime.

## CUMULUS INC.

**45 Flinders Lane  
Melbourne**

Tel: +61 3 9650 1445

Chef Andrew McConnell's restaurant/wine bar fuses fantastic food with sleek architecture. Cumulus Inc. is the place you go to for a laid back meal with simple food served exceptionally well. Why not try McConnell's English breakfast, a definite classic – black pudding and all.

## GROSSI FLORENTINO

**80 Bourke Street  
Melbourne**

Tel: +61 3 9662 1811

Executive chef Guy Grossi heads one of Melbourne's most quintessentially Italian restaurants. Try out the buongustaio (degustation) menu and sample Grossi's meltingly perfect Glenloth pigeon with ravioli, highlighted with flavours of marsala, cardamom and liquorice powder.

## FRANK CAMORRA

**HEAD CHEF, MOVIDA AND  
MOVIDA NEXT DOOR**



Born in Barcelona, Frank Camorra passionately champions Spanish food, yet his laid back personable demeanour is definitely a classic Australian trait. Meeting *The Age Good Food Guide 2009* 'Chef of the Year,' I was a little starstruck. For a man that shies away from the limelight, everyone that has eaten at his restaurants seems to love him. Yes, love is a strong word, but if you have ever tried MoVida's mahon (cheese) croqetta – you too will have serious love stars in your eyes.

**What did winning *The Age Good Food Guide 2009* 'Chef of the Year' award mean to you?**

It was a great honour – I didn't expect to win. What we do at MoVida is hardly ground-breaking. We do things simply and well, and for people to acknowledge that is great.

**Why do you think Melburnians have really taken on the concept of Spanish cuisine?**

Our location in the vibrant CBD is at the heart of everything – theatre, comedy festivals, shows etc. MoVida caters to people who come to work, play and seek entertainment while enjoying city events. The ideal is for people to enjoy an event and have a good meal – making a big day of it.

**What is your preferred thing to eat outside of work hours?**

I crave Asian flavours because they are so different from what I cook. Because of where I live, I love good Thai food and I enjoy things like pho (noodle soup).

**What is your favourite Australian destination to visit, outside of Melbourne?**

I love Tasmania. Its beauty is untouched and natural. There are some great walks and it's nice to feel like you're getting away.

## GEORGE CALOMBARIS

### HEAD CHEF, THE PRESS CLUB AND HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Do The Press Club, Hellenic Republic or via yia's (grandma's) moussaka sound familiar? Well, of course not, unless you're a well-versed foodie who regularly enjoys chef George Calombaris' "agora of modern Greek gastronomy" – or you watched MasterChef. Some would argue that Calombaris has single-handedly brought Greek cuisine back in vogue – a taste that has long been savoured by migrated Melburnians for generations.



#### What do you think The Press Club brings to Melbourne?

The Press Club is the agora of modern Greek gastronomy. It also represents the Melbourne dining scene – being able to eat in an unpretentious environment with humble but informative service.

#### Who or what influences and inspires your cuisine?

I am inspired by everything good. It doesn't matter if you're a bricklayer or a heart surgeon; I always listen and learn from people's experiences in life. Above all my mother and yia yia (grandmother) for their passion and great food – also my father for his strength and ability to stay positive.

#### What do you think of Melbourne's foodie scene?

I am so proud to have three beautiful restaurants in Melbourne [including Maha Bar & Grill], and work among some amazing chefs and restaurants. You can eat so well in Melbourne. From a cheap bowl of noodles down Victoria Street [Richmond] or a fine dining experience that is world-class at Vue de Monde. We are blessed.

#### What is your favourite 'non-cheffy' food?

I love ham on toast. Love it!

### MOVIDA AND MOVIDA NEXT DOOR

1 Hosier Lane

Melbourne

Tel: +61 3 9663 3038

Head chef Frank Camorra is one of Melbourne's most celebrated chefs and he brings a little España to many keen diners almost every night of the week. Camorra's second venture, MoVida Next Door is an authentic rendition of a classic Madrid tapas bar, while the neighbouring MoVida, is the more grown-up and sophisticated restaurant.

### THE EUROPEAN

161 Spring Street

Melbourne

Tel: +61 3 9654 0811

The European fuses old-world European charm with dishes like rabbit and leek pie, creating a modern appreciation for the classics. One of Melbourne's greatest little gems, The European creates food that is simple, fresh and wholesome.

### THE PRESS CLUB

72 Flinders Street

Melbourne

Tel: +61 3 9677 9677

Undoubtedly one of Melbourne's go-to places to make a maximum impression, The Press Club is all about excellence and epicurean innovation. Head chef George Calombaris prides himself on delivering modern Greek dishes which never fall short of being spectacular.

### THE GRAND HOTEL

333 Burnley Street

Richmond

Tel: +61 3 9429 2530

People seem to be put off when they realise that The Grand is a pub, but what they fail to realise is that this watering hole also boasts an award-winning restaurant. The Grand Hotel Dining Room places great emphasis on innovative Italian recipes, which feature mains like char-grilled spatchcock with polpettone di fagioli, which delivers warm, robust game flavours. The Grand Hotel presents a beautiful concept that merges the Australian 'pub' tradition with Melbourne's fine dining expectations.

### VUE DE MONDE

Normanby Chambers,

430 Little Collins Street

Melbourne

Tel: +61 3 9691 3888

Chef Shannon Bennett maintains his place on the global culinary scene by sourcing decadent ingredients like Strasbourg foie gras and black Périgord truffles, which delicately deliver masterpieces that would be impossible for a mere mortal to recreate. Vue de Monde is a rare and magnificent dining experience. **w**

