Whether you’re looking to take wing or merely take fork in hand, our team of hardened luxury travellers, fearless culinary thrillseekers and finely tuned aesthetes has combed the globe for a year’s worth of juicy inspiration. Dive into our take on 2014’s most intriguing places and people, trends and ideas.

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Dead Rabbit
Named for an infamous Five Points street gang, The Dead Rabbit Grocery and Grog is a throwback Irish-American saloon headed by a pair of expat Belfast barmen in lower Manhattan. Cocktail culture revivalists head straight for the parlour upstairs where toddies, slings, punches and nogs are updated from nearly forgotten manuals such as Cooling Cups and Dainty Drinks (1869) and The Gentleman’s Table Guide (1871). Order the fiery Empire Club from a new whiskey-soaked graphic novel-menu immortalising Dead Rabbit lifer John “Old Smoke” Morrissey and toast the bad old days. deadrabbitnyc.com

Turkish delight
Turkish Airlines has gone from zero to hero since CEO Temel Kotil began shaking up the national carrier in 2005. It’s now the world’s fourth largest airline, serving 241 destinations (the biggest, United, serves 373) and has won Skytrax’s Best Airline in Europe award for three consecutive years. A savvy ad featuring superstar athletes Kobe Bryant and Lionel Messi in a selfie shootout has been viewed 137 million times on YouTube. By 2017, the first stage of one of the world’s biggest airports will open in Istanbul. The hub – clearly aiming to out-Gulf the Gulf – will have six runways and serve 150 million passengers. That’s 80 million more than Heathrow.

BREAD & BUTTER
In these carb-conscious times, bread is increasingly in the firing line. On the plus side, though, many chefs have used this perspective to treat good old bread and butter as more of a luxury than ever. We’re particularly taken with the example chef Hamish Ingham serves as a course on its own as part of his new menu at Sydney neighbourhood favourite Bar H. The bread is hot Chinese-style steamed buns, accompanied by what Ingham likes to call “pork butter”, a mixture of butter and lard, spiced with fennel pollen and a suggestion of chilli heat. Take that, Atkins dieters.

MAYFAIR DÉBUT
Two of London’s most celebrated restaurateurs, Jeremy King and Chris Corbin, are trying something new: The Beaumont Hotel, a 73-room luxury hotel in Mayfair scheduled to open later this year. The duo’s restaurants, including the highly regarded Wolseley and Delaunay, are known for polished service, Art Deco styling and continental glamour. Expect the hotel – with restaurant and bar, of course – to take service seriously. thebeaumont.com

SMART LUGGAGE
Every year more than 25 million checked bags are reported lost or missing – that’s about a one in 100 chance of your luggage going astray. A new gadget, Trakdot, helps reduce those odds by travelling inside your checked bags and sending a text message to let you know how – and where – it’s travelling. trakdot.com
Cameron Krone of Smith and Carmody, the Sydney design firm behind the looks of some of the city’s most appealing café spaces (Cornersmith, Gumption and Brickfields, among them), describes his work as being “sympathetic to the site” in an effort to “blur the line between what’s new and old”. It’s also clean, fresh and meticulously detailed, and you can expect to see more of it at Mecca Espresso’s upcoming Alexandria roastery-café later this year. smithandcarmody.com.au
Grown Underground

The Japanese did it first, growing rice in tower blocks. In London, World War II bomb shelters are being put to use as greenhouses for growing hydroponic herbs and premium greens for the capital’s restaurant kitchens. zerocarbonfood.co.uk

Doctor’s orders

In India, one expects best-practice Ayurvedic spas and meditation. Vana, Malsi Estate, a new luxury ashram in the northern Indian state of Uttarakhand in the Himalayan foothills, takes its treatments to another level, matching spa menus to doctors’ orders – Ayurvedic, Tibetan and Chinese doctors, to be precise. Highly recommended are the Tibetan detoxifying treatments and the creative spa cuisine. vanaretreats.com

Face-sized chicken

Hot-Star Large Fried Chicken started out as a stall in Taipei’s Shilin Night Market, quickly spread throughout Asia and is now intent on colonising the west, starting with Melbourne and Sydney. The fried-to-order chicken comes as a hefty quarter-kilo breast cross-section (served on the bone, for added juiciness), about the size of your face, as several million selfies can attest. Coated in tapioca and spices that pack heat, it’s crunchy, salty, fried addiction at its best. hotstarchicken.com.au
TO IRAN In a further sign Iran’s nuclear-sanctioned isolation is easing, Austrian Airlines has resumed direct flights, five a week in fact, from Vienna to the capital Tehran. austrian.com>

MOVE OVER, SABRAGE
The latest in flamboyant bottle-opening trends? If you’re over slicing the tops of your drops off with a sabre, consider Port tongs. An 18th century invention, they were used to cleanly sever the bottleneck below the cork to prevent contamination by fragile or damaged corks. In Manhattan, Eleven Madison Park’s wine director Dustin Wilson has revived the technique, using it to open old vintage wines and add just that little bit more theatre to the experience.

CANDY LAND
Here’s an irresistible sweets store to pop on a NYC shopping map. CuRious Candy by New York designer Cynthia Rowley sells fairy floss spun daily in watermelon, blueberry, rose, liquorice and salted caramel, sprinkled with edible glitter. Nibble on candy cones or flower bouquets (the large size) and shop for lollies and edible teacups and plates. cynthiarowley.com

BOTTURA IN ISTANBUL
Massimo Bottura, the chef-patron of the three-star Osteria Francescana in Modena, will open his first restaurant outside his native Italy this month. Ristorante Italia, a contemporary fine-dining venue located inside Istanbul’s Eataly, a massive Italian food hall, will celebrate regional specialties and draws on 100 classic and historical recipes. Bottura’s menu will conjure nostalgia while pressing decidedly into the future by employing modern techniques to achieve the flavours of the past. Dishes such as osso buco, risotto alla Milanese, pesto alla Genovese and spaghetti with squid-ink will be transformed by Bottura’s forward-looking staff.

NIKKEI, PERU’S JAPANESE-PERUVIAN FUSION CUISINE
With the opening of Pakta, former El Bulli chef Albert Adrià’s new 32-seater in Barcelona, Peru’s Japanese-Peruvian fusion cuisine, Nikkei, is set to have its time in the sun. Fire up your palate with avocado tofu with sea urchin, yuzu and wasabi, suckling pig gyoza and fried rockfish with escabeche sauce. en.bcn50.org

CHIFA, PERU’S CHINESE-PERUVIAN FUSION CUISINE
Speaking of fusion Peruvian-Asian cuisines, we’re also expecting to see more of Chinese-Peruvian cooking, which came to be in the kitchens of Peru’s Chinese migrants in the 20th century. Signatures include chaufa, a Peruvian adaptation of fried rice; lomo saltado, a Chinese stir-fry and Peruvian steak and potato hybrid; and Peruvian-style wonton soup.
Flipping the Switch
Representing and aiming to please a new generation of Australian wine drinkers, winemaker Vanessa Altmann casts organic wines in a fresh light with her bold Switch Wines. The labels have arresting graphics, the wines are innovative small-batch expressions of friends’ organic vineyards – Adelaide Hills chardonnay, Eden Valley pinot noir, Riverland vermentino and more. Having learned her craft from old-school organic diehards Temple Bruer in Langhorne Creek, Altmann’s private label – her “after-hours wine empire” – is in its fifth vintage. It includes such curios as cloudy natural wines Orange Wallflower (hints of apricot, tropical fruits, banana and spice) and Autopilot (licks of cherry, spice and soy).

House of the rising suds
While there are cocktails, dumplings and décor to love at David Zhou’s new South Yarra bar Zhou Zhou, it’s the beer list that really gets us steamy. Nearly 30 Japanese craft beers – from pilsners to stouts and IPAs – are the main pull but there’s a strong showing from the rest of Asia, too, alongside Japanese cider and Australian rice lager.

DISH DECODER From Chengdu to Guangzhou, if you’ve got a smartphone, you’ve got the meal you want. Hold it over a menu written in Chinese characters and Waygo translates the dishes into (usually) intelligible English. Currently available on Apple devices only. waygoapp.com>
THE KEFIR FACTOR

Whether you buy into its reputed health benefits or not (kefir originated in the mountains of Caucasus, has been around for 2000 years, and there are a lot of claims), this probiotic-laden, lightly spritzy, fermented milk drink punches above its weight in the kitchen. It’s easy to make at home using kefir grains and milk. Use it as a starter for bread making or to make labne.

LET THERE BE LUZ

Creamy, fresh and cold-pressed from pesticide-free almonds, Luz almond milk is nutrient-dense, lactose-free and suitable for vegans. The drink has a short shelf-life and is made to owner Kevin Chin’s mother’s recipe. The Brisbane start-up is the pet project of venture capitalist Chin and he’s already started supplying to Sydney. A cold press is on order from Spain, part of a plan to target the US market by the end of the year.

VIP FOR A DAY

Being stuck in cattle class no longer means being shut out of the lounge. Many airlines, particularly in the US, are allowing travellers to buy day-passes for their lounges. American, United and US Airways offer $55 passes that allow full access to their priority-passenger areas. Plenty of independent lounges are cropping up as well: American Express is rolling out its Centurion lounges free to Platinum and Centurion cardholders, $55 for all other AmEx members; Hong Kong-based Plaza Premium Lounge has lounges in 27 locations worldwide offering everything from cocktails to napping beds for fees ranging from $57 for two hours to $82 for five hours; and Executive Lounges by Servisair provides upscale lounges in 44 countries for about $456 a year (bonus: you get to bring a guest). Priority Pass, meanwhile, offers guests access to more than 600 lounges worldwide for an annual fee of about $110, plus an entry fee of about $30.

JELLY WRESTLING

In a sweet nod to its topless-bar heritage, rebooted inner-western Sydney pub the Oxford Tavern offers a dessert called the Jelly-Wrestle. It consists of ice-cream, waffles, whipped cream, maraschino cherries, chocolate sauce, caramelised popcorn, sprinkles and, of course, jelly (three kinds, in fact). Best of all, it’s served not with forks and spoons, but simply with disposable rubber gloves. A fine mess indeed.

Luggage check Louis Vuitton has shrunk its classic monogrammed trunks – or malles – into pint-sized versions, complete with removable covers. Un petit plaisir! Louis Vuitton Petite Malle bag, POA. 1300 883 880
Hotel Escondido turns the bare essentials into an art form. The latest Mexican refuge from Grupo Habita occupies an otherwise empty beach, almost 400 kilometres south of congested Acapulco. (What a difference that distance makes.) Each of the 16 palm-thatched casitas has a plunge pool and hammock in full view of the Pacific. Sandy paths lead through a cactus garden to the restaurant and lounge, where a bartender named Juan is the master of mezcal-and-mango Margaritas. Catch of the day lands in handmade tortillas; Mexico’s surf mecca is a quick hop down the road. And the occasional migrating grey whale breaches offshore at sunset. designhotels.com>
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MONKEY BUSINESS
Every sub-Saharan aficionado knows you don't monkey around with the traditional safari – a beloved formula of wide-open savannas, game drives and the Big Five – but a few safari operators have gone bananas with primate trekking. Along with gorilla trekking in Rwanda and Uganda – already popular with intrepid travellers – there's the chance to get close to chimpanzees. Africa expert Micato Safaris offers a “Primates in Paradise” four-day adventure by foot into the enchanted forests of the Mahale Mountains in Tanzania's remote west to encounter troupes of chimps in their natural habitat.

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AMAN NEXT Arguably the world's most sophisticated resort operator, Aman continues its bid for world domination with new resorts confirmed for Lijiang and Jordan and rumoured for the Dominican Republic, Gabon, Tokyo and Portugal. amanresorts.com

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Let them eat meat→
Fermented, salted, aged and sliced on the Berkel, but created from vegetables, not animal flesh? Brisbane's Ben Williamson says heck yes. He's been experimenting with vegan charcuterie for Gerard's Bar, a tasty new adjunct to Fortitude Valley's Gerard's Bistro. “The method is a mix of fermentation and salt baking,” he explains. “Salt-baking provides the firmness, texture and flavour.” Beetroot, parsnip and carrot are fermented, dehydrated then salt-baked to absorb any remaining moisture and to infuse more flavour. The result? “It has the same texture as jamón.”

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Shades of Mondrian
The Morgans Hotel Group, known in the US for stylish design, is opening its first European Mondrian hotel in a prime Thames-side site in June. The south wing of an imposing 1970s office block has been returned to its originally intended use as a grand hotel, redesigned by Tom Dixon, with a vast lobby bar and 359 guest rooms on 14 floors. Its location is a perfect mid-point between the arts hub of the Southbank Centre on one side, and the Tate Modern and Globe Theatre on the other. Sea Containers House, 20 Upper Ground, London. morganshotelgroup.com
HOME BREW

Some of our best bar owners are having a crack at making their own wine with delicious results. Travis Tausend of Adelaide’s Cork Wine Café is a couple of vintages into his own spicy, earthy grenache; Aidan Raftery’s Vin du Patron at East Melbourne’s Persillade is one of the best pinots we’ve tried this year.

KAKADU PLUMS

“The health benefits of Kakadu plums are off the chain,” says Orana chef Jock Zonfrillo. “It’s a natural immune-system booster, from antibacterial, antiviral qualities to anti-carcinogenic effect, and wild-harvested fruit contains 5000mg of vitamin C per 100gm of fruit, which is about 50 times more than oranges – but putting my chef’s hat on, it’s got an appealing mild acidity something like cooked citrus, or Granny Smith apple, and it’s also a tenderising agent, great for marinades. Bang: what else would you put in your smoothie?”

PERFECTLY FLAWED

The Japanese aesthetic wabi-sabi finds beauty in imperfection, value in age and accepts decay is natural. Sure, luxe designers are comfortable with patina, but we say they’ve only scratched the surface. Get thee to Melrose, in South Australia’s Flinders Ranges and bed down in converted trucks behind the North Star Hotel (northstarhotel.com.au). Hole up in Austria’s drainpipe hotels (dasparkhotel.net). And bravo, the recycled Boeing 727 suite in Costa Rica! (costaverde.com/727.htm)

OTT SUITES

The rich are different from you and me – they can spend silly money on hotel rooms. Or so the recent rash of extravagant suites pitched at the jetsetting one per cent would suggest. Take the Royal Etihad Suite at Abu Dhabi’s Jumeirah at Etihad Towers, a four-bedroom, six-bathroom mini-palace that occupies the entire 60th floor, with 360-degree views of the Corniche, Arabian Gulf and the metropolis – yours for a cool $19,900 a night. Then there’s the three-storey Jewel Suite by Martin Katz at the New York Palace, which features a private lift, a two-storey-high “cascading crystal” chandelier and crystal jewel boxes holding glittering creations by the suite’s namesake jeweller. The price? $27,600. Prefer to spend your 27 grand on digs in the City of Light? Try the two Royal Suites at the legendary Four Seasons Hotel George V in Paris: both have private terraces overlooking the lovely Art Deco fountain of the Three Graces and marble bathrooms with steam rooms, saunas and Marie Antoinette-worthy walk-in dressing rooms. But you haven’t seen OTT until you’ve seen the Presidential Suite at The Raj Palace Hotel in Jaipur, India, a former Maharaja’s four-storey dwelling. Spanning 1,500 square metres, there’s everything from a private roof terrace and swimming pool with panoramic views of the pink city to a private museum, library, banquet hall and bar. Recline on furniture made of silver while admiring rooms swathed in intricate stucco work, mirror and gold leaf. Only $49,700 a night.

CERTIFIED JUICE

The green wine thing’s getting serious Down Under: newly certified organic star vineyards include Grosset and Mount Horrocks in Clare and Pewsey Vale Contours in Eden Valley – and Torbreck is about to convert one top Barossa site to biodynamics. If this keeps up, most of our top wines will soon be glowing green.
The new butter

In konbu butter the building blocks of Western and Eastern deliciousness (fat and umami, respectively) meet in a dangerously versatile mixture; the version seen at Rockpool, whether melted over the potatoes dauphine as it is here, or on its superb chicken wings, is savoury sublimity itself.
AN EDITOR’S EYE
Ever since curating became the sexy thing to do, a host of hip names have become virtual gallerists of their own style – among them Balenciaga’s Alexander Wang, whose eponymous line-up now includes a signature collection of edited black-on-black “objects” such as this travelling eye mask. Alexander Wang leather eyemask with pouch, $103. +1 212 532 3103

STARCK GOES TO SEMINYAK
Philippe Starck has landed in Bali. The French designer is working on The Stairs, a villa-hotel hybrid on Seminyak’s teeming Petitenget strip, which will feature 12 villas and a look-at-me public space with restaurants, bars, spa, gym, library and, being French, pâtisserie. Doors are due to open early next year. thestairsbali.com

MAYLANDS RISING
After watching neighbouring Mount Lawley hit the big time, the inner-city Perth suburb of Maylands is finally getting its chance to shine. Smoult’s Continental Deli, Mrs. S and Sherbet continue to bring traffic to the area, and recent additions like French small bar Swallow, artisan butcher Hampshire on Eighth and Saturday night food markets are also playing their parts in reviving the 6051.

Africa’s booming beach scene
What a difference a decade or two makes. Back in the 1990s Mozambique was a basket-case African country emerging from 15 years of civil war. Now this Indian Ocean nation is the exotic beach destination of choice for switched-on sunlovers. New arrivals on the Lagoon Coast include the 22-stilted suites of White Pearl Ponta Mamoli, 100km south of the capital, Maputo. Besides plunge pools and private beach, the resort is handy to dolphins, humpback whales, turtles and the Maputo Elephant Reserve. Its private airstrip should open late this year (whitepearlresorts.com). Meanwhile, African lodge supremos andBeyond have taken over Benguerra Island Lodge, a 31-guest coral reef resort in the Bazaruto Archipelago. Among its guest experiences are dhow cruises with local fishermen and a jungly national park on the doorstep (andbeyond.com).
They're calling it Nueva Colombia, the new-look Latin nation that has (mostly) shed its drug-addled past and now enjoys political stability, lower crime rates and the attention of intrepid travellers keen to uncover the Next Big Thing. Its high-altitude capital Bogotá combines the pleasures of gastronomy with the joys of exploring gentrified barrios such as Usaquén – hence the growing comparisons between Bogotá and Buenos Aires. Not BA as it is today, but as it was in the formative years after the financial collapse of 2001: resourceful, edgy, determined and endlessly surprising.

Dubai and Abu Dhabi have had their flash-in-the-sand moments. Now it’s the turn of neighbouring Oman, the desert sultanate with more culture in its capital Muscat than all the UAE combined. Besides its Arabian Nights landscapes and some of the most hospitable Arabs on Earth, the Musandam Peninsula is gaining a reputation for adventure tourism, dhow cruising, untouched oases and unique lodgings. The latest standout address is the new Alila Jabal Akhdar, a glamorous redoubt in the Al Hajar mountains. alilahotels.com.

One-time pub patrons will be glad to hear the Clare’s tiled bar will remain. “It’s a very iconic bar because anyone who ever studied at UTS or Sydney uni remembers that pub,” he says. Prepare to raise glasses in February 2015. unlistedcollection.com

Taking some of the package out of its European tours, Trafalgar’s savvy “Be My Guest” program has travellers lunching with families who own local wineries and farms. Five-star resorts are also realising that guests occasionally like to get real; the Shanti Maurice in Mauritius, for example, encourages its guests to break bread with grandma in her home.

Oranges, lemons, limes and pomegranates beware: the Ra Chand juicer, that Mexican cult kitchen lust object, now has local distribution in Australia. All the juice, none of the washing up. discountwinefridges.com.au/juicers

FLAX has broken out beyond the confines of the health food aisle and into the dining rooms of our nation’s top restaurants. We’ve spotted it on the tables of Attica, Brae, Café Paci and Moon Park (with sea urchin roe, left) and if its nutty (and yes, healthful) appeal gets any bigger, we’re looking forward to seeing a whole lot more.

COLOMBIAN COMEBACK

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HAIL RA

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MEET THE FAMILY

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BEST DESERT DESTINATION

Two years on and the long-awaited Sydney lodgings from Singapore’s hippest hotelier still don’t have a name. In fact, much remains unclear about Loh Lik Peng’s Broadway début, but his track record suggests it’ll be worth waiting for. The Irish-born entrepreneur pioneered hip hotels in Singapore (New Majestic, Wanderlust) before branching out to London (Town Hall Hotel) and Shanghai (The Waterhouse). He has a reputation for turning unloved areas into must-visit venues – in this case, making over former student dive The Clare Hotel at Broadway as part of the $2 billion Carlton & United Brewery redevelopment. Project Peng will be a 60-room hotel with three restaurants – one of them conceived by his Brit-chef pal Jason Atherton (Pollen Street Social) – and a “quite sexy, quite special” rooftop pool. Room interiors will channel the legacy of the pub and brewery. “Not a beer-themed hotel, but industrial,” Loh says with a laugh. “I think it will be a very interesting project. It’s not something we’ve done anywhere else.” One-time pub patrons will be glad to hear the Clare’s tiled bar will remain. “It’s a very iconic bar because anyone who ever studied at UTS or Sydney uni remembers that pub,” he says. Prepare to raise glasses in February 2015. unlistedcollection.com
Best new address in Paris

The Hongkong and Shanghai Hotels group makes its long-awaited Paris début in August when The Peninsula opens its gilt-edged doors on Avenue Kléber. After six years of arduous restoration, involving untold volumes of marble, stucco and gold leaf, the former Hotel Majestic will emerge as a 200-room palace fit for the most discerning Paris visitors. Among its rather spectacular amenities are a terrace shaded by Avenue Kléber’s plane trees, a rooftop restaurant with 360-degree views of the City of Light and the historic Le Bar, where Kissinger signed the Vietnam Peace Accords in 1973. Five of the hotel’s 45 suites have their own gardens atop the seven-storey Belle Époque landmark. The Peninsula will also channel its oriental roots at Li Li, the signature haute chinoise Cantonese restaurant. The Paris property will feature the usual inspired Pen accoutrements – the fleet of Rolls Royces, elaborate afternoon teas, valet boxes and leading-edge in-room technology. Naturellement, for a property of this calibre, the Peninsula is located in the 16th arrondissement. paris.peninsula.com.

Automatic India

Indiaphiles rejoice. Forget the interminable queues and weeks-long visa waits – the Indian Government is about to introduce visas on arrival for residents of some 180 countries, including Australia. Visitors will be able to register and pay online and then collect their visas after touchdown at one of 26 Indian airports. The scheme phases in from October, just in time for peak tourist season.

Automatic India

Pérez Art Museum Miami confirms Miami as a global cultural hub.

Modern art in Miami

While the city is known for its party vibe, the Pérez Art Museum Miami confirms Miami as a global cultural hub. Set in the city’s newly gentrified downtown, the Herzog & de Meuron-designed museum is compulsory viewing, with an unrivalled Latin American collection that includes works by Cuban painter José Bedia and Mexican muralist Diego Rivera, donated by patron and real estate developer Jorge Pérez.

Perth’s Sichuan Street

When it comes to unbridled Sichuan flavours, Victoria Park is Perth’s lateral and literal hotspot. Along the suburb’s main drag of Albany Highway, chilli fiends have options galore for getting their ma la (“numbing and spicy”) fix. At Hao Szechuan Steamboat, it’s all about fiery hotpots while nearby Amazy specialises in all things meaty and delicious. Up the highway, Red Chilli Szechuan puts on bravura performances across the board, from fine dan dan noodles to exceptional cold tripe dishes. Finally there’s Lin’s Cuisine, as notable for its late-night hours as its yabby hotpots.

Cartoccio Allá Australiano

Paperbark can’t be said to be a truly new trend when it’s been part of Australian medicinal and culinary culture for a few thousand years, but it’s definitely having a moment in our top restaurants. It imparts a subtle herbal smokiness – at Attica in Melbourne, pale whiting fillets dressed with pearl meat arrive wrapped in lightly blackened parcels; in Brisbane’s Blackbird Bar & Grill its Murray cod, with lemon aspen and pepperberry. Brooks of Melbourne uses the native melaleuca’s bark to slow-cook potatoes for use in a dish featuring Victorian eel, consommé and edible “bark” shards made from squid ink-dyed lavoche.
XO MARKS THE SPOT Oz meets Asian green beans becomes a must-have menu treat thanks to Jock Zonfrillo’s inspired treatment at Street-ADL in Adelaide. Blanched and lightly wok tossed, the crisp, firm beans are dressed in an Aussie-accented XO sauce made with a base of bush tomato and native pepperberry to create a dish that’s irresistible.

GET ACTIVATED
The snark that greeted activated almonds may morph into a hum of pleasure as the idea of soaking, fermenting and sprouting grains starts moving out of the vegan ghetto and into the mainstream. Yes, there are a million health reasons to eat them (full of enzymes, aids digestion, blah blah blah) but the taste and texture of sprouted grains, an earthy-crisp-refreshing mix, is strangely appealing as evidenced in places like The Press Club (sprouted lentils with tarama butter-poached marron) in Melbourne.

SAVOIR FLAIR
One looks a little like the Sydney Opera House, encased in glass; the other resembles a spaceship parked at the junction of the Rhine and Saone rivers. Both are set to turn travellers’ heads when they debut in France this year. The Frank Gehry-designed Louis Vuitton Foundation for Creation, a remarkable barque whose 12 glass sails soar above the Bois de Boulogne in Paris, will showcase the art collection of LVMH chief Bernard Arnault. After a difficult eight-year gestation, it should be sprung by spring. Meanwhile, the arresting Musée des Confluences is the star turn of Lyon’s ambitious riverfront redevelopment. Its cerebral collection will explore questions of science and society against a backdrop of titanium and glass. fondationlouisvuitton.fr; museedesconfluences.fr.

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UP AND AWAY
One of the world’s highest hot-air balloon ventures, Balloons over Bhutan, takes off early next year over the kingdom’s remote central Phobjikha Valley. It will be the second balloon operation by Melbourne-based Eastern Safaris, which runs the highly regarded Balloons over Bagan in Burma. In preparation for flights, partners Khin Omar Win and Brett Melzer opened a 12-bedroom luxury lodge, Gangtey Goenpa, in the region late last year. Balloons over Bhutan will take a maximum of six guests per flight before and after the endangered black-necked cranes arrive on their annual migration. easternsafaris.com

Life is swell
Kelly Wearstler describes it as “a soulful and spirited homage to iconic west coast style”, but we just love her surfboard’s complex puzzle design featuring a spectrum of rich nutty woods – walnut, cherry, koa, ash and Russian birch plywood, to name a few. “Mulholland” surfboard, $10,300. kellywearstler.com

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KOREAN FOOD

Yep, it’s about time. Sydney is the epicentre (Moon Park leading the charge, with Kim and Danjee close behind) but you can taste the K-influence spreading out all over the country.

KOLKATA

Old India hands are heading to the oft-overlooked east. For its part, Kolkata has become more accessible thanks to a new airport terminal, an expanded underground network and more hotels; the Great Eastern Hotel has been refurbished and new Radisson Blue and Novotel hotels are slated to open this year. Browse the world’s largest second-hand book market, visit the home of India’s poet laureate, Rabindranath Tagore, cruise down the Brahmaputra. Never heard of any of it? Precisely.

BITTER IS SWEET

From chicory to chocolate and craft beer to cocktails, the presence of bitterness can be as satisfying as the more celebrated salt or fat. Australian-born Canadian author Jennifer McLagan celebrates the acquired taste in her forthcoming book Bitter (Ten Speed Press, 2014), which aims to pull this historically dangerous flavour to the fore.

Cracker konbu

Layered, fermented and then cut by very sharp machines to make for an arresting pattern, grained konbu is now the umami-rich garnish of choice at the likes of Rockpool, Billy Kwong and Quay. table181australia.com

RIVER RUNS

It will be bumper to bumper on European rivers this northern spring, as a flotilla of river-cruise vessels set sail with new itineraries to meet record demand.
Carrots, parsnip, and artichokes don’t immediately shout dessert but they’ve been popping up at the tail end of the meal with greater frequency recently, following hot on the heels of that noughties favourite, beetroot. At Saint Crispin, co-owner/chef Joe Grbac has a small repertoire of vegetal desserts that include this carrot number that combines pickled (in a sweet vinaigrette) and roasted heirloom carrots, carrot sorbet, espuma and cake. He also does a rice pudding that includes Jerusalem artichokes and parsnips. Down at Brae, in regional Victoria, meanwhile, one of the fine dégustation moments is a fried parsnip and freeze-dried apple dessert. Surely turnip crème brûlée can’t be too far away?
Its borders were thrown open barely a year ago and already the madding crowds are thronging to Burma. Head down south, however, and you’ll find a remote region of more than 800 islands whose white sands and crystal waters welcome fewer than 2,000 visitors a year. To describe the Mergui Archipelago as untouched is almost understating its sense of seclusion. But the smart set are slowly discovering its charms thanks to savvy charter outfits such as Burma Boating, which offers five-night itineraries aboard a classic two-masted yacht. Days are spent beach-hopping, blue-water sailing and meeting indigenous Moken people in their dugout canoes. Abercrombie & Kent also has a 12-night Burma trip that includes nine nights cruising the Mergui. abercrombiekent.com.au; burmaboating.com

Finally, the gamay grape is sloughing off its cheap Beaujolais image and gaining the respect it deserves. As well as a plethora of top natural gamays from France, you can now find terrific local examples such as the sinewy 2012 Sorrenberg from Beechworth, the plummy 2012 Eldridge Estate from Red Hill, and the juicy 2013 Rippon from Central Otago.

As Claus Meyer was selling most of his share in Noma, the famed Copenhagen restaurant he co-founded, he was opening his new joint across the water. From the custom-designed chairs to the jazz club within, there’s nothing standard about The Standard, a dining destination (three restaurants, two bars) set in an Art Deco gem that was once a ferry terminal. With former Noma chef Torsten Vildgaard as a partner, a new Nordic restaurant was expected; unexpected was the Michelin star that Vildgaard’s studio collected just four months after its opening in October. There’s also a modern old-school restaurant and a high-end Indian overseen by Karam Sethi, of London’s one-star Trishna. Another partner, renowned jazz pianist Niels Lan Doky, came home from Paris to run a jazz club that also sets new standards. Havnegade 44, Copenhagen K. thestandardcph.dk
HOT 100

PUT PEN TO PAPER
Eschew the shallow selfie and embrace instead the gravitas and permanence of ink. Think soft Moleskine covers, think a Mont Blanc nib, think a table outside a café on the Rue de la Paix. Consider your next words carefully.

The new guns in the wild south
The Happy Motel team of young foodists Jordan Jeavons, Andy Nowell and designer James Brown (of Mash Graphics) have changed the model for impressive dining events in Adelaide by specialising in innovative and fun-filled pop-ups, from Adelaide Festival’s Barrio performance plaza to Alpha Box & Dice winery in McLaren Vale. They have the canny ability to embrace timely food trends, from Mexican to Korean – and the focus at Adelaide Festival’s 2014 riverside pop-up venue Lola’s Pergola (curated with Bistro Dom chef Duncan Welgemoed) had a strong South Australian theme, celebrating what’s in our backyard, with a walk-in smokehouse shed and a central barbecue zone rigged from a converted Hills Hoist clothesline.

DRINKS MILES
A drinks list categorised by kilometres? Hidden down a laneway in the city, John Mills Himself is Brisbane’s most niche watering hole, and it’s also the country’s first ‘drinks miles’ bar. All the beers are sourced from within 200km and wines from 250km. Spirits are Australian-made apart from the Tromba Tequila, which is Mexican (gap-in-the-market alert, tequila fans), but partly Australian-owned.

IN-ROOM PINBALL MACHINES
The appearance of a pinnie makes at least half the room’s guests (usually the male half) go “phwoaarr!” As well as engendering visitor satisfaction, Melbourne’s Ovolo is demonstrating a certain rocker chic, attention to soundproofing and a proper understanding that Gen X never really grew up. Exhibit A: the Ovolo’s penthouse has the ‘80s pirate classic, Black Rose (complete with rotating cannon). Expect more. Please.

CLASS IN LAS VEGAS
The luxe SLS hotel group is adding Sin City to its growing list of properties in America’s hotspots. The 5,500-square-metre casino, scheduled to open in September, is seeking to please food-conscious gamers with restaurants such as The Bazaar by José Andrés, Katsuya by Starck, Umami Burger and LA institution The Griddle Café. Please.

PHOTOGRAPHY BEN MCGEE (LOLA’S PERGOLA) & WILL HORNER (MOLESKINE)
ARTIST’S IMPRESSION OF SLS GROUP’S NEW VEGAS CASINO
Selling pizza to the Italians

Italy’s most famous export is undergoing a renaissance. No longer satisfied with pizza’s reputation as a cheap, ubiquitous fast food, the nation’s best pizzaioli are redoubling efforts to source fine ingredients and are returning to hand-kneading. In Campania, Franco Pepe, of Pepe in Grani in Caiazzo, and Ciro Salvo, of 50 Kalò in Naples, are the movement’s southern ambassadors, while Simone Padoan of I Tigli near Verona is leading the charge from the north.

Instagrammable

When 1888 Hotel in Sydney’s Pyrmont opened last year, it dubbed itself “the world’s first Instagram hotel”, with a dedicated “selfie space”, image competitions and a “picture perfect” package. Major hotel chains are joining the social media soirée, offering free nights for popular Instagram users who post images of their hotel. Taking the visual holiday experience even further, Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts has launched a “Pin. Pack. Go.” program, allowing guests to create Pinterest boards to help an online concierge tailor their next holiday itinerary.

↑ MERCURY RISING The Mercury building will be home to Hobart’s hottest new restaurant in years when David Moyle, formerly chef at The Stackings, and Ben Lindell, open a new restaurant and bar. The building will also house Betsy, a café, also by Moyle and Lindell, and the excellent Pigeon Whole Bakers. It’s all go for June.
Sherry cocktails
It took a counter-cultural revolution led by sommeliers and wine writers to coax this tipple off nanna’s sideboard and back onto the world’s top tables. But Sherry’s extended comeback is thanks to barkeeps who have embraced it as a cocktail component and revived the Sherry Flip and the Sherry Cobbler and given rise to the likes of the King of Spain (rye, fino and vermouth) from the Gresham Bar in Brisbane. The movement is celebrated in Talia Baiocchi’s Sherry (Ten Speed Press), out later this year.

Brisbane’s moment ↓
Pack shorts but reconsider the thongs. The Queensland capital’s hotel scene is poised to become a lot hauter – and cooler, too. Inner-city Spring Hill is earmarked for the state’s first Art Series hotel. Due to open in December next year, it will showcase signature artworks in a similar fashion to sister properties The Olsen and The Cullen in Melbourne. Guests can also expect a 70-metre pool, open-air cinema, volleyball court and a golf driving range. The heritage Inchcolm Hotel in Spring Hill is morphing, too, and will reopen in July as Brisbane’s first boutique MGallery. At South Bank, a second Emporium Hotel, with cocktail bar-equipped sky deck and spectacular pool, is in the works as part of the $590 million Southpoint development. Feeling sporty? The Gambaro family’s plush 68-room Gambaro Hotel, a footy toss from Suncorp Stadium, kicks off this month (see p187).

BOOZE CUBES
Ice cubes that monitor your alcohol intake and even send a message to your friends if you continue to drink have been developed at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The Cheers cubes glow to the beat of music and change colour the more you drink. Their manufacture will be expensive, however, and researcher Dhairya Dand says commercial release is a few years off yet.

FULL ENGLISH London’s dish of the moment is an entrée labelled simply “Egg, Ham and Peas” by executive chef Jason Atherton at the glamorous Berners Tavern in Fitzrovia. A crumbed and deep-fried duck egg is held upright by a purée of fresh peas, with pancetta-like Cumbrian ham leaning on the sides. bernerstavern.com
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**FRESH MINT**

Next month, one of America's favourite carriers, Jetblue, will bring its upbeat, irreverent style to the front of the plane with Mint, a premium class that promises to revitalise the dreaded New York to LA commute. There will be 16 lie-flat seats (four of them suites with privacy doors) and perks such as small-plates dining courtesy of New York's hip Saxon + Parole restaurant and amenity kits from Birchbox. A New York-San Francisco route will follow later in the year. jetblue.com

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**↑ Bulli for you**

Meet elBulli 2005-2011. The last cookbook to be discussed so often in terms of its price ($750) and weight (18 kilos) ahead of its actual content was Nathan Myrhvold's *Modernist Cuisine*. This new Phaidon edition is likewise one for the true fans (though hopefully not quite so riddled with errors). Ferran Adrià deems the years in question the restaurant's most creative era, and whether your interest is technical or merely ruminative, the level of detail here will stop you in your tracks. phaidon.com

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**SEE FERRAN ADRIÀ**

Watch our interview with Ferran Adrià on his new cookbook and what's next for El Bulli on our website, with our viewa app, or on iPad (pick up our digital edition via the Apple App Store).

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**VINS DE SMASH**

Every young winemaker is hawking a super-fresh young red around town these days. The French call this style of red, made using carbonic maceration, designed to be quaffed a few months after vintage, “vin de soif” – “thirst-quenching wine”. Aussies, being Aussies, just call their wines “smashable”.

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**HARLEM RENAISSANCE**

The epicurean pilgrimage to Manhattan's northern nabs continues. The movement was spearheaded by chef Marcus Samuelsson, whose perpetually mobbed comfort-food restaurant Red Rooster (now with basement speakeasy, Ginny's) is one of many reasons to head to Harlem. Try tiny Mountain Bird (mountainbirdny.com), featuring chef Kenichi Tajima's French-influenced comfort food – think chicken schnitzel, turkey goulash and cassoulet – then make a beeline for the industrial-chic bar at the Corner Social (cornersocialnyc.com) for an Uptown Mojito and reinvented soul food. Bier International (bierinternational.com) is a new-gen beer hall serving craft brews from near and far. Or head to legendary jazz club Mintons for live music while tucking into "Southern revival" dishes such as lobster casserole with Creole crawfish gravy. mintonsharlem.com

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**THE REBIRTH OF COOLING**

A lifesaver for many a diner who overestimated their chilli tolerance, the “cooling plate” at Melbourne's Chin Chin contains the soothing likes of cucumber, apple, iceberg, ginger and palm sugar. But, yes, they also do a chilli plate.
COMME DES CONCEPTS
More is more for the New York incarnation of London’s Dover Street Market. This version of the DSM concept store created by Comme des Garçons’ visionary designer Rei Kawakubo and her CEO husband, Adrian Joffe, has more floors, more art, more brands and, for shoppers weary of Midtown’s staid grub, more delicious food in an expanded Rose Bakery. Dover Street Market New York, 160 Lexington Ave

Western Australia’s least probable Japanese restaurant
Not just content with world-class surf, wine and scenery, Margaret River can now add dazzling tempura to its list of attractions. Miki’s Open Kitchen, Mikihito Nagai’s tempura counter restaurant, is the township’s finest place to dine after dark. Elegant handling of local seafood and the offer of well-chosen sake make it a must on any south-west itinerary.

WINE-GECK GADGET It looks like a weapon from Star Trek, it costs $330, but wine geeks are hailing the Coravin as a revolution. Insert the gadget’s needle through the cork of your favourite bottle, and as it draws a pour, it fills the empty space with inert gas to keep the remaining wine fresh for months. And it actually works. Genius.
Best bed for a night in LA’s Koreatown
Chef, food-truck mogul, restaurateur, hotelier and Kogi founder Roy Choi continues to make waves in Los Angeles. He has joined forces with the Sydell Group (owners of NoMad in New York) to help open The Line, a hip new hotel in buzzing Koreatown. The in-house dining options include Korean hotpots and kimchi but also Taiwanese baked goods and other hits from the pan-Asian playbook. The hotel’s prime location aside, other features of note include a 24-hour newsagency curated by Poketo as well as mid-century lounge hosted by local funsters, The Houston Brothers. thelinehotel.com
From the opening of Hotel Hotel, the capital’s first Design Hotel, and the rebranding of the Lakeside as a QT Hotel to the appearance of hip new eateries such as Temporada and Da Rosario in Civic, to the development of Braddon and the Kingston foreshore as food and drink destinations, and the continuing brilliance of the capital region’s wineries, Canberra is now a real and serious contender for your leisure dollar.

Soft-serves
Follow Andy Bowdy, pastry chef at Sydney restaurant Hartsyard, on Instagram for the latest updates on his increasingly outré variations on the theme of soft-serve (roti, banana cake, shortbread among them). @andybowdy

The Daniel O’Connell Hotel in North Adelaide does its own take on nose-to-tail dining that converts the offal-curious into fans. Venison tartare with “mollie spice” and hop salt gets people interested, but whole roast ox tongue with horseradish and beetroot, or a pig’s ear schnitty makes diners swoon. Offal is even in the dessert, with My Bloody Valentine featuring whisked blood. danieloconnell.com.au

The hottest collaboration in Australian wine is A Sense of Compression, a 2013 grenache made by Adelaide Hills grape-treader (and former punk bass guitarist) Taras Ochota and Maynard James Keenan, frontman for hardcore rock band Tool. Released at the Adelaide Festival, the wine is incredibly rare (919 bottles) and costs $100 a pop.

With half the Australian restaurant business, seemingly, powered by Filipino brains and brawn, it seems like a genre-busting restaurant or bar specialising in the food of the Philippines is more than overdue. Bring on the sotol Margaritas, the yam macarons and adobo tacos, we say. (We’ll pass on the deconstructed balut, though.)