

- + The rise of Bali's food scene
- + Neil Perry's Christmas dinner
- + Blanc de blancs: the new fizz

## Top tables

The best restaurant openings and most innovative menus of 2016.



Jacqui Way

↑  
Gnocchi with oxtail  
ragù, celeriac purée,  
baby turnips and  
Parmigiano reggiano at  
Osteria Oggi, Adelaide

# Quisine.

## Bali's cool change

Fresh local produce, a paddock-to-plate philosophy and experimental gastronomy are transforming the island's dining scene, writes **Andrea Dixon**.





World-renowned chefs join forces at Mejekawi by Ku De Ta (far left); Room4Dessert's White Choco, Black Heart

#### MEJEKAWI BY KU DE TA, SEMINYAK

Set within Ku De Ta, a popular oceanfront restaurant and bar, Mejekawi (Jalan Kayu Aya 9, Seminyak; kudeta.com) is an intimate “tasting kitchen and laboratory” offering dégustations that showcase local produce. The kitchen also makes its own “Bali Camembert” and sourdough. As part of the Culinary Collective Supperclub program, Ku De Ta’s resident chefs, Ben Cross and Stephen Moore (who met while working for Neil Perry’s Rockpool Group), join forces with world-renowned chefs to create special meals. In March 2017, they’ll have Monty Koludrovic from Sydney’s Icebergs Dining Room and Bar in the kitchen; in July, it will be Canada’s Matt Abergel, who’s taken Singapore by storm with his yakitori restaurant, Yardbird.

#### ROOM4DESSERT, UBUD

This bar-and-dessert destination houses some mighty talent. New York’s Will Goldfarb is Le Cordon Bleu Paris-trained and was a chef at Spain’s now-closed three-Michelin-starred El Bulli. In *Food for Art, Art for Food*, El Bulli’s Ferran Adrià declares him among the 20th century’s most important chefs. Goldfarb describes Room4Dessert (Jalan Raya Sanggingan, Ubud; room4dessert.asia) as a “mothership”, nodding to his plans to expand. His dishes and cocktails are Michelin-worthy

but the vibe is convivial and familial. Indulge in the White Choco, Black Heart, a lush cocoa-butter cake with black-rice porridge meringue, kemangi and pennywort yoghurt sorbet, tamarind syrup and a cocoa butter and aloe vera emulsion. Or try the Chocobubbles 4 Evah, a decadent concoction of crumbled cookies and mousse topped with chocolate foam and crushed nougatine. Round off the evening with a Boulevardier, a rather potent Manhattan/Negroni combination.

#### SANGSAKA, KEROBOKAN

Created by the A-team behind Jalan Petitenget’s fine-dining mecca, Merah Putih, this little-sister project with Melbourne-born chef Kieran Morland at the helm produces perfectly executed Indonesian food, a modern take on what you’d get at a *warung* (a café that typically serves local dishes). Sangsaka (Jalan Pangkung Sari 100x, Kerobokan; sangsaka.bali.com) offers good value and exceptional fare. Duck rendang comes sealed in a steamed bun and sweet slipper lobster is paired with smoked potato, while a cob of young corn cooked in coconut husk is smoky and honeyed. A cosy 40-seater, Sangsaka (Indonesian for “character of the flag”) has a small, well-stocked bar. Though it only opened in March, it’s already being frequented by expats and in-the-know visitors.



(From top) Chef Jimmy Parker in MoVida Bali's kitchen; Ginger Tonic cocktail and "risotto" made with black-squid "grains" at Cuca

### MOVIDA BALI, SEMINYAK

As fortune has it, the Spanish love to preserve their best produce and Bali loves to import. Frank Camorra's first diner outside Australia has an outstanding value-to-quality nexus. Think delicious Cantabrian anchovies, subtle tuna belly served in the tin, piquant chorizo smooth serrano ham and Ibérico shoulder. This tapas restaurant run by Australian chef Jimmy Parker is part of Katamama hotel, which was constructed with 1.5 million handmade bricks that are usually reserved for temples. A Jospier charcoal oven delivers smoky, tender lamb shoulder and an amazing Wagyu hanger steak. The by-the-glass wine selection is excellent, making MoVida Bali (Jalan Petitenget 51b, Seminyak; movida.com.au) a great place just for drinks, too.



### CUCA, JIMBARAN

Canadian-born chef Kevin Cherkas cut his culinary teeth at Spain's El Bulli. He delivers surprise twists and 360-degree turns with flawless fine-dining tapas at Cuca (Jalan Yoga Perkanthi, Jimbaran; cucaflavor.com), a neat, airy space within a huge lawn. His Lombok scallop on mashed cauliflower, crowned with toasted coconut, is a flavour bomb. The black-squid "risotto" is tiny pieces of hand-cut squid "grains", finished with garlic cream and popped rice – almost Paleo-perfect. Guests marvel at the amuse-bouche that reveals Cherkas' molecular cooking expertise: a puffball mushroom that delivers the elaborate flavours of Bali's famous spicy chicken betutu. "We don't do specials," insists Cherkas. "There's nothing 'special' about creating a dish in four hours. Making something truly amazing cannot be properly done in a short time." Cuca's vibrant cocktails include the Ginger Tonic (homemade lime soda, gin and ginger-blossom nectar) and the Bali Mary (fresh tomato juice, citrus and spiced syrup).

### LOCAVORE, UBUD

Dutch chef Eelke Plasmeijer and Indonesian Ray Adriansyah create plates of produce-driven culinary art that extract every last flavourful drop from local ingredients. Their Scandinavian-style restaurant, Locavore (Jalan Dewisita 10, Ubud; locavore.co.id), produces everything by hand, including bread, sausages and gelato. The Dirty Potato dish is a crisp delight served on luscious mascarpone made in house and lightly sweetened with a floral honey from the island of Sumbawa then finished with brown butter and a traditional medicinal herb. It gets super-busy at night so book ahead. Just 50 metres down the road, Locavore's bar, Night Rooster, serves inspired cocktails. Asian and Western flavours are beautifully balanced in the Northern Boys cocktail



Ling-Ling's décor features Japanese anime

made with sweet grapes from the Kintamani region, rosemary-infused egg white, bourbon, Jägermeister and locally produced rosé. Nearby, sister eatery Locavore To Go is more casual yet still painstakingly committed to using quality ingredients.

#### LING-LING'S, PETITENGET

Industrial-style interiors, epic anime art and a vast range of pan-Asian dishes instantly established Ling-Ling's (Jalan Petitenget 43x, Petitenget; [linglingsbali.com](http://linglingsbali.com)) as a hot haunt for the food-obsessed and families when it opened earlier this year. Dine from 6pm on gorgeous gyoza, Japanese-style pork ribs, Korean fried chicken and san choy bau or groove into the night in the music garden, where the DJ booth holds sway. Owners Mimi Dougherty, an Australian who grew up in Bali, and Brit James Foley have also installed a bar inside. A good people-watching outpost, it's where you can sip a cool cocktail while munching on delightful morsels grilled on sticks, wrapped in lettuce leaves or sliced and diced.

#### MOZAIC, UBUD

French-American chef Chris Salans opened Mozaic (Jalan Raya Sanggingan, Ubud; [mozaic-bali.com](http://mozaic-bali.com)) in 2001 and altered Bali's culinary landscape by unleashing classic French techniques on local ingredients. Step into the elegant restaurant and you

enter an oasis of rarefied dining. The six- or eight-course dégustation menus include a vegetarian option and well-considered wine pairings span the globe from France to Australia without missing a beat. The pan-seared coral trout with Balinese basa gede oil, lemon and turmeric reduction is ethereally delicate, while the rice-husk-smoked quail and chilled foie gras with fresh nutmeg is as rich as it is earthy. Salans forages for seasonal delights to use in the kitchen so the menu is an ever-changing series of gastronomic feats.

#### SARONG, KEROBOKAN

Scottish chef Will Meyrick is a local legend who repackages traditional street food as fine dining and serves it in an elegant tropical setting. This cool coupling has earned Sarong (Jalan Petitenget 19x, Kerobokan; [sarongbali.com](http://sarongbali.com)) a prime position among the island's top culinary destinations.

The slow-cooked Sri Lankan lamb curry is served with superbly rendered naan bread, while the signature pork belly balances the soft lushness of the meat with a tart tamarillo and tamarind sauce. Seating spills

from an antique Indonesian *joglo* into the fragrant gardens. The restaurant is open in the evenings only. For a more casual, experience, try Sarong's sister restaurants, Tiger Palm and Mama San, in Seminyak or Ubud's bustling Hujan Locale, where the paddock-to-plate philosophy is almost a cult. And Hujan Locale's Carrot Swizzel cocktail – made with vodka, lemon, vanilla, chilli, Thai basil, carrot soda and carrot candy – is a taste sensation.

#### STARFISH BLOO, KEROBOKAN

Hip five-star hotel W Retreat & Spa Bali stages the most intoxicating Sunday brunch at its beachside restaurant, Starfish Bloo (Jalan Petitenget, Kerobokan; [wretreatbali.com](http://wretreatbali.com)). Australian executive chef Ashley Garvey puts on a sumptuous spread, which includes juicy prawns, succulent lobster, sweet crabs and fresh, creamy oysters. There's also a carvery and a great range of curries and salads, as well as sashimi, dim sum, soups, satay and foie gras. Complimentary sample cocktails do the rounds and the service is seamless. While you enjoy sweeping ocean views from a large bamboo pod, attentive staff are on hand to supervise kids' activities in the play area beside the restaurant. After brunch, you can cool off in the monumental pool, which mirrors the design of rolling rice terraces, or make your way to the energetic Woobar.



For a first-timer's guide to Bali, visit [travelinsider.qantas.com.au](http://travelinsider.qantas.com.au).



(Clockwise from left) Salumeria Tanah Barak; Petitenget; Seminyak Italian Food's dining and pasta-making areas



**Movable feast**

Chefs from Down Under are taking European flavours to Bali.

Geoff Lindsay of Melbourne's Dandelion has opened Salumeria Tanah Barak ([salumeria.asia](http://salumeria.asia)) in bohemian Canggu. Specialties include spuntini – Italy's answer to tapas – at this "temple to all things cured, smoked and cultured". Try an Italian-inspired cocktail such as the Campari Tangerine made with freshly juiced local citrus.

Sean Cosgrove, founder of Mooks fashion label, is behind French-style restaurant and bar Petitenget ([petitenget.net](http://petitenget.net)), in Seminyak, where Adelaide-born executive chef Simon Blaby creates farm-to-fork dishes. The restaurant's organic farm supplies up to 80 per cent of the produce used in the kitchen, supplemented by other local producers.

A sizzling addition to Petitenget's growing culinary scene is pizzeria Da Maria (+62 361 302 1299), an offshoot of Sydney's Da Orazio Pizza + Porchetta. It's the first collaboration between Bondi's Icebergs Dining Room and Bar restaurateur Maurice Terzini and entrepreneur Adrian Reed, the man behind flamboyant Seminyak eatery and party bar Motel Mexicola.

Carefully crafted Italian food first appeared in Seminyak about two years ago when former Icebergs Dining Room and Bar partner Robert Marchetti opened Seminyak Italian Food ([seminyak-italian.com](http://seminyak-italian.com)) and The Plantation Grill ([plantationgrillbali.com](http://plantationgrillbali.com)). Both venues have impressive wine lists and are popular with expats.



Flight path

**DPS**

Qantas flies to Denpasar from Sydney during the Australian summer season and from most Australian capital cities via partner airlines year-round. [qantas.com](http://qantas.com)