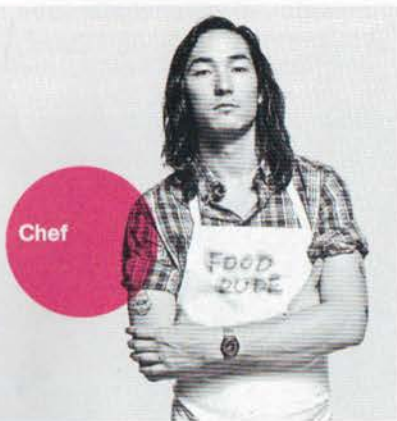


# the (sydney) magazine



## Thomas Lim/chef

There are many things that can switch on the light globe of inspiration. For chef Thomas Lim, it was the freezer door. "One of my fondest memories from childhood is taking potato gems from the freezer, bunging them in the oven and putting some tomato sauce on them," he says. "Now I'm making 'tater tots' by turning a desiree potato into a gem, making a rich, braised oxtail gravy and adding a little edamame for texture with snow pea leaves."

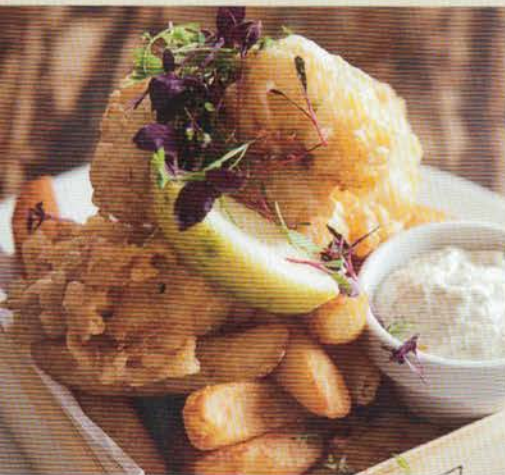
Creating something special out of a simple idea is Lim's modus operandi. Late last year, Lim, 25, joined forces with former young chef of the year Mitchell Orr to open Duke, a slick

bistro upstairs at the Flinders Hotel in Darlinghurst (see Hot, page 52). There, he's pumping out honest and impressive food, without even a hint of molecular gastronomy tricks. "I want to create unpretentious share food," he says, "and a place that has a reputation for reliable, consistent cooking with great drinks."

Besides the odd weekend shift at Bistrotte, Duke is the Perth-born chef's first foray back into the kitchen since leaving Tetsuya's in 2007 after two years (before that he did a 2½-year stint at iconic Fremantle fish restaurant Cicerello's, which his uncle managed). In his time away from the burners, Lim dabbled in music and fashion, setting up clothing franchises in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide, without entirely sheathing his knife.

"I hosted dinner parties every week and did some catering," says Lim, who also consulted on the menu of revamped Redfern pub The Norfolk last year. "Most of my mates are chefs and I was missing that camaraderie in the kitchen." →

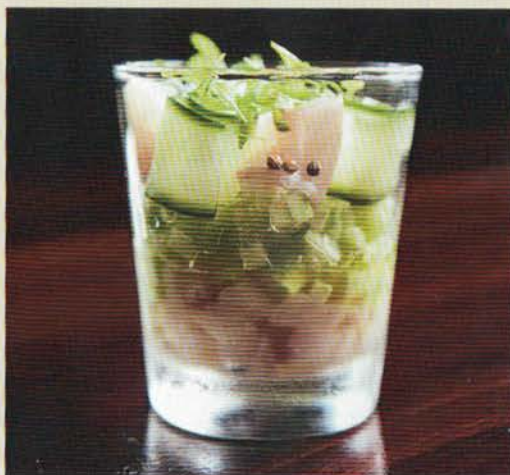
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### Local beer-battered flathead and chips at the Boathouse Palm Beach

This idyllic waterside chill-out spot is the closest most of us will come to having our own beach house. But who cares when you can sit on the outside deck on a sunny day, clutching a chilled glass of chardonnay and watching the boats and seaplanes coming and going? To make things even more heavenly, the Boathouse's famous battered fish and chips (\$22.50) arrive: big, chunky fingers of local flathead and almost equally chunky, lightly battered chips, all piled into a chic bamboo box with a side serve of house-made tartare sauce. No wonder they go through 70 boxes on a typical sunny Sunday.

Barrenjoey Boathouse, Governor Phillip Park, Palm Beach. Phone: 9974 3868.



### Kingfish gin and tonic at Duke

This is pub food but not as you know it (see Guy Griffin's review in Hot, opposite). Fried chicken wings with coleslaw milk is about as close to KFC as you'd want to go. Or Tater Tots – deep-fried shredded potato roesti with gravy and green soy beans. Then there's this dish: finely cut raw kingfish, curls of cucumber, Hendrick's Gin jelly and quinine cordial, all served in a glass tumbler and called kingfish gin and tonic (\$18). Former Josephine Pignolet best young chef Mitchell Orr joins forces with Thomas Lim to feed their Gen Y peers in the dark, loud and charmingly offbeat upstairs dining room of the über-urban Flinders Hotel.

Upstairs at the Flinders Hotel, 63 Flinders Street, Darlinghurst. Phone: 9332 3180.



### Crumbed veal medallions, wittlof, green bean and mushroom salad at Uccello

The Merivale Group has the knack of making Sydney's top chefs offers they can't refuse, reeling in such formidable talents as Peter Doyle and Lauren Murdoch. Recently, Eugenio Riva, ex Lucio's in Paddington and Ristorante Riva in Darlinghurst, joined the glamorous poolside Uccello restaurant. His finely crafted northern Italian cooking is now as much a drawcard as the flamboyant crowd and the alfresco cabanas. Case in point is this classy take on cotoletta Milanese, a far fry from the plate-size schnitzels of old, with its perfect, fine-crusted medallions of rose pink young veal served with baby green beans, shredded wittlof and mushrooms in a zingy shallot dressing (\$42).

Level 4, 320 George Street, city. Phone: 9240 3000.