

FOOD & TRAVEL

belle

Six creative types share their travel secrets, while a pioneering designer and celebrated chef get together to create a daring new Sydney restaurant.





SPICE GIRLS

When Christine Manfield met Tina Engelen it was truly a meeting of like minds, with the designer quickly giving form to the chef's concept of a bold and exotic new Sydney restaurant.

PHOTOGRAPHS TANYA ZOUËV WORDS ANDREA MILLAR RECIPES CHRISTINE MANFIELD

Designer Tina Engelen was appearing on Maggie Tabberer's Foxtel show when chef Christine Manfield flicked on the TV. This wasn't a coincidence. Christine had been on the show a week earlier and was curious to see the line-up. Eloquent, intelligent and with a sharp sense of humour, Tina spoke about her creative philosophy and love of good design. That the two women were on the same TV show a week apart may signal something about the parallels in their careers. But more importantly, it was the moment that "the penny dropped" for Christine, who was in search of a like-minded interior designer to breathe life into her ideas for a new Sydney restaurant. One phone call later, a relationship was forged and Universal was in the making.

A prolific chef, author and teacher, Christine first made waves with her gutsy Burley Katon Halliday-designed Potts Point restaurant, Paramount, in the mid-1990s. Celebrated for her tantalising combinations of flavours, she is regarded as a pioneer. "So much that has happened in Macleay Street is because of what Christine did all those years ago," says Tina.

At the same time, just a suburb away, Tina was also pioneering, rocking the design industry with her award-winning interiors for the Price O'Reilly house in Redfern, one of the first truly minimalist interiors in Australia.

Acknowledging that they had a lot in common, Christine gave Tina a brief for the restaurant – bold and all-encompassing colour was to be the focal point. "I wanted a visual representation of the exotic and evocative colours in a spice box. Now each wall in the restaurant is named after a spice," she says.

Tina was keen to break away from the perception of being a designer who specialised in neutrals. "I was feeling colourful," she laughs, and credits the inspiration for the backdrop of coloured glass panels in the restaurant to artist James Turrell, who describes himself as a "painter in light". Colour and artful references are also carried through by designer Marita Leuver in the graphic components. Her choice of typeface, with its Art Nouveau look, completes the visual package.

The restaurant was designed to command a presence in the large open courtyard of the Republic building in Darlinghurst. Rows of banquette seats in striking black vinyl define the dining space, but the wit and vision of her work is most evident in another of her seating solutions, born out of a tight budget. "I said to Christine, 'You might think I'm mad because a lot of people would have grown up with these chairs at school, but they are really comfortable, and we can make them look quite different.'"

Enter the Sebel function chairs that are as common in the suburban Australian psyche as the Hills Hoist. Disguised in black and with the addition of button-on seating pads in primary colours, the solution was a stroke of genius. As for the restaurant's menu, Christine says, "I draw on influences from travelling and working all over the world; nothing is traditional." There's no doubt it's an innovative, global offering. "It's the reason I chose the name; it's all about bringing the world here," she says.

Part of the enjoyment of a meal at Universal is the modern execution of an old style of serving, *Service à la Française*. Expect different tasting plates of delicious morsels served simultaneously. It's a style that dates back to the middle ages, but stopped in favour of the set course method introduced to Paris in the 19th century by a Russian ambassador. History lesson over. The point is that Universal is great for food buffs in Sydney, a place where design, art and global flavours blend in fabulous harmony. **15**



TINA ENGELEN

1987 Internships with Arclinea and BKH.
1995 Established architectural practice Engelen Moore with Ian Moore. 1996-98 Won RAIA (NSW) Merit Awards for the Price O'Reilly house, Davis house and Ruzzene Leon house. 2002 Won Best Building in Australasia and Best Housing Scheme in the World awards at the World Architecture Awards in Berlin for the Allair apartments. 2005 Won Interior Design Awards Best of State (NSW) Residential Interior for 2 Kings Lane, Darlinghurst.

CHRISTINE MANFIELD

1993 Opened Sydney's Paramount restaurant.
2003 Moved to London and opened East@West restaurant in Covent Garden. 2004 East@West named London's Best New Restaurant in the *Tatler Restaurant Guide* and won a Catey (a prestigious industry award in the UK) for best new menu. 2008 Due to launch her fifth book, *Fire*, following the success of *5tir*, *Spice*, *Christine Manfield Originals* and *Christine Manfield Dessert*.

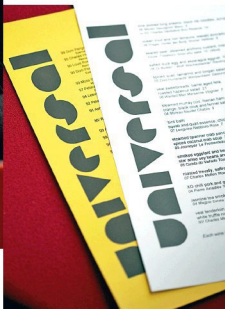


COCONUT PICKLED PRAWNS

SERVES 4

200g peeled raw banana (or red spot) prawns, deveined
 50ml coconut milk
 2 tsp coconut vinegar
 1 tbsp lime juice, strained
 ¼ tsp minced fresh ginger
 1 small green chilli, finely sliced
 1 tsp Murray River salt flakes
 1 tsp caster sugar
 1 red shallot, peeled and finely diced
 2 tsp finely sliced young coconut flesh
 8 yellow grape tomatoes, sliced
 2 tbsp coriander leaves, chopped
 2 iceberg lettuce leaves, shredded
 2 tsp avruga*

- 1 Cut the prawn meat crosswise into thin slices.
- 2 Puree the coconut milk, vinegar, lime juice, ginger, chilli, salt and sugar in a blender.
- 3 Pour the coconut mix over the prawn meat in a bowl and stir to combine.
- 4 Sit the bowl over another bowl of ice and allow to pickle for 20 minutes before serving.
- 5 To serve, mix the prawns and dressing with the remaining ingredients, except the avruga, and spoon into serving glasses. Spoon the avruga over the top and serve immediately.



*HARD AND MAKE UP DOWD AND SPEER
 *PHOTO BY TOM PICKLED GROUP BY STORES



SPICED OCEAN TROUT SALAD WITH PUFFED RICE

SERVES 4

300g ocean trout fillets, skinned
 1 tsp ground turmeric
 1 tsp sea salt
 ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 1 tsp mustard oil
 1 small cucumber, peeled and shaved into fine ribbons
 1 small carrot, finely shredded
 2 tbsp pickled tamarind leaves, rinsed
 ½ red onion, finely sliced
 80g puffed rice
 1 punnet basil cress, snipped
 1 punnet celery cress, snipped
 1 tbsp shredded mint leaves
 40g baby spinach leaves
 2 tbsp curry leaves, deep fried
 1 tbsp ocean trout roe

CURRY DRESSING

1 tbsp lime juice
 2 tsp coconut vinegar
 2 tsp fish sauce
 2 tsp sugar syrup
 1 small garlic clove, minced

¼ tsp ground ginger
 ¼ tsp mild curry powder
 ½ tsp Christine Manfield Chilli Jam*
 ¼ tsp freshly ground black pepper
 ½ tsp sesame oil
 85ml sunflower oil

- 1 To make the curry dressing, put all the ingredients in a bowl and mix with a stick blender until emulsified.
- 2 To season fish, mix the turmeric, salt and pepper into the oil, then rub it over the surface of the fish.
- 3 Lay fish on a baking tray and cook under a hot grill for 4 minutes. The fish should stay rosy in the centre.
- 4 Remove fish from heat and allow to cool for a few minutes while you prepare the salad.
- 5 Mix the remaining ingredients except the curry leaves and roe in a bowl, then flake the fish into small pieces and add to the salad greens. Add enough dressing to moisten and toss to combine.
- 6 Pile onto plates, sprinkle a few fried curry leaves and the roe over the top and serve.



STIR-FRIED CHICKEN NOODLES WITH ASIAN CELERY AND ASPROUTS

SERVES 4

2 x 120g organic chicken breast fillets, cooked
 2 tbsp vegetable oil
 2 tsp minced ginger
 1 bunch Asian celery, cut into 2cm sticks on the diagonal
 1 punnet fresh cloud ear fungus, torn into small pieces
 150g bean sprouts, picked
 8 water chestnuts, finely sliced
 ½ long red chilli, finely sliced
 4 green onions, finely sliced on diagonal
 200g cooked egg noodles
 2 tbsp coriander leaves
 1 punnet celery cress, snipped
 2 tbsp celery leaves, deep fried

SESAME SOY DRESSING

1 tsp Chinese light soy sauce
 1 tsp sesame oil

1 tsp Christine Manfield Sambal Bajak*
 1 tbsp lime juice, strained
 1 tbsp rice vinegar
 2 tsp mirin
 2 tbsp sugar syrup
 1 small garlic clove, minced

- 1 Shred chicken meat finely, using your fingers.
- 2 Mix dressing ingredients together until combined. Set aside.
- 3 Heat oil in wok and fry the ginger and celery until soft, about 1 minute.
- 4 Add dressing and then immediately add the shredded chicken, cloud ear fungus, sprouts, water chestnuts, chilli and green onions to the wok. Toss to combine, then add the noodles.
- 5 Cook for 1 more minute, just enough to heat through.
- 6 Remove from heat and stir through coriander and celery cress.
- 7 Pile onto plates, scatter the fried celery leaves over the top and serve immediately.



QUAIL AND SPICED BEETROOT

SERVES 4

- 8 quail breasts (from 4 large quails)
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ½ tsp ground coriander
- ½ tsp ground turmeric
- 1 tsp sea salt flakes
- ½ tsp freshly ground black pepper
- 1 tsp sunflower oil
- 1 tbsp fried curry leaves

SPICED BEETROOT

- 2 tbsp vegetable oil
- 1 tsp sesame oil
- 2 tbsp fresh curry leaves
- 4 small green chillies, finely sliced
- 3 red shallots, finely sliced
- 1 tsp minced ginger
- 1 tsp ground cumin
- 45 medium-sized beetroots, peeled and cut into fine matchsticks
- 40ml rice (or coconut) vinegar
- 2 tsp sea salt
- 2 tsp caster sugar
- 200ml coconut milk
- 1 tbsp fresh green peppercorns

1 To prepare the beetroot, heat both oils in a braising pan and

sauté the curry leaves, chillies, shallots and ginger until softened. Stir in the cumin then add the beetroot sticks.

- 2 Add the vinegar, salt and sugar, stirring to combine.
- 3 Fry over high heat, stirring until beets soften, about 3 minutes.
- 4 Add the coconut milk and green peppercorns and cover with the lid.
- 5 Cook until beets are tender and juices have been absorbed, about 15 minutes.
- 6 Remove from heat, taste and add extra sea salt if needed.
- 7 To cook the quail, mix the spices, salt and pepper with the oil. Add the quail breasts and rub spice oil over to thoroughly coat. Heat grill plate and sauté the breasts, skin side down for 4 minutes, then flip over and sauté for another 2 minutes.
- 8 Remove from heat and rest for 1 minute. Slice each breast in half diagonally.
- 9 Spoon spiced beetroot onto the centre of each plate and arrange sliced quail on top.
- 10 Sprinkle over fried curry leaves and serve.



STRAWBERRY CRUNCH

SERVES 4

- 2 tbsp strawberry sauce
- 4 croquant collar wafers*
- 8 strawberries, sliced
- 1 orange, peeled and cut into segments

BLACK PEPPER CREAM

- 500ml double cream
- 270ml milk
- 100g caster sugar
- ½ tsp black peppercorns, cracked
- 6g gelatine, softened
- ¼ tsp ground black pepper, sieved

ORANGE JELLY

- 270ml orange juice, strained
- 270ml sugar syrup
- 6g gelatine leaf, softened in cold water

1 To make the black pepper cream, heat cream, milk, sugar and

- peppercorns to simmering point.
- 2 Add the softened gelatine and stir until dissolved. Pass through fine mesh sieve, then stir in the ground sieved pepper. Allow to cool slightly, then pour the cream into serving glasses or bowls.
- 3 Refrigerate for 2 hours, until set.
- 4 To make the orange jelly, heat the juice and syrup in a pan to simmering point. Stir in gelatine until dissolved. Strain and pour into a shallow tin and allow to cool completely. Refrigerate until firm, about 2 hours.
- 5 Dice the jelly into small cubes.
- 6 To assemble the dessert, spoon a little strawberry sauce onto the centre of each plate and sit a croquant collar wafer on top. Pipe in the black pepper cream until half full. Add a few strawberry slices, orange segments and diced jelly. Repeat layers to fill the collar. Stick a croquant shard on top and serve.