

APPETITE

Edited by Jane Hutchinson



For an easy dessert, scoop out the seeds from a halved rockmelon. Chill in the freezer for one hour. Fill the halves with gelato, smooth the surface and refreeze. Cut into wedges to serve.

You'll find more simple recipe ideas at www.taste.com.au.



THIRSTY WORK

MATT SKINNER

Sabrage is the lost art of opening a Champagne bottle with a sword. While it's unlikely that you'll find many cutlass-wielding sommeliers these days, long ago, sabrage was a noble skill. The truth is, it ain't that difficult – just don't try it at home. Although, if you're curious...

You'll need a heavy and blunt sabre – you're aiming to knock the top off rather than chop it off. Then, with the sword in your preferred hand and the bottle in the other, swiftly slide the sword up the neck of the bottle towards the collar. If it's chilled to the correct temperature (3°C) the top should come straight off, with minimal spillage.

You may want to practise on some affordable bottles first. Here are two.

Amid an ocean of mediocre prosecco, there are few beacons in the fog. **Canella Prosecco NV (\$25)**, from Italy's north-east, is one.

Expect a fresh nose of green apple and pear while, in your mouth, soft citrus fruit is perfectly balanced.

Closer to home, **Chandon ZD 2004 (\$35)** is a stylish sparkling wine from Domaine Chandon, the Australian sibling of French fizz giant Moët & Chandon. Sealed with a crown cap, it impresses with a bright and clean nose loaded with green apple, citrus and spice while, in your mouth, there are plenty of tiny bubbles and a super-dry finish.

Matt Skinner is the author of The Juice 2008 (Hachette Livre, \$19.95). Visit www.mattskinner.net.



BAR NONE

Rambutan, 96 Oxford St, Darlinghurst. Call (02) 9360 7772 or visit www.rambutan.com.au. Open seven days.

The look: 'Europe meets Miami' on Oxford Street. A Buddha statue watches over this intimate bar with mirrored walls and sleek stainless-steel tables. Glamorous Missoni fringing and fabrics line the walls.

The soundtrack: The subtle yet funky instrumental tunes are a compilation of the latest lounge music. **Signature drink:** The Rambutan and Sorbet Bellini (\$14) is a mix of sparkling wine and sorbet – a traditional Tuscan refresher with an oriental kick. **Hungry?** The Thai steamed dumplings with pork, prawn and shiitake mushrooms in plum sauce (\$12) are delicious. Or, snack on the more-ish deep-fried gow gee with spinach and soy bean in a ginger and red-vinegar dressing (\$10). **The wow factor:** The saltwater fish tank houses two black-and-white striped eels, called Dolce and Gabbana. **Best for:** Meeting your most fabulous friends for cocktails. Jennifer Hawkins and boyfriend Jake Wall are regulars.

By the www.DeckofSecrets.com team.

GLUTTON

LA TRATT 14 Anzac Pde, Fairfield. Call (02) 9727 5000

The local RSL club (or 'ar-ee') isn't usually my first choice for fine dining, but word around the 'burbs is that food is on the up, in at least one club. So, on a Friday night, our party of six arrives at Fairfield RSL to sample the heralded modern-Italian cuisine at La Tratt. Inside, the club is ablaze with the usual neon decor, but La Tratt's recently refurbished interior is sleek, with dark-wood furnishings and a glowing fireplace. I bump into long-lost friend and La Tratt senior chef de pasti, Jason, who's keen to showcase what an RSL restaurant with big ambitions can do. Hoping to rival inner-city nosh spots, chef Robert Green's menu is based on Italian gastronomy cookbook-bible, *The Silver Spoon*, and inspired by *Grossi Florentino* by chef Guy Grossi and *Gastronomy of Italy* by Anna Del Conte. I begin with a hearty entree of lentil soup with juicy slices of pork sausage (\$14.90). By contrast, my friend's Sicilian salad (\$7.50) is a fresh mix of rocket tossed with radish. For my main, I've eyed a *Silver Spoon*-style recipe – wagyu beef fillet wrapped in prosciutto with a Muscat demi glaze and side of caramelised eschalot (\$33.50). It's perfectly pink on the inside and crisp on the outside. Yet I can't help swooning over the risotto mantecato (\$17.50) – a blend of fontina, emmental, gorgonzola and parmesan cheeses – that's arrived on the table. There's room for dessert and the Del Conte-inspired house-made chocolate, espresso and truffled honey gelato (\$11.50) is scooped down in minutes. We're won over by the fare, and agree even our Diggers would be impressed. **KLAUDYNA MORAWSKI**

Three of a find... pasta pots



- 1. Berdes 6.2-litre pasta pot, \$159.** Dragging a heavy pot loaded with boiling water and pasta from stove to sink can be unnerving, but a pasta pot makes draining your linguine a breeze. Simply lift the perforated basket to drain over the pot. This all-in-one insert and pot is made from stainless-steel. Stockist: Victoria's Basement.
- 2. Avanti multi-function cookware set, \$129.** This 7.5-litre stock pot with accompanying pasta and steamer inserts is a jack-of-all-trades. Both the pot and inserts are made from quality stainless-steel and the heavy-duty glass lid comes with a heat-resistant knob. Stockists: David Jones, Myer, Victoria's Basement.
- 3. Scanpan pasta insert, \$89.95.** If you already own a pot, you'll find most brands offer pasta inserts as an accessory. This Scanpan insert fits all 6-litre Scanpan dutch ovens and comes with cast stainless-steel handles that are cool to the touch. Stockists: 1800 209 999.