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**A LANGKAWI
LEGEND
REBORN**



**SHANGRI-LA
MEKONG RIVER
RAJASTHAN**

FEBRUARY / MARCH 2019



S\$8 IDR80,000 HK\$60 THB250
RM25 PHP325 NT\$295

A REAL CATCH

Two Melbourne suburbs not known for culturally adventurous dining now have restaurants that are on the radar of foodies across the city—and not just because of their seaside locales. BY DANA TER



SEBASTIAN BEACH GRILL & BAR

The brainchild of restaurateur Dave Parker and his childhood friend Alex Brawn, Sebastian is housed in a 1930s bathing pavilion on Williamstown Beach, part of a historic suburb that was Melbourne's first European port settlement. Both the venue's name and its menu take their cues from San Sebastián, with Basque-leaning cuisine that can be enjoyed in the cool, white-and-blue dining room and bistro or out on the wooden deck. Nodding to the prevalent use of fire in Basque cooking, chef Leigh Robbins plays with a custom-made charcoal grill to prepare seafood, meats, and even the oranges used for the bar's pisco sours. Robbins says that Williamstown has been crying out for a slightly more refined dining experience, and at Sebastian he delivers this with techniques learned from his time in the Basque region while working as a chef in a French ski lodge. The selection of *pintxos* (tapas) and sharing plates include *gildas* (mini-skewers of green olives, white anchovy, and guindilla pepper), homemade *chistorra* sausage, as well as charred octopus caught in the waters just off Williamstown Beach. Other standouts? Mussels sourced from the nearby Bellarine Peninsula with fermented chili aioli,



and the grilled catch of the day—perhaps a whole local flounder—smothered in burnt anchovy butter (61-3/9088-8989; sebastianbeachgrill.com).

ELICHI

This modern Indian restaurant in the affluent Black Rock neighbourhood beckons with long glass windows, a gilded bar, and a print of a turbaned man in sunglasses that beams at passersby. Across the street, waves lap against the caramel sands of Black Rock Beach while seagulls caw and circle above Port Philip Bay. For owner Mani Waraich and Mumbai-born chef Punit Fernandes, the location reflects their desire to challenge the Melburnian preference for casual bites when it comes to coastal fare. Elichi's single-page seasonal menu incorporates dishes from all corners of India, beautifully showcasing Australian ingredients and the bounty of Victoria in particular: think beef from the Gippsland re-



Clockwise from above: Kashmiri lamb ribs with cucumber and saltbush at Elichi; Sebastian's restored art deco exterior; Basque-style mussels with fermented chili aioli at Sebastian.

gion, lamb from the Macedon Ranges, and micro herbs grown in Castlemaine. A must-try is the *jhingra kovalari*, which comprises Queensland tiger prawns soaked in house-made tandoori sauce served with a frothy pumpkin puree and pickled kumquat. For something more traditional, opt for pork vindaloo cooked in sugarcane vinegar or the *chana palak*—spinach relish with chickpeas—inspired by Fernandes's childhood (61-3/9589-3241; elichirestaurant.com.au). ●