

SO MANY cuisines, so little time... Melbourne has a solid coffee culture; many of our Chinese and Italian restaurants are highly regarded around the country (in some cases, the world) and in the last few months we're turning our attention to other cuisines - not that we've ever neglected them - but there are some contemporary takes on other culture's dishes that are earning some big attention here in Victoria. Forget the kofte or shisha, **Tulum** is a new restaurant that is opening the eyes of Melburnian's to a very savvy perspective of the current state-of-play with Turkish food. Determined to show the other dishes of this rich culture, chef and owner **Coskun Uysal** is taking ideas and influences from the Turkey of today and showing that there's so much more to Turkish food than just kebabs. Uysal worked in London, at the acclaimed River Cafe among other great venues, but he loved visiting Melbourne - he loved that we're also passionate about food - and he decided to come here, put his flag in the sand, and set up shop. Tulum is a 36-seat dining room in Balaclava, not an area largely recognised for its culinary prowess except for a little restaurant in the neighbouring suburb of Rippon Lea (Attica). But Tulum does sit on Carlisle Street, a popular strip of retail and dining options and he's garnering a strong following from walk-by trade who are discovering his menu.

Uysal takes influences from many of the dishes his mother taught him and filters them through contemporary culinary techniques. His mum's version of the classic dish *cilbir* (eggs poached in yoghurt) is made his by using smoked yoghurt, organic eggs, two kinds of butter, a crumbly butter and one flavoured with sumac - and plonking crispy chicken skin on top. Wonderful! The foundation of the menu is in its sauces, all of which are made on the premises. The aforementioned smoked yoghurt, the pickles, cheeses and vinegars. The wine list was designed by Pei Modern maître d' Ainslie Lubbock, and includes drops from Beechworth to Istanbul. Tulum, 217 Carlisle Street, Balaclava. Phone (03) 9525 9127.

We love Greek food in Melbourne and while its foothold in Melbourne dining



culture has hit its straps in the last ten years - think The Press Club and Gazi, Epocha and Elyros - **George Calombaris's Made Establishment Group** (who own The Press Club and Gazi in their stable) have created a very Melbourne-meets-the-Adriatic vibe with their **Hellenic Republic** outlets, the most recent of which opened in June in Williamstown in Melbourne's west. The original plan was to open two years ago but a major refurb of an old pub can cause its own delays and delay it did with it finally opening to much anticipation. Chef **Josh Pelham**, formerly of Estelle Bistro in Northcote, heads up the kitchen in Williamstown (there are other Hellenic's in Brunswick and Kew) and you'll find a menu consistent with these venues but they'll tweak here and there to suit each part of town. The soft-shell crab souva is there or perhaps you'd like to try the one with lambs' brains, mustard and onion rings. There's also the slow-roasted lamb shoulder or the grilled saganaki, topped with apple puree in place of the usual spiced figs. Hellenic Republic, 28 Ferguson St, Williamstown, Phone (03) 9393 1000.

Chef **Adam Liston**, formerly of Collingwood's Northern Light - that focussed on Japanese and Korean cuisine - has set up camp at the back of the historic Hotel Windsor in Melbourne's CBD. Liston and his team opened **Honcho Noodle** in June as a three-month pop-up in the old Wallis & Ed site on the Spring Street end of Bourke Street. After the stint here, he'll open the permanent Honcho space on Punch Lane,

also in the city, with business partner **Adi Halim**, who is director of the Halim Group which owns the Windsor Hotel.

Liston says that the permanent venue will be more high-end dining and not just a noodle bar. The new venue will have a raw bar serving Japanese-inspired seafood dishes such as ocean trout sashimi with pickled ginger and the jewel in the kitchen crown will be a \$50,000 custom-built uber-grill, which can spit roast, yakitori and smoke. Currently on Bourke Street, Liston is serving a relaxed, contemporary menu including chicken yakitori, spring rolls bursting with braised duck and cabbage and the outstanding salt-and-pepper squid with ink noodles and pork crackle. Honcho Noodle, 1 Bourke Street, Melbourne. Phone (03) 9633 6265.



Top: Interior of the new Hellenic Hotel in Williamstown.

Above right: Exterior of the new Hellenic Hotel in Williamstown.