

AUSTRALIA

40+
NEW LOOKS
for winter

LIVE SMART//LOOK SHARP

GANG-HO
WITH UNDERBELLY'S
GYTON GRANTLEY

SHANGHAI
LIFE AND STYLE
IN TOMORROW'S
UBER POWER

THE CHASER'S
CHARLES FIRTH
VERSUS
NORTH KOREA

**DEATH AND
REDEMPTION**
ON THE
KOKODA TRAIL

HOW TO ▶
PICK THE
SHARPEST
DENIM CUTS
LOOK THE
BUSINESS
OUT OF THE
OFFICE
KNOW
YOUR ARTS
FROM YOUR
ELBOW

ESCAPE ACT

GUY PEARCE BREAKS HIS CHAINS

APRIL/MAY 08
AUSTRALIA \$8.50
NEW ZEALAND \$9.90



RACHAEL TAYLOR GUCCI VAMPIRE WEEKEND ROCKY ELSOM ROSS NOBLE THE WOMBATS

Life.

Design > Art > Food > Drink

Artful environs

One of Australian painting's great names turns up on the awning sign of a new hotel in Sydney.

"WHAT'S THIS?" Tim Storrier, sounding faintly irritable, points to a framed print on the wall of a compact but plush hotel room with a striking view across Sydney's Woolloomooloo basin to the city skyline. "It's a Storrier, Tim," says someone. One of his burning-coals series, to be more precise. "Oh. Hmm."

On his 59th birthday, the artist affecting not to recognise his own work is here in Sydney's Kings Cross to witness the opening of a boutique hotel named after him, while several hundred of the nation's social pages regularly sip bubbly, slurp oysters off the shell and slap him on the back. About which he appears not one whit impressed, even if you do suspect he may enjoy a spot of adulation. The man is flesh and blood, after all.

In this line of work, you meet lots of people celebrated for their contribution to public life. Most, even the supercilious, the stoned and the just plain stupid, are easy enough to talk to, just working people plying their trade. But there's nothing quite like meeting a man famous for not suffering fools gladly to get the dopey questions flowing.

"So, uh, you know, how's it feel to have a, ah, a hotel named after you?" Long pause. "Well, it's rather an odd brand of flattery, isn't it," he replies. Longer pause. "It's creative..." Extra long pause — still-life-with-furrowed-brow... "It's one of the results of post-modernism, I suppose. A melding



Will Deague and Tim Storrier, shot on 13 February at The Storrier, Sydney.



of the commercial and the artistic.”

A clever deflection to the clever idea that brought him here today. It comes care of the young man in a sharp suit and oddly amorphous suede loafers standing beside him. The Storrier is the brainchild of Will Deague, scion of one of Melbourne’s better known property development clans. It’s one of a series being built by Deague’s A Hotels Group, to be named after Australian artists and themed on their work. First, last year, came The Makin, named after Melbourne painter and critic Jeff Makin. Now comes The Storrier in Sydney. Shortly hence will come The Olsen and The Whiteley, and another Storrier, all in Melbourne.

The cleverness in all this lies in a neat branding trick, dreamed up in cohorts with the Deague family’s long-time art consultant, Ken McGregor. “To market a boutique hotel,” Deague says, “you can’t put it under one of the big umbrella brands like Accor or something of the sort. So you have to go it alone from scratch and absorb all the costs that go with the look-and-feel stuff.”

Which is where those iconic Australian artists come in. For in each lies a rich source of aesthetic and cultural reference points that, tapped appropriately, could be made for such a venture.

But if the idea provides a convenient marketing solution, it’s not without risk. There’s more to this kind of organically derived branding than hanging an expensive painting in the foyer and a big-name awning sign out front. “You have to do it in a way where you don’t compromise or cheapen the artist,” says McGregor.

Which has meant plenty of consultation in translating their muse’s sensibilities into fine details and neat touches for the benefit of guests. An example here might be the conservative elegance of furniture like the black-and-white striped parlour chairs. They’re a small but tidy allusion to the period and manner in which Storrier grew up, as the boarding school-educated son of a well-to-do grazier in the Menzies era.

Storrier is widely admired for his work and enjoyed by many for his well-articulated contempt for the avant garde. Which might help explain why his eponymous hotel is restrained in its feel. The novelty’s there, in things like black and orange dunny rolls and complimentary Storrier print thongs. But there’s none of the kind of bling that dobs in people for trying too hard.

There are also, of course, the Storrier prints and photographs adorning the suites and the public areas, the focal point being the original *Point to Point (Evening Blaze)* in the foyer. It’s a substantial and important work — the perfect introduction to the Storrier motif for guests as they walk in the door.

The celebrated artist stands aloof as the guests stream in, the champagne flows and the canapés come out care of Red Belly, the hotel’s restaurant.

“So,” I ask him as the PA people test mics and speakers in the background, “are you up for a few words from the rostrum this evening?”

“Oh God no.” He sounds faintly appalled. “What’s to say?” **GQ** — JB
15 Springfield Ave, Potts Point
(02)8988 6999
www.thestorrier.com.au

DO TRY THIS AT HOME

Red Belly chef Coop Woodstone serves up simple, healthy meals all day.



BIRCHER MUESLI WITH SHAVED APPLE

Ingredients • 150-200g rolled oats • 250ml mango nectar • 1 red gala or granny smith apple • 2 fresh lychees

Instructions Soak the rolled oats in the mango nectar for several hours prior to serving — do it before going to bed the night before. In the morning, they should be firm yet very moist. (You can adjust the consistency each time you make it by using more or less nectar, depending on your preference. You can also change the flavour by using apple juice instead.)

Scoop the bircher into a bowl, top it off with fresh apple and peeled lychees. Cold milk or cinnamon yoghurt make great additions, but not essential.



LAMB CUTLETS WITH SAGE & CAPER BUTTER

Ingredients • 1 x4 cutlet rack of lamb • 20 baby capers • ¼ bunch fresh sage • ½ lemon • 1 clove garlic • 150g butter • Olive oil • ½ diced onion

Instructions Place the lamb in an oven pre-heated to 170°, with a little olive oil drizzled over the fat to crisp it up. Cook for 25 minutes then remove from oven and leave in a warm place to rest. While the lamb is resting, sauté the onion on a medium heat until a little brown.

Add the sage, garlic and a huge squeeze of lemon juice. Then throw in the butter and let it bubble away until it starts to turn brown. Add the capers and season well. Remove from heat. Carve the rack into cutlets and pour over the sauce. Serve with your favourite salad or potatoes.



Room at the Inn.

GQ heads up-river to the latest incarnation of one of Sydney’s fine dining institutions.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION. It’s the promise that’s launched a thousand restaurants — and one that many fail to follow through on when the plates hit the table. Occasionally, however, a restaurant scores a winning trifecta of unique location, breathtaking view and superb cuisine. Welcome to the new Berowra Waters Inn.

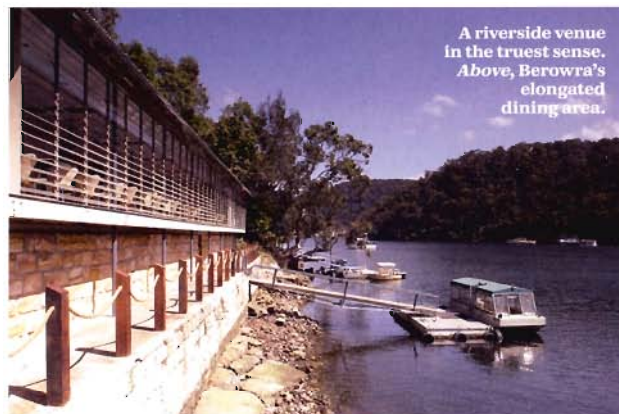
Nestled in bushland 50 minutes from Sydney’s CBD, it boasts a 180-degree view of the Hawkesbury River fringed by eucalypt-studded sandstone cliffs. Accessible only by boat or seaplane, the once legendary eatery is a bit of an Alice-down-the-rabbit-hole experience, the waters of the Hawkesbury casting their spell and lapping away any vestiges of urban drudgery. “Our boat driver says people start visibly relaxing on the trip across,” says the Inn’s newest owner and chef, Dietmar Sawyere. He’s also the man behind Forty One, the fine diner on the top (41st) floor of Sydney’s Chifley Square building.

Throughout the day, diners are treated to a shifting play of light through the building’s floor-to-ceiling louvred glass. Designed for Gay and Tony Bilson in 1975 by architect Glenn Murcutt, it makes much of its idyllic waterside location. Tony moved on and Gay kept it for a while before closing it in 1995. It passed through a number of hands before Sawyere took over the restaurant last year, reopening in November with a revamped interior and a new menu focused on provincial Mediterranean cooking and the use of organic and biodynamic ingredients.

Sawyere has long dreamt of running this place, since he first visited it some 20 years ago. “At that time it was the place to dine in Sydney,” he says. “When I made my way here I just thought, ‘What an amazing spot to have a restaurant.’”

Former owner Gay Bilson has pointed out the drawbacks of running the Inn — massive upkeep, inconvenient location and “the fact you don’t have to go [there] to get a good meal in Sydney any more”. But Sawyere isn’t shy of the challenge. “When we opened Forty One, everyone said we were crazy opening a fine dining restaurant on top of an office building. That was 15 years ago and it’s still going.”

His confidence is upheld in the finesse of his craft. Dishes like seared scallops on a bed of lemon-infused pea risotto, and Wagyu steak in a moat of creamy artichoke purée exhilarate the senses. Each is a perfect marriage of subject and setting. Much like the place itself. **GQ** — Chris Piper
via Berowra Wharf
(02)9456 1027. www.berowrawatersinn.com.au



A riverside venue in the truest sense. Above, Berowra’s elongated dining area.