

The Age Good Food Guide 2012

Janne Apelgren
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The hat winners of this year's *The Age Good Food Guide 2012*.

H AS it ever been harder for a restaurant to attain a chef's hat in the *Good Food Guide*? The bar was certainly raised this year. At least 25 notable restaurants opened, and seven went straight to hatted status. Our very top restaurants are even better.

The 32nd edition of the guide, out today, has awarded 81 hats, compared with 84 last year. The one-hat field contains new entries from seasoned chefs who routinely occupy two-hat territory - Neil Perry, Andrew McConnell and Geoff Lindsay have snagged a hat with new restaurants Spice Temple, Golden Fields and Dandelion.

The city, Southbank and St Kilda remain the most well-endowed fine-dining suburbs.

In a year in which more than 50 guide-worthy restaurants opened in Victoria, 649 are reviewed, of which 77 are new entries. The city and Richmond are the biggest beneficiaries of Melbourne's restaurant growth spurt.

Italian restaurants count for the largest number of entries, after "contemporary" cuisine. Victoria's best Italian? Stefano's in Mildura. Best Chinese? Flower Drum.

Our biggest news is four restaurants have attained three-hat status for the first time in the guide's recent history. Has Melbourne ever been a better place to eat out? We think not.

JANNE APELGREN, *Good Food Guide* editor

The hats

THREE HATS

Attica, **Jacques Reymond**, Royal Mail Hotel, **Vue de Monde**

TWO HATS

Cafe Di Stasio, **Circa the Prince**, Cutler & Co, **Ezard**, Flower Drum, **Grossi Fiorentino**, Lake House, **Loam**, Matteo's, **MoMo**, MoVida, **Pearl**, The Point Albert Park, **The Press Club**, Provenance, **Rockpool Bar & Grill**, Stefano's, **Stokehouse**, Tea Rooms of Yarck, **Verge**

ONE HAT

Abla's, **Annie Smithers' Bistrot**, The Atlantic, **Bacash**, Becco, **Bella Vedere**, Bistro Guillaume, **Bistro Vue**, Cecconi's Cantina, **Centonove**, Chris's Restaurant, **Church St Enoteca**, Cicciolina, **Coda**, Comme Kitchen, **Cumulus Inc**, Dandelion, **David's**, Donovans, **Eleonore's**, Embrasse, **Esposito @ Toofey's**, Gill's Diner, **Golden Fields**, The Grand, **Il Bacaro**, The Italian, **Koots Salle a Manger**, La Petanque, **Livingroom**, Longrain, **The Long Table**, Maha, **Maze**, Mercer's, **Montalto**, MoVida Aqui & Terraza, **Neilsons**, Oscar W's Wharfside, **Paladarr**, P M 24, **Port Phillip Estate**, Sapore, **Sarti**, Scorched, **Shoya**, Simone's Restaurant, **Spice Temple**, Sunnybrae, **Tempura Hajime**, Ten Minutes by Tractor, **Town Hall Hotel**, Vin Cellar, **Villa Gusto**, Wardens Restaurant, **Whirrakee Restaurant**, Yu-u

CHANGING FORTUNES

MORE HATS

TWO TO THREE: Attica, **Royal Mail Hotel**

ONE TO TWO: Stokehouse

NONE TO ONE: Chris's Restaurant, **La Petanque**, Livingroom, **The Long Table**, Oscar W's Wharfside, **Port Phillip Estate**, Scorched

FEWER HATS

TWO TO ONE: Donovans

ONE TO NONE: Balzari, **Estivo**, Gingerboy, **Giuseppe Arnaldo & Sons**, Kenzan, **No35 Ocha** **Perfect Drop Wine & Food**

Lounge, Royal George Hotel, **Taxi Dining Room**, The Outpost Retreat

NEW RESTAURANTS WITH HATS

The Atlantic, **Bistro Guillaume**, Dandelion, **Golden Fields**, P M 24, **Spice Temple**, Town Hall Hotel