



[Green ants, quandong and finger lime: Former Noma chef reveals exciting new Kiln menu](#)

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Highlight: Copenhagen-based Beau Clugston takes over the Ace Hotel Sydney restaurant this week. Here's what to expect.

Body

Beau Clugston's debut menu at Sydney's Kiln restaurant kicks off this week, with the chef-owner at Copenhagen's acclaimed [Iluka](#) restaurant delivering a daring flex and feel for native Australian ingredients years in the making.

Clugston's tartare dish is a mix of kangaroo and mussels, the emulsified shellfish included to counteract the lean marsupial meat. "I wanted to get something in there to mimic fat," the chef says. Elsewhere, green ants creep onto the menu, and pickled quandong is paired with tuna, almond and cucumber.

The chef focuses on seafood from the North Sea at [Iluka](#), a restaurant Danish newspaper Weekendavisen named Restaurant of the Year in 2022. So how is he up to speed on Australian ingredients?

Born and raised in Sawtell on the NSW North Coast, Clugston headed overseas 20 years ago, spending time at Gordon Ramsay's restaurants in Britain before working his way up the ranks at René Redzepi's famed Noma restaurant in Copenhagen.

It was in his role as head of research and development at Noma that Clugston had his food awakening to the ingredients of his own country. Sent to Australia to scout for [Noma's 2016 pop-up at Barangaroo](#), he criss-crossed the country.

"I remember these Aboriginal elders wrapping mud clams in paperbark, dropping them in the fire and saying 'they're ready when they sing'," he says. At Kiln, the paperbark package is filled with leek, lovage, Monforte cheese and finger lime.

"There are some finger limes grown in France, that's about it," Clugston says of his access to Australian ingredients in Europe.

When the chef flew home and got off the plane, he was hit by the warmth and "immediately switched to the Australian summer". The dish on Kiln's new menu that encapsulates that feeling mixes king prawn and oyster, with tomato, strawberry and lemon aspen. And a sprinkling of green ants.

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Clugston's chef-partner deal with Ace Hotel Sydney and its signature rooftop Kiln restaurant will involve alternating 12-week stints between Sydney and Copenhagen. He replaces maverick Sydney chef [Mitch Orr](#), known for his high-wire Jatz crackers, who departed Kiln two years after it opened.

Clugston also has some heavy-hitter help in the kitchen. Isobel Whelan-Little (former executive chef at [Alberto's](#) and [Caterpillar Club](#)) has stepped in for the next few months, and Sydney "cake cowboy" Andy Bowdy will look after the pastry section.

Where Clugston has taken cannoli and transformed it into a savoury version with chicken livers and Davidson plum, Bowdy is staying in the sweet lane with a deep-fried play on mango sticky rice, and a dessert of apricot and burnt honey. "Andy's changed a few things, turning down the sugar and upping the intensity," Clugston says.

"It's a monster truck compared with [Iluka](#)," Clugston says of Kiln compared with his pint-sized restaurant in Copenhagen. "I've only missed five services in five years at [Iluka](#)," he says. He'll see how the year pans out with the commute, but he is keen to move home with his family, which might mean eventually selling [Iluka](#).

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