


LOCAVORE.

# GOLD



Pork bao, Angus beef tataki salad and Wagyu beef red curry at Mamasan. **OPPOSITE:** the Gold Coast can reflect on its growing reputation for quality produce and venues.



# COAST

A new food scene has sprung up on the Gold Coast. With the Commonwealth Games months away, lifestyle writer **Lindy Alexander** meets up with local chef and restaurateur Daniel Ridgeway to find out which venues get a gold medal.

PHOTOGRAPHY JUDIT LOSH



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**W**hen chef and restaurateur Daniel

Ridgeway (pictured above) first proposed the idea of opening a fine-dining restaurant in a sleepy Gold Coast suburb, his family and friends gave him an unequivocal answer.

"Everyone told me I was crazy," he says. "There was nothing like that around here." Ridgeway went ahead anyway and opened a modern European restaurant. "I named it **Little Truffle** (littletruffle.com.au) because it was a tiny gem away from what was then the riffraff of the Gold Coast," he says. "We were the jewel on the highway."

Fast-forward seven years and Ridgeway's success has been magnetic. Stylish new venues are opening every week as the Gold Coast sloughs off its reputation as a glitzy destination only good for roller-coasters and surf clubs. The climate and geography mean the

It's always had its beaches, but now the Gold Coast is matching them with top-quality food such as that at Daniel Ridgeway's Little Truffle (inset).



growing season is long, and perfect for bespoke producers. You'll find everything from finger limes to camel milk.

Ridgeway now owns six restaurants along the Gold Coast, with more to come. "I am a restaurateur with multiple venues, but I'm a chef first and foremost," he says. "If I don't get into the kitchen for a few hours each day, I get a bit agitated."

When in an apron, the chef likes to cook European-style food, but when dining out he can't resist Japanese. "I eat out about four times a week and I do love great sushi or a sashimi platter," he says. "But the truth is, there are so many great places to eat now on the Gold Coast."

## 1 COUNTRY CHARM

In a renovated charcoal and white timber cottage sits **Paddock Bakery** (20 Hibiscus Haven, Miami; paddockbakery.com). "There's a beautiful backyard with big trees to sit under, and inside there's an amazing bakery serving awesome coffee," says Ridgeway. "Even if it's raining, people are still lining up to get in." The heart of the cafe is the woodfired oven with bakers mixing, shaping and cooking the loaves. The free-range soft-boiled eggs with sourdough soldiers served in pink or blue egg cartons are a huge hit with kids and adults alike.

## 2 SIMPLE PLEASURES

Ridgeway likes to grab a piccolo, or, depending on the day, a double piccolo from **No Name Lane** (16 Charles Ave, Broadbeach; facebook.com/nonamelanebroadbeach). "It's a little cafe that does great coffee," he says. "I try to keep it to two a day, but with coffee this good, that's hard." The unassuming decor, simple menu and tucked-away position place the spotlight entirely on the coffee.

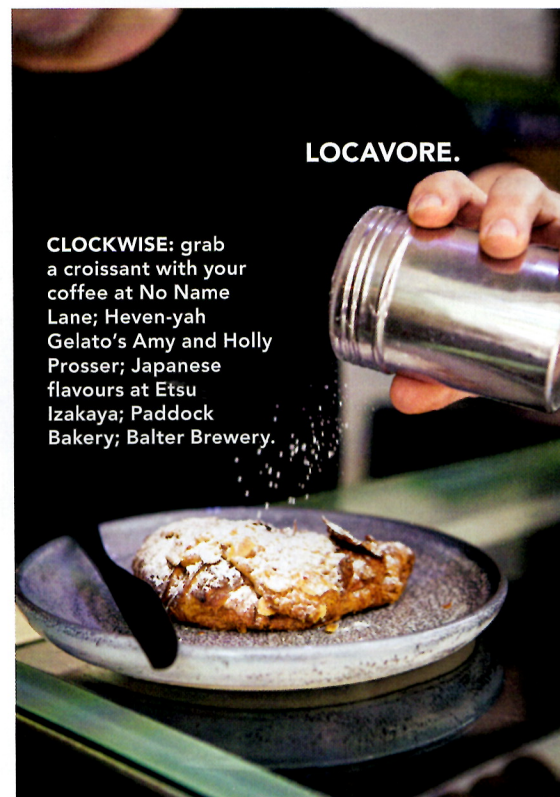
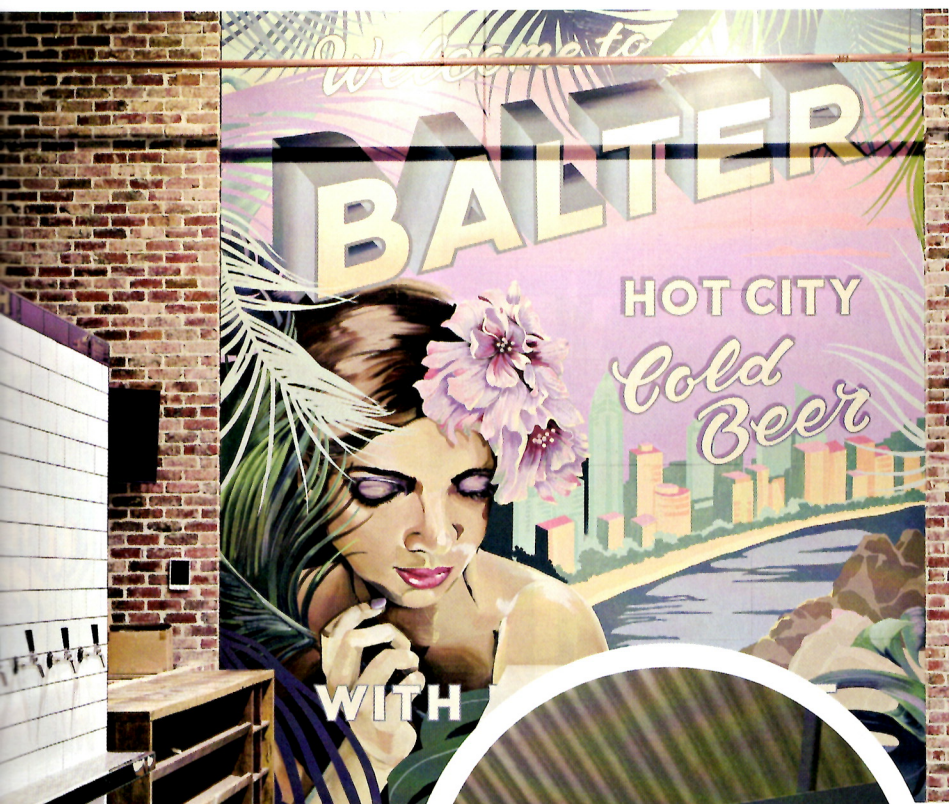
## 3 HAPPY HOUR

If you think the guy pouring beers at **Balter Brewery** (14 Traders Way, Currumbin; balter.com.au) looks familiar, you could be right. World champion surfer Mick Fanning, together with six mates, created the sleek but welcoming brewery with its exposed brick and copper and concrete fittings. Particularly striking are the floral splashes on the cushions and the tropical Hawaiian-style wall mural, which signals it's happy hour with a 'hot city cold beer' motto. "We are cheerleaders for the good beer movement," says co-owner Stirling Howland. "We want to make a legacy for the Gold Coast."

## 4 HIDE AND SEEK

**Etsu Izakaya** (2440 Gold Coast Hwy, Mermaid Beach; etsu.com.au) is a little slice of bustling Japan hidden behind a sliding stable door and a swinging red lantern. "Estu is so funky, it feels like you're in a nightclub in Japan with awesome food," says Ridgeway. Perch at the long concrete bar, sample the huge range of sake and Japanese whisky, and let the experienced waiters bring you a selection of raw, fried and grilled delights. Ridgeway's pick is the sashimi. For vegetarians, the oyster mushrooms cooked over *binchotan* charcoal pack an umami punch you'll remember for days.





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**CLOCKWISE:** grab a croissant with your coffee at No Name Lane; Heven-yah Gelato's Amy and Holly Prosser; Japanese flavours at Etsu Izakaya; Paddock Bakery; Balter Brewery.



## 5 HEAVEN SENT

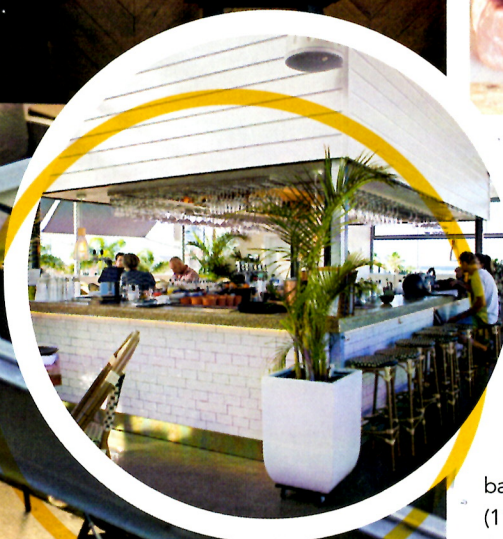
When Amy and Holly Prosser were travelling in Portugal, they were regulars at a little gelateria. One day, the owner invited them to watch him make his iced treats... and the rest is history. Back home, the sisters opened Heven-yah Gelato (Shop 2/2387 Gold Coast Hwy, Mermaid Beach; [facebook.com/hevenyah](https://www.facebook.com/hevenyah)), where they sell their house-made, small-batch gelato and sorbetto featuring seasonal and unique flavour combinations like cultured creme fraiche and raspberry jam. As for the maestro who taught them the tricks of the trade? "We're hoping to go back and visit Pedro next year," says Holly. "He'll be so proud."





## 6 BOSS LADY

"Mamasan (3 Oracle Boulevard, Broadbeach; [mamasanbroadbeach.com](http://mamasanbroadbeach.com)) is an Asian fusion restaurant that really pulls it off," says Ridgeway. "It's such a great fit-out and the curries are amazing." Ridgeway's go-to dishes are the Wagyu beef red curry and the pork bao buns filled with twice-cooked pork belly, pickled cucumber and sriracha chilli mayo. Among the warm timber, concrete floors and brass accents are touches of Asian decor that owners Lauren Mitchell and JP Duitsch have picked up on their travels. Mamasan refers to the imposing photograph of an Indonesian woman gazing over the dining room. "I like to call her the lady in charge," says Mitchell.



## 7 FIVE STARS

When you put five kitchens, two levels and one (long) menu together, you're in for something special. Housed in an old post office with abundant light and outdoor areas, games for kids, and a rooftop bar with 360-degree views, **The Collective** (1128 Gold Coast Hwy, Palm Beach; [thecollectivepalmbeach.com.au](http://thecollectivepalmbeach.com.au)) is the place to go when your group all want to eat different cuisines. "We believe in having lots of options," says director Jeremy Davidson. "We found five of our favourite local food operators and invited them to open a side business." Ridgeway's pick is The Italian Job. "They do great pizzas with quality bases and authentic, minimal toppings," he says.

## 8 STREETS AHEAD

Local favourite **Justin Lane** (1708-1710 Gold Coast Hwy, Burleigh Heads; [justinlane.com.au](http://justinlane.com.au)) is a light, airy pizzeria and pasta restaurant with a buzzy rooftop bar overlooking the ocean. "Our pizzas are all about the base," says venue partner Pete Tayler. "They are 100 per cent sourdough that has been cold-risen for 48 hours." The seafood pizza is the most popular on the menu, adds Tayler.

**CLOCKWISE (and inset):** something for everyone at The Collective; Mamasan's warm surrounds; great steak is on the menu at The Glenelg.



## 9 STEAK A CLAIM

"The food is exceptional at **The Glenelg Public House** (cnr Glenelg Ave, 2460 Gold Coast Hwy, Mermaid Beach; [theglenelgpublichouse.com.au](http://theglenelgpublichouse.com.au))," says Ridgeway. The steak-based gastro pub with its looped hanging pendants and luxurious leather lounges has a massive local following. "It's simple food that is delicious," says head chef and owner Aaron Smith. "We get the best produce we can and we don't mess with it."

## 10 ISLAND HOME

One block back from the beach, **The Island** (3128 Surfers Paradise Blvd, Surfers Paradise; [theislandgoldcoast.com.au](http://theislandgoldcoast.com.au)) is the ultimate Gold Coast hotel – there's a tropical rooftop bar, an open-air restaurant, and swimming pool with striped umbrellas and reclining loungers. Recently refurbished, the rooms are a haven of cool with their raw timber walls, industrial lighting and balconies with ocean views.

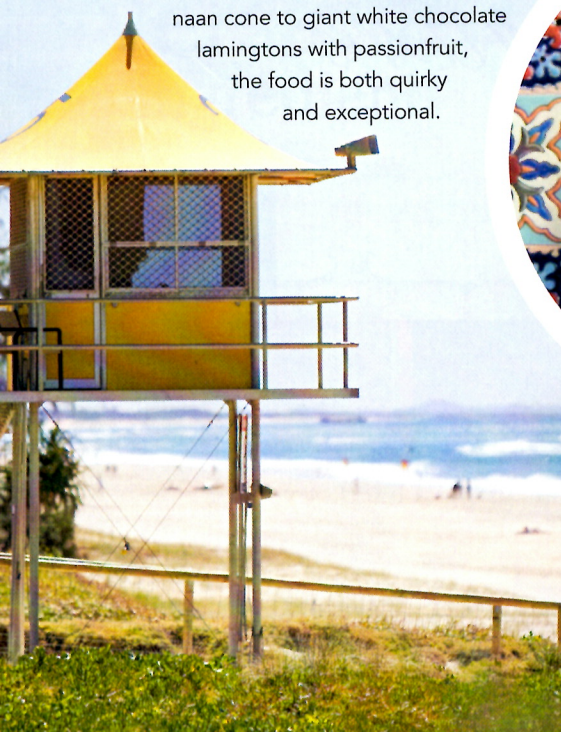
## 11 MARKET MAGIC

Hidden in a quiet industrial estate is **Miami Marketta** (23 Hillcrest Parade, Miami; [miamimarketta.com](http://miamimarketta.com)), complete with hipster bartenders, twinkling fairy lights and pumping tunes. "I feel so proud to be a Gold Coast person when we have markets like this, filled with cool food stalls and local artists," says Ridgeway. From curry in a naan cone to giant white chocolate lamingtons with passionfruit, the food is both quirky and exceptional.



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CLOCKWISE: Justin Lane's seafood pizza is its most popular; enjoy good times and (inset) great eats at boutique hotel The Island.





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## 12 RISING STARS

Ridgeway's other favourite Japanese haunts are **Muso Ramen Noodle and Gyoza Bar** (2b/2484 Gold Coast Hwy, Mermaid Beach; [xrayt1.wixsite.com/muso](http://xrayt1.wixsite.com/muso)). "You have to line up to get in to Muso," he says. "But it's worth it – the food is legit." A couple of doors up is Gold Coast institution **Itoshin** (2484 Gold Coast Hwy, Mermaid Beach; [facebook.com/Yusukeltoltoshin](https://facebook.com/Yusukeltoltoshin)). "My mum is their longest-standing customer of 23 years!" says Ridgeway. "I love their bamboo boats filled with sashimi and oysters."

## 13 VILLAGE PEOPLE

Mitch and Nerissa McClusky are the husband and wife team behind **Commune** (1844 Gold Coast Hwy, Burleigh Heads; [07] 5520 3377), an old butcher's shop with reclaimed furniture and rustic timber tables. The food is wholesome and hearty – think power bowls of acai, coconut and dragon fruit, Instagrammable cacao pancakes with caramelised banana, or the standout fritters with house-made chilli jam. "I tried to take the fritters off the menu, but our regulars wouldn't let me!" says Nerissa.

[delicious.com.au/travel](http://delicious.com.au/travel)  
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**GOLD CLASS//** There's no doubt about it: a lot is happening on the Gold Coast. The extensive redevelopment of shopping destination **Pacific Fair** ([pacificfair.com.au](http://pacificfair.com.au)) upped the luxe factor of its offering, while **QT Gold Coast** ([qthotelsandresorts.com/gold-coast](http://qthotelsandresorts.com/gold-coast)) brought its signature quirky-chic accommodation to Surfers Paradise. Not only that, the glitzy Gold Coast this year welcomed six-star hotel **The Star at Jupiters Casino** ([star.com.au/goldcoast/hotel](http://star.com.au/goldcoast/hotel)) in Broadbeach, which you can read all about in our February issue. ✂



**CLOCKWISE:** visit Commune for wholesome fare and (inset) refreshing treats; tonkotsu spicy miso at Muso Ramen; cool market vibes at Miami Marketta.