

Countdown to Maze opening

Crown already has two of the biggest restaurant openings of 2010 planned, kicking off in March with two Gordon Ramsay restaurants.

NEW ZEALAND-born chef, Josh Emmett, arrives in Melbourne at the end of this month to race toward the opening of one of the most anticipated new restaurant launches in the city—Gordon Ramsay's Maze restaurant and Maze Grill.

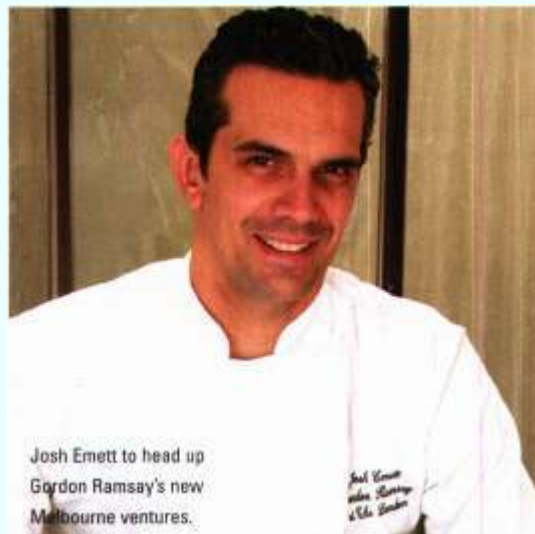
Emmett, who has been working with Ramsay for more than ten years, was last year announced as chef de cuisine of the Ramsay restaurants that are due to open at Crown's new Metropol hotel in March.

Fresh from running Maze and Gordon Ramsay at The London NYC, Emmett is returning to Australia to work for the first time since he left Melbourne in 1999 having spent three years working with Donovan Cooke at Est, Est, Est.

By coincidence, Cooke is also returning to Melbourne to launch a Crown restaurant this year—the new Atlantic restaurant, a joint venture between Cooke, the Atlantic Group's Hatem Saleh, Con Andronis (of Clamms Seafood fame) and Tony Schiavello, principal of the Schiavello Group, which is scheduled to open at the end of this year.

Restaurant openings are not new for Emmett, he's also been involved with the launch of Gordon Ramsay at Claridge's, Gordon Ramsay NY and LA and the Savoy. "That is one thing I have in my favour," Emmett told *Hospitality* magazine. "I have a bit of expertise in that."

Emmett said he was looking forward to getting back to Melbourne and working on finalising the menus to reflect the market. He said he was particularly keen about using the local produce here. "What I love working with is things like yabbies and Moreton Bay bugs and those massive crayfish or rock lobster," he said. "They are sensational."



"And the marrons from Western Australia. These are the sorts of products that I've never seen anywhere else I've been. And they come in fresh and live and are just incredible. You don't get that anywhere else in the world. The seafood in Australia and NZ is so great."

While Emmett would not reveal any of his senior kitchen appointments he confirmed that Australian, and long time Ramsay staffer, Randa Assi, would be restaurant manager with the key task of managing the all important front of house side in restaurants where diners will head with high expectations of both food and service.

"Making sure you have the right people in place out front with the right attitude is critically important," Emmett said. "It is the face of the restaurant."