



## secretingredients

Romeo Baudouin

Victor Churchill, Woollahra, Sydney

Meet the chef who's heading up the kitchen in the million dollar new venture from Vic's Meat in Sydney—a butcher shop that looks like a boutique, and has raised meat to a new level.

### **Give us a very brief history of your career?**

I have more than 18 years experience in the business. I originally training with my cousin in Brittany, France, and then took my skills to Harrods in London where I produced its charcuterie. After a few years I moved into restaurants and worked in London and Sydney – Marco Pierre White's Mirabelle in London and in Sydney at Guillaume at Bennelong—and later as head chef at GPO Restaurants and Bars. Prior to Victor Churchill, I ran my own successful charcuterie business where I worked closely with Vic's Premium Quality Meat.

### **What do you like to eat when you're not working?**

I am quite naughty at the moment as we have been so busy and I have a real sweet tooth. If there is chocolate or sweets left around I will demolish them. But really I like to eat anything that my five-year-old daughter Sophie and I make together—she loves making pancakes at the moment.

### **What's your favourite restaurant?**

In Leichhardt there's a great restaurant called Bistro Ortolan. It's

relaxed, great French food and good service.

### **What's your pick of the menu there?**

The Chicken Pot-au-feu with Foie Gras, artichoke and black truffle is marvellous.

### **What's your favourite dish on your menu at Victor Churchill?**

At the moment I'm loving the Fromage de Tete (brawn). I love this dish because it is an easy way to remind me of my childhood as my cousin used to make it for me.

### **What's your favourite ingredient at the moment?**

I love pork, it is so versatile and I use it for pretty much everything in charcuterie such as terrines, rillettes, confit and black pudding.

### **What do you think is the most over-rated ingredient on menus at the moment?**

I would actually know this if I was able to get out of my kitchen...

### **What's the most indispensable piece of equipment in your kitchen?**

It goes without saying my knives are an indispensable part of my day. From boning out a rabbit through to

slicing a terrine, you must have well looked after sharp knives.

### **What's been your most expensive flop?**

This was recent, I made our first batch of duck liver pate with truffle and for some reason it just didn't work and we had to throw it all out. We are still searching for the reason—every other batch has worked since.

### **What do you think will be the next big foodservice trend?**

I feel it is going to be all about charcuterie. This has already been in development in the past few years but I think it will all be about the quality, handmade product, going back to the old days.

### **What's your tip for Australian restaurateurs and chefs for surviving the downturn?**

I think if you are always focused on quality food and great service and have consistency with these two things you will always survive the bad times. People will always appreciate what you have provided and gone through to get it to their plate.

### **Your dream hospitality gig?**

I'm really lucky that I am back doing

what I learnt to do 18 years ago and I'm loving it. I am quite free to do what I want and make what I want.

**Vent your spleen. What annoys you about the restaurant/foodservice business in Australia? How would you like to change it?**

It is very hard to find staff who have the passion and the drive to learn and keep themselves motivated to learn new things. Many people treat this industry just as a job, not a way of life and unfortunately you can really feel this when you visit some places.

**What would be on the menu at your last supper?**

Steak Frites with pepper sauce and béarnaise on the side. Fantastic.

**If you weren't a chef you'd be...?**

...a fashion designer. If my cousin did not call me 18 years ago I would definitely be this.