

Photography
Mark Chew



On his day off, **Philippe Mouchel** and his wife, Tomoko, enjoy a leisurely meal at home.

Interview
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iCOOK

Sunday brunch

You might expect a great chef such as Philippe Mouchel to do more on a Sunday morning than shake cornflakes into a bowl but, even so, the careful attention he pays to his poached eggs, hollandaise and hash brown is impressive. "I think this is what makes the difference between a good meal and a very good meal," he says. While Mouchel stands over the stove in his Melbourne apartment, focused and calm, his wife, Tomoko, sets the table and they discuss the coming meal in a free-flowing Franglais-Japonaise.

"I cannot leave the house without eating something," says Mouchel. During the week, that means toast, coffee and Tomoko's homemade yoghurt with berries and honey. "But it's nice to have something more indulgent on a Sunday," he says. "We don't get up until 11 o'clock, so this is breakfast and lunch."

The meal feeds their relationship, too. "During the week, I leave at nine o'clock and come back at midnight, a little bit tired," explains Mouchel of the routine that keeps his new city bistro, PM24, humming. "When I get home late, I don't want to talk. I just watch sport on TV and fall asleep on the sofa. On Sunday, it's important to have time together, to talk and," he laughs, "to complain." With their two adult children living overseas, Tomoko might wish

Mouchel, 53, would wind down. But when he trained in Normandy, apprentices worked 15 hour days, six days a week, no quibbles, and it's shaped his approach since.

The pair have lived in Australia since 1991 when Mouchel's long-time mentor, French cooking giant Paul Bocuse, sent him to open Restaurant Paul Bocuse in Daimaru department store. Bocuse contributed the foreword to Mouchel's new book, *More Than French*, written with Rita Erlich. In it, he speaks of Mouchel as a "rare talent".

"It means a lot to be respected by him," says Mouchel. "I don't know if I'm a talent but I always give 120 per cent."

In 1998, Mouchel was the launch chef at city restaurant Langton's, then he went to Liberte in Sydney, followed by a period back in Japan. From 2004 to 2010, he ran the Brasserie at Crown. But he couldn't resist when Press Club Group director George Sykiotis showed him the site that is now PM24. "I got intoxicated with the idea," he says. Customers from the Daimaru days are begging for Bocuse dishes such as pastry-encrusted barramundi.

"They remember those dishes," he marvels. "I feel proud. I'm not doing that detailed food here – PM24 is a bistro – but I put the same love into every jus or sauce. I am still enjoying my cooking, and my eating too."



Oeuf Benedicte

4 free-range eggs
1 tbsp white wine vinegar

Sauce hollandaise

3 egg yolks
80g unsalted butter
juice of ½ lemon
salt, white pepper
4 slices of bacon
2 muffins
herbs for decoration
(parsley or chives)

Poach the eggs in simmering water and vinegar (two minutes for soft, runny yolks). For the sauce hollandaise, **melt** the butter in a small pan at very low heat, let stand for five minutes and with a spoon remove the white part sitting on the top.

In a small pan, mix together the egg yolks with one tbsp of water. **Whisk** on very low heat or in a bain-marie until a light cream consistency. Take off the heat and add butter and lemon juice, whisking constantly until smooth and thick.

Season with salt and pepper. Keep warm. In a 180C oven (under the griller, if you have one), **grill** the bacon until crisp then lay it on paper towel to absorb fat.

Toast the muffins, place on each plate, and add the bacon and the poached egg.

Spoon over the sauce hollandaise. Finish with herbs and extra pepper.

Serves 2



Hash brown potato, smoked salmon, sour cream

1 medium potato, peeled
1 spring onion, sliced
1 small onion, thinly sliced
1 tbsp potato starch
2 tbsp canola oil
1 tbsp butter
2 slices smoked salmon
sour cream

Finely shred the potato with a mandolin, rinse well under water, drain on kitchen paper and place in a bowl.

Add potato starch, chopped onion and spring onion. In a nonstick frypan heat canola oil, add potato mixture, flatten with a spatula, reduce the heat to medium and cook until golden brown.

Turn upside down to colour the other side, remove excess oil and add butter to finish the cooking for an extra two minutes.

Drain on kitchen paper. Cut the hash brown into wedges, top with the smoked salmon and serve with sour cream.

Serves 2



Salade Nicoise

1 small tin of tuna in brine
1 tbsp of mayonnaise
1tsp Dijon mustard
juice of 1 lemon
100g green beans
1 free-range egg, poached for 9 minutes (or 2 quail eggs, poached for 3 minutes)
4 small breakfast radishes
4 black olives
2 medium tomatoes
2 white anchovies
1 spring onion
½ red capsicum, thinly sliced
few basil leaves
extra virgin olive oil
balsamic vinegar.

Drain the brine from the tuna and mix with the mayonnaise, mustard and lemon juice. Cook beans in boiling water for 5 minutes or until soft, refresh in cold water, drain on kitchen paper.

Place tomatoes in the same boiling water for 30 seconds. Refresh in cold water, remove skin and cut in half. Arrange tomatoes on a plate, spread with the tuna mayonnaise, place the beans, olives, radish, capsicum, anchovy and egg on top.

Season with salt and pepper, drizzle with olive oil and balsamic vinegar. Decorate with basil leaves and serve.

Serves 2



Breakfast orange cake

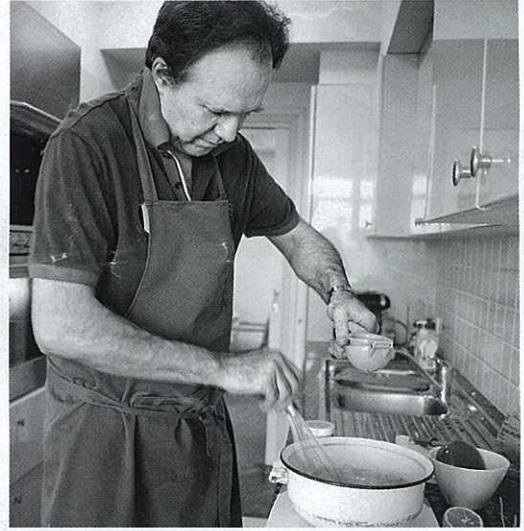
250g unsalted butter
15g finely chopped glace orange
185g pure icing sugar
100g almond meal
zest of 1 orange
250g flour
4 large eggs
25g hot milk
5g baking powder
orange marmalade,
to serve

Heat oven to 170 degrees. **Melt** the butter on a low heat. Transfer to a bowl and add the chopped orange, icing sugar, almond meal and orange zest. Add half of the flour, and the eggs and milk.

Mix together, then add the rest of the flour and baking powder and mix well. Transfer the mix to a rectangular floured tin (20x7x5cm) and cook for about 45 minutes until springy to touch.

Cool down on a wire rack. Once the cake is cold, slice and serve with marmalade.

Serves 10



Clockwise from left
Eggs Benedict. Smoked salmon on a hash brown. Mouchel whisks the hollandaise sauce. Salade Nicoise. Tomoko. Breakfast orange cake.



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