

The Noma effect

The legendary restaurant's alumni are making their mark on the world

Words by Delle Chan

René Redzepi finally reopened Noma 2.0 in February amid much fanfare. The rebooted space in Copenhagen is an exercise in Scandinavian chic, with blonde wood and natural light. Menu-wise, it stays true to its predecessor's roots, celebrating seasonal, hyper-local produce. This culinary philosophy has influenced chefs worldwide, particularly those who cut their teeth in Noma's hallowed kitchens and have successfully struck out on their own.

BENJAMIN GREENO SYDNEY

British-born Greeno was Redzepi's first employee when Noma opened. "I practically lived on René's sofa during the first three months," he reminisces. His main takeaways from his time there? "To expect the absolute best from my suppliers and staff, and to organise my time well," he shares. As the executive chef at Australian hospitality group Merivale, these lessons have certainly come in handy. One of his venues is The Paddington in Sydney, a contemporary take on the traditional pub. Here, the menu takes centre stage – think rotisserie meats and vegetables in creative dishes like pork belly with grilled peaches. merivale.com.au

SIMON MARTIN MANCHESTER

Martin started out at Noma as a fresh-faced intern in 2016. Three months later, he was offered a full-time position. "Working at Noma was amazing," reflects the chef. "It's a high-pressure environment, but I learnt so much about the creative process." The 27-year-old is taking this spirit of innovation to his new spot, Mana, which will open in Manchester this summer. "Mana will essentially be British, but we'll serve food nobody has seen before," he says. "We want to define our own culinary ethos and expand our knowledge of produce – and there's a lifetime of work to be done." manarestaurant.co.uk

KRISTIAN BAUMANN COPENHAGEN

Can't score a table at Noma? Try sister restaurant 108 instead. At its helm is Seoul-born Baumann, the 31-year-old protégé handpicked by Redzepi to spearhead the venture. "I've always wanted to open my own establishment, and René and I realised we share the same culinary vision," he explains. "108 was the natural result." Like its older sibling, 108 serves exquisite New Nordic cuisine and focuses on fermenting and foraging. However, 108 also has its own test kitchen, where Baumann dreams up innovative flavour combinations like brown beech mushrooms with a smoked egg yolk sauce – revelatory dishes that put 108 in a league of its own. 108.dk

SANDIA CHANG & JAMES KNAPPETT LONDON

For Chang and Knappett, a meal at Noma in 2007 was life-changing – Knappett immediately applied as a chef; Chang came on board a year later as a waiter. In 2012, the husband-and-wife team opened their own dual-concept space in London: Bubbledogs celebrates the unlikely combo of hotdogs and Champagne; Michelin-starred Kitchen Table, hidden at the back, offers a modern British riff on omakase-style dining. "Whether it's a hot dog or a beautifully plated dish, we champion only the freshest artisanal produce," Chang declares. bubbledogs.co.uk; kitchentablelondon.co.uk

MADS REFSLUND NEW YORK

More than a decade after his departure, Refslund – one of the restaurant's original co-founders – is still linked to Noma despite breaking away in 2004. "Noma was locked in a dogma of Nordic cuisine, but I wanted to be more experimental," he explains. Refslund went on to open Michelin-starred Restaurant MR in Copenhagen and revamp New York's Acme in 2012. His next venture is slated to open in Brooklyn later this year. It'll be themed around fire and ice, with "ingredients from New York's own backyard", he reveals. Like Noma, the menu will draw heavily on nature; in a sense, then, Refslund will be coming full circle. fb.com/madsrefslund



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FLAVOUR PROFILES

From sweet to spicy, here are a few spots dedicated to culinary delights that pack a punch

SPICY

Tabasco Museum, Louisiana

Dedicated to the popular hot sauce, this museum is where you can find out everything you've ever wanted to know about the tongue-numbing condiment.



Museum Kimchikan, Seoul

Kimchi fans will have a field day here, where they can learn more about the history and process of making regional variations of kimchi while sampling a few different recipes.



Janice Wong MGM, Macau

Diners can pick up the edible art dessert queen's Signature Singapore series – which includes a spicy-sweet chilli padi chocolate truffle – to take home with them.



Dessert Museum, Manila

Opened just this February, this expansive wonderland comprises eight rooms, each dedicated to a different dessert. Discover a shocking-pink cotton candy forest and so much more.



Museum of Candy, New York

Opening this summer, the Museum of Candy will feature tasting stations, edible art installations and what will purportedly be the world's largest gummy bear.



SWEET