



Executive Chef, David Williams, brings eclectic African flavors to his menu at Rydges Bell City.

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Rydges Bell City

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Out of Africa

From cooking Zebra and wild hog in South Africa to the jungles of Preston, Executive Chef David Williams' latest challenge is turning the newly built Rydges Bell City complex into a multifaceted suburban success story.

I have worked with snakes and frogs, all types of antelopes and crocodiles - you name it I've cooked it," says David Williams. "Although the meats I cook with these days may be a little more tame I still use a lot of African spices in my cooking - from Ethiopian Berbere spice to various chutneys and relishes from my native South Africa."

David's menu of modern West Mediterranean cuisine with an African twist, has been receiving some great feedback at the Rydges Bell City Restaurant. "Our meals gather influence from Spain, Portugal and Morocco and spice is a big part of these dishes...it's an explosion of flavor." Since coming to Australia from South Africa five years ago, David has risen through the ranks at Rydges, starting in the Melbourne CBD hotel as a Banquet Chef, and then moving to 2IC before becoming Executive Chef. He joined the newly built Rydges Bell City complex just over a year ago and now manages the unique hotel's kitchens.

Rydges Preston comprises of a 3.5 Star hotel with a student component, which locals may recall as the old PANCH hospital nurse's quarters. The former hospital itself has been renovated into the 4.5 Star hotel property with a long-term residence wing.

At first glance, the location for such a complex may seem unusual, but David says it is thriving and out booking many CBD based hotels. "We have had 104% occupancy in this past week alone, so we've had to move people to nearby motels," he says.

The unique structure of the site means David must cater his food selection for

four distinct markets. From pub style meals for students to a full à la carte restaurant for hotel guests looking for up market dining, and a pantry style outlet in the foyer for the 42 office blocks situated in the complex. The hotel also has a menu that caters for the corporate market - all in all Rydges has the capacity to do 1100 pax.

David is no stranger to challenging environments; before he came to Australia in 2004 he spent two decades in South Africa working for large restaurants and silver service establishments.

"I developed my passion for food service in 1990, the year Nelson Mandela was released from prison...."

"My last job was running a 500-seater restaurant with gazebo and tree house style décor. We had one massive BBQ style buffet, 12 grilling stations and cooks behind each station. It was a huge logistical challenge and consumed my life with 7.00am starts and midnight finishes.

Although South Africa had changed significantly since the end of Apartheid, it was not moving fast enough for David and his family. As a non-white chef, David says traveling overseas during his 20's really opened his eyes to the possibilities available to him, regardless of his race.

"I developed my passion

for food service in 1990, the year Nelson Mandela was released from prison.

That's when I started to take a career in the food industry seriously and I did a course at the Bill Stafford Cooking School," he says.

"Still I couldn't tolerate the way non-whites were treated and although the situation improved over the years my wife and I grew tired of the system and decided to move to Australia with our young family."

David says he enjoys a more mellow life in Oz... "In South Africa I was a dramatic tantrum-throwing chef. I used to stack plates high and then throw them all to the floor for dramatic effect when the occasion called for it, or I would throw a pan right across the kitchen. But when I came to Australia I was told about certain laws against violence," he laughs. "Let's just say I have calmed down a lot since coming here."

But it hasn't been all smooth sailing, particularly David's introduction to Asian cooking.

"Coming from my African background I was confused by Asian ingredients. Even



now I have to Google ingredients on occasion to find out what the hell it's for," he laughs.

"Asian cuisine is so new to me but I love the flavours and I am excited by the opportunity to perfect a new style that Australians seem to have really embraced."

Another area David has embraced is food and wage costing. "I'm a numbers man at heart," he says. "In the past I think chefs were allowed to go a little crazy with figures. I remember the days when we worked with cray fish like it was an everyday food, now we don't even consider putting it on a menu because it's so expensive."

"Wages are a big part of any food establishment's costs. I use the Roster Coster system as an accurate way to forecast staffing levels in advance based on projected revenue."

Despite the slowing economy the new restaurant shows no signs of suffering, having more than doubled its turn over since opening. David puts this down to their marketing efforts.

"Everything is centred on our database and all promotions are sent via SMS alerts. We advertise special events and offer genuine deals across the whole centre. This really sets Rydges apart from many struggling CBD based hotel chains. Our marketing is relevant and targeted and SMS is the most powerful marketing tool we use."

"Another important recipe for success is your equipment," adds David, "and Fagor has performed consistently in this new kitchen."

"Fagor is excellent value for money. It operates just as well as the high end brands without the price tag. The ovens we use in the banquet department for instance are hardwearing and do the job well. That's all you can ask for. And with a seamless finish it makes it perfect for our open kitchen."

...And some final words of wisdom for readers who haven't tried African cuisine yet but are interested in broadening their palette... "You need to ease into it," David recommends. "Moroccan Tagines are a good entry into African cooking - they are simple and familiar to many. Don't be scared, be open minded and take on the experience of African flavour."



Scallywags Play Centre, Brisbane

Child's Play



Richard Janson knows how hard it can be to juggle children and a social life. That's why he created Scallywags Play Centre - where good food doesn't have to be sacrificed for good play.

"I have been in the retail and hospitality industries for 15 years but I always wanted to own my own restaurant," says Richard Janson one of the owners of thriving Brisbane play centre - Scallywags. "I used to work right next door to Scallywags, managing the Golf Store and I would go there for lunch. The food was terrible, but it was the only cafeteria in the area. Its main function was as an indoor playground centre but with help from the Esquillo and Lao families we were able to join heads and hip pockets to turn Scallywags into a quality restaurant and play ground that caters for toddlers through to children 12 years of age."

Richard says it was their dream to serve five star food at three star costs at a three star venue that was family friendly yet adult savvy. Richard has succeeded, creating an environment that is both safe and clean, where children can be entertained while adults can come and enjoy a meal with friends. Located in Virginia, Brisbane Scallywags has had a major facelift, with an upgraded Fagor kitchen, a new playground and a more up market customer base.

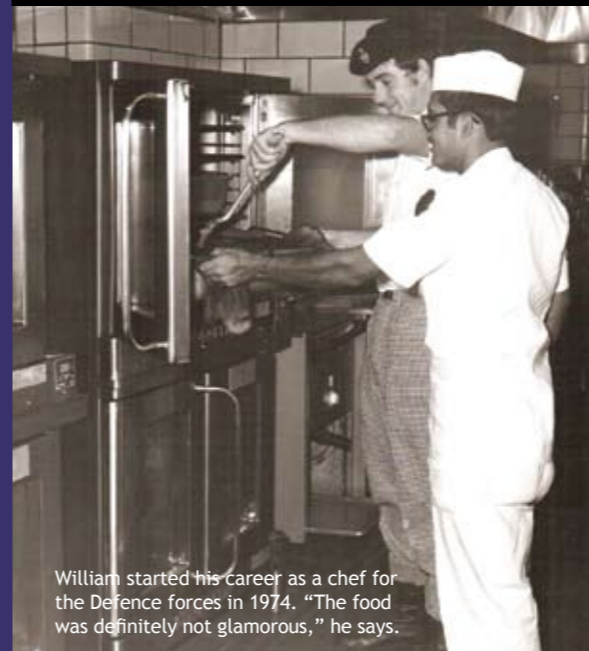
"Normally a parent would go to an indoor play centre and the best they can expect is a good coffee. Here we offer them à la carte food at three star prices. I know my customers work too hard and too long to be eating sub class food," he says. Running a kitchen for the first time has

opened up Richard's eyes to food costing and the importance of equipment. "I have really got down to the last cent and worked out how much it is actually costing me to prepare each dish. We have food costs running at under 20%, which everyone said was impossible."



Richard says the secret was to eliminate all waste. "We make our own stock and we cut our own meat, we don't waste a thing. But it all comes down to having the right equipment. We bought equipment to suit the menu rather than working with what we had because it wouldn't have been good enough." "When you just 'make do' with equipment you are limited to what you can make. We chose Fagor equipment and designed the kitchen to be very fast moving. Now you can go from the kitchen to the dishwashing room without any obstacles in your way," he says. Richard adds that Fagor works well for him. "It looks the part and the price tag was very good. Being Spanish made also had me sold. Anything that is European is a favourite for me."

Fagor Training College



William started his career as a chef for the Defence forces in 1974. "The food was definitely not glamorous," he says.

Food for thought

Hospitality Training Australia (HTA) teacher, William Stevens, has spent over 35 years working in kitchens across Australia. From serving hundreds in the Australian Defence Services to catering for politicians; William now enjoys passing on his knowledge to the next generation.

When HTA teacher, William Stevens, began in the industry in 1974; food service was a different beast.

"I started out cooking for officers in the Defence Force and the food was definitely not glamorous. It was basic Australian meals of meat and mash. Then I moved to catering for sergeants who received better quality cuts and a more up market menu, but it was still traditionally Australian. I also spent some time in Hawaii as part of a defence exchange in 1976. I had to cook typical American rubbish like burgers and hot dogs with mince on top.

"In the late 1970's we noticed a real switch to multicultural meals like Italian dishes and Indian curries. It was a slow shift to acceptance but it definitely made my work more interesting when it did come."

Despite the basic nature of the meals, William enjoyed the buffets and functions at the Defence Forces and stayed as Head Chef for seven years before moving to catering for private hospitals. He then started his own business during the 1980's, Four Seasons Catering, where he did anywhere up to 150 functions a year - from birthdays to bucks nights, weddings and christenings. "I catered for everything from finger food to sit down meals and I did this for 20 years. The biggest function I ever did was for 4500 people, at the annual Big BBQ at Cranbourne Racecourse - I actually still do this event." Never content to put all of his eggs in one basket, William enjoyed a

simultaneous career at Melbourne Airport as part of the Aviation Security team, as a work place Trainer and Assessor. William has also been to East Timor as part of a training exercise for Qantas. He even worked for Ansett airlines as Chef in Charge at the Maintenance Post. Here he was awarded Cafeteria of the Year. "That was a real highlight," he adds.

William sights cooking for former Victorian Premier, John Cain as his most exciting experience as a chef. "I cooked a three course meal for him and he was very, happy sending his compliments to the kitchen." Perhaps it was the dessert that did it for Mr Cain - as William's speciality is patisserie. "I like to make a good black forest cake. I love eating cakes and I try to improve the flavour of classic recipes and add my personal touch."

"I need diversity in my work to keep me stimulated and motivated. Now my new challenge is training young cooks as Trainer, Manager and Work Place Assessor at HTA. HTA is a specialist training institute, providing a range of courses from two year diplomas to short courses. In 2008 over 8,500 participants trained at the school and now many are enjoying the new Fagor commercial kitchen.

"I am a big believer in training people on how to get the best out of their kitchen

equipment. The new Fagor Kitchen is so simple to use, we can teach anyone to use it - no matter how limited their understanding is of cooking equipment." "My main role is student inductions where I go in depth into the functions of the equipment and OH&S. I also deal with any maintenance issues that may crop up so I know how important it is to have well functioning equipment in the kitchen. It can make or break a kitchen," he says.

The Fagor Kitchen has been 16 months in the making, and in operation since January 2009. Now it is being enjoyed by students from all over the world. "We have a big take up of students from India, Malaysia, Thailand and Mauritius at the moment doing our Commercial Food Cookery course, which lasts for a year. We also have a number of government placed students through Centrelink who do our Commercial II Cookery course. There is a wide range of students so we need a diverse range of equipment in the kitchen to practice on."

www.hosprtrain.edu.au



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A message from our new Managing Director: **Andrew Sinclair**



A year of growth: Andrew Sinclair has been appointed Fagor Australia Managing Director.

Following five years as Victorian Sales Manager and 12 months as National Sales Manager, Andrew Sinclair has been promoted to the role of Fagor Australasia's Managing Director.

As you know, Jim Kyle ended his long and successful career with Fagor in October 2008. Jim was very well regarded within our organisation and throughout the entire industry and we owe much of our good reputation to Jim's efforts. We wish him all the very best in his future endeavours. After dedicating almost 25 years to the food industry, beginning as a chef, I now draw on my experience in retail

and wholesale sales across a number of industries, my strong customer service focus and extensive knowledge of the food service industry to serve you in this role. My appointment as Managing Director re-confirms that Fagor is 100% committed to the Australian, New Zealand and wider Pacific markets and we will soon introduce new incentives to strengthen our relationship with loyal dealers and customers. My aim for 2009 is to replicate in Australia the outstanding success Fagor has seen across the globe. We will concentrate heavily on improving our technical support and customer service centres and continue to build on our reputation for being customer focussed.

It is my goal to improve the brand recognition of Fagor in the marketplace through advertising and marketing initiatives. The result of this will be to significantly increase market share over the next 18 months through innovative products, outstanding service and product support. Best of all, Fagor will continue to be well priced. Fagor has always prided itself on working closely with chefs to design equipment that is friendly, functional, easy to clean and maintain and actually looks good in the kitchen. As a company we are constantly looking to grow and improve, therefore we actively listen to what our customers and dealers tell us. I would also like to thank all of our cus-

tomers for supporting Fagor thus far. I look forward to meeting you again over the coming months and welcome your feedback and thoughts.

Many thanks,
Andrew Sinclair
Managing Director

Upcoming Events

Fagor launches "One Brand 1 Solution" in Australia

We can supply all your primary equipment needs, if you're planning a new restaurant, talk to us about our one brand -1 solution offer - call 1800 **FAGOR1** for details

Sydney Fine Food Exhibition Sept 7th-10th 2009

Held in Darling Harbour Sydney, please come and visit us on stand number HG02 to experience fresh and exciting food demonstrations and our latest products.

NEW 600 series equipment - late 2009

Fagor continues to expand its range and we will soon have a 600 series (600 x 650mm) for your high output kitchen where space is a premium?

New Fagor refrigeration is high spec and well priced

Our first container of Fagor Hi-Spec refrigeration is about to arrive, if you're looking for the highest specification at a sensible price, we have it!!

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Ryldges Bell City Hotel



Ryldges Banquet Kitchen

- 2 x FG9-05 Fryers
- CG9-11 Target top oven
- SBG9-10I Bratt Pan

- HEP-20/21 40 tray combi oven
- Edesa CCB-20 Hot box
- HEM-20/21 40 tray Combi oven
- FI-200 Conveyor washer