



DREAM DESTINATION

Thalia Haven

GREAT OYSTER BAY, TASMANIA

The bath takes centre stage at this rental cottage on the east coast of Tasmania – and when you lie in it, on a deck looking out to sea, with a glass of local pinot noir and a book, you appreciate why. Run on solar and wind power, the place sleeps 10 but is comfortable for two. There are open fireplaces, a herb garden, a pantry stocked with Tassie produce, and two leather chairs positioned, like the bath, towards the view. *Kate Simmons*

EAT / DRINK

IT'S NOT often a chef does a pop-up in his own restaurant, but that's what Brent Savage is doing at Cirrus Dining. In collaboration with Visit Singapore, Savage has installed an entirely Singaporean-inspired menu: expect hor fun noodles with egg yolk, chilli crab with fried buns, and this special dish of steamed blue-eye trevalla with fermented wood ear mushroom and bak kwa (crisp-dried pork), devised with chef Wayne Liew of Singapore's Keng Eng Kee (\$40). Pop in before it pops off on April 12. *Jill Duplex*



CIRRUS DINING

10/23 BARANGAROO AVENUE, SYDNEY
CIRRUSDINING.COM.AU

FOREIGN CORRESPONDENCE

Home truths

BY *Amelia Lester*

AS I sit writing this in a Washington, DC café, something strange is happening at the table next to me: two people are having a conversation. Most of the time, when I come here, the only social interaction I have – beyond making my order – is with strangers asking me to mind their laptops when they go to the bathroom. Something about me must scream trustworthy, though in reality I have no intention of throwing myself between their ageing Macbook and a thief. Still, I nod and smile, and that's about as far as interacting with other humans goes on my one trip outside the house for the day.

Turns out a lot of other Millennials are also disinclined to engage. The term “cocooning” was coined in the early 1980s by futurist Faith Popcorn to describe the practice of staying at home to relax versus entering the public sphere. “Socialised cocooning” meant inviting friends over for fondue, or whatever people ate at dinner parties in 1981. But since we are now always on our phones, the term has evolved to mean communicating digitally with friends while remaining physically remote.

For young people and those who think of themselves as young but are actually hurtling towards middle age – hello fellow elder Millennials, gather 'round the Snapchat – “going out” is an increasingly rare event. Some sociologists point to 9/11 as the seminal event in the lives of those who grew up in the 1990s; a reckoning with reality on the cusp of adulthood that forever tinged public spaces with a hint of foreboding. Perhaps that's true of American youth, but there was another event that affected many members of this generation worldwide: graduating into the global financial crisis. With stability elusive, roommates were procured; some 22-year-olds moved back in with their parents, figuring it was the only way to

save money for a house. Throw in Facetime, YouTube, Netflix and a generational aversion to party drugs and alcohol, and it's little wonder we wound up preferring the couch to the club.

An intriguing knock-on development identified by the home-design blog *Curbed* is that architects are rethinking how to design living spaces. With less interest in entertaining, kitchens might become obsolete and dining room tables will disappear, while coffee tables in front of the TV will become the hub.

Cocooning also has implications for how Millennials spend their money. I've noticed an ambient increase in purveyors of luxury bedding and other lounging accoutrements. Plush robes and slippers have become status items for a generation that

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probably grew up thinking of them as synonymous with the elderly. *The Atlantic* reported recently that Le Creuset and other “investment” cooking items, which would have once been wedding or housewarming gifts, are now purchased by 20-somethings who know they'll likely never have the money to buy their own home but who want to make really good *coq au vin* regardless.

At the time of writing, US authorities are warning of the impending arrival of coronavirus. They say extended periods of lockdown at home will become inevitable as outbreaks close schools and workplaces. This comes after a summer when many Australians couldn't go outside for fear of smoke inhalation. Cocooning is a rational response to the news, but it's also nice to get out in society. Back to eavesdropping on that conversation next to me. ■