

and also...

BUON BURRATA

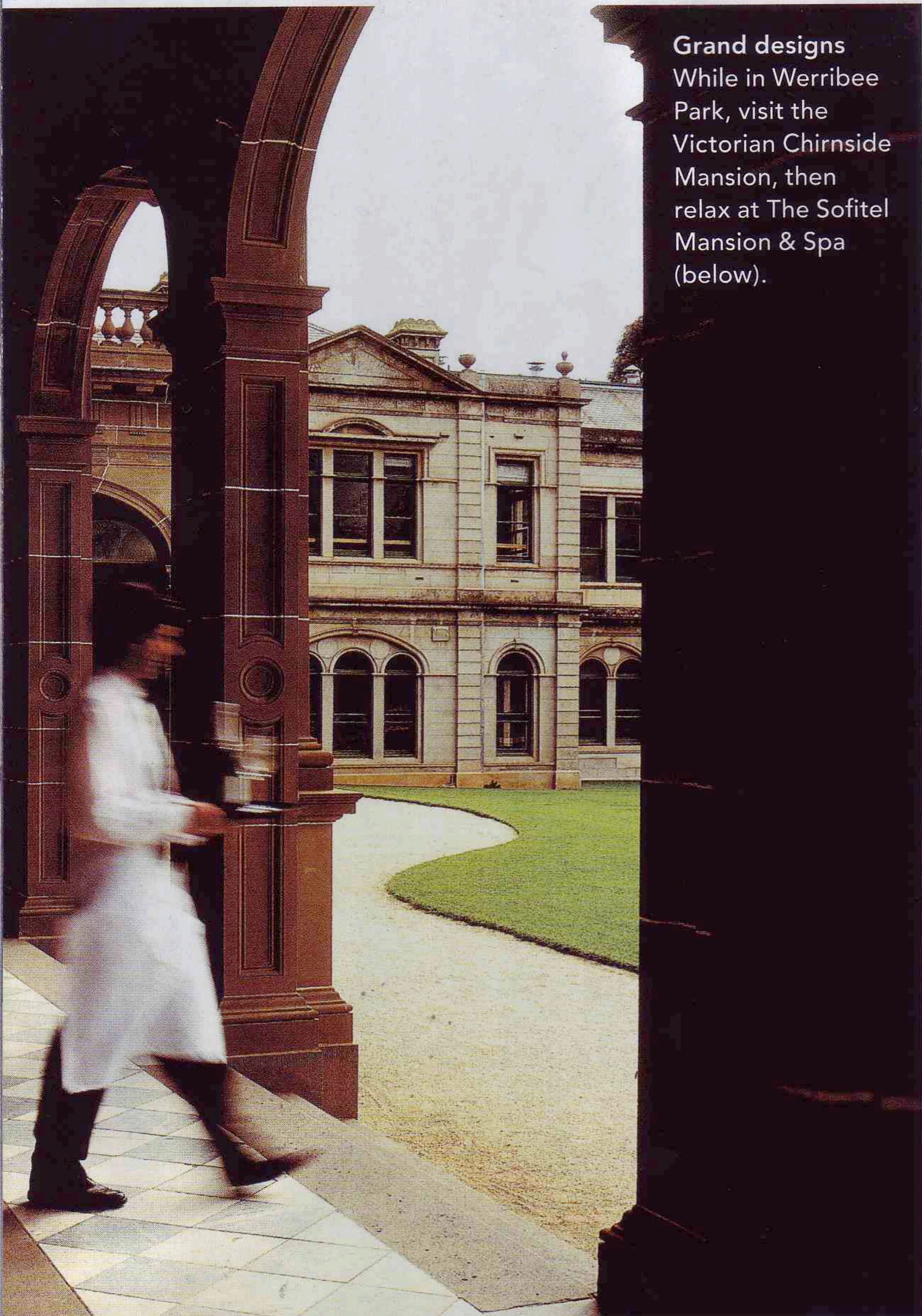
Race to Buon Ricordo for its new entrée featuring burrata, the lush, mozzarella-like fresh buffalo milk cheese. Armando Percuoco and new chef Darren Taylor pair it with a sugar-cured tomato and a slash of basil purée to make for a dazzling take on the insalata Caprese. The catch? The cheese is flown in only once a month.
108 Boundary St, Paddington, NSW, (02) 9360 6729.

RING DEM BELLS, STEFANO

And while we're talking about the big names of Sydney Italian food, it's great to see that Steve Manfredi has found a happy professional home cooking at Bells at Killcare, the pretty retreat 90 minutes north of the city. The tortellini in brodo is sublime, and pan-roasted, prawn-stuffed Hawkesbury calamari on polenta and tomato and parsley sauce is our kind of locavore eating.
107 The Scenic Rd, Killcare, NSW, (02) 4360 2411.

Bells at Killcare





Grand designs
While in Werribee Park, visit the Victorian Chirnside Mansion, then relax at The Sofitel Mansion & Spa (below).



Past perfect
For a slice of 19th-century living, stay at Lilianfels in the Blue Mountains.

Chirnside Mansion, a Victorian treasure, provides a bygone contrast to the sharply modern lines of the Sofitel Mansion & Spa.

From Sydney

North: Central Coast

The Central Coast is studded with getaway gems, but for a classic Aussie beach escape, head to the twin communities of Hardy's Bay and Killcare. Take a short ferry from Palm Beach or drive up the F3 and bed down in a waterfront holiday home (www.araluenocoastalproperties.com.au) or at adman John Singleton's five-star Killcare Bells, where Stefano Manfredi oversees the in-house menu (doubles from \$350 including breakfast, www.killcarebells.com.au). Coastal walks in Bouddi National Park, fish and chips beside the bay and a Sunday afternoon beer at the Hardy's Bay RSL round out the perfect weekend away. www.visitcentralcoast.com.au.

South: Royal National Park

The Royal National Park, Australia's oldest – and the world's second oldest – lies just south of the city and is home to Aboriginal rock art, bracing coastal hikes, isolated beaches such as Wattamolla and Garie, and the charming community of Bundeena. Rent a modern beachfront home here (such as House on the Rock, house is \$700 for two nights, www.ozstayz.com.au/8598) or take a room at the five-star Beachhaven (doubles from \$275

including breakfast, www.beachhavenbnb.com.au), then spend a peaceful weekend bushwalking, swimming and gazing out to sea. Local artists exhibit their work on the first Sunday of each month at The Art Trail (www.arttrail.com.au), or take a guided sea kayak tour – by day or night – of the local waterways (www.bundeenakayaks.com.au). www.nationalparks.nsw.gov.au.

West: Blue Mountains

Recharge in the World Heritage-listed surrounds of the Blue Mountains, where luxury accommodation and fine dining complement the primitive wilderness. The Orient Express-run Lilianfels (doubles from \$705, www.lilianfels.com.au) is the pick of the inns and a fine base from which to discover the region's Aboriginal heritage (www.bluemountainswalkabout.com), tramp the walking trails to Sublime Point (and Echo Point at sunset), or get a bird's eye-view of the bushland on Scenic World's cable car (www.scenicworld.com.au). Enjoy afternoon tea, a tradition here since Victorian times, at the Hydro Majestic Hotel Blue Mountains (www.hydomajestic.com.au) or Everglades heritage gardens (www.evergladesgardens.info). www.visitbluemountains.com.au.

