Challenges to flavour:
Influences on the cultural identity of cuisines in the Australian foodscape

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I dedicate this thesis to my late mother, Wilda Lambie, who always encouraged me and would have been thrilled to see my research journey fulfilled.
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Statement of authentication

The work presented in this thesis is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, original except as acknowledged in the text. I hereby declare that I have not submitted this material, either in full or in part, for a degree at this or any other institution.

Catherine Link
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Abstract

In Australia at the beginning of the 21st century, there is a diversity of cuisines to be explored, many of which are vital markers of culture and identity. An integral part of a cuisine's migration process is its acclimatisation into the Australian setting, where it seeks a balance between drawing on local ingredients sources and maintaining the characteristics of its identifiable cultural flavours.

In this thesis I explore how the integrity of a cuisine's flavour is both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia. The study is framed by a metaphorical Australian culinary framework—the foodscape—in order to address the social constructions of food and flavour at a particular time and place in the Australian environment. I observe how the impressions of three cuisines—Vietnamese, Italian and Australian—are managed from the perspectives of food media, cookbooks, restaurants and chefs in order to consider how cuisine is represented to their communities of taste whose collective interests includes a shared identity with food culture. In order to exert a dominant influence on the perception of cuisine, food news media uses restaurant reviews, interviews with notable food experts and articles suggestive of culinary expertise to enforce a particular view. Cookbooks are another source through which cultural flavours are perceived in the foodscape, reflecting the assimilation of migrant cuisines into the Australian foodscape through their narratives and recipe collections. Chefs and restaurants provide the reality of the cuisine experience, and manage the impressions of their cuisine by both the arrangement of their restaurant spaces and their cooking styles. All of these sources recognise the tensions that exist between preserving flavour integrity and adapting and developing in the Australian foodscape.

The study found that migrant cuisines undergo transformative stages of acceptance into the Australian foodscape, and are able to retain their individuality despite the cultural pressures they encounter. It suggests that chefs with a background of migrant cuisine maintain their culinary integrity by utilising flavour principles and techniques inherent in their cuisine, often enhanced with quality Australian produce. It further indicates that there has been a development of a unique contemporary Australian culinary style relying on a framework of traditional training overlaid by thoughtful application of flavours from migrant
cuisines. A final reflection deliberates on the development of a unique contemporary Australian culinary style.
Chapter 1: My journey in the foodscape

Culinary diversity is a hallmark of the Australian food environment, and many cuisines have connections to communities that have migrated to the country. One of the first ways a cuisine is revealed to the wider population is through restaurants. Such a perspective becomes the focus of the ensuing work, whereby this thesis examines this particular representation of cuisines in the Australian environment and studies the pressures that affect the flavour of migrant cuisines as well as their influence on the flavour of Australian cuisine. This investigation spans the timeframe from 2000 to 2009.

In Australia, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, abundant food supplies and a diversity of cooking styles mean that flavours from many cuisines can be explored. In most cases, migration cuisines have had to adapt to the Australian setting, and make use of local and imported ingredients to maintain their flavour characteristics. At the same time, there is cultural influence from the social environment that can affect the way a cuisine is evolves. On one hand, there is pressure for the originality of a cuisine’s flavour to be preserved by adhering to traditional ingredients and cooking style. On the other, a cuisine may be mingled with other cuisines to the extent that its distinct flavours are no longer recognisable.

Cuisine means different things to different people, and in order to address my research question, I first need to define its meaning in the context of this investigation. I have chosen a straightforward definition of cuisine as ‘a style of cooking’ in order to draw on generic understandings of cuisine and further discuss it in terms of cultural identity and originality. This conceptual definition enables me to draw on and question the concepts that define cultures and cuisines and their cultural identity and originality in essential terms, avoiding value judgements from a western perspective. Since restaurants often provide people with their first experience of an unfamiliar cuisine, my focus is on the style of cooking represented in the restaurant environment. So far many studies have focussed on other areas, including the home, but in this case I am approaching the topic from a hospitality perspective, and introducing the impact of both the media and the customer on the construction of cuisines. I investigate Vietnamese and Italian cuisines as samples of migrant cuisines that have had an impact on Australian restaurant cuisines. Migrant cuisines are generally defined as ethnic but
that in my view Australian cuisine can also be defined as an ethnic cuisine. However in this case I am differentiating it due to the multicultural influence of multiple migrant cuisines. In fact, Australian cuisine, along with many other cuisines in historical terms, is a multiethnic cuisine. All the restaurants in the study were situated in a variety of Sydney and NSW regional locations and listed in the *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH) *Good Food Guides* (GFG) of 2007 and 2008.

This thesis will incorporate elements of cultural studies into the field of hospitality, to lie alongside quantitative research in the area. In the thesis, my research objectives are to consider how food news media and cookbooks contribute towards the assimilation of cuisine flavours from migrant cuisines into the Australian foodscape, and how chefs, restaurants and customers influence the integrity of cuisine flavours in the Australian culinary environment. To fulfil the aim of this thesis, the research was designed around the following research question: ‘*How is the integrity of a cuisine both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’*  

The research question gives rise to its own set of sub-questions that are interpreted in later sections of the thesis:

1. In what ways do cultural perceptions of migrant cuisine define its identity in Australia?
2. How do Australian communities of taste expectations influence the ethnicity of flavour?
3. How do ethnic cuisines influence contemporary Australian cuisine?
4. How do chefs communicate the cultural identity of their cuisine?
5. What cooking processes and tools are crucial to retain the identity of a cuisine and why?
6. What role do restaurants play in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours?

To address these questions, I examine newspaper articles, cookbooks and restaurants in search of cultural messages embedded in the cuisines in terms of production of flavours. These messages are aimed at communities of taste that I identify as participants who engage with these culinary facets of the foodscape. By researching the representations of Vietnamese, Italian and Australian cuisines in these three different cultural settings, I
evaluate the focus of flavour in the interlinked contexts of culture, communication and cuisine in the commercial environment. These sub-questions guide the analysis of different components of the data collected research design. Together, they integrate with the research question, and are addressed by the aim of the research.

The study is framed by a metaphorical Australian culinary environment that I define as the foodscape. Although a more expansive account of the foodscape image will be delivered in Chapter 2, the following brief overview clarifies its importance to provide the underlying structure to the research.

Geography, climate and environment form the physical reality of food, but interconnected with this physical reality are cultural, social and economic practices performed by society in its food-related behaviours, called foodways. The term suggests a network of activities and systems pertaining to food, ingredients transformed from basic life-sustaining nutrients in a complicated, ever-changing food system. A food system is a complex unity made up of purposive, patterned and interdependent symbolic and instrumental activities carried out by people in their quest for food. To the extent that people share such activities, they share common foodways (LaBianca 1991). The expression ‘foodways’, which refers to informally transmitted traditional food and eating patterns in a society (Sobal 1999), takes into account the interlace of food activities, and thus imparts information about the cultural and social relationships between individuals and groups but it does not entirely focus on the landscape of food. By extending the notion of the food system as a way of contextualising the foodscape from a hospitality perspective, I was able to address the social constructions of food and flavour, as well as interpret levels of meaning at a particular time and place in the Australian environment.

The contemporary notion of ‘scapes’ that was developed by Appadurai (1990) can be extended to include foodscapes, and allows a context to be created for viewing the culinary environment. The term ‘foodscape’ is derivative of the landscape concept, which can be seen as a view of particular perspective of geographical space (Cosgrove and Daniels 1988; Appadurai 1990; Cosgrove 1985) focusing on the appearance, uses and perceptions of places that are part of the outdoor environment (Goodchild 2006). An observation of a food landscape or foodscape can be similarly justified as a point of view at a given time (Yasmeen 2006). From this position, a foodscape can be experienced as a perspective to a particular
setting, while at the same time contained within a particular area or boundary. This ‘scaping’ of food provides a framework for exploring the dynamics of cuisine, interconnecting history, memory and contemporary eating practices. In this thesis, the Australian foodscape is where perceptions are created about the cultural meanings of cuisine flavour, and where impressions and expressions about food are mediated by the communities of taste whose clustering of interests includes a shared identity of food culture. The foodscape is engaged with the combination of sensory perceptions and mental images stimulated by this culinary landscape and at the same time, the combination of the media, cookbooks and restaurants influence cultural attitudes towards flavour, which are the basis for the formation of communities of taste.

Figure 1.1 demonstrates how the boundary of the foodscape filters the influences of ethnicity, texts, restaurants and the community of taste to the interconnected themes of cuisine, communication and culture, which in turn act as a lens on the social construction of flavour.

**Figure 1.1: A model of cuisine, culture and communication**

While the foodscape metaphor can be used to focus on many aspects of human existence, in this thesis, it is exploited to concentrate on the public perception of ethnic food in Australia. By applying this structure, attention is drawn to the interwoven physical and
cultural aspects of flavour, and how it can be manipulated to communicate underlying assumptions about cuisine in society. By drawing on analysis of texts, ethnographic observation of restaurant settings and interviews with chefs, cultural attitudes to flavour are investigated. These three sources are studied from the perspective that production and consumption of cuisines can be considered a communication medium, between restaurant chef and diner, between cookbook and practitioner, and between newspaper and reader.

In selecting from the myriad of cuisines found in Australia, I restricted the samples to three cultures. Vietnamese cooking represents Asian food, Italian cooking symbolises European heritage, and contemporary Australian food characterises the way in which influences from both continents have been absorbed into the foodscape.

Both Vietnamese and Italian cultures have a significant population or diaspora in Australia, and their establishment in Australian society is now multi-generational. By establishing their respective foodways, both have had a palpable influence on the Australian foodscape and together have made significant contributions to the development of contemporary Australian cuisine. The culinary background of Australian food including the cultural effects of migration and their influence on food could consequently be identified as essential markers in the cultural landscape, illuminating the interconnection between cultural foodways and adaptation in the commercial environment of restaurant cuisines that influence the dynamics of the Australian foodscape.

In order to fulfil the aim of the thesis, these two cuisines are firstly investigated from the perspective of Fairclough’s (1995) Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), which is used to decode the messages in the texts that are sent and received about the flavours of the selected cuisines and help to identify the cuisine’s position in the foodscape.

Data samples were gathered from the Good Living (GL) weekly supplement, published by the SMH between 2000 and 2009. To limit the scope of the study, I chose GL because it has been in continuous publication for more than 25 years, acknowledging that there are many media data sources such as other food magazines, television shows and internet. However, few have the longevity and reliability of GL. Data collection was limited to articles published in the newsprint section, and did not include content from an online blog site GL started in 2005, as it did not correspond with the timeframe.
Secondly, the chosen cuisines are examined from the perspective of text analysis of specific cookbooks on Vietnamese and Italian cuisine written by authors from the respective cultural backgrounds primarily for an Australian audience. Cookbooks not only give instruction on ingredients and techniques, but also inspire cuisine messages that can be interpreted in the way the themes are managed by the writer. By choosing books that were published in the timeframe, the connections of cuisine, communication and culture could be linked to the analysis of data from GL.

In the third phase of the analysis, Vietnamese and Italian restaurants are examined through the lens of Irving Goffman’s (1959) frontstage/backstage theories, which are adapted for ethnographic observations of the restaurant dining rooms and kitchens in an investigation of their management and production of the process of cuisine identity.

Finally, the thesis studies the representations of Australian cuisine by GL and cookbooks, culminating in the analysis of interviews of chefs from the three cuisines exploring how they manage the processes and production of cuisine identity in the context of the Australian foodscape.

By connecting these interviews to the themes that emerged from GL and cookbook analyses, there emerged a comprehensive coverage of cuisine contexts that allows me to uncover deeper patterns of cultural communication that are transmitted by the flavours of the three ethnic cuisines. All of the sources investigated were treated as interconnected spheres of influence in the perception of cuisine flavours in the Australian culinary environment, contributing towards the assimilation of migrant cuisines into the Australian foodways.

The fluidity of the foodscape concept as the frame for the analysis enabled the various data sources to be scaffolded using the diverse methods of text analysis and thus avoiding the constraints of a rigid, predetermined structure. Text analysis of the data from GL and cookbooks, for example, requires methodologically different treatment to interviews with chefs and restaurant ethnography. This diversity of techniques allows analysis to occur naturally, intensifying each segment of the research to produce richer interpretations in the journey towards the focal point: flavour.

In the following section, I explain my personal place in relation to the theme of the thesis. I give details of my research journey, discuss why I set out to explore the public
representation of ethnic cuisines and how they are communicated in the Australian environment, and explain to which my research questions and aims are specifically addressed. The thesis is shaped by my personal place in my own cultural context. It features my involvement in the foodscape over several periods of my life—my travels, my work history and my academic career—all of which converge to become intimately connected with the topic of this thesis.

**My foodscape journey**

Today, I am an unashamed food adventurer, after being first confined by the bland food experience of my white-bread Australian upbringing, and then liberated by my food experiences in South East Asia in the 1970s. My travels began in my late teens, before opportunities for mass travel were developed and before Australia’s borders opened to the first wave of immigrants from the region. My food exploration progressed in a series of stages rather than a wholehearted plunge into the unfamiliar.

In fact, feeding myself was not always easy. Mostly, I had little choice but to eat what the locals ate, such as a breakfast soup made entirely from undisguised duck innards, feet and head that I knew would be rude to refuse. Confronting food hygiene standards had to be ignored. But there were glorious flavours to be committed to memory from culinary discoveries made in the night markets that made up for awkward moments. Besides, the only poor imitations of western food were available at a few international hotels scattered around the region, and in nascent tourist enclaves in Bali and Thailand.

I travelled to Asia annually, and upon my return to Australia after each escapade, I attempted to replicate some of the dishes I had experienced. There was little to buy in the way of Asian ingredients and few recipes to follow. Only Chinese food represented Asian cuisine, moulded to bland Australian tastes.

To pay for my travels, I worked in restaurants of all descriptions, first in front of house, but increasingly preferring the kitchen. The construction of flavour was what really interested me, rather than selling a finished product, and I was constantly learning the processes and techniques involved in creating dishes. Once again, not every food experience was positive, and I have my fair share of stories from those restaurant days involving the
darker side of the culinary world. However, it seemed I absorbed cooking strategies from every kitchen in which I worked. The combination of my travel adventures, cooking expertise and a knack for innovation led me to the rarefied world of the private chef, where I settled for many years.

I was a boardroom chef in the world of stockbrokers, a firm of private wealth business specialists with an advanced knowledge of the workings of the powerful money market. Mine was a full-time, full-on position where I cooked corporate lunches for as many as 100 people, with a generous budget ensuring there were no constraints on quality. I practiced and developed my cooking talents, because each day was never straightforward. There were special dietary requirements and personal likes and dislikes to account for on almost every occasion. The complexity of constantly creating a harmonious combination of flavours to balance every dish stimulated my mental capacity and I considered my culinary expertise as a communication medium, because although I provided food that was good to eat, much more was happening on other levels.

A private dining room in an office building in the city was a symbol of high status in the business world, and at the time, only a few other banks and large law firms had such a rarity. Even fewer employed full-time kitchen staff. The firm boasted a series of dining rooms, which further elevated its reputation in the world of high commerce. Only senior partners had the company’s imprimatur to invite guests to the dining room, exhibiting their prestige and social standing to others in the workplace. The company was able to boast that its business was of such consequence that it should be conducted away from the restaurant environment with its prying eyes and ears, in their own territory where they had control over noise levels, food discretion, and the rhythm of service. The guests no doubt considered their invitation to lunch a reinforcement of their importance in the corporate world. Their personal and cultural values were both validated by this lunchtime ritual. In Bourdieu's (1984) terms, I embodied my cultural capital, both consciously and unconsciously, as I shared in the glamour as I enjoyed the status of chef to the rich and famous of the corporate world, and I had an unlimited budget, which gave me access to the purveyors of rare and costly food and wines. I also escaped the unsociable hours that plague most restaurant workers and I was highly paid.
Due to the daily variation of the menu that was constantly expected, I was always searching for new recipes and I became adept at reading and translating them into reality. Recipes became more than a list of instructions. I could transmit each ingredient and cooking process to what I call my palate memory, which Santich (1987 p 183) calls a kind of 'memory bank' and retrieval system, making a split-second judgement on whether the recipe would 'work' or not, and how all the flavour ingredients would intermingle and balance. For me, each recipe is like a splash of integrated colours, textures, odours and tastes as I evaluate the flavour structure of a dish. When faced with the more complex task of creating a meal structure, I can confidently balance the flavours in all the dishes to create a harmonious composition. When Asian ingredients eventually found their way to the market, I began to develop an interest in cuisine mobility by incorporating Asian cuisine into the essentially conservative, western-style preferences of the boardroom.

The next stage in my cooking career was to master the entirely different process of restaurant cooking. I became familiar with the restaurateurs commercial responsibility—the accounting, the marketing, and the customer base. Although the stint was short-lived, understanding the balance between front and back of house gave me an insight into how the business reality of restaurants interplays with maintaining the integrity of food in the hospitality context. The long, hard hours of restaurant ownership eventually took its toll on my family life, so I switched my focus to a more academic approach to food.

An undergraduate degree in Food and Nutrition led to the completion of an Honours degree, researching human perception of the five basic tastes (sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami). The research design of this study necessitated a quantitative positivist framework, where human reactions to taste mixtures were statistically analysed to see how many tastes a participant could recognise (Link 2000). While the results of study were interesting, I privately questioned whether every participant had the same perception of the experiment, and whether their individual construction of what they were being asked to do affected the outcome of the experiment.

Drawing on my extensive experience in the hospitality industry, I moved into teaching hospitality at university level. When the chance for further research presented itself, I drew on my Honours degree for inspiration, realising I had the freedom to explore the construction of flavour using an alternative perspective. Instead of capturing statistical
impulses in a laboratory, I could investigate flavour from the point of view of people who think about it, find out what it means to them, and consider how they communicate with it.

This research journey was motivated when a colleague showed me a model developed by chef and gastronomic innovator Ferran Adrià from el Bulli restaurant in Spain (see Appendix 1). It appealed to me because it visually synthesises the connections between chef, server and diner, and reinforces the concept that cooking is a language through which creativity and culture can be expressed. The model sketches the complexity of thought processes and skills that are intrinsic in each step in the chain of communication, and influenced my development of my research question and my concept of the foodscape. I decided to develop my own model of communication as I saw it in the foodscape, which I will return to in the final chapter.

The research journey

In my research journey, I have deliberately used the first person voice, that is, ‘I’ or ‘me’, as it enables me to construct a dialogue that focuses the reader on the interpretive character of the research (see Atkinson et al, 1991, Corbin & Strauss 2008). I have tried to make my personal beliefs, values and influences transparent in order to allow readers to understand my perspective and my deep interest in the concepts surrounding cuisine flavour. While this direction is not novel, especially in the field of cultural research, it is still uncommon in the area of hospitality business research, which is the locus of the PhD. The insights that guide the research draw on my career experiences as a cook and chef, and are invaluable when interpreting the data. The advantage of this standpoint is that I am able to interpret and categorise the wide range of research resources investigated here without being actively involved in their production.

This has been described as a peripheral membership role (Adler & Adler, 1987). Researchers can operate on one of three levels of involvement in group membership processes—as peripheral, active or complete members. Active members of a group spend the most time in the research setting, becoming involved in central activities, assuming responsibilities and interacting on a social level with members of the group they are studying, although not fully committing themselves to being essential to the running of the enterprise. To assume this role, I would have had to work in a restaurant to collect my data. Complete
members of a group are fully committed, and in this scenario, I would have had to own or run
a restaurant in order to collect the relevant data. Conversely, peripheral membership is
marginal and least committed in the practice and characterised by a lack of intensity and an
ability to retain self-identity.

Neither active nor complete membership of these groups was suitable for the study,
firstly from a practical viewpoint, but more importantly, my peripheral role meant that I was
uniquely placed to observe the patterns of multiple restaurants. As I have both worked in and
owned restaurants in the past, I was able to view the group I was studying with an insider’s
perspective without having to commit to the study settings. The advantage of this approach
was that I could make use of shared knowledge of cooking practices to enter into a dialogue
with the chefs being studied. Due to my prior restaurant experience, I was able to establish a
mutual understanding of each restaurant’s context with an active appreciation of its operation.
As the analysis proceeded, there were opportunities to reinforce my findings owing to this
privileged status.

My role of peripheral researcher was extended to decoding the GL newspaper articles
and the cookbooks used in the study. Since its inception, the GL supplement has tracked an
increasing maturity in the Australian food scene, monitoring the acceptance of the many
cuisines that have made their mark on the foodscape. As a member of its ‘community of
taste’ over an extended time, I acted on its recommendations and became familiar with its
journalistic output and its sphere of influence. My ability to read cookbook recipes and
predictably capture the tastes communicated was also used in data collection and analysis for
this thesis. This research journey therefore has given me to opportunity to approach the
themes generated by the research question systematically, address them using principles of
theoretical and empirical research, construct an appropriate research methodology, and
formulate the methods and techniques needed to produce a work of reliability and validity.

My previous field of research, sensory evaluation science, is an area in which
scientific quantitative studies are used extensively (Laing et al. 2001). However, the research
design of the present study has re-focused from the quantitative course of my previous studies
to a qualitative focus using social constructionist assumptions. To fulfil the aim of the study
and answer the research question, I employed a case study approach.
Vietnamese and Italian cuisines were selected as samples of migrant cuisines that have influenced the Australian culinary environment. To begin I address the definitions of authenticity, cuisine and flavour as my interpretations of these notions directs the focus of the thesis.

There is much misuse and distortion around the term 'authenticity' in the culinary context, so much so that it is almost impossible to refer to the term without immediate criticism. It seems we all have an opinion of what authenticity is, but its meaning is difficult to articulate or pin it down to one definition because of the subjectivity needed to make the experience real. Appadurai (1986) indicates the multiple conflicts that can arise when trying to isolate a precise definition:

'Authenticity measures the degree to which something is more or less what it ought to be. It is thus a norm of some sort. But is it an immanent norm, emerging somehow from the cuisine itself? Or is it an external norm, reflecting some imposed gastronomic standard? If it is an immanent norm, who is its authoritative voice? the professional cook? the average consumer? the gourmand? the housewife? If it is an imposed norm, who is its privileged voice? the connoisseur of exotic food? the tourist? the ordinary participant in a neighbouring cuisine? the cultivated eater from a distant one? (Appadurai, 1986, pp25).

In this thesis I agree that all the voices that Appadurai(1986) mentions are equally authoritative when it comes to authenticity. However, it needs to be stressed that these and other notions of gastronomic authenticity are concerned with how cultural identity is determined through cuisine, describing a function of distinctiveness that serves as one of the markers of social difference.

In accordance with Weiss (2011), I suggest that authenticity is a dynamic notion, and an authentic dish is not fixed in time, space and form. The question arises of not what is authentic, but how it is authentic, which is the way the term is featured in this study.

As this research focuses on the reproduction of migrant food traditions, particularly in restaurants but also on cookbooks and the media in restaurants in the Australian foodscape, the question of authenticity is naturally raised. Tan (2011 p 11)
suggests that 'the discourse of authenticity with regards to food assumes that food has an essentialised style and taste'. People generally do expect to find certain features associated with such food, especially migrants moving to a new location. As well, tourist and others seeking inter-cultural opportunities through culinary experiences expect the cuisine to replicate authentic national cultural characteristics (Tsai & Luy 2011). Therefore, the main issue is whether the food is cooked according to the style and taste available in the original place of production.

The areas of the thesis that focus on authenticity—newspaper reviews, cookbooks, and chefs—all express their own interpretations of culinary authenticity. Of these, perhaps the chefs are the most influential, because they are in a position to change the foodscape by cooking what they know and like (Pang 2013).

However, for the sake of clarity, a working definition needs to be communicated so the reader understands the context to which it applies. In this thesis, gastronomic authenticity, or 'authenticity' is used to describe the differences between the cuisines studied in terms of their accepted relationship to whether the food is cooked according to the style and taste available in the original place of production, and recognised as such by people who have an intimate understanding of the culture and the cuisine.

In the context of this thesis, the definition of cuisine is composed of the meanings have been constructed in the Australian foodscape by the community of taste. These are composed of the GL section of the SMH, and the flavour-makers—writers of cookbooks, and chefs who contribute their expertise to the understanding of what it means to eat food that has been prepared in the original place of production. I extend it from the definition of 'authentic', with which it is inextricably bound.

In this study, the definition of Italian cuisine follows the aspirations of Council of Italian Restaurants in Australia (CIRA), a not-for-profit organisation formed in 2004 that aims to promote the values of Italian food and perpetuate 'authentic' Italian cuisine in Australia. Two of their core aims are to safeguard Italian culinary cultures while recognising traditional and evolving values in Italian food. This means recognition of both tradition (defined as a belief or custom handed down from ancient ancestors to posterity, either orally or by practice) and evolution (development, origination of species by adaptation to local
circumstances) as legitimate ways that Italian food can be interpreted. The council acknowledges that there are boundaries beyond which food is no longer Italian but Italian styled, and seek to explore this phenomenon as well (www.cira.com). In other words, their concern is that Italian food is cooked according to the style and taste available in the original place of production, but at the same time recognising the dynamics of culinary evolution.

It is more difficult to find 'official' definitions of Vietnamese cuisine, perhaps because it has not been established in Australian long enough to realise the necessity for a similar council to CIRA. However, the definition put forward by CIRA is equally applicable to any other cuisine, and so the same framework can be used to define Vietnamese cuisine.

Vietnamese cuisine is diversified, and divided into three main styles according to the three main regions of the country (north, central and south) (Avieli 2011). By applying the CIRA framework, one can recognise the cuisine by the same values: safeguarding the culinary cultures of these regions by cooking according to the style and taste of Vietnam, and recognising both traditional and evolving values in the food.

The issue of defining Australian cuisine is always a murky one, and not one that fits into the framework of the aforementioned migrant cuisines. Apart from the limited availability of indigenous ingredients, there is no recognised terroir or geographical home of such a cuisine (Symons 2007). Yet in my conversations with the Australian chefs, it was apparent that a similarity of cooking characteristics existed between them. Following the notion that authenticity and cuisine are closely intermingled and that authenticity of a cuisine is typically not the concern of the native participant in a culinary tradition one could imply that the Australian chefs feel they are insiders, not outsiders. If this is the case, then it follows that there is no set of criteria of genuineness when exploring Australian cuisine (Appadurai 1986), no matter how much we wish for it, because it is invisible. In Chapter 7 of the thesis I illustrate how Australian chefs tried to explain not only the ingredients and techniques of their cooking but that they felt that the key was to cook with 'feel and flavour' and thus dictate what is authentic, and to them, Australian cuisine.

‘Cuisine’ is also a useful term when used to compartmentalise the cooking styles of any culture. It differentiates Asian from European food, focuses on a country’s style of
cooking, and can narrow attention to a small region within its broad category. An example would be to broad-brush the food of the South East Asian continent, concentrate on the cuisine of one country such as Vietnam, and then differentiate a regional style of cooking. One could even go further to encapsulate the food that is found in a small area or village and nowhere else.

According to Pennington’s (1996 p 156) definition, cuisine is 'the culinary/cultural identity of foods', referring to cuisine in a broad sense by describing it as food selection and patterns common to cultural groups. This simple definition is challenged by Mintz (1996 p 94), who categorises cuisines as national cuisine, regional cuisine, haute cuisine and engages the possibility that there are some societies in which a cuisine is absent. According to Mintz (1996), cuisine is regional rather than national, but I suggest this bypasses attention to a tension that exists in restaurants, which usually try to represent the cultural identity of a nation rather than a regional style even if that which is regarded as national is from one of the regional cuisines. For example, both Vietnamese and Italian restaurants usually focus on dishes that are recognised as national rather than regional. Indeed, Appadurai (1988) observes that regional Indian cuisine has shifted from being expressed as an exclusively local culinary style towards becoming identified as a national representation, and that popular foods from all over the sub-continent are no longer confined to their particular area.

Although restaurants can be equally successful presenting a national cuisine (Italian, Vietnamese) as a regional one (the Italian region of Emilia Romagna, the Vietnamese region of Huế), the regional boundaries are fuzzy at best, and constantly shifting. For example, Italy is regarded as a country of diverse regional food customs, but even these have been homogenised into 'Northern Italian' or 'Southern Italian' and even 'Central Italian' and are not classified by region (Rozin 1992). Therefore for the purpose of this study, ‘cuisine’ relates to the style of cooking from a particular country of origin rather than a more detailed subdivision, although regional references are included when essential to the argument. This phenomenon will be addressed further in Chapter 2.

Regardless of authenticity and cuisine style, it is the sensory attributes of food that lead humans to decide whether to eat or not, presuming there is a choice of food and starvation is not an issue. Food selection and eating are one of the few activities where all five senses interact—where visual and aural perception combine with the physical sensations
of touch, smell and taste. Although this is not the focus of the research, it is a significant topic that cannot be ignored and is recognised as an area for further study. Once sight and odour appraisal have sanctioned edibility, the first mouthful combines taste and aroma and leads to what I argue is the most important perception of all: flavour. Flavour is defined as a 'distinctive taste of a food or drink' (Oxford Dictionary 2013), in other words, it is a taste perceived in food or liquid in the mouth or a substance added to food to impart a specific taste. But the resonances of flavour must be interpreted more deeply than a dictionary definition. Barthes (2013) regards food as a system of communication, implying that this system can be broken down into its constituent units and the differences graded by significance and in that sense flavour components are contributing to the 'spirit' of a food. This interpretation can be applied to differentiating between cultural affiliations of culinary flavour. Everyone has their own sensory memories of the flavours of childhood intermingled with flavours of the present, and which allow for comparison or judgement (Sutton 2013). Therefore, a chef from a Vietnamese Italian or Australian cultural background is able to bring the 'spirit' of the cuisine, as well as creating innovation when learning new flavours as part of their life course.

The interpretation of this 'spirit' by the diner signifies that flavour preferences are culturally based and dependent on the context in which they are experienced (Rozin & Fallon 1986), and cultural differences are evident, most probably as a function of the different culinary experiences of different cultures (Prescott & Bell 1995). Although other attributes make food good to eat, flavour is a powerful feature because it is capable of conveying symbolic cultural messages about a cuisine and signalling meaningful social cues in specific social situations. Santich (1996 p12-14) connects taste (flavour) and culture by elaborating on traditional food preferences that are inextricably entwined with cultural regions in France, and comments on the evolution of taste (flavour), whether individual or public, over time. This suggests that food preferences change with shifts in societies' values, structures and beliefs. In other words, along with notions of authenticity and cuisine, flavour is dynamic and changes over time space and form. In this thesis, therefore, flavour communication is considered from the perspective of the cultural background of the cuisine, and how it is communicated to the diner via the media, cookbooks, chefs and restaurants. The GL writers are not flavour-makers themselves, but are instrumental in constructing the perception of how flavours are identified as related with the cultural identity and quality of the cuisines.
Conversely, the cookbook writers and the chefs can be regarded as flavour-makers, because cookbooks instruct how to replicate the flavours of a cuisine, and the chefs actually create the flavours by which a cuisine can be identified, whether Vietnamese, Italian or Australian.

The cultural adaptively of Vietnamese and Italian cuisines is shown by the successful transfer of their foodways from the home country to Australia. Geographically, Australia as a country has been a favourable place for relocating agricultural foodstuffs, as tropical to temperate climatic variation ensures that many crops can be established. Although some food products are subject to import regulations, many dried, canned, frozen or otherwise preserved ingredients are imported as flexible substitutions for fresh ingredients. Often, these replacements are successfully integrated into either cuisine in Australia as an acceptable alternative. Such products then become a valid selection in the range of Vietnamese or Italian cooking ingredients, and are included in newspaper articles about the food, incorporated in cookbooks and integrated into restaurant cuisine.

Australian contemporary cuisine is influenced by the way chefs select, juxtapose and seamlessly amalgamate these imported substitutes into their repertoire, reflecting an ability to fuse substitute ingredients with locally available produce. The resultant flavours can either retain the integrity of a cuisine, or alter the balance to transform their culinary combination into a less identifiable blend.

**Overview of the chapters**

The following chapters outline the organisation of the thesis structure, beginning with an overview of the theory of the project, followed by an explanation and justification of the methodology. A wide-ranging analysis of newspaper articles, cookbooks and restaurants shows how the Australian foodscape has been influenced by the cultural perception of the construction of ethnic cuisines. The thesis concludes with a summary of the research findings, limitations and implications for further study.

**Chapter 2: ‘Sensing the Australian foodscape’** gives an overview of the theoretical framework of the project. Here, I develop the two main themes that I draw on to approach the research questions and aims. First, I expand my development of the foodscape metaphor, and explain how it became the framework of the thesis, referring to the literature that supports my
use of the concept. Secondly, I show how I adapt the frontstage/backstage theories from work of Goffman (1959), to explain how the impression of culinary flavour is managed by the media, by cookbooks and by restaurants in the frontstage, and how flavour is created in the backstage by chefs in their kitchens.

**Chapter 3: ‘Making sense of foodscape complexity’** elaborates the methodology and research design that I employed to address the research questions. My research methods are explained and justified, and the theoretical and interpretative paradigms used are clarified. I explain my research design incorporating text, ethnographic observation and interview analysis and how the integration of these three methods responds to my research question. The methodology for this study can then be positioned within the foodscape framework. The semiotic analysis of newspaper articles and cookbooks and the ethnographic approach to the observations and interviews all support the case study approach to each cuisine. This is followed by the four analytical sections of the thesis, in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7.

**Chapter 4: ‘The construction of the foodscape by Good Living’** focuses on the dynamics of GL’s representation of cuisines in the foodscape. In the textual analysis of a sample of articles about Vietnamese and Italian cuisine appearing between 2000 and 2009, I use procedures taken from social semiotic analysis—Fairclough’s (1995) CDA—to link Australia’s foodscape to cultural meanings of flavour and its expression by influential Australian print media. This chapter focuses on the construction of the foodscape by GL, in particular how Vietnamese and Italian cuisine is portrayed to communities of taste.

**Chapter 5: ‘Representing ethnicity in the cookbooks’** employs textual analysis of six cookbooks from these two cuisines, written and printed over the same period as the GL articles. Cookbooks are another way that cuisine representation can be reflected and may further acquaint communities of taste with an unfamiliar cuisine. This chapter principally examines how the cultural identity of these two cuisines is represented by both the writers of the books and the recipes therein, and traces the adaptation process of the cooking requirements to the Australian environment.

**In Chapter 6: ‘The restaurant experience’**, Vietnamese, Italian and Australian restaurants are observed through Goffman’s (1959) paradigm of outside, front region and the backs region. Firstly, the exterior of each restaurant is observed for clues that identify and communicate about the cuisine. Secondly, the setting of the dining room is examined for
signs and symbols that mark the cuisine for the diner. The third component is the ‘backstage’ of cuisine and flavour production—the realm of the kitchen—where the processes of flavour creation are performed by the chefs and their brigades. These three areas are drawn together to present an overall impression of how the restaurants manage the impressions of the cuisine to potential customers.

The three previous chapters are linked to the interviews with Vietnamese, Italian and Australian chefs in Chapter 7: ‘Communicating flavour’, in which the spheres of influence of these two migrant cuisines on Australian food and the Australian foodscape are examined and expanded by additional ethnography of the three Australian restaurants in the study. In the beginning of the chapter, I review articles written by GL food writers about their interpretations of Australian cuisine, including indigenous ingredients. I next interrogate three Australian cookbooks to establish their interpretation of Australian cuisine. Finally, I connect the analyses from the previous three chapters and link Vietnamese Italian and Australian cuisine flavours drawing on interviews with restaurant chefs from the three represented cuisines in order to analyse their management of the flavour production process.

Finally, Chapter 8: ‘Discussion and conclusion’ summarises the research findings, draws conclusions from those findings, and indicates some of the implications of the findings. Culture, communication and cuisine are connected to construct a foodscape of Australia in twenty-first century with flavour at its core. Limitations of the study and suggestions for further research in this field are also considered.
Chapter 2: Sensing the Australian foodscape

In the first part of following chapter, I present my theoretical framework around the metaphor of foodscape which I developed from concepts of landscape and incorporating the other senses. Using this framework, I then consider the concept of the interaction of cuisines in respect of their migration into the Australian food environment using Vietnamese and Italian to illustrate my theoretical argument. I selected to study the impact of this migration process on the foodscape by looking at restaurants, considering these are often the first places that people encounter an unfamiliar cuisine, and in addition an effect on and are affected by public perceptions. Within this discussion, I advance my perceptions of ethnicity, authenticity and cuisine, and how I will conceptualise these three concepts in my study in terms of the Australian foodscape. I also reflect on the notion of ‘communities of taste’, which includes participants who engage in the culinary environment and whom I position between the cultural sense of cuisines on one hand, and commercial interests on the other (Cook et al 1999, Miele and Murdoch 2002).

My adaptation of Ferran Adria’s (2005) map, (Figure 2.1) allowed me to model impression management in the foodscape. Adria originally developed the map to explain his philosophy of the communication processes that take place between cook, server and customer in a restaurant situation.
Figure 2.1 Adaptation of Ferran Adria’s map, incorporating impression management

The extension of this model is useful to evaluate a cuisine in a specific setting because it reflects the complexity of the foodscape. It stylizes how culinary integrity is communicated to the community of taste by filtering the impressions given off by food media, cookbooks, chefs, and restaurants, and forms the basis for how impressions of culinary flavours can be viewed through the lens of Goffman’s (1959) theatrical analysis.

The second part of this chapter proposes how impressions of culinary flavours are managed in the foodscape. Drawing on Goffman’s (1959) dramaturgical analysis, I situate my research on how cultural representations of flavours and the ethnicity of the cuisines are managed in the foodscape by newspaper media, cookbooks and restaurant owners and chefs. Applying the framework of Goffman’s premise of frontstage/backstage to restaurants, the restaurant façade and restaurant dining room is the frontstage where the cuisine is presented to the public, while the notion of backstage applies to the kitchen, where the flavours and images of the cuisine are forged. Newspaper media and cookbooks are another method that
shape opinions about flavour and I consider how they are in themselves an extension of the backstage/frontstage performance.

As mentioned earlier, the foodscape forms the fundamental framework of the thesis in order to answer the research question: ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’ My foodscape metaphor has been developed from the concept of the landscape image, for it is from the landscape that all other ‘-scape’ words originated. In the following section, I give a brief summary of the development of ‘-scape’ words, followed by an overview of the essentials of landscape theory. I then explain how other ‘scapes’ have been constructed from the landscape metaphor. Finally, I briefly refer to the fundamentals of two other ‘-scapes’: soundscape and smellscapes. Landscapes, soundscapes and smellscapes all share qualities with my definition of foodscape, where all five human senses, touch, vision, hearing, smell and taste integrate to form perceptions of flavour. The scope of the study, however, was limited by the complexity of this mix, relying primarily on sight, with secondary references to the other senses.

**Multisensory interpretations of the landscape**

The word ‘landscape’ was borrowed from the Dutch painting term ‘landschap’, suggesting the aesthetic appeal of the countryside. ‘Landscape’ was blended into analogous English terms such as ‘cityscape’, ‘seascape’, ‘roadscape’ and the independent word ‘scape’. ‘-Scape’ has become what is known as a productive suffix, that is, it has been detached from words like landscape, and used to form still more words, such as ‘moonlandscape’ and ‘dreamlandscape’, contracted to ‘moonscape’ and ‘dreamscape’ (Aldrich 1966). The suffix ‘-scape’ is particularly popular, because it can be tagged to many nouns to form a useful abstraction combining the elements of place and space. Its use has spread to all sorts of industries, such as computer games (‘runescape’) health (‘medscape’), media (‘magazinescape’). Appadurai (1990) also used ‘-scape’ words to draw attention to the contemporary dimensions of globalisation. His isolation of five ‘scapes’ as core global concepts—‘ethnoscape’, ‘mediascape’, ‘technoscape’, ‘financescape’ and ‘ideoscape’—are the primary forces shaping his view of a globalised world. Foodscape is not among these, but
it might be, as a foodscape can be regarded as a global force just as influential as any of Appadurai’s ‘-scapes’.

The landscape concept has long been used as a means to measure and record past human activities and physical environments, but it sometimes has a rather static definition with focus only on what is perceived with the eye—or the mind’s eye. A typical landscape definition is:

A concept, a real or imaginary environment, image or view in which the land, and natural and semi-natural elements are prominent, dominant, or the only ones. Landscapes may, and often do, include humans and man-made components as well (Goodchild 2006 p. 1).

Most landscape literature relies on the primacy of sight, as visual aesthetics dominate in distinguishing shape and colour in the environment. According to Porteous (1985), up to 90 per cent of human perceptual intake is visual, exerting superiority over the other auditory and tactile senses. A landscape can be interpreted in several ways—to gain knowledge of past civilizations and geographic events, for instance. Some researchers have likened landscape analysis to ‘reading a written document’ (Cosgrove & Daniels 1988; Duncan & Ley 1993), which presents the landscape as:

A variety of materials and on many surfaces - in paint on canvas, in writing on paper, in earth, stone, water and vegetation on the ground. A landscape park is more palpable, but not more real, no less imaginary, than a landscape painting or poem (Cosgrove & Daniels 1988 p. 1).

This draws attention to an increasing complexity of understanding, but even though a landscape can be interpreted through the various media mentioned above, it is nonetheless a visual entity that requires a detached view. It is a ‘way of seeing’ (Cosgrove 1985 p. 46) and this therefore implies that features of the landscape can only exist by being observed.

The study of landscapes has expanded in recent decades to offer not just a quantifiable record of the past, but a way of interpretation that develops the significance of experience, expression and emotion (Smith 1994). Scenery, vistas and countryside are no longer characterised as separate visual entities, but environments in which humans are wholly
involved. In other words, the viewer is not emotionally detached from the effect of the scenery, but intensely connected at a deep psychological level. In fact, a landscape can even be culturally deciphered by the viewer. In the novel *Landscape with Woman and Snake*, for example, writer Lettie Viljoen’s (1996) main character moves from one environment to another, and the narrative illustrates that the landscape has a profound effect on her personality:

Lena therefore experiences a decline in focus and inspiration, on the one hand because she finds the landscape overwhelming, confusing and uninspiring, and on the other, because she is paralyzed by an obsessive yearning for the more familiar (and soothing) landscape of the Western Cape (Human 2010 p. 4).

To Lena, the physical elements of the landscape become an unbearable burden, stifling her ability to maintain her creative life and engendering feelings of longing for a happier time and place. However, although this interpretation is of the emotional impact of the two different landscapes on Lena’s psyche, it still relies heavily on sight as the medium through which the landscape is experienced.

The predominating visual bias in current landscape interpretations means that all the dimensions of human sensory experience are not appropriately captured, to the detriment of the other senses. This primary focus on visual acuity does not account for other ways of experiencing a landscape, such as by hearing, touching and smelling (Abraham, Sommerhalder & Abel 2010). According to Feld (cited in Howes 2005 p. 182), there is a multisensory character to human perception, thus all the senses should can be involved in translating the concept of landscape.

Recently, it has been suggested that landscapes can be perceived as conglomerates of different types of ‘scapes’ such as soundscapes (Schafer 1994) and smellscapes (Classen 1994). Each of these can be examined as a separate fragment of the landscape or as part of a holistic analysis. These two scapes have received the most attention by researchers (after landscapes), and the following section will show how research from both these influenced my understanding of the foodscape framework. However it is essential to recognise the challenges involved in the integration of soundscapes and smellscapes in the understanding of
culinary complexity, so for this thesis I will only refer to them from my own partial insider reflections. More research in this area needs to be done to do justice to their significance.

**Other senses in the foodscape.**

In this section, the dimensions of other *-scapes* in the foodscape—soundscape and smellscape—will provide the final catalyst for the construction of the metaphorical foodscape that I propose.

**Soundscape and Smellscape**

It has been suggested that a soundscape is an auditory correspondent of a landscape (Schaffer 1969). Soundscapes—like landscapes—also exist in time and space, and the contexts that generate sounds change as well (Smith 1994). All sounds, whether music or ‘noise’ are inseparable from any social landscape, similar to a foodscape where food flavours, analogous with sound, define many cultural practices.

Soundscapes are always variable, and can be viewed from a global to a local situation (Raimbault & Dubois 2005). Sound variations can therefore be experienced in moments of space and time, grounded in the topography of an urban or rural area. Moreover, some sounds predominate during certain periods and the soundscape may simultaneously contain sounds from different sources. A foodscape can similarly change depending on location—a foreign country, a familiar environment—and is also subject to changes in time, as exemplified by daily cooking cycles or a gradual transformation over a period of years. The foodscape can reflect flavours from varied sources, such as the flavours generated by the different cuisines in the environment.

According to Smith (1994), the sense of hearing within cultural landscapes is of crucial importance because it may simultaneously contain sounds from several sources, some of which attract attention more than others depending not only on the physical characteristics of the signal (e.g. the intensity) but its meaning and relevance to the listener. For instance, the sound of incidental footsteps can be perceived as either an annoyance or just a cue to a pleasant pedestrian area (Raimbault & Dubois 2005). A similar situation is apparent in the foodscape, when one flavour perception is stronger than another, whether by chance or deliberate manipulation of the food environment.
In conclusion, the various interpretations of the important elements of soundscape can be compared with the foodscape, especially in relation to the location and the time/space continuum aspects. As a landscape is a way of seeing, and a soundscape is a way of hearing, so is a foodscape a way of experiencing flavours at any given time or place.

Smell is used to structure and classify different aspects of the world, and Classen (1994) describes it as a ‘scented map’ in which odours exist and change with time and space—in common with both landscape and soundscape dialogues. Smellscapes may be spatially ordered or place related like the visual impressions offered by landscapes, and they can provide aromatic framing of locations (Porteous 1985). However, unlike landscapes—which are more static and slow to change—smellscapes are fluid, variable and volatile. This unpredictability means smells are difficult to quantify, and even more difficult to describe, because even though the human nose can recognise thousands of smells, most of the time they cannot be described without resorting to similes (Engen 1986). Although people may have difficulty in describing smells, they have no trouble in making accurate connections when memories are triggered by smell, especially but not exclusively by food-related smells. A smell can recall time, space and place, and stimulates emotional or motivational arousal (Engen 1986). This is called ‘odour memory’ and is illustrated by the often-quoted excerpt from Marcel Proust (1973 p. 58), when his childhood memories are awakened by a little cake he had eaten in his youth:

No sooner had the warm liquid, and the crumbs with it, touched my palate, a shudder ran through my whole body, and I stopped, intent upon the extraordinary changes that were taking place. An exquisite pleasure had invaded my senses, but individual, detached, with no suggestion of its origin ... and suddenly the memory returns.

Scientists who study odour perception as a chemical sense have made some inroads to uncovering how this elusive sense functions (Jinks & Laing 1999), but humans have a poorly developed vocabulary that equates with smell. This lack of organisation of a sensory vocabulary has contributed to the argument that the sense of smell along with taste and touch are regarded as ‘lower’ order senses unable to compete aesthetically with sight and hearing (Coleman 1965). But is it fair to say that because we cannot name smells, the sense of smell is a lesser one? According to Coleman (1965), human faces cannot always be described
either, but that does not mean that recognising them has any less impact. Some differing patterns of smell are always recognised, for example, cooking smells often differ according to the time of day. Breakfast smells are an indication of morning meal, and we expect to eat different food at dinner, so while the individual smells cannot be named, they can be grouped.

A way of classifying smells developed by Synnott (1993 p. 182) is to divide them into three conceptually separate categories: natural (e.g. body odours), manufactured (e.g. perfumes or pollution) and symbolic (e.g. an olfactory metaphor). This arrangement fits neatly into the food context in that ‘natural’ relates to the smell of food in its uncooked/unprepared state, ‘manufactured’ smell is the result of cooking/preparation process, and ‘symbolic’ refers to the meaning of the odour of food to both individual and groups. These three kinds of odours are not necessarily separate, and in the foodscape, all three may well be mingled together. This gives rise to the idea that a cuisine can be recognised by the aroma of its constituent parts and indicates how closely the smellscape and foodscape are linked. This was apparent in my own experiences as a chef and restaurateur, and lends itself to further research outside the parameters of this study.

The combination of taste with smell completes a flavour profile, but thus far sensory science has been able to isolate only five simple tastes—sweet, sour, salty, bitter and umami. Conversely, the sense of smell is reliant on thousands upon thousands of components, and scientifically isolating individual odour compounds is frequently complicated. Taste and aroma have been the main criteria in the selection of food for as long as humankind has existed, and when they are blended together in food, they form our impressions of flavour. By extending the characteristics of soundscapes and smellscapes in my construction of the foodscape, I create a map of cultural flavour that pinpoints how media, cookbooks and restaurants in the Australian environment are affected by migrant cuisines, and how its cultural identity is communicated through culinary flavours.

Taste and aroma combine in the foodscape to describe a location in terms of flavour at any given time and in any given space, in the same way as landscapes reflect seeing, soundscapes reflect hearing and smellscapes reflect aroma perception. While reflecting on this concept, I propose to incorporate the corresponding characteristics of these -scapes into my conception of the foodscape.
Foodscape

‘Foodscape’ seems to be a word that everyone knows and uses, but it has many different meanings depending on how and where it is applied. Although frequently found in food-related topics in the media and on the internet, few researchers have used the term other than to set the scene for their area of study. Often the term is only briefly enunciated, as if it is intuitively understood and does not bear further explanation.

Although overlooked when researching flavour, the foodscape has been used to frame several different approaches to food. In each of the following studies, the foodscape was established as a ‘core’ to a particular setting, and was contained within a particular area or boundary. Dolphijn (2004 p. 10) used the foodscape metaphorically as a philosophical map composed of a ‘manifold of scapes based on how foods affect and how they are affected’. The text talks of ‘how we think with food’ (p 13) in a modern way—in contrast with Levi-Strauss’ (1970) primitive world—as the way food functions at the commencement of the 21st century. Although concomitant time-wise, my foodscape is seen as a framework in which perceptions are formed about the food culture of migrant cuisines.

The image of the foodscape was extended by Yasmeen (2006) to highlight the interconnections between people, food and place and to bring into focus social, economic and cultural relations around food. In this case, the social geography of the foodscape was examined with food systems as the focus of negotiations around gender and urbanisation. Some convergence with my study is apparent here as well, as although I do not concentrate on gender or urbanisation, I am mindful of the negotiations that occur within the foodscape between food as text and food as performance from a hospitality management perspective.

Sobal and Wansink (2007) take the geographical approach further, connecting the landscapes of the built environments with the concept of food landscapes made up of the presence and distribution of food outlets in the built environment, arguing that the micro-geographies of built environments subtly influence the way we eat. This point of view is echoed by Lake et al. (2010) who limited their foodscape to establishments selling food or food products in an urban location. Although I acknowledge in the thesis that there are physical attributes such as decorative artefacts that restaurants utilise to identify their cuisine,
I also concentrate on the way in texts are used to influence diners in their perceptions of migrant cuisines.

This demonstrates that foodscape is therefore a fluid concept, and this flexibility can be used to advantage when its application has a clear context. In this research, flavour—smell and taste—form the ‘core’ to the foodscape, a lens through which to study the merger of culture, communication and cuisine.

Each person has to eat, and my impression is that they carry within them a subliminal map of their own foodscape. This map can be implicitly or explicitly perceived, like landscapes, soundscapes, smellscapes and other scapes. Our recognition of the scape is not apparent all the time, for example, one is always in a landscape whether it is registered subjectively or objectively. Further, we have the ability to manipulate that landscape in our own personal way, for example, creating a garden, park or similar. In a soundscape, we can always hear exterior sounds unless we put ourselves into an artificially silent vacuum. Even then, because we make interior sounds ourselves (heartbeats, breathing) our minds are always in a soundscape. We can extend these perspectives of the landscape and soundscape to the foodscape, in that one is always in a foodscape, whether actual or imagined, and we may not be aware of the foodscape until our attention is triggered by hunger or by the signs from other scapes we associate with food. Responsiveness to the foodscape requires the accord of all five senses, but of these, taste and smell—flavour—draw attention to the interwoven physical and social aspects of food. By expanding this notion, I can formulate a view of the culinary environment in contemporary Australia.

In the remainder of this section, I address my working concept of cuisine, beginning with a brief discussion to clarify my definition. I then address the migration of cuisines into the Australian environment, referring to the concepts of ethnicity, authenticity and hybridity as they will be employed in this thesis. I then suggest how this has affected Australian restaurant cuisine.

**What is a cuisine?**

In this thesis, the word ‘cuisine’ is used to focus on the different culinary styles of the three cultures to provide guidance, rather than to introduce a specific argument over a precise definition.
The word cuisine itself is French. As mentioned in Chapter 1, Mintz (1996 p 94), categorises cuisines as national cuisine, regional cuisine, haute cuisine identifies, but to can be further dissected into grande cuisine, haute cuisine, la cuisine bourgeoise and cuisine nouvelle. (Schehr & Weiss 2001) in the French context. In this scenario, cuisine means not only the style of food but also the kitchen itself. According to Higman (2011 p 164) cuisine is taken to include the rules of cooking, eating and food service, and the interpretation of these rules leads to hierarchical forms of culinary practice, or in other words, the highly elaborated forms of cooking described by Goody (1982 p vii) found in China, France and the Middle East. It is also suggested that these development of cuisine can only happen in those societies that have an agrarian surplus (Higman (2011 p 165). Mintz's (1996 p 104) definition is more democratic and less complicated, the 'ongoing foodways of a region within which active discourse about food sustains both common understandings and reliable production of the food in question'. As indicated previously, this definition does not take into account the special case of restaurants away from their country of origin, which often use the national definition of the cuisine or have a span of regional dishes listed on the menu.

My definition of cuisine as a ‘style of cooking’ would be regarded as an over-simplification by Freeman (1977), who maintains that the term could easily be applied to fast-food, which is not a cuisine. He interprets cuisine as ‘a self-conscious tradition of cooking and eating with a set of attitudes about food and its place in the life of man [sic]’ (Freeman 1977 p. 144). This requires both a style of cooking and an awareness about how the food is prepared and consumed, further narrowed by the proviso that it should also involve a wide variety of ingredients—more than are locally available—and cooks and diners willing to experiment. I find these four stipulations too restrictive and my preference is for a clear, concise working definition that allows me to explore cuisines from the point of view of their dynamics and their contextual foodscape.

Following this broader understanding of the definition of cuisine, I use the generic definition of cuisine, which is ‘a style of cooking’ (Macquarie Dictionary 2010). By using this simple description, I can apply the word ‘cuisine’ to the dynamic interaction, styles and flavour that characterise the foodscape in Australia, in other words, I am able to move away from essentialised culinary characteristics that are perceived as endurably static entities and instead focus on the vigorously intermingling cuisine components that characterise the
Australian foodscape. A further benefit for this selection is avoidance of elitist representations of cuisines, and I show no discrimination between 'haute' cuisine and other food presentation.

As Hannerz (1990) contends, it is important to recognise that world culture is embodied by the development of cultures without a clear anchorage in any one territory, in other words, sub-cultures within a whole of transnational movement. However, a line of reasoning about cuisine proposed by Mintz (1997 p. 96) takes the view that cuisines are the ‘foods of a place’, which provides an important aspect of defining a foodscape in a geographical area such as Australia where there is a widely understood conception of the representative foods of many cultures with origins from many places. The dialectic between the two conceptions allows recognition of the social significance of a cuisine when its transnational movement is recognised. Moreover, by defining cuisine as simply a ‘style of cooking’ with all its undercurrents from times and places, I deliberately avoid the western gaze and circumvent rendering migrant cuisines as the food of the ‘other’, with its associations with post-colonialism and race (Slocum 2010). My final reason for adopting this conceptualisation is that it allows me to track the dynamic processes of cuisine in Australia, and to overcome temporal and territorial prejudices that a cuisine is necessarily fixed in time and place.

By avoiding temporal definitions of cuisine, my notion of authenticity is also simplified (Reisinger & Steiner 2006). According to Taylor (1991) there are at least as many definitions of authenticity as there are those who write about it. From a food science point of view, food authenticity simply means whether the food purchased by the customer matches its description, and has not been adulterated or misrepresented in other ways (Kvasnička 2005), but even this recognises a wide diversity of the authenticity criteria.

Fine and Lu (1995) observe that authenticity is not an objective criterion but is socially constructed and linked to expectations, which segues with Weiss's (2011) opinion that the word itself, in a culinary sense, has such a plurality of meaning that it needs to be realised as a dynamic notion, not fixed in time, space and form. Thus, he says, the sense of authenticity can be applied to a cuisine in a number of contexts—personal, local, regional, national, and global. By utilising this wider understanding of the definition of authenticity,
the references to authenticity in later parts of the thesis, from the varied contexts of media, cookbooks and chefs can be understood from a wider social perspective.

According Anthelm Strauss (1993), social worlds are marked by core activities that are shared by the members of that world and defended in processes of authentication and legitimisation. In terms of the authenticity of cuisine, restaurants represent part of this social world and their interpretation of authentic cuisine is defended by its social acceptance. In other words, if a Vietnamese restaurant claims to serve ‘authentic Vietnamese cuisine’, the shared principles of recognition of both the chef and the clientele legitimise the cuisine as authentic, even if it is a version of it. It will be seen later in this thesis that the Vietnamese and Italian chefs I interviewed supported Mintz’s (1997) assertion in that they knew what their cuisine was because they had been eating it for all their lives in migration terms, both in the place of origin and in the place of destination. In those terms, they could talk about it in terms of its authenticity. As Hudgins (2006 p. 239) maintains, ‘authenticity exists on the tongue of the taster, in the nose of the inhaler, and in the eyes of the beholder all of which come together in the mind as a culinary experience’. In those terms, the claims of authenticity of a cuisine can be regarded as an interactive process between the cook or chef and the consumer, mediated by the palate-memory in which different senses interact and act as complex recognition.

**Who are the chefs?**

The terms of ‘chef’ and ‘cook’ need to be defined for the thesis because sometimes they can be interchangeable and at times, the word ‘chef’ has certain associations. Within the food service industry, Gunders (2008) follows the theme of professionalism in television cooking shows, and reveals a tension between the professional chef—usually represented by a male—and the domestic cook, often represented by a female. This thesis does not investigate gender patterns but focuses on the level of professionalism, which chefs must have in the restaurant industry to maintain technical control of the cooking and management processes of a restaurant.

In this context the word ‘chef’ implies a level of formal training, and often brings images to mind of a professionally trained male with a high level of technical knowledge (Gunders 2008 p. 121). Indeed, the Dictionary of Occupational Titles 2011 (DOT) defines a chef as one who is involved in the supervision and coordination of those engaged in the
preparation of food. (www.occupationalinfo.org). A cook, on the other hand, is described as one who is more involved in the actual cooking function and less in the managerial functions associated with 'chef'. This definition of 'chef' is important from a hospitality industry perspective as it reflects the managerial and operational skills that are required beyond cooking and managing the kitchen (Guyette 1981).

Several of the chefs in the study were in fact trained in Australia or overseas at a formal educational institution devoted to the trade. There are also chefs in this investigation that did not undergo formal training, but because they are actually responsible for the operation of a commercial kitchen and their responsibilities extend to more than cooking, they are included in the category of chef.

**What are communities of taste?**

The idea of a *sensus communis*, or a community of the senses, can be regarded as a basis to conceptualise a community of taste. It comes from Kant’s philosophy on the condition of our experiences:

We must [here] take sensus communis to mean the idea of a sense shared [by us all], i.e., a power to judge that in reflecting takes account (a priori), in our thought, of everyone else’s way of presenting [something], in order as it were to compare our own judgement with human reason in general... Now we do this as follows: we compare our judgement not so much with the actual as rather with the merely possible judgements of others, and [thus] put ourselves in the position of everyone else (Kant 2007 p. 294).

On this basis, communities of taste can be identified as clusters of people who look, listen, interact and participate in common activities, and whose members recognise the similarity of their taste and practices. In the culinary setting of my research, I refer to communities of taste as people who share interest in the culinary fields defined by GL supplement, cookbooks and restaurants, with each of this fields enmeshed in and generating its own representations (Mintz 1997). In other words, in this thesis, communities of taste are audiences who care about food and are engaged in its imagery and from a hospitality perspective, are potential clients of the restaurants.

In addition, each person constructs their own mental foodscape, a sort of imaginary geography of food that is a shared way of representing food and place (Bildtgard 2009).
methodological terms, I refer to this as a foodworld. However, in order to create a foodworld, there must be an organised ‘external’ pattern of food. Although every person views the foodscape through their lens of their subjective foodworld, every society has ordered food habits developed around a cuisine that has a profound influence on an individual’s perception of food. The foodscape is relative in that two people can share the same empirical outlook—they might both be vegetarians, for instance—but they could have entirely different mental constructions of their vegetarianism according to their foodworlds. But considering their individual foodworlds have been socially constructed by the foodscape, any resulting meaning-making about food is collective rather than individual.

Likewise, no foodworld can ever be fully objective. Although vegetarians are committed to a meatless diet, there are multiple variations once the option has been taken up. Some consume dairy foods, others eschew all animal products. It is not possible to take an objective position because of the multiple connotations and connections in everyone’s perceived foodworld:

The communities of taste are also targeted by a specific marketing milieu embedded in GL, cookbooks and restaurants, as these are driven by commercial interests after all. But communities of taste can also be understood in the social sense in terms of shared identity constructed around specific cuisine tastes (Duruz 2011). I therefore position my communities of taste as overlapping entities in the culinary landscape between business and societal concerns. Some of these communities particularly relevant for this research include food adventurers searching for experimentation with the unfamiliar tastes entering the Australian foodscape.

Restaurants focus

Migration of cuisines through restaurants, such as Vietnamese and Italian restaurant cuisines, have inspired dietary shifts in Australian cuisine, especially in the commercial sense. Restaurant cuisine is usually regarded as distinct from ordinary domestic traditions of cooking, although it is acknowledged that some elements of restaurant cuisine can influence domestic cooking. To generalise from Gomez, Bouty & Drucker-Godard (2003 p 101), chefs have their way of being—in Bourdieus (1984) term, habitus—which is embedded by training and repetition, integrated and internalised rules and reflexive thinking on practice, as well as an allowed improvisation through cooking practise. Traditionally, the restaurant belongs in

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the public sphere, and domestic cooking in the private space. Restaurant cuisine and home kitchen cuisine have frequently been described as distinct styles of food preparation and presentation that are odds with one another (Võsu and Kannike 2011). The traits of professional chefs are not usual in the domestic cook, and according to Krautkramer (2007) differ considerably in the ethics of the kitchen and the aesthetics of the cuisine itself. Chefs use 'expert and artful techniques and sophisticated ingredients according to consistent standards' (Võsu and Kannike 2011 p 23) thus creating an original cuisine for their customers. However, Krautkramer (2007) argues that there is an emotional disconnect with the customer that does not manifest itself in domestic cuisine, observable in the expression of care towards the guest and the relationship with the diners. I would argue that this is not necessarily true and all of the chefs interviewed in for this thesis expressed an emotional connection with their diners.

Restaurants are places where consumers may encounter an unfamiliar cuisine for the first time and thus are influential in representing their cuisine for their clientele, particularly with regard to flavours (Lu & Fine 1995). Their visible position in the public domain makes them useful barometers of the influence that incoming migrant cuisines have had on Australian foodscape and the Australian cuisine. Defining Australian cuisine, as distinct from other cuisines, has been a source of animated discussion for the past three decades or so, especially after 1982 when Michael Symons’s influential ‘One Continuous Picnic’ Australian food history was published. Other authors followed with their own interpretations (Bannerman & Bilson 1998; Beckett 1984; Pont 1987; Ripe 1993; Santich 1986; Saunders 1999) but the argument seemed to peak in the 1990s and then tapered off, occasionally remerging in articles in the media, for example, in GL. At the time, Australian restaurants, as distinct from 'ethnic' restaurants, were based on the dominating style of French cooking that was perpetuated by the trade school education of most chefs. The impact of the globalisation of restaurants saw the incorporation of flavour influences from other ethnic cuisines into Australian cuisine. The French cookery structure—as distinct from Vietnamese or Italian—became overlaid with flavour influences from international cuisines, many of them with migratory origins, as I interpret in Figure 2.1.

Figure 2.1 stylises the integration process of restaurant cuisines into the Australian environment. Using Vietnamese and Italian cuisines as samples of migration, I allude to the
multiple influences that they can encounter in terms of their food culture, communication and cuisine as they are firstly absorbed by an initial translation process. This process represents early pressures on structures within the original cuisine in terms of the existing foodscape in Australia. The transformation process that follows indicates the adaptation of the ethnic cuisine within the foodscape where it is accepted and absorbed into the food environment. This results in a creolisation process— as distinct from a homogenising process—indicating that the flavours of migrant cuisines have become established in the foodscape, but at the same time recognising the tension that occurs as the cuisines are continually re-examined and redefined, initiating flavour influences beyond their culinary boundaries and reflecting the 'cultural creolization' (Hannerz 1996) of the migrant society.

![Figure 2.2: The process of flavour migration and acceptance](image)

In the context of the creolisation process, restaurant cuisines can either retain or lose their identity. For example, Vietnamese flavours can be regarded as generically Asian, dumbed down to such a degree that they are no longer recognisable against the original, or the flavours can be nurtured to reflect the cuisine as authentically as possible. How a
cuisine’s integrity is preserved when challenged with such pressures is the focus of this research.

In the following section, I expand on Goffman’s (1959) themes of societal presentation to explain how cuisine is represented using his backstage/frontstage model. In this way, I identify strategies used by restaurants to engage communities of taste in the commercial production and reproduction of what is accepted as authentic cuisine both from the perspective of the media, cookbooks, chefs and their clientele.

**Impression management in the foodscape**

In my investigation of the cuisines in this thesis, I will contribute to the existing research by extending Goffman's approach, combining it with the semiotic analysis of restaurants and the texts that surround their food culture. I take the perspective that impressions of the cuisine are managed by its public construction in the foodscape.

According to Goffman (1959) social performances are given in 'bounded regions' or settings that can be distinguished into 'front' and back' stages like the front-stage and back-stages in the conventional Western theatre. In this metaphor of theatrical performance, an individual in a social situation is regarded as being like an actor in the front-stage, with the purpose of impressing an audience. Hidden behind the scenes and shielded from public view, or back-stage, the same individual can act in a different and private way.

Following this line of reasoning, any social establishment can be studied profitably from the point of view of impression management. In this theory, a ‘team’ of performers gives a particular impression to an audience, analogous with a theatre performance and indeed, called ‘frontstage’. Support to these ‘actors’ is rendered by the ‘backstage’ where the routine is prepared for delivery. Usually, the audience is not granted access to the backstage.

The development of this performance metaphor has frequently been applied to restaurants (Bourdain 2000; Finkelstein 1993; Martens & Warde 1997; Shelton 1990). In this study, I incorporate the perspective of the social design of a restaurant, where the décor of the frontstage—the dining area—creates a productive area of exchange, and reflects the ‘cultural material through which ‘scenes’ are constructed (DeNora 2003 p123). The backstage—the kitchen—is evaluated for the workplace design and the technical artefacts of food production.
The frontstage/backstage metaphor is adapted here to express the management of \textit{cuisine} instead of the management of \textit{self}. By substituting cuisine for self, I have appropriated Goffman’s framework to investigate how the presentation of cuisine is represented in the social settings of media, cookbooks and restaurant kitchens and dining rooms. I propose that in each of these areas information about a cuisine is conveyed to the audience of GL readers, cookbook users and restaurant patrons by ‘sign-vehicles’, where signifiers about cuisine becomes meaningful to those who have an interest in deciphering them as representing an specific cuisine identity.

**How cuisines are represented: The restaurant frontstage**

Using this framework, I examine the way that the restaurant frontstage is interpreted by GL as one of the producers of cuisine public representation of cuisines in the Australian foodscape. GL is recognised as a carrier of meaning about food-related news as it imparts information and opinion about chefs, restaurants, produce, ingredients and judgements in the Sydney/regional area. It also is assumed to have authority in its inferences about cuisine and as such, projects the image that the potential clientele of a cuisine can rely on the advice of its experienced journalists, who are experts in the field and who have already done exhaustive research on their behalf. Similarly, cookbooks can also be seen as frontstage carriers of culinary perception because they also manage images of cuisine flavours in the public domain. A cookbook imparts crucial ingredients and core flavours, and serves to give an overall impression of the cuisine to readers and cooks who may have been triggered to acquire a book prior or subsequent to a restaurant encounter. Most cookbooks include detailed narratives about the cuisine as well as instructions that can be interpreted as frontstage activities.

The impressions from the two data media sources are managed from the perspective of what others—journalists and authors—say about the cuisine, and by the assumptions that the reader’s prior knowledge may bring to the situation. In the case of restaurants, the ‘others’ are the signifiers of the restaurant—dining rooms, for example—combined with the patrons’ prior beliefs. This part of the analysis is guided by my own reflections on the creation of meaning about a cuisine in the restaurant dining space.

Goffman (1959) not only takes into account the front and backstages of a performance but also the aspect of the ‘outside’. Considering the restaurant as representation of the
cuisine, the outside is difficult to define as it is neither front nor backstage, as the outer walls of the building serve as a boundary and cut the restaurant off from the outside world. Those beyond this periphery are outsiders, and thus not directly involved in the activities of the restaurants’ ongoing performance. There are two interpretations of this phenomenon, according to Goffman. Firstly, the exterior of the restaurant building and its outside decorations can be seen literally as aspects of another show. The façade of the building is used as a device for gaining prestige—and in the case of restaurants, as a marketing device, relying on architectural impressions to establish that there is an eating establishment beyond the boundary. Most restaurants communicate their purpose this way, although there are some that promote exclusivity by having a concealed entrance. The first indicator is the signage—the name and description of the restaurant—and from there, glimpses of décor through the shopfront windows communicate to potential customers what type of establishment they can expect. Commercial necessity usually ensures that the exterior is maintained, signalling the impression of a successful business venture based on a particular type of cuisine.

A second, less obvious interpretation of the outsider’s presence is an intrusion through the periphery into the restaurant setting, whether expected or unexpected. This can result in the delivery of a different performance outside that of the normal front and backstage and especially tailored for the outsider. When interviewing the chefs, I was placed in this very situation, as I realised that the interviewees would have displayed a performance to me that differed from their usual interactions with their customers and employees. Goffman (1959 p. 136) warns that the experience of being an outsider can sometimes be disillusioning because of the chance of witnessing circumstances not meant for them. For example, chefs could say one thing to me in the course of the interviews in order to maintain control of the conversation and exclude the possibility of inconsistencies in the interview, but unintentionally reveal that they believe another.

Since the interviews were mostly scheduled outside of the busy time of the restaurant, I was integrated into the restaurant space, accorded ‘a clear cut welcome’ (Goffman 1959 p. 139), and offered dishes from the kitchen or coffee. By extending this welcome, the chefs were careful not to discredit their public image of the ‘host’, which is part of the stock in trade of hospitable relations with customers. In that sense, my observations were limited
because although the interviews were mostly completed in the backstage settings out of the restaurants business hours, the chefs acted as if they were in the frontstage.

**Where cuisines are constructed: The restaurant backstage**

According to Goffman (1959 p. 112), a back region or backstage may be defined as a place, relative to a given performance’. In a restaurant’s backstage, the kitchen staff manage the construction of culinary flavours out of sight of the audience. Rather than present this area as a place where there is dissonance between front and backstage, described such memoirs such as in the first section of Orwell’s *Down and Out in Paris and London* (1949) and Bourdain’s *Kitchen Confidential* (2000), I look upon it as the locus of the process of production. Here, the stage props are the batterie de cuisine—the kitchen utensils, the pots and pans and the heat sources that are needed in the transformation of raw ingredients. Even in the circumstances of an ‘open’ kitchen situated within the restaurant itself, the audience only sees staged elements of culinary suspense, not fish being cleaned or the dishwasher (Petrowski 1999). Further, open kitchens operate differently before and after service when customers are absent from the dining room.

Usually, the front and back regions of a restaurant are adjacent so the restaurant dining room is closely connected to the kitchen, and each area supports the other in communicating culinary expectations to diners. The backstage of a restaurant is constructed precisely to hide the evidence of workers’ labour from the clientele, who are meant to see as little of the work that goes into their meal as possible. According to Goffman (1959 p. 112), ‘it is here that illusions and impressions are openly constructed’, in other words, the kitchen is where the chef controls the performance of flavour creation.

In the next section, I explore the way in which GL is integrated into the front/backstage dynamics of the restaurants and how it contributes to the management of restaurant impressions.

**The Good Living supplement**

As part of frontstage management, GL provides an important source of impressions for those readers who use its articles and reviews to determine the culinary setting of a restaurant. In place of gathering the facts for themselves, they rely on the inferences that they take from its articles and can draw in them as a substitute predictive device. These articles are
one source of information about Vietnamese and Italian cuisine, for example, and a means by which readers can choose to guide their responses.

In Goffman’s (1959) terms, these impressions are largely the result of the professional impact of the GL food writers. They give off the impression that they convey factual information intended to help people come to conclusions about the nature and meaning of cuisines. GL is therefore capable of exerting a strong influence on the conduct and reactions of its readers and thus it is in its commercial and social interests to control and manage culinary impressions.

Goffman’s (1959) ‘performance’ metaphor is useful to describe the general pattern of GL’s activity in which this impression management occurs. According to Goffman (1959 p. 54), a performance is ‘all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants’. As part of GL’s performance, food writers manage their expressions while being attentive to possible disruptions to their performances, such as restaurant closures, chefs’ movements, and other changes that occur in their niche of the foodscape. The text of GL therefore is one front region ‘setting’ by which the core flavour identity of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine can be conveyed. In this setting, information about the cuisine is conveyed to the ‘audience’ of GL readers. Through GL, impressions are formed about a cuisine’s content and appearance, and certain readers can combine their own experiences of the cuisine with the assumptions that are shaped by its articles.

Daily newspapers are part of the ephemera of everyday life, and their content is often outdated less than 24 hours after they hit the streets. However, despite the transient nature of newspapers, historians and social scientists often rely upon media discourse as a systematic source of data because they prove to be reliable over time and space, and therefore provide a strong basis for valid observation of change (Barranco & Wisler 1999). This feature enables me to contextualise the construction of GL as a frontstage by taking into account the advantages of using the texts of the SMH GL supplement as a socio-historical and socio-cultural data source delimited by commercial interests.

The SMH is a daily newspaper published six times a week by Fairfax Media in Sydney. The SMH exerts considerable influence over the Sydney foodscape, and to a lesser
extent that of regional NSW, by publishing up-to-date information on the food and wine industries and by sponsoring well-publicised industry-related events. Every week, there are two regular sections of the SMH newspaper devoted to those readers whose social contexts relate to this version of events in the foodscape. These are the GL supplement and a segment in the ‘Spectrum’ leisure insert in the Saturday edition. This analysis focuses on the GL magazine, which gives a more comprehensive overview of the Sydney/regional foodscape.

GL is published each Tuesday as a lift-out supplement. The supplement has been in continual publication for over 25 years. Devoted to the latest food news and trends, it features regular restaurant, bar and cafe reviews and other more general articles about food and wine.

Newspapers are a rich source of unobtrusive research, in that they do not depend on the researcher’s ability to collect reliable data in a given real-life situation (Kellehear 1993). By analysing GL as an example of the food media, I was able to identify how its texts worked to depict one kind of reality, how its depictions were constructed, and what functions they played. These newspaper texts were ‘existing sources’ of data, to be juxtaposed with the data created from cookbooks, restaurant observations and interviews to reinforce a unique perspective provided on the construction of the Sydney/regional foodscape, which is then generalised to include the rest of Australia.

News is often biased and selective due to the wide differences in reporting practice and news coverage, commercial imperatives, and time and space requirements (Franzosi 1987). The SMH makes its profit through advertising, as do all commercial publications of this nature. By promoting the food and wine industry, it attracts advertising for GL—and food sections in its other newspaper interests—from targeted suppliers and retailers. In return, it is the main sponsor for significant Sydney food events providing increased avenues for publicity for its advertisers, and more advertising revenue for the newspaper group.

The reporting practices of GL are therefore subject to commercial imperatives. The SMH is a profit-making organisation that makes its money by selling audiences to advertisers, and it does this by achieving the highest possible readerships for the lowest possible financial outlay. From this perspective, GL texts are symbolic cultural commodities produced in the food milieu—itself a culture industry. Devised for profit within a market, GL is therefore open to the effects of commercial pressures. That commercial aspects of GL
influence the text of the publication cannot be ignored in the dynamics of creation and maintenance of the Sydney/regional foodscape. Since the audience reach of the marketing strategy is connected to advertising revenue, one expects that the GL supplement is always under pressure to be at the cutting-edge of food industry fashion, to entertain and inform readers and to keep the paper’s circulation high. This expectation is fulfilled by the longevity of its publication and its position of influence in the regional foodscape.

According to Molotoch and Lester (1974), mass media can be seen to have the power to determine the experience of others rather than its supposed purpose, to reflect the world ‘out there’. The food ‘news’ that GL assembles is selected from a pool of possible occurrences, of which the most special, interesting or important are chosen for publication to favour the needs of the reader. GL then becomes the transmitter of Goffman's 'front' stage impressions to its community of taste. The reader relies on GL as a reflector of an objective reality ‘out there’, and assumes that it reports only the truly important events. Thus, GL has the power to determine the experience of the reader, because the reader accepts the selected topics published as reality.

GL is seen as a front-runner in the formation of public food tastes through not only its weekly publication, but also its involvement in significant food events. GL also exercises considerable influence over restaurant competition in metropolitan Sydney and regional NSW. Linked to the weekly publication of the GL is the annual SMH GFG. A year-long review process of urban and regional restaurants culminates in the SMH GFG Awards, which showcases and critiques restaurants in NSW. The GFG Awards have been ongoing since 1984, increasing over time in their influence and authority. The GFG Awards are presented in Sydney as a prestigious event, with a limited number of guests to enhance the desirability of the event. The guest list is comprised of food writers (mainly those who contribute to GL), as well as high-status restaurateurs and others involved in the industry. The event attracts major involvement from companies such as presenting partners Vittorio coffee and Citibank, and sponsors Louis Roederer glassware and Virgin Australia airline (GFG 2012). There are other awards competing in similar markets, but the SMH’s powerful backing of its own event ensures that press coverage is exclusive, and ensures the continuing strength of its profile in the industry.
On the day following the GFG Awards, a GL Special Edition is dedicated to publishing a summary of the results, with an overview of the awards ceremony and interviews with co-authors of the GFG, who are also contributors to GL. The SMH and Penguin Books simultaneously release the GFG paperback, positioning the award winners in the front section. The bulk of this book is its review section, which lists more than 400 reviews and up-to-date information about the restaurants and cafes that have met the GFG evaluation standards. The restaurants/cafes are categorised by location, and although the majority are from the Sydney metropolitan area, there are regional inclusions from all over NSW. Reflecting advances in technology, the GFG is also accessible through the internet by subscription and via a Smartphone application. The GFG Awards not only appeal to prospective diners at highly ranked eating places, but also attract suppliers, restaurants and other retailers to advertise in the GL supplement.

The reporting in GL is not necessarily random, because it reflects the intentions and interests of certain economic groups. For example, at regular intervals throughout the year, GL publishes Special Editions that act as an advertising conduit from commercial and retail suppliers to potential customers of wine and food outlets. Notification of these editions is distributed to potential advertisers at the beginning of the year, and reminders are also printed in the supplement. In 2011, GL targeted wine purveyors, coffee outlets, boutique grocers and hotel dining rooms, as well as the usual Mother’s Day and Christmas promotional activities (Fairfax Media 2011). Fairfax Media uses Roy Morgan Research, a premier market research company, to regularly survey readership of GL, and utilises these statistics in reminding advertisers of GL’s significant readership to encourage them to buy promotional space in their weekly publication.

From these different aspects of the construction of cuisines, it is possible to understand GL as an important influence in the construction of share ideas and values that bring together its readership as constitutive of an Australian community of taste.

Cookbooks as representations of cuisines beyond flavours

A further element that is important as part of frontstage management are cookbooks, because they represent different cuisines that reflect both lifestyles and ingredients that make public the identity of different cuisines through their narratives as well as their recipes.
The cookbooks used in this study were all targeted at the domestic market to capture its location into the Australian foodscape and the interaction with other elements in it. The relationship between restaurants and GL may help to orient the communities of taste as consumers and acquaint them with an unfamiliar cuisine, triggering them to buy cookbooks. Although not directly addressed in this study, it is important to mention the role of cookbooks in the transformation of unfamiliar cuisines into domestic cuisines.

[Cookbooks] are directed towards those who have access to ingredients, those with culinary skill, time to both cook and reconnoitre for ingredients, and those with economic and cultural capital to want to indulge in such tasks (Gallegos 2005 p. 109).

However, cookbooks are more than collections of recipes. They impart signs of cultural and social values and representations of people associated with the cuisine, and can be used to chronicle changes in society over time.

Gallegos (2005) separates cookbooks published in Australia into four divisions: ‘foreign’ (1890s) ‘continental/oriental’ (1930s–1950s) ‘international/multicultural’ (1960s–1980s) and ‘Australian’ (1990s–2000s). Her study uses cookbooks to trace the gradual acceptance by the predominant Angloceltic culture of ‘the other’, from regarding ethnic cuisine as ‘foreign’ and relegating the recipes to their own chapter to accepting it as ‘Australian’ to such an extent that the ‘traditional’ British-based cuisine is now seen as old-fashioned. This Anglocentric predominance has become naturalised (i.e. invisible), and it taken for granted that ethnic cuisine is 'the other' (Hage 2000, Cook et al 1999), an artefact of Australia's post-colonial outlook.

In keeping with Gallegos’ groupings, the cookbooks I selected for this study were written by Australian authors and published for the Australian market in the 2000–2009 time period allowing me to explore the progression of those stages.

According to Gallegos, cookbooks in the ‘Australian phase’ are vehicles for defining the boundaries of the Australian community—boundaries that have been gradually extended over time to embrace multiculturalism and the cuisines of all cultures in the Australian community, publically affirming a collective identity of an inclusive Australia. I suggest further that these boundaries are also a means for defining a foodscape at any given time. Another implication is that cuisine can be a space in which acceptance of otherness can
occur, even when other aspects of the culture are dissimilar (Hage 2000). Cookbooks of this phase distinguish and differentiate the existing foodscape by reflecting its diversity. The foodscape is constructed in part by these cookbooks by what is observed ‘within their text, amongst those who read the text, and where the text circulates’ (Gallegos 2005 p. 107), in other words, in the ‘shared world’ of the foodscape.

Until The Vietnamese Cookbook (Freeman & Lê 1995) was published in 1995, there were no Vietnamese cookbooks by Australian authors in circulation, although almost 20 years had passed since the peak of mass migration of Vietnamese in the mid-1970s. In the early 2000s, however, an increased number of cookbooks began to emerge, accelerating after the mid-2000s, so there are now more than a dozen of this genre in the marketplace. Compared to the abundance of Italian cookbooks, either available in Italian, translated into English from Italian, or written by Australians of Italian heritage, this can be seen as comparatively insignificant. Italian culture has a history of cookbooks from the middle ages onwards (Capatti, Montanari & O’Healy 2003; Helstosky 2003), and Italian women often either bought their books with them when they migrated to Australia or bought them in Australia in their own language (Supski 2005). However, it seems that there was not a similar tradition with Vietnamese migrants.

More often than not, Vietnamese fled a war torn country with little more than the clothes they were wearing. Unlike the comparatively orderly immigration of Italians (Cresciani 2003) who had time to think about what belonging they could bring with them, for Vietnamese perhaps cookbooks were jettisoned in favour of food or fuel in their escape. Moreover many Vietnamese did not arrive in Australia directly, but spent some years interned in Thailand, Malaysia and the Philippines (Kroll et al. 1989). A recipe book may have been considered superfluous baggage in such circumstances.

Besides, there may have been little need for the western format of cookbooks, as cooking is classified as practical knowledge and it is not unusual for cooking to be learnt by generational transmission in any culture, by watching and doing. In addition, a ‘gustatory approach to food’ (Appadurai 1988 p. 5), that is, one that is relaxed of its moral and medical implications (Counihan & Van Esterik 1997) may not have emerged so there was no related necessity for written recipes or for cookbooks. However, Luke Nguyen, owner of the Red Lantern restaurant, remembered cookbooks from his childhood in the 1960s in Vietnam,
which leads to the possibility of connecting with the interpretation of cookbooks as a construction of class. According to Appadurai (1988), cookbooks only appear in literate societies where cooking is seen as a communicable variety of expert knowledge. Only 10 per cent of the Vietnamese population was literate in 1945, and although this has increased to over 90 per cent (Phan et al. 2007), it is likely that the development of cookbooks was impeded by the structure of society.

Cookbooks also demonstrate class hierarchy because of their historical association with the aristocratic courts that not only developed complex cuisines, but had the means to maintain written texts (Goody 1982; Mennell 1996). There was indeed a royal class in Vietnam, but this was fractured by the civil unrest that occurred during the colonial reign of France and fragmented by the ensuing Socialist regime that dominates to this day. It is not clear whether the aristocracy recorded their cuisine in cookbooks.

In Australia, there do not seem to be any Vietnamese cookbooks translated into English. Vietnamese cuisine was not documented in a wider Australian cookbook collection before The Vietnamese Cookbook emerged, although it was recognised in the newspaper media. Perhaps it was difficult for the Anglophone cook to find the widespread ingredients needed to address the cuisine, while in contrast today many ingredients are available in supermarkets and greengrocers. Prior to the 1990s, Vietnamese grocery shopping was limited to the local areas where Vietnamese congregated to live, suburbs not comfortably reached by middle-class cooks. Further, there were not the widespread travel opportunities to Vietnam to foster an interest in the cuisine, as the country did not welcome foreign travellers until the mid-1990s.

The increase in the number of Vietnamese cookbooks published in Australia could also have cultural relevance in maintaining and valuing ethnic identity. As upwardly mobile Vietnamese entered the middle class, many second-generation Vietnamese may have spent their time in areas other than daily food preparation. For these Vietnamese, cookbooks contribute to recipe stability as well as promote ethnobiological knowledge and practices (Nguyen 2007) when they are used by members of the immigrant community.

Cookbooks can also be seen as symbolic of acculturation into a dominant group, whereby the food habits of a migrant group are not only accepted by the host community, but
actively sought (buying the cookbook) and applied (cooking the recipes). This is applicable for both Vietnamese and Italian cuisines, which are both listed in the GL top ten of Australia’s favourite cuisines. Therefore, they can be regarded as symbolic of the process of creolisation, where they both influence and are influenced by the culinary aspects of the culture around them.

The foodscape is composed of representations of culinary flavour, which in turn are managed in the public sphere by GL, cookbooks and restaurants. Using this framework enables me to consider the interaction of cuisines in respect of their migration into the Australian food environment and how impressions of culinary flavours are managed in the foodscape.

Before exploring these significant elements in the process of migration of cuisines through the analysis of data I will be analysing in Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, in Chapter 3, I address the design of the research, identifying my position in relation to the data and discuss the rationale for the methods that were used in the study.
Chapter 3: Making sense of foodscape complexity

The aim of this research is to establish how the integrity of cuisine flavours is influenced by the multiple elements interacting in the Australian foodscape. As mentioned in Chapter 1 of this thesis, my research focus was on the way chefs and restaurants managed the identity of their cuisine flavours in the Australian culinary environment and the influence of consumers on it. To explore the complexities of these processes, I consider different forms of representation that contribute towards the assimilation of cuisine flavours from three migrant cuisines into the Australian eating patterns. These include from Vietnamese, Italian and Australian ethnic origin. To achieve its aims, this study investigates attitudes to flavour from each cuisine included in the following sources: articles from the GL weekly supplement from the SMH, three cookbooks from each cuisine, ethnographic observation of their restaurants and interviews with nine chefs, three from each cuisine. The period of this study was 2000 to 2009. The significance of the media and their audiences is considered because they influence the management of flavour impressions in the Australian foodscape and are interpreted and driven by chefs through their restaurants. In that sense, the essential features of this study are the perceived interactions between the media, communities of taste and chefs resulting in the social construction of culinary impressions.

All parts of the research design are combined to address the central research question ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’ and the sub-questions listed below:

1. In what ways do cultural perceptions of ethnic cuisine define its identity in Australia?
2. How do Australian communities of taste expectations influence the cultural identity of flavour?
3. How do migrant cuisines influence contemporary Australian cuisine?
4. How do chefs communicate the cultural identity of flavour?
5. What cooking processes and tools are crucial to retain the identity of a cuisine and why?
6. What role do restaurants play in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours?
This chapter details the research paradigm, research design and methodology used in this study, and discusses each in relation to its appropriateness for this type of investigation. After a preliminary evaluation of qualitative and quantitative methods, I adopted a qualitative research paradigm of constructionism. I show why social constructionist assumptions were the most appropriate for this study, and why I employ a case study approach. It also includes a profile of each area to be analysed and the participating chefs, and describes the data collection and data analysis methods used for the investigation. It concludes with a summary of the topics covered.

Because the four different themes were analysed using different methods, the beginning of each chapter further shows how the methodological framework corresponds with each topic.

**Background to the study**

Sensory evaluation science was my previous field of research, an area in which scientific quantitative studies are used extensively. They use experimental methods and quantitative measures to test hypothetical generalisations, and often depend on a substantial sample size to produce variables, experimental data and statistics.

Sensory analysis is a tool used to determine the organaleptical properties (taste, colour, odour and feel) of foodstuffs by measuring the gustatory and olfactory perceptions of food components. An analysis is measured by a panel of trained or untrained judges whose reactions to specific tastes/odours are recorded and the captured data evaluated. This procedure is usually carried out under laboratory conditions deliberately designed to minimise distractions in order to focus on the task at hand. A sensory laboratory consists of a small number of identical booths, each with a small trapdoor through which randomly numbered samples are delivered to each person for their assessment. These days the data from each panellist is captured by a computer program, and each panellist delivers his or her judgement via a keyboard.

There are three fundamental types of sensory testing. Firstly, discriminatory tests are used to determine whether a difference exists between samples, for example, whether there is a difference between Coke and Pepsi (there is not). Secondly, descriptive tests are used to
define the nature and intensity of the difference, and are often used in the development and improvement of new products. Finally, effective tests are a measure of acceptance from which is determined a relative preference (Poste et al. 1991 p. 68). Each category contains a subset of methods that can be used for individual experiments. The project I was involved during my Honours research fitted into the descriptive category, with panellists being asked to if they perceived a target taste (sweet, sour, salt, bitter and umami) in increasingly complex taste mixtures. As it turned out, once there were more than three tastes mixed together, the more confused the data became and it was reported that humans had a limited ability to recognise complex mixtures of tastes (Link 2000).

Initially, I considered quantitative methods to answer my research question, because I was familiar with this methodology from this previous research. However, I had to reflect on whether statistical modelling would really give me the answers I was seeking, and whether the analysis of quantitative data would sufficiently tell the story of this research. I could design a sensory experiment, but would quantitative sensory methods answer the research question? Besides, sensory laboratories are rare, and I was not convinced that chefs would be willing to travel to take part in an unpaid sensory panel. Of course, there were other quantitative tools that I could use, notably questionnaires.

Horng and Hu (2008), for example, used a questionnaire developed from interviews with seventeen top-level international chefs to find out if there was a connection between creative process and performance. This questionnaire was not delivered to the chefs themselves but to 1,000 university student volunteers and the returned data was then statistically analysed. Student volunteers were also enlisted to make up a statistically relevant sample size in my own previous study. Reflecting on the limits to the relevance of the information I gleaned I questioned myself. Were the student volunteers being truthful about their perceptions? What if they did the test a second time—would their results have improved? Had they ever reflected on the five tastes, and if they had, would this have made a difference to their responses? Not only that, but the analysis of the statistics focused on the middle range, and is adjusted for any deviance from the ‘norm’ by correcting for random variations. I was actually more interested in the random variations. Were they just chance elements that did not fit the norm as the statistics would have it, or were there a few people
who were more sensitive to taste disparity than the majority, allowing them a more complex analysis of the taste mixtures?

I also wanted to ask the participants what they thought about the tastes they perceived, questions like whether the environment of the sensory lab influenced their decisions, whether they recorded their perceptions truthfully, whether they had ever considered their sense of taste in relation to the food they ate. However, I had no way finding out any different perspectives because this line of enquiry was not supported by quantitative research that demanded emphasis on objective reality. These knowledge gaps needed another branch of enquiry for meaningful solutions, and different questions than those that could be answered by fleeting reactions to artificial stimuli.

An alternative for me was to consider the type of study designed by Horng and Hu (2009) as an example where a qualitative study can benefit from incorporating quantitative methods of data collection (Corbin & Strauss 2008; Creswell 2003; Patton 2002; Yin 2003). It is not necessary for these two methods to be in opposition to each other, rather that the method chosen should be appropriate to the situation especially when the research seeks ‘methodological appropriateness’ as the primary criterion for judging methodological quality (Patton 2002). Yin (2003) issues a warning that the researcher must be prepared to master certain statistical techniques, but it is now widely accepted that a mixed methods approach can be suitable. Horng and Hu (2009) used this mixed methods option, combining qualitative interviews with quantitative questionnaires. In my view, this might have been an acceptable research method for my research, because it allows for a ‘situational responsiveness’ (Patton 2002) that strict observance to one paradigm or another may not. In other words, quantitative and qualitative data can complement each other depending of the nature of the research design.

However, although quantitative methodology can be used successfully in conjunction with qualitative research, the aim of this case study was to investigate layers of meaning in a small, information-rich sample, and not to deliver a statistically relevant outcome over a broad range of instances. On reflection, I considered that a mixed methods approach would diffuse the capacity of the study to focus on in-depth reflections of the processes involved in communicating cuisine and it would not add theoretical credibility to the outcome. A questionnaire, no matter how well designed, was too simplistic a tool to gather complex
information about the cultural influences involved in the communication of flavour, even when used in conjunction with quantitative methods. To bring focus on to my theoretical perspective, the table below characterises the differences between positivist and interpretive research approaches.

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<tr>
<th>Quantitative Method</th>
<th>Qualitative Method</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Paradigm/Assumptions:</strong> positivism, empiricism</td>
<td><strong>Paradigm/Assumptions:</strong> Subjectivism, interpretivism, constructivism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Methodology:</strong> scientific method, hypothesis-driven, deductive, reliable, valid, reproducible, objective, generalisable.</td>
<td><strong>Methodology:</strong> ethnomethodology, phenomenology, ethnography, actions research, inductive, subjective, idiographic, intuitive</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong> large-scale, generally surveying</td>
<td><strong>Methods:</strong> small-scale, interviewing, observation, document analysis</td>
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<td><strong>Data Type:</strong> quantitative</td>
<td><strong>Data type:</strong> qualitative</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis:</strong> statistics</td>
<td><strong>Analysis:</strong> thematic exploration</td>
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Table 3.1 Assumptions related to the quantitative and qualitative. Adapted from O’Leary (2004)

The legitimacy of qualitative research in hospitality needs to be considered, and it is important to justify using this qualitative approach, as the academic field in which the thesis is positioned is composed predominantly quantitative and its associated positivist methods.

A qualitative perspective

Qualitative research, broadly defined, means ‘any kind of research that produces findings not arrived at by means of statistical procedures or other means of quantification’ (Corbin & Strauss 2008 p. 17). A qualitative researcher uses a multiplicity of interconnected empirical materials—such as case study, personal experience, observations and texts—in an attempt to get closer to their subject’s perspective (Denzin & Lincoln 1994). Qualitative research is a set of interpretive practices rather than instrumentation and quantification of data. Although both quantitative and qualitative researchers are concerned about the individual’s point of view, qualitative investigators use detailed interviewing and observation in an attempt to find rich, detailed descriptions of reality and its perception. The constraints of everyday social life are considered positive attributes that allow them to record the reality of living more specifically.
My preferred alternative was to analyse words and images rather than numbers and naturally occurring data rather than that gathered from experiments and structured interviews. By choosing social constructionism as my ontology with an interpretive epistemology, I was able to study the meanings attached to the phenomena under study, offering a far richer outcome in terms of the investigation of the participating chefs and their cuisine. In other words, I wanted to ‘document the world from the point of view of the people studied’ (Hammersley 1992) rather than count predetermined activities, so my research design would be hypothesis-generating rather than hypothesis testing.

The research design shows how extensively I have re-focused from the positivist course of my previous studies to the interpretative philosophy that is apparent in this dissertation. I learnt not to expect to find an objective truth as I explored the realities that were constructed by the various people involved in my research—including myself—with the intention of understanding the ways by which we make our own truths through our words and actions. Interpretive methods provided me with a more apt line of enquiry, with different questions and more meaningful solutions than those that could be answered by brief responses from a simulated situation that I had seen in the sensory lab. This paradigm allowed me to tell a different kind of story, of differing versions of reality guided by my research question, ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’

Figure 3.1 gives an overview of my research approach and the chosen research design and process. An explanation for each is included in this chapter emphasising the rationale for their use in the study.
Research paradigm: Ontology and epistemology

Ontology is the branch of philosophy that is concerned with the study of what exists, and how things that exist are understood and categorised (O’Leary 2007). As a post-positivist researcher, I acknowledge that humans play a large part in the construction of knowledge, and ‘truth’ and knowledge are not fixed but fluid realities informed by meanings people attribute to their experiences and social worlds. Therefore, the ontology of the reality studied in this research includes the existence of both an empirical and an imagined foodscape that exists as a social construction. The reality of food is obvious—it is procured, transformed from raw to cooked, and consumed. But the social reality that exists around food in a specific foodscape cannot be so easily evaluated, as the foodscape itself is created or invented by human actors and for that reason is perceived differently by each person (O’Leary 2007).

In this study, although the foodscape is but one construction of reality, it is the one through which I investigate what is understood by journalists, cookbook authors and chefs communicating their ‘sense of self’ to their communities of taste through their interpretation of cuisine:
‘Sense of self’ suggests that the social reality of the lives of people is formed by their everyday thoughts, interactions and conversations. These are socially and experientially based, local and specific in nature (although elements are often shared among many individuals and even across cultures) and dependant for their form on the individuals or groups holding the constructions (Guba and Lincoln in Denzin, Norman K & Lincoln 1994 p. 110).

The implication is that the journalists, authors and chefs in this study live in the socially specific world of the foodscape, with its unique food-related experiences and processes along with the social realities of the communities of taste who connect with any or all of these fields. It is expected that they should all present a highly selective view on the social processes involved in their respective fields, intertwined with their professional and private beings. This shows that the only way of gaining access to the ‘truth’ is through representations of it, and all representations involve particular points of view.

If I were objective, or if you were objective or if anyone was, he would have to be put away somewhere in an institution because he’d be some sort of vegetable (Brinkley cited in Patton 2002 p. 96).

A social constructivist-interpretive assumption embraces the perspective that a life-world cannot be constructed in isolation, and objectivity is an impossible situation. This raises a series of questions that needs to be asked (and answered) to reveal meanings delivered by the foodscape.

According to Patton (2002 p. 97), the foundation questions for this type of enquiry are:

How have the people in this setting constructed reality? What are their reported perceptions, ‘truths’ explanations, beliefs, and worldview? What are the consequences of their constructions for their behaviours, and for those with whom they interact?

These questions supported the methodological framework underlying my investigation of how food news, cookbooks, restaurants chefs have influenced cuisine
construction in the Sydney/regional foodscape setting from 2000–2009. Data collected from interpretations of texts—GL articles and cookbooks—was juxtaposed with chefs’ perceptions, as their ‘truths’ explanations, beliefs, and worldview were gathered as data from both interviews and ethnographic observations of their restaurants. Consequences of their constructions were found in connections about cuisine and flavour between these four interconnected aspects of the case study.

The foodscape is used as a framework in which discourses or accounts are examined, rather than as a reality that will provide truths or facts (Kitzinger 2004). In other words, in using a foodscape framework, I acknowledge that all the experiences involved in this study are embedded in a social web of interpretation and re-interpretation. This naturally flows into the qualitative epistemology used for the interpretation of the various data in this study.

In all studies of this nature, the investigator and the object(s) of investigation are assumed to be interactively linked so the ‘findings’ are literally created as the investigation proceeds. In this case, the connection between the topic under investigation and my own background is intertwined. My role in the research is enhanced by my own experience as a chef and this role as a kind of insider lends reciprocal value to the exchanges between me as the interviewer and my interviewees.

My interpretation of flavour, as a food researcher and culinary expert, will be applied as a lens to view the representations of cuisine by media articles, cookbooks, chefs and restaurants in the foodscape framework to enable an understanding of flavour beyond my own experiential interpretation by juxtaposing the data from each source and discerning recurring patterns between them and unique understandings and behaviours. The interdisciplinary nature of the thesis is highlighted by drawing on specific elements of the foodscape using a combination of CDA of the texts and ethnographic interpretation of the interviews and restaurants, and hospitality in general, guided by Goffman’s theoretical framework.

My research question was developed from my own professional background as a chef, and my passion for experimentation with flavour construction. That cooking is a communication medium has been investigated from various viewpoints. For example, Giards(1998) views cooking as a transmission of knowledge, while Paresocoli’s (2011)
focuses on the communicative power of food using semiotic analysis as a tool for understanding culinary encounters. Barthes (1961) found it has the ability to communicate in different registers, and can be regarded as a form of language, while Counihan (2008) explores food narratives that communicate information about the self. However, to date there has been little research from the perspective of cultural influences on the creation and maintenance of cuisine flavours. To this end, I turned to the methods of ethnography to obtain ‘thick description’ (Ryle 1949 p. 474) of the situation I was researching.

‘Thick description’ is a term used by ethnographic researchers to explain their interpretive practices. The phrase was coined by philosopher Gilbert Ryle (1949) and extended by cultural anthropologist Clifford Geertz (1973), who expressed it as the kind of intellectual goal of the ethnographer. Geertz uses Ryle’s (1949) example of two boys who are ‘rapidly contracting the right eyelids of their right eyes’ or winking. He describes how one action—in this case, a wink—that outwardly appears to be the same mannerism in either boy can actually have numerous meanings, depending on the purpose of the person who actually performs it (and the person interpreting or receiving the message). The social codes that exist around such bodily movements serve to separate a simple twitch from an intentional communicative moment. When a third (winking) boy is introduced, with intentions that are different from the other two, another complex layer is added to the cultural meanings of the action. ‘Thin description’ only explains the outward appearance of the twitch, whereas ‘thick description’ is:

A stratified hierarchy of meaningful structures in terms of which twitches, winks, fake-winks, parodies, rehearsals of parodies are produced, perceived, and interpreted, and without which they would not ... in fact exist, no matter what anyone did or didn’t do with his eyelids (Geertz 1973 p. 7).

In other words, ‘thick description’ takes in the many cultural possibilities associated with any action. Food and flavour are also subject to ‘thin’ and ‘thick’ descriptions. Food is a source of nourishment, and as long as it has the necessary nutritional content, can be perfectly adequate for keeping an organism alive. It is not imperative that flavour must add enjoyment to the eating experience or mean anything beyond a warning to an eater of whether or not food is safe to eat. A ‘thin’ description would merely comment on the process of eating. However, as food and flavour are culturally empowered and laden with symbols,
food habits can be interpreted in many, many ways. For example, food communicates about gender and power, (Counihan 1999; Murcott 1996; Probyn 2000), and every eating experience can be decoded, deciphered and unravelled from many different perspectives. Additionally, the flavour of food is more than the perception of sweet or salty, concentrated or faint. A cuisine imparts its individuality by the flavours in its food so a ‘thick’ description would comment on the why, where, who and how of that flavour.

In this study, I am faced with ‘a multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed upon or knotted into one another, which are at once strange, irregular, and inexplicit and which he must contrive somehow first to grasp and then to render’ (Geertz 1973 p. 10). As an ethnographer, I am seeking to develop a ‘thick description’ of the often-complicated cultural phenomenon of how flavour is interpreted.

**Research design**

To understand the world of meaning, one must interpret it (Schwandt 1994). The perspective of constructivism is to find meaning in the complex world from the viewpoint of those who live in it. In order to do this in the context of my research, I chose the case study method.

**Research approach: Case Study**

According to O’Leary (2004), a case study is not really a methodology, but an approach to research. It is both a ‘process of inquiry about the case, and the product of that enquiry’ (Stake 2005 p. 444). As well, there is no one ‘right’ way for a case study to be conducted, because case studies can have methodologies within themselves, and the methods for data collection and analysis are diverse.

Stake (2005 p. 445) maintains that every case is ‘a specific, unique, bounded system’. This implies that every case, with its unique features and activity patterns, needs to be contained within a frame or boundary. Outside this boundary, other features may be significant in forming context to the study but are not themselves included in the focus. In this dissertation, for example, cuisine, culture and communication form the system around a central point, creation of flavour. These three interdependent elements—bounded by the foodscape—create a unique system that is specific to time and place. It is set in an external
context of unique surrounds—the Australian environment—which add specificity to the research.

Although the overall concept of studying cases is to concentrate on experiential knowledge, they can be grouped by the type of interest that fulfils the primary reason for their undertaking. Stake (2005) categorises case research as either intrinsic, instrumental or multiple/collective, while Yin (2003 p. 46) developed a matrix to show how single and multiple case studies reflect different design situations and analysis. Other typologies of case study exist in historical or political social science. My own case study, according to Stake’s (2005) typology, is intrinsic because has been undertaken to give a better understanding of a singular case, rather than a multiplicity of cases or because it illustrates a trait or problem. The choice of case method for this research allows me to focus on one case and one set of boundaries, using an intrinsic design to develop the case’s own issues, contexts and interpretations and its own ‘thick’ description and to put forward an understanding of the challenges made to and by flavour in a dynamic culinary environment.

The goal of using case study analysis in this instance is to find a richness and depth of understanding that goes beyond the possibilities of large-scale research. All research has limitations—for example, time, cost and travel—and this is no different. However, on another level, this kind of case study analysis gives me the opportunity to concentrate on the processes of flavour management by ethnic restaurant chefs, an area that has not yet been reflexively explored. I was able to assemble the cultural specification of flavour construction influences in the selected newspaper articles and cookbooks and build an ethnography of the restaurant settings by eliciting the rapport and trust of my interview subjects. Most importantly, the case has intrinsic value in that it is unique and interesting.

Difficulties encountered were not unexpected. The level of access to chefs for interviews was complicated firstly by their motivation to participate in the research, and secondly by their hours available for contact. It was more complicated than I expected to arrange interviews with chefs. While some generously put aside their time for an interview, others either consented then pulled out, or ignored the request. I recognise that restaurants are businesses, and that the time of the chef is very limited so it was probably not ill feeling that was driving these reactions—more likely a lack of time. As well, cooking is currently associated with celebrity. Some chefs who were invited to participate in interviews may have
preferred paying opportunities for their time, which would be more likely to create value by adding publicity exposure for their restaurants, and they may have felt some reluctance to commit to being a research participant without these incentives.

Another of the cited problems of case study research—the effect that the researcher has on the researched and vice versa—is problematic, but not insurmountable. In fact, it is recognised that the case study will be informed by my evaluation of how my own experiences and background affects my understanding of the inquiry process. In order to carry out the interviews, I drew on my own experience as a chef to position myself in what has been described as a peripheral membership role (Adler & Adler 1987) in the profession of cooking, rather than being an active or complete member of the profession. As explained in Chapter 1, Adler and Adler (1987) pointed out the difficulties of conducting pure observation in practice, emphasising that the researcher’s subjective status always affects the validity of the data. Their classification of the way that researchers operated on one of three levels of involvement in group membership processes—as peripheral, active or complete members. I was able to view the groups I was studying with an insider’s perspective without having to commit to the study settings, in other words, as a peripheral member of the group. Peripheral membership is marginal and the least committed, characterised by a lack of intensity and an ability to retain self-identity. The advantage of this approach was that I could make use of our shared knowledge of cooking practices to enter into a dialogue with the chefs being studied. Due to my prior restaurant experience, I was able to establish a mutual understanding of each restaurant context without having to be actively involved in its operation. As the analysis proceeded, there were opportunities to reinforce my findings owing to this privileged status.

This enhanced the creditability of the research results, highlighting how I engaged in a systematic search for alternative themes, divergent patterns and rival explanations (Patton 2002) in the course of the case study.

**Text analysis**

Newspaper articles selected for analysis from GL focused on reviews specific to the cuisines in the study. Articles about Vietnamese, Italian or Australian cuisine, for example, both initiated and followed public discourse about the cuisines. Further, these commentaries give a topical account of food and restaurant trends as they provide accessible records of
progressive food developments in the public domain over time, and thus monitor the growth in public awareness about the cuisines.

The implemented sampling strategy for GL texts was based on Baur and Lahusen (2005), who suggested several methods to address the problems of sampling newspaper-specific data. They put forward the three perspectives as seen in Figure 3.2. GL is positioned between Perspective One and Perspective Two. From Perspective One, it is an interested party that includes opinions, stories, metaphors, comments etc, but is also occasionally involved in public debates about food-related matters, reporting public claims of who, when and why.

Newspapers are treated as... ...by analysing...

Figure 3.2: Possible perspectives when reading newspaper articles
(adapted from Baur and Lahusen (2005))

GL therefore affects people’s knowledge, opinions and attitudes because it exists to inform the reader about facts, events and opinions of social actors such as chefs and others involved in its discourse. My text analysis includes the specific organisation of information, implicit comments and rhetorical devices (e.g. metaphors and catch words) in order to capture what meaning and messages GL ascribes to reality as well as public debate, especially about Australian cuisine and its acceptance of migrant cuisines.

Since the amount of available data was so large, it had to be sampled. Figure 3.3 shows the three steps I used in my selection of the data. The first step was to isolate the target cuisines in GL. The second step refined the abundance of available data by selecting articles
about the cuisines that appeared in certain weeks of the month. Thirdly, the relevant types of articles were separated into categories for analysis.

Figure 3.2: Developing a sampling strategy
(adapted from Baur & Lahusen 2005)

As data from the GL supplement is a result of social processes, and the information was to be analysed using interpretive methods, the sampling process was straightforward. A strategy was developed to capture a random sample of articles from 2000–2009. As indicated in the figure above, articles about Vietnamese cuisine were sampled by those appearing in the first issue every month and Italian the third issue every month. Articles about Australian cuisine were far fewer, and were sorted by relevance. All articles were sourced using the digital database EBSCOHOST available through the University of Western Sydney (UWS) Library.

For Vietnamese references, the search parameters were the keywords ‘Good Living’ ‘Vietnamese’ and within the publication dates 2000–2009. A total of 203 hits was made, but some of these articles related to other themes than Vietnamese food—Vietnamese fashion or architecture, for instance, and were discarded. To delimit the data, articles to be analysed were randomly selected by downloading those that appeared in the first week of the publication for each month from 2000–2009 (i.e. a maximum of twelve articles per year). In
some instances, there were no articles published in the selected edition (see Appendix 2: Breakdown of hits for Italian and Vietnamese keywords).

Italian references were sources by the keywords ‘Good Living’ and ‘Italian’ within the same publication dates. A total of 1,306 hits was made, but again, some of these articles related to other themes than Italian food. To delimit the data, the same strategy was used. A sample was randomly selected by downloading those that appeared in the third week of the publication. As with Vietnamese search, there were no articles published in the selected edition on some occasions. In the breakdown of hits for Vietnamese and Italian keywords, there was more than double the number of hits for Italian than Vietnamese. There are several possibilities for this disparity in distribution (see Appendix 2).

By combining the analysis of GL with other sources of data in the thesis—cookbooks and interviews and restaurant observations—I was able to increase the capacity to substantiate my interpretation from each data source. For example, utterances by chefs in the interviews on the topic of their practice in their own cuisine could be explored by juxtaposing them with writings from GL. By anchoring all data sources in the context of the foodscape, a reliable portrayal of representations of flavour could be constructed.

As previously mentioned, the only way of gaining access to the ‘truth’ is through representations of it, and all representations involve particular points of view. Of course, GL does not present an unbiased picture of reality and its journalists present a highly selective view in the processes involved around writing about the food landscape. In the GL analysis, I compare and evaluate these representations in terms of what they highlight and what they conceal, include and exclude. In this way, relative conclusions can be arrived at about the veracity of GL’s representations. In this sense, I do not regard GL as a mirror of the reality of the foodscape; rather, I recognised it as an institutionalised form of describing reality incorporating the perspectives of journalists and others involved in putting the supplement together each week. It is therefore an amalgamation and conflation of different realities: a window to an external reality and an institutionalised reality at the same time (Baur & Lahuusen 2005) reflecting and contributing to shifting cultural values and cuisine identities.

The benefit of using GL articles is that they provide a reliable source of longitudinal data, as GL has been in continuous publication for more than 25 years and there are no other
equivalent culinary media sources. As well, the digital archives of GL are a consistent data source, which can easily be re-checked by others (Kellehear 1993). Not only are there hard copies of back issues kept in the repository of the National Library of Australia, but digital copies are accessible through university and public library websites.

Finally, the exclusive benefit of using GL was that it acted as a filter of contemporary views about the three selected cuisines, representing a coherent perspective in their comparison with the focus on the audience that is interested in a high-status restaurant experience that corresponds to the selected chefs. That is to say, it provides understanding of each of the three cuisines from the same community of taste.

**Cookbooks**

The cookbooks featured in this study were specifically selected from those published between 2000 and 2009, written by Vietnamese Italian and Australian authors anchored in the Australian foodscape and available in bookshops. The choice was limited. The shrinking number of bookstores brought on by the increasing preference for buying books online was one problem, while some books that would have been appropriate were out of print or published outside the timeframe.

Of the three Vietnamese cookbooks chosen for analysis, two authors had Vietnamese cultural backgrounds and one was Australian. Although both Vietnamese writers are restaurateurs, none of these authors is a trained chef. Lien Yeomans, author of *Green Papaya* (2001) emigrated to Australia in 1962 as a Colombo Plan scholarship recipient, and Pauline Nguyen, who wrote *Secrets of the Red Lantern* (2008), emigrated with her family as a refugee after the Vietnam/American war. Meera Freeman is an Australian author who wrote the cookbook *The Flavours of Vietnam* (2002) in collaboration with Vietnamese restaurateur Văn Nhâm Lê. Each author conveys his or her own perspective of Vietnamese flavours to the cookbook reader.

The three Italian cookbook authors represented are Salvatore Pepe (*Cibo*, 2005), Stefano de Pieri (*Modern Italian Food*, 2007) and Stefano Manfredi (*Seasonal Italian Favourites*, 2009). Pepe emigrated to Australian as an adult, while de Pieri and Manfredi spent some of their formative years in Italy with family. All three Italian authors are professionally trained chefs.
Although it is not explored by this thesis, the gender difference is noted. I could find no Italian cookbooks published by women in the timeframe.

The three Australian cookbooks used in the study were Stephanie Alexander’s *The Cook’s Companion* (2004), Sally Hammond’s *Australian Regional Food: the best chefs’ recipes* (2006), and *bills sydney food: the original and classic recipe collection* (2009) by Bill Grainger. *The Cook’s Companion* is widely distributed in Australian kitchens, with no emphasis on settings, while *Australian Regional Food* uses state boundaries to divide its sections and focuses on ingredients from each area. *bills sydney food* concentrates on a single location.

**Interviews**

According to Yin (2003), interviews are essential sources of case study information, and he recommends that for best results the stream of questions should be conversational rather than a series of structured queries. I followed this approach. The interviews of chefs involved individual, face-to-face, verbal interchange, and lasted between 45 and 75 minutes. Fontana and Frey (2005 p. 698) remind us that interviews are ‘not neutral tools of data gathering, but rather active interactions between people leading to negotiated, contextually based results’ and need to be guided by conversations rather than structured queries. Fontana and Frey (2005) list seven steps that the interviewer needs to do in order to manage the process effectively and these provided guidance when designing my interview strategy. These are represented in Figure 3.4.

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1 The book title is not in capitals. The forward by Terry Durack says: ‘The name was spelt in lower case, with the anarchic absence of an apostrophe’.
With the steps of the thesis, types of analysis, literature review, objectives and conceptualisation understood, I could proceed to choose the data collection methods best suited for the topic.

**Research instruments**

As research design is an iterative process, I returned to these steps to confirm that the appropriate instruments were being used.

I also considered the following points on selecting an appropriate method for data collection adapted from Brewerton and Millward (2001). The method must be:

- Appropriate to your research objective
• Able to produce a form of data appropriate to testing your hypothesis/hypotheses or addressing your research question(s)
• Practicable given time, resource constraints and the feasibility of using it within a chosen or given context
• Ethically sound
• Agreed and accepted by your supervisor
• Used appropriately, in the context of its original formulation and development
• One you feel comfortable with.

Using this guidance, I then selected the research tools used to gather data, which were the text analysis of GL articles and cookbooks, ethnographic sensing of restaurants, and semi-structured interviews with the chefs. The research methods for the restaurants were predominantly visual, as the data collection was restricted to meet other exigencies although awareness of the auditory and olfactory elements of the restaurants was considered in my ethnographic reflections.

The selection of the period 2000–2009 allowed me to track the socio-historic development of public perception of food flavours at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and follow the changes in the perception of the three cuisines from the point of view of this influential section of the press.

**Texts for analysis**

Gallegos (2005) charted the incorporation of ‘ethnic’ recipes into Australian cookbooks, by tracing their gradual addition into the British-based Australian culinary heritage through their increasing presence in cookbooks. The texts supporting these inclusions were divided into four approximate periods over 100 years. These ‘phases’ were designated the ‘foreign’ (1890s–1920s) the ‘continental/oriental’ (1930s–1950s) the ‘international/multicultural’ (1960s–1980s) and the ‘Australian’ (1990s–2000s). Her study illustrates the dynamic nature of the Australian foodscape, the changes being pinpointed at over time.

I focus on a further stage in the development of Australian cuisine that extends beyond Gallegos’ 1990s–2000s interpretation by examining the content of both GL articles and cookbooks, to further the impression of the Australian foodscape in 2000–2009. This
focuses on the integration of ethnic cuisine by taking into account GL articles about this topic and evidence from cookbooks that reflected the types of cuisine fusion between Asian cuisines that has occurred since 2000. I also questioned Gallegos’ prediction that ‘bush foods’ would become embedded in the Australian culinary environment.

**Sampling process for chefs and restaurants**

Chefs from Vietnamese, Italian and Australian restaurants were selected for participation in the study according to their restaurant’s listing in the SMH GFG 2008. In 2008, this guide had a 37-member reviewing team, which spent more than seven months appraising eateries in Sydney and NSW for the best places to dine. Each reviewer dined at least once at every restaurant listed, if not twice or more, booking anonymously and paying for the meal. Each review was completely independent (Thomsen & Savill 2007). Although star ratings are awarded in the guide, the recruitment process was not influenced by the number of stars awarded to the restaurants.

Initial contact was made by letter, in which details of the study were given to each chef either personally or by email. This was followed up a week later by a phone call, in which the chef was asked to participate in the study. Depending on the availability of the chef, a date and time was established. Interviews were conducted throughout 2008–2009.

As purposeful sampling was employed, the size of the sample was determined by informational considerations. Twelve interviews were originally planned, but as there was no new significant information forthcoming after nine interviews, no further meetings were arranged. In cases where there are a small number of participants, the in-depth information obtained can be seen is valuable enough, and it is not necessary to keep interviewing for limited or no additional information (Lincoln & Guba 1985). Further, the interviews were supported by the ethnographic observational strategy of the restaurants and semiotic analysis of media and cookbooks, thus extending the complexity of the study.

The interviews took place in the restaurants belonging to each chef. With the exception of one chef, all preferred that the interview be conducted out of service hours. A benefit of this fieldwork was the opportunity to observe the chefs willingness to participate in the rapport-building process by offering samples of their cuisine to provide vivid illustrations to their approach to flavour.
Interviews were recorded using two MP3 players (for back up) and transcribed by a professional transcription service.

**Analysis methods**

The broad framework for the analysis of the texts addressed in this study was Fairclough’s (1995) model of the dimensions of CDA, represented in Figure 3.5. An explanation of the model follows, as does an explanation of the innate flexibility of its structure, which allowed me to incorporate an analytical strategy specific to each topic.

Fairclough’s (1995) CDA enhanced facets of diversity in my methodology, enabling visible interconnections between the texts analysed and the ethnographic interpretation of the material features of restaurant kitchens and dining rooms and interviews with chefs. The model is derived from a critical theory of language in which language is considered a form of social practice. I applied this model to my investigations, not by using it as a linguistic frame, but by adapting its focus to a socio-historic/socio-cultural exploration of newspaper articles and cookbooks informed by a critical reading of the language represented.

Although developed and implemented as a systematic-functional linguistic methodology, CDAs categories and concepts have been developed directly or indirectly from the social semiotics model developed by Hodge and Kress (1988). This model in turn was derived from the work of Saussure (1974 p.16), who defined the foundation of semiotics as ‘the science of the life of signs in society’. While Saussure did not develop a theory of social semiotics, he was unequivocally in support of a social base for the study of signs, and his thinking allowed for the subsequent development of a social semiotic framework.
The basic premise of communication is that as well as connecting verbally, humans communicate by using semiotic systems, in other words, by recognising non-verbal cues that are organised and integrated into the language system. Such signs can and do appear throughout all fields of human endeavour, but in this case the print medium of the GL supplement was targeted in order to decode the messages sent and received about the flavours of the selected cuisines and the cuisine’s position in the foodscape.

CDA was developed and implemented as a systematic-functional linguistic methodology, in other words, it was a vigorous process developed to facilitate consistency and depth when analysing text, especially that in the published media. Although not directly applied, this approach influenced my analysis of meaning of interviews and ethnography inquiry. Since my approach is shaped by social semiotics, my interpretation of restaurant

Figure 3.4: Fairclough’s Dimensions of Discourse Analysis (1995 p. 98)
spaces are, for example, in themselves ‘readings’ of the symbolic language of those spaces. My interpretation of their codes is how I sense the kitchens and dining rooms, using each restaurant’s visual signs and symbols as a semiotic text, and incorporating the auditory and olfactory as a backdrop in my reflections on their settings. Ethnographic impressions were mapped using Goffman (1959) as a guide. Conversely, in my analytical strategy for the interviews with chefs, I used content analysis. Even so, considering interviews as texts representing spoken language once again I found Fairclough’s (1995) original model fluid enough to accommodate this specific analytic strategy. The analysis was guided by the most significant themes explored by chefs regarding their strategies to manage the identity of their cuisines in the Australian foodscape.

According to Janks (1997), Fairclough’s model (1989, 1995) consists of three interrelated processes of analysis tied to three inter-related dimensions of discourse. The three processes interpreted though the theme of this thesis are:

1. The object of analysis (in this case, the four aspects of the foodscape, which includes the representations of the three cuisines in the media, cookbooks, the scenography of the restaurants and the perspectives of chefs.

2. The processes by which the foodscape is understood by specific actors in those four aspects, in terms of constructing both representations of the cuisines and also the flavours according to specific cultural identities.

3. The socio-historical conditions of the foodscape (2000–2009) that dictate these processes, with reference to the time-frame in which migrants and their cuisines have been accepted, increased travel experiences to their countries, availability of high-quality, diverse products from different countries — for example, in supermarket "ethnic" products sections — and the promotion that cuisine has had in Australia from TV.

Fairclough’s assertion is that each of these elements requires a different kind of analysis.

1. Text analysis (description of the features of textual aspects of the foodscape)

2. Processing analysis (interpretation of the relevant aspects of the foodscape)

3. Social analysis (explanation how individuals construct selves, social categories and social realities in the foodscape).
Further deconstruction of the model reveals a three-dimensional image of embedded boxes, linked by the different types of analysis necessary for each dimension. The interdependence of each process is accentuated by the links from dimensions to processes.

The foremost attraction of Fairclough’s (1995) model is the inherent flexibility in the interrelationships between the text, process and practice. In agreement with Janks (1997), one of the advantages of using this model is that it does not depend on a linear analysis; in other words, the analysis can begin in any dimension as long as all are considered, and are shown to be mutually explanatory. Guided by this model, the analysis of the social context articulated in all four aspects of the foodscape could be systematically integrated into each analytical step.

A range of strategies was utilised in order to answer the research question, ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’ The semiotic analysis of media articles and cookbooks, ethnographic interpretations of restaurant spaces (observations) and the interviews with chefs each needed specific analytical approaches. The advantage of this approach was that rather than using one method exclusively, an interdisciplinary mix could be applied to interpret the three spheres: the communicative power of media and cookbooks (semiotic analysis), the interconnection of restaurant spaces (observation), and the life-world of the chefs (interviews). These three supporting strategies of interpretation acted as counterpoints in the analysis of this case study. The result of applying these three methods of interpretation to the case study was a ‘more accurate, comprehensive and objective representation of the object of the study’ (Silverman 2006 p. 291). Interview data, field data and text data were contrasted to make better sense of each other, the strategy adding ‘rigor, breadth, complexity, richness and depth’ (Denzin & Lincoln 2005 p. 8) to the study.

**Textual analysis**

In this section, I refer to the method of data collection as it relates to the GL articles and the nine cookbooks. The semiotic analysis of cookbooks and GL articles were used in data triangulation with interviews and observations to uphold the validity of the research to develop converging lines of enquiry (Yin 2003).

Cookbooks and media articles provide a good example of how cultural attitudes are filtered and reflected by the publisher at a particular time and place. Both sources were
analysed as cultural artefacts that reinforce the impact of society and culture on knowledge about—and interpretation of—cuisine by chefs and their restaurant customers. In the following section, I will expand on the data selection and analysis process of the GL articles used in order to reflect on these realities.

**Good Living analysis**

There are further significant benefits for using textual data from GL magazine (synthesised in Table 3.1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Richness</strong></th>
<th>Close analysis of GL texts reveals presentational subtleties and skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Relevance and effect</strong></td>
<td>GL texts influence how the foodscape is perceived, the people in it and how they interact in it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Naturally occurring</strong></td>
<td>GL texts document what writers and readers are actually doing in the world, without being dependant on being asked by researchers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability</strong></td>
<td>GL texts are readily accessible and not dependant on access or ethical constraints</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3.2: **Advantages of textual data** (adapted from Silverman 2006 p.157)

Close analysis of the selected texts from GL revealed rich data about how each cuisine in the study was represented over a particular period. Not only could the total number of articles that were published be counted, but also the breakdown into type of articles and emerging themes could be closely monitored. For example, editorial pieces, recipes, cookbook and restaurant reviews communicated different perspectives about the cuisines. From this, themes on cuisine, flavour and ingredients could then be evaluated in relation to recurring representations of the cuisines derived from interviews, observations and cookbooks in the foodscape.

The relevance and effect of the texts could also be scrutinised for implications of how the GL writers envisaged and communicated about the foodscape. Not only did their assertions imply how they visualised the cuisine in the foodscape, but what they wanted the reader to imagine about the cuisine and perhaps how they expected them to act on the information they disclosed.
The data gathered from GL was characterised by patterns identified in the treatment of the cuisines selected for the study. It was then used to identify accentuated elements of the cuisine, and how their meanings could be interpreted and explained in the foodscape context.

In terms of my analysis, the questions were applied to the three selected cuisines. Firstly, a random selection of articles published in GL about the three respective cuisines was selected. These texts were investigated firstly for their recurrent themes on cuisine core flavour identity, sourced from restaurant reviews, recipes, ingredient lists and so on. Secondly, from the same sources, an appraisal followed of the identity of the cuisines, focusing on their value in the foodscape and influence on other cuisines. These themes were interpreted by utilising the questions from the above Table 3.1, which were designed to guide the ethnographic observations. As is illustrated by the model (see Figure 3.5), a projection of the socio-historical/socio-cultural discourse was implied in the articles throughout their text, so interpretations and explanations were formulated by GL as it communicated information to the reader. Any evidence from the feedback loop was also subject to this scrutiny.

Data from GL provided a unique perspective on the foodscape. Although there are many media data sources, such as other food magazines, television shows and internet, few have the longevity and reliability of GL. According to the statistics from 2009 quoted by Roy Morgan Research and published by Fairfax Media (2011):

- around than two thirds of readers spend more than ten minutes reading each issue
- around three quarters have been four or more times to a restaurant or cafe within the last three months
- over two thirds of readers have taken some form of action after reading or seeing a GL advertisement
- 497,000 or 80% of readers went to restaurant within the last three months
- 470,000 or 76% of readers went to a cafe in the last three months
- 454,000 or 74% of readers agreed that they enjoy food from all over the world.

That this readership was measured and compiled gives additional credence as to why GL was given precedence over magazines, television programs and internet articles, for which statistical analysis is not easily accessible.
The way GL is produced, shared and used in a socially organised way is at the heart of the analysis. However, it is recognised that this was not the only source of data available with which to address the research question, which was why it was supported with evidence from the other research tools. For example, accounts by chefs in the interviews on the topic of their own cuisine could be explored by juxtaposing them with findings from the GL, the cookbooks, and the ethnographic observations of restaurants. By anchoring these data sources in the context of the foodscape, a reliable portrayal of representations of flavour could be constructed.

The analysis in Chapter 4 shows the ways GL engages with the foodscape, its significance in constructing and reflecting the foodscape, and the value of the text to those who respond to it.

**Cookbooks analysis**

Cookbooks were selected for the study on the basis they written and published for the Australian market. There were no Vietnamese recipe books published in Australian until 1995 (Freeman & Lê 1995), although the mass immigration of Vietnamese occurred in the mid-1970s.

The first modern cookbooks appeared in Vietnam in the 1920s (Mar 1976). They had simple recipes and concise instructions and were aimed at upper- and middle-class readers. According to Appadurai (1988), cookbooks presuppose a degree of literacy; before 1945 only about 10 per cent of the population was literate² (Biddington & Biddington 1997) and access to means of producing them—reading, writing and printing—were usually in the control of the upper classes (Appadurai 1988). A confirmatory email exchange with Luke Nguyen (12/08/2011 pers. comm.), co-owner of the Red Lantern restaurant in Sydney, verified that cookbooks were used in Vietnam in the 1960s, although he was unable to confirm if any had been translated into English. None was brought to Australia by his family when they fled Vietnam in the 1970s. In previous centuries, Vietnamese cooks had relied on oral transmission only (Marr 1976) and this did not cease with the publication of cookbooks.

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² At present, the literacy rate is the highest in Asia, thanks to Ho Chi Minh’s prescience and government strategy from 1975 to the present.
For expatriate Vietnamese, cookbooks can be culturally relevant in maintaining and valuing ethnic identity. According to Nguyen (2007), many second-generation Vietnamese do not know how to prepare some of their favourite Vietnamese foods. Cookbooks devoted to the cuisine therefore promote ethnobiological knowledge and practices that can be used by members of a Vietnamese immigrant community and contribute to recipe stability by writing down ingredients and methods, rather than relying on spoken tradition.

Importantly, ethnic cookbooks such as the ones analysed in this thesis can also be seen as symbols of acculturation into a dominant group, whereby the food habits of a migrant group are not only accepted by the host community, but actively sought (buying the cookbook) and applied (cooking the recipes).

The featured cookbooks were analysed using a similar method to the articles from GL, by linking Goffman’s (1959) theory of impression management to Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model. In Chapter 5, I give a detailed description of the structure and layout of each book, comment on its narrative, and analyse dishes common to the three cookbooks in each of the two ethnic cuisines, decoding the processes and ingredients and interpreting the recurrent flavour themes apparent in each cuisine. The analysis of the Australian cuisine is discussed in Chapter 7 regarding the influence of the migration of cuisines.

**Ethnographic observations of restaurants**

The ethnographic observation of the restaurants extended the complexity of the study. Linked to the interviews, the restaurants were naturally occurring settings in which data could be systematically collected to capture social meanings of the space and evidence of signs and symbols relating to the cultural identity of the cuisine.

Observation of the restaurants spaces took place concurrently with the interviews. In all but two instances, these observations did not take place during business hours, because the interview meetings were scheduled to take place before or after service due to work constraints on the chefs and due to the limited time available to spend with each chef selected for the study. The nature of the research design demanded that the comparatively brief encounter of the interview could be supplemented by fieldwork notes and photographs. In addition to the interviews, field notes and photographs/videos were employed to record impressions of both restaurant and kitchen. Each chef was asked for permission to record
visual images of both spaces, and this part of the data collection occurred following the interview. In most cases, chefs accompanied me through the kitchen, pointing out areas that I might find interesting, and showing me how work within the kitchen was ordered during service.

**Interviews with chefs**

The strength of qualitative interviewing is the opportunity it provides to collect and rigorously examine narrative accounts of social worlds. Qualitative interviewing provided me with a way of exploring the points of view of my research subjects. The most important issue was to generate data that gave an authentic insight into chefs’ experiences (Silverman 2001).

The purpose of assembling the interviews was to explore how chefs create and maintain their own subjective understandings of reality. However, I took into account that life went on outside the interview and that other social worlds exist outside the interview dialogue that may or may not have had a bearing on the information told to me at the time.

In food research, creativity and the life-world of chefs has been of interest to a number of qualitative researcher (Chossat & Gergaud 2003; Klosse *et al.* 2004; Ottenbacher & Harrington 2007; Schafheitle 2000; Stierland & Lynch 2008; Sutton 2001). Their studies have shown that in-depth interviewing produces far richer data than could be collected by a set of generalised facts. A further advantage is that interview data could be integrated and triangulated with related data from observational and text analysis.

Each chef holds their own implicit awareness based in part on their cultural consciousness. However, because of the practical commonalities of restaurant life in Australia, each chef shares elements that are specific to the profession, whether Vietnamese, Italian or Australian. Although the characteristics of the reality I was studying are derived from the distinct perspectives of different people, in particular their cultural backgrounds, my objective was to find points of commonality in their attitudes to cuisine. By systematically evaluating the emergent patterns of chefs’ social construction and creation of cuisine, I was able to make a reasoned approximation about the reality of flavour from their perspectives.

Similarly, sensorial perception and visual observations of the chefs’ restaurants were subject to interpretation in the construction of culinary flavour. With emphasis on the visual to discern the processes involved in the creation of flavours. By directly observing the cultural
setting of each restaurant, I was better able to understand and capture the context in which the chefs interact. Table 3.2 shows the value of direct observation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Value of Direct Observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Understand and capture the context of the observation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Openness to discovery</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Insight into ex-routine nuances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Perception of additional information from interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Comprehensive view of setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Reflection and introspection</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 3.3: Value of direct observation**
Adapted from Patton (2002 pp. 262–264)

This firsthand experience in the restaurant settings minimised reliance on prior conceptualisations of the restaurants. As well, there was the opportunity to see things that may have escaped the awareness of the chefs in the setting. Details that were not uncovered in interviews could also be discerned. Further, observational analysis was able to counterpoint the selective perceptions of the interviewees and to compare what was being said with what was observed to be done. By positioning my personal knowledge of restaurant spaces, I could make my own perceptions part of the data and thus arrive at more comprehensive assessment of the setting.

To limit the scope of the study, Italian and Vietnamese chefs were selected as representatives of migrant groups whose cuisine can be found in the Australian foodscape. As mentioned previously, both communities have a significant identity in Australia, having immigrated to Australia in two separate migration surges. Italians relocated mainly after World War II, and Vietnamese at the close of the Vietnam War in the mid- to late 1970s. Their diasporas now have second- and third-generation family members who have become acculturated into Australian society. Some have become restaurant chefs, cooking the food that is representative of the culture of their country of origin. No matter what their
background, all chefs who specialise in both migrant and Australian cuisines are influenced by the economic, social and multicultural environment in Australia.

In the interviews, I gave all the chefs the opportunity to reflect on and speak about their life in ways not always available to them. By drawing on my own background, I hoped to establish trust and familiarity by having genuine interest, assuring confidentiality and not being judgemental, elements of quickly building rapport that was a key to this process. Chefs were encouraged to feel comfortable enough to talk back, and wherever possible to label particular topics as irrelevant, point out misinterpretations and offer corrections.

Although gender representation was not relevant to the study, the sample consisted of one female and eight male respondents, which is consistent with male domination in the career of commercial cookery and restaurant ownership (Swinbank 2002).

**Ethical considerations**

The study was approved by the UWS Ethics prior to the commencement of the interview process. All chefs in the study were sent a Participant’s Information Sheet, which stated the purpose of the study, an Invitation to Participate that affirmed their rights and a Letter of Consent, by which they confirmed their consent to be interviewed. Participants were contacted via a follow-up phone call to confirm their availability. They were informed that they could withdraw from the study at any time.

The data collected in these interviews are in electronic form, and consist of individual sound files and electronic transcriptions of recorded interviews. These files are stored securely in accordance the UWS Data Management, Storage and Retention Policy to protect the privacy of the participants and to preserve the integrity of the data. However, in the case of this research, each chef interviewed gave written permission for me to use their names in the writing of the thesis. Therefore, real names are included.

In summary, four spheres of activities relevant to the foodscape were engaged for the research. GL and cookbooks were analysed for their contribution to the textual representation of the three cuisines. Detailed observations of restaurants accompanied by interviews of their chefs provided life-world impressions. Both areas contribute to the management of culinary
impressions of the Australian foodscape by communities of taste that use these fields as a communication medium.
Chapter 4:
The media construction of the foodscape: Good Living

The following analysis is positioned from the way that Good Living (GL) manages the impressions of Vietnamese and Italian cuisines in its public construction in the foodscape. As established in Chapters 2 and 3, the analysis borrows from Goffman’s (1959 p. 253) metaphor of theatrical performance in referring to the way the GL writers manage the ‘dramatic effect that emerges diffusely from a scene that is presented’. The articles published in GL generalise the images of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine, establishing its own particular viewpoint of the cuisines in the foodscape and creating a shared set of meanings or a ‘working consensus’ (Goffman 1959 p. 10) that it is expected its readership will respond to.

GL also relays the image that it has exclusive access to important food-related news by conveying information and opinions about chefs, restaurants, produce, ingredients and flavours in the Sydney/regional area. Further, it implies legitimacy in its inferences about cuisine by projecting credible representations of the foodscape and potential consumers of Italian and Vietnamese food culture belonging to its community of taste are encouraged to rely on the opinions and views of its food writers.

The analysis of GL texts advances this investigation into how the integrity of flavour in Vietnamese and Italian cuisine is both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia, and how it is positioned in the Australian foodscape by GL. In the sections that follow, I first give an account of the how the methods were used to interpret the ways in which cuisines are represented in GL. Secondly, I explain the dynamic construction of GL texts, followed by my classification of the cuisines as represented by GL. Then, I speculate on the essential flavours of both cuisines, and finally disclose what is considered ‘normal’ Australian food including instances of misrepresentation and contradiction that occur in GL discourse. This chapter begins with an introduction on how the methodological framework corresponds with the analysis of GLs texts.

Following Fairclough (1995), it is possible to state that any reading of text is the product of an interface between the properties of the text and the interpretive sources and practices that
the reader brings to bear upon the text. This suggests that GL engages in a discourse with its readership that mediates between the way in which the GL texts are produced by the SMH media, and received by the GL readers.

The following analysis of GL will acknowledge the course of the text production by the GL food writers, their selective representations of the targeted cuisines to the GL reader, and the possibilities of reader feedback to the sources of production.

**Representations of cuisine in Good Living**

Food writers play a crucial role in the construction of perceptions of cuisines. Duruz (1999) claims that food writers take opposing ‘positions’ about food, either as givers or takers, but rarely both. In analysing GL, these standpoints are cast from the perspectives of writers conveying culinary information about the foodscape. Occasionally a food writer—Matthew Evans for example—has performed the dual roles of chef and restaurant critic, but not as concurrent activities. Duruz maintains that food writers are easily recognised figures:

- The writer as grateful recipient, (the hungry child who remembers the pleasures of being fed);
- The writer at the table as critic (the arbiter of contemporary taste and guide to good living);
- The writer in the kitchen as chef-auteur (the dazzling performer for reverential middle-class audiences) (Duruz 1999 p. 306).

All three of these roles can be verified in GL: Hafner and Greenwood taking the position of writer as grateful recipient, Evans and Thomsen are the restaurant critics, and Manfredi and Mangan both represent the chef-auteur.

Since the impressions of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine are managed from all these perspectives, extra dimensions are created in the shared meanings about the cuisines and provide diverse reflections of socio-cultural practices that are produced, shared and used in a socially organised way in the foodscape. This is a function of the social identity that GL projects and the cultural values it embraces, since all its representations involve particular values and points of view, especially from the GL writers but also from the SMH institution that publishes it. The articles provide information about the treatment of these cuisines gathered over a decade, tracing how cultural attitudes are filtered and reflected by the publisher at a particular time and place.
Further, GL articles are cultural commodities designed to both entertain and keep people socially informed about the foodscape. As such, as Fairclough (1995) would claim, they are cultural artefacts in their own right, informed by their own aesthetics and at the same time, caught up in contributing to shifting cultural values and identities in the foodscape.

My analysis is concerned with the overall construction of these representations, irrespective of whether they are accurate or inaccurate, true or biased. Although GL is composed of journalistic content that is fleeting in nature, the reviews, information and occurrences therein are ‘newsworthy’ in that they entertain and inform. The journalists who are involved in writing for GL seek the ‘new’ in the Sydney/NSW foodscape, in what can be seen as previously ‘hidden’ or ‘concealed’. The adaptation of Fairclough’s (1995) model provides the flexibility needed to interpret the texts over a ten-year period so their thematic content can be continually revisited for indications of fresh perspectives.

**Dynamic construction of Good Living’s representation of the foodscape**

GL texts are commodities that are created for and consumed by a particular social group. It is taken for granted that the GL reader has a wide interest in culinary affairs, and therefore only individuals of this particular type are likely to belong to its ‘community of taste’. The texts of GL provide a source of impressions for the readers who, wishing to know more about a culinary setting than is possible to determine themselves, rely on the inferences that they take from GL and its food writers, thus employing GL as a substitute predictive device. These inferences are one of the sources of information about Vietnamese and Italian cuisine that the reader can use to form impressions about the flavours they can expect when encountering the cuisine, and a means by which they can guide their responses.

In Goffman’s (1959) terms, these inferences are impressions, and they are in a large part the results of the expressiveness of the GL food writers. GL gives off expressions to intentionally convey factual information about cuisines, as well as emitting expressions that are consequences of being part of an large media organisation that influences the foodscape in other ways—by attracting advertisers, running the SMH GL Good Food Awards and sponsoring events, for instance. By managing their impressions, GL helps people come to conclusions about the nature and meaning of culinary organisation and in doing so exerts a strong influence on the
conduct and reactions of the readers. It is consequently in GL’s interest to control and manage the impressions that the readers have of them and the GL section.

The general pattern of GL’s activity in which impression management occurs is encapsulated by Goffman’s ‘performance’ metaphor. A performance is ‘all the activity of a given participant on a given occasion which serves to influence in any way any of the other participants’ (Goffman 1959 p. 15). As part of GL’s function, food writers manage their expressions by being attentive to possible disruptions to the foodworld performances, such as chefs’ movements between restaurants, restaurant closures and other changes that occur in their niche of the foodscape.

As mentioned previously, GL writers are creators of cultural products and continuously need to convince readers that their research is genuine, so that their consumers—buyers and readers—can be assured that their articles are of high quality and the expectations that they create are met. GL therefore conforms to an established format, and its peripheral products, such as the Good Food Awards and other sponsored events, signal an additional legitimacy to the consumers so they accept the claims that are made in the articles. Based on Goffman’s (1959) perspective, I define the text of GL as a front region ‘dramaturgical setting’ by which the core identity of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine is conveyed. On this frontstage, information about the cuisine is communicated to the ‘audience’ of GL readers. Impressions are formed about its content and appearance, and the individual reader can incorporate their own past experiences of the cuisine with the assumptions that are shaped by the articles.

By integrating Goffman’s (1959) theory of impression management with Fairclough’s (1995) model of text analysis, I analysed GL texts in three different ways. Firstly, as the cuisine itself as a text; secondly, by cuisine as a progression in relation to the foodscape; and thirdly, the social analysis of how GL constructs each cuisine as a social reality. The emphasis is on the process of the production and the expression of the texts by the GL journalists rather than the impressions, interpretations and consumption of GL readers, as no research was carried out on the GL readership itself.

Instead, the terms of my position as a food professional and culinary authority, brought about by my peripheral membership (Adler & Adler 1987) of the profession, a perceptive and insightful perspective that is employed as an advantage to exploit an insider’s point of view,
while at the same time retain the distance of self-identity. As mentioned in Chapter 3, the benefit of this position was enhanced by a comprehensive knowledge of the cuisines in the study, and of restaurant practices in front and back regions. To approach the social context text of GL as a socio-historic/socio-cultural account of the Sydney/Regional foodscape, Table 4.1 (adapted from Hammersley & Atkinson 2007) lists those questions that were systematically applied to a statistically relevant percentage of the yearly output of articles about Vietnamese and Italian food from 2000–2009.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How are the GL texts written?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are the GL texts read?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who writes the GL articles?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who reads them?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For what purposes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On what occasions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With what outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was recorded?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What was omitted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is taken for granted?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does the writer seem to take for granted about the reader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What do the readers need to know to make sense of them?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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**Table 4.1: Ethnographic questions about texts**  
(adapted from Hammersley & Atkinson 1983 cited in Silverman 2006)

The ethnographic questions raised in Table 4.1 are linked to Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model, previously detailed in Chapter 3, and a critical instrument in analysing the texts. I utilise GL articles as the object of analysis, and focus on the management of the Vietnamese and Italian culinary impressions in the foodscape by the writers and clarify the socio-historical conditions that dictate their effects on the foodscape.

Figure 4.1 shows how the responses to these ethnographic questions would be investigated by decoding, interpreting and explaining the text of the articles. How do GL journalists write the articles? Who are these journalists? What are the purposes behind the writing of these articles? The journalists’ messages were assembled according to their relevance and value. How are they read by the audience? Who is reading them, and why?
How the GL readership uses the information is up to them. The point here is to investigate the flow of impressions about the two selected cuisines, from GL journalist to reader and back by feedback loop.

**Figure 4.1: Dynamic construction of media representation of foodscapes**

GL promotes general feedback from its readership by providing contact details in the publication, complemented by online access to social networking sites such as their official blog and Twitter. Feedback disseminates information ‘uncovered’ by audience members to journalists who can seize the opportunity to expand their self-image and offers a beneficial means to assess GL’s impact on the audience. By encouraging online feedback—monitored by the SMH feedback policy—the dialogue of the publication from GL journalist to reader, and back to GL creates a dynamic form of communication about the Sydney/regional foodscape.

Reinforcing the value of GL’s influence on the foodscape, the channels of interaction between the publication and the readership are not limited to the newsprint copy of GL. The economic situation of modern broadsheet newspapers means they have to diversify their offerings by having an online presence in order to survive (Lewis 2004). In line with
technological pressure on modes of communication, a good deal of contact between reader and publication is facilitated online through social networking sites (Twitter, blog) and by email. GL can also be read via an online account, and exclusive multimedia presentations are linked to iPad applications that are not available in the newsprint editions. According to the evaluation of the SMH conducted by Morgan Market Research, the readership of GL in newsprint form is nevertheless over 450,000 and is still the way most people interact with the supplement. To include the online applications—which began in 2005 as a blog with the later inclusion of Twitter—would have interrupted the sequence of the material so this study is therefore limited to the newsprint offerings (available online) rather than including online interactions. Additionally, data was not collected from these sources because it did not correspond with the full timeframe of the research.

**Vietnamese and Italian Cuisines in Good Living**

The Italian community has been established in the Australian community for a longer period than the Vietnamese, so as Cinotto (2004) suggests, the quantity of knowledge available for Italian food has been significantly enlarged and the cultural difference inherent in Italian food has come to be highly regarded. Moreover, opportunities for tourist entry to Vietnam were limited before the mid-1990s, thus prospects for culinary transfer by Vietnamese expatriates and tourists alike compared to available Italian cross-cultural opportunities were limited. Further, the market of Italian food has reached global dimensions, and Italian cuisine is popular in Australia as illustrated by the following research conducted by the SMH.

**Cuisine popularity**

In August 2003, the SMH commissioned research agency AMR Interactive to conduct phone interviews with a sample of 1,000 Sydney adults, weighted to match the city’s diversity by age, gender, income and geography (Dale 2003). By commissioning an independent market research company to produce a report, GL emphasised their impartiality in the data gathering process.

The results (see Table 4.2) were interpreted as ‘facts’ about the foodscape, although no information is given about who gave their opinions for the survey, and why the sample needed to
be weighted. The intention might have been to show the reader an example of an instance where the publication attempted to avoid bias and thus conclude that their other articles were just as rigorously researched.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cuisine</th>
<th>% respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Italian</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thai</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seafood</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Asian</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>French</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No favourite</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4.2: What would you say is your favourite cuisine? (Dale 2003)

The ten cuisines indicated are well established in the Australian foodscape, either by their association with a migrant culture (Italian, Vietnamese) or in the case of French cuisine, underpinning the dining and culinary style of much of Australian food culture. Italian and Chinese cuisine share top billing. Well before this survey however, GL was tracking the popularity of Italian cuisine:

Mama mia! When will we wipe the pasta sauce from our chins and declare we need a break from Italian food? (Bernoth 2000 p. 4).

This reputation was not limited to Australia, and Mariani and Bastianich (2011) suggest that it is now indisputable that Italian food is among the most popular in the world, east and west:

It comes as no surprise to find that Italian is flavour of the decade in Japan, just as it is here, and many Japanese chefs are training in Italy (Evans 2001a p. 6.).
Italian food has become so much the mainstream that specialty items are available in supermarket generic brands:

New in the *antipasto* range of Woolworths Select products are mild and sweet Borettane onions from Northern Italy (Mullins 2008 p. 12).

Notwithstanding its lesser representation in the SMH survey (two per cent), the inclusion of Vietnamese cuisine in the top ten favourites suggests it has also been accepted into the Australian foodscape. Noticeably, it is distinguished from the category of ‘other Asian’, whose geographical reach extends to countries in the Middle East, Russia, the Indian subcontinent and other parts of east and South East Asia. Significantly, Vietnamese cuisine is on a par with French cuisine, which has long been entrenched in restaurant culture in Australia and was used as the primary teaching model in culinary training in institutes such as TAFE mainly because of the strong French influence in the hospitality industry. Since the results of this survey are from an independent source, GL is able to communicate to the reader that although Italian cuisine ranks the highest, Vietnamese cuisine is statistically relevant because of its inclusion in the top ten cuisines.

**Vietnamese and Italian providores**

There are considerable differences between the reporting of the two cuisines to be found in the analysis of GL articles. Firstly, reporting on Vietnamese and Italian grocery items shows that the two cuisines are viewed as separate entities in the foodscape and there is no evidence of fusion. For instance, Vietnamese grocery items are stocked in stores among other imports from countries all over the Asian region, but not in European equivalents, and vice versa. A typical example is Dong Nam grocery store in Sydney’s Chinatown, owned and run by a Vietnamese couple, which is:

Stacked and packed with a plethora of bewildering bags, brands and boxes, because everything you need to cook your green mango salad or your chicken curry is here. I mean, everything (Greenwood 2000 p. 5).

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3 Technical and Further Education colleges (TAFE) that are government-run education providers, and train hospitality graduates, including chefs.
Asian groceries have filtered into the general foodscape, and even in supermarkets in Sydney today there is a special section called ‘Asian Foods’, albeit with a limited range of processed products and there are few generic products. Unless one travels to specialist shops Vietnamese vegetables and herbs are still regarded as exotic and unlike Italian commodities are not commonly stocked outside of areas where there is a significant Vietnamese community, such as Bankstown, Cabramatta or Fairfield in Sydney’s western suburbs.

Conversely, Italian food is integrated throughout the supermarkets’ stock, and generic supermarket brands include Italian delicatessen items:

New in the antipasto range of Woolworths Select products are mild and sweet Borettane onions from Northern Italy. Perfect with an aperitif, the flat saucer-shaped onions range from 2 to 8 centimetres in diameter and are marinated in balsamic vinegar from Modena which gives them a piquant sweet-sour flavour. Also in the range are grilled artichokes, Italian cerignola olives, sun-dried tomatoes and a grilled vegetable trio (Mullins 2008 p 12).

Separate from the large chains, an independent supermarket—IGA, in the Sydney suburb of Haberfield—is dedicated to Italian grocery and delicatessen items, where the shopper is ‘Transported to Italy by an out of the ordinary supermarket’ (Greenwood 2001a p. 5). This supermarket caters to the sizeable Italian community in the local area, and GL encourages an ‘Italian experience’ for the GL reader to increase their knowledge of Italian comestibles.

Away from the supermarkets, there are independent delicatessens that carry a wide range of imported Mediterranean foods, but GL tends to single out providores, both wholesale and retail, that are exclusively Italian. This is also a further sign of GL’s construction of what is authentic.

Iacobbe began by importing pasta, mineral water, biscuits and tinned goods from Italy before branching out into perishables eight years ago (Greenwood 2007 p. 4).

4 IGA stands for Independent Grocers of Australia.
Balestrini began his importing career representing a friend’s taleggio and gorgonzola in Australia for 18 months. During that time, he saw a niche market for good Italian products (Greenwood, 2008a p 13).

GL’s individual attention is not focused on Vietnamese providores, who remain unnamed. There is no comparable information on Vietnamese imported specialty items, for example, and they appear to be grouped in the generic ‘Asian’ category. There is little evidence to suggest that any importers combine and sell Asian as well as Italian produce—they seem to be entirely separate operations.

**Cuisine dynamics**

The imbalance between Vietnamese and Italian articles presumes that there has been much more written about Italian food than Vietnamese, thus individual cuisine analysis is not evenly balanced. Nonetheless, four significant themes to be negotiated by the reader emerged from the analysis of 79 articles on Italian and 34 articles on Vietnamese food. These themes constituted what I will accordingly refer to as ‘traditional’, ‘modern’, ‘pan-Asian/pan-European’ and ‘undifferentiated’ versions of the cuisines. The model represented in Figure 4.2 stylises how I have arranged these four themes by which cuisine can be bent, shaped or changed over time (or left the same). These four stages are in continuous tension, interacting and overlapping.
The model illustrates a perceived representation of traditional Vietnamese or Italian cuisine in the centre with an increasing movement away to an undifferentiated periphery. Traditional food retains its architectural coherence and legitimacy, while disturbance of cuisine principles and structure occurs at the periphery. All of these impressions are fabricated and maintained by the GL food writers.

**Traditional Vietnamese/Italian**

‘Authenticity’ is a key concept and primary measure of value in the consumption of both Vietnamese and Italian food and GL maintains the image through its food writers that insightful readers who want to discern the authentic food, recipe or restaurant from the inauthentic can rely on their insights:
On the trail of the authentic, Shelf heard through an Italian friend of a friend about the Pasticceria Reggina in Blacktown (Greenwood 2001b p. 5).

There is a strong emphasis on traditional or ‘authentic’ cuisine in GL’s treatment of both Vietnamese and Italian cuisines. Authenticity is ‘typically defined as being that which is believed or accepted to be genuine or real: true to itself’ (Taylor 1991 p. 17), and my use of the term is defined in Chapter 1. GL’s label of ‘authentic’ in this case implies that food and food products are prepared using the same ingredients and processes as those found in Vietnam or Italy, and the term used in less fluid capacity than can be found in other interpretations. In particular, Weiss (2011) applies the term to different contexts—personal, local, regional, national and global, which allows greater flexibility in its application. However, it must be agreed that a key feature of cuisine being represented, perceived and exchanged is that it has legitimacy, in that is not fraudulent or contrived, but a sincere, real, true and original expression of its origin, and is a believable or credible culinary representation (Cinotto 2004), in whichever context it is viewed..

Both Vietnamese and Italian migration to Australia meant that their cuisines became available to a wider audience other than travellers. As part of place-making strategies, Vietnamese restaurants would have initially catered to their local market of Vietnamese nationals, their customer base later broadening to interested Australians. The food at these restaurants was closely modelled on original Vietnamese cuisine from the mid-1970s. While some restaurants later began to assimilate into the Australian foodscape by adapting their menus for customer demands or using substitute ingredients, others remained traditional:

The food at both [restaurants] is southern Vietnamese. Hong keeps it simple and authentic. ‘I’ve never tried to do the modern Australian thing [she says]’ (Whitaker 2001 p. 12).

Another restaurant was so intent on protecting the originality of the cuisine that:

Her father and mother had passed on the family recipes to help them set up on their own and ... they’d called in a Vietnamese master chef to teach chef Mark Jensen even more technique (Austin 2002 p. 7).
The clear intention to keep the cuisine in its authentic or traditional style is expressed by both these restaurateurs, and they use GL to emphasise that their core flavours are not compromised.

GL writers focus on Italian cuisine differently to Vietnamese, most likely because Italian cuisine currently has enormous global popularity and wide coverage in newspapers, magazines, books and the internet. As well, the Italian community in Australia migrated at least a generation before the Vietnamese, and thus have been long ago acculturated in the Australian foodscape. Finally, there is a complex relationship between Italians and their cuisine, which has not yet found equivalence in GL’s expression of Vietnamese cuisine. According to Castellanos and Bergstresser (2006 p. 194), traditional Italian cuisine is ‘born within the domestic, or pseudo-domestic walls, where the cooks are the public version of the mamma and not a chef’.

This is apparent in the images that are communicated by GL, where many Italian chefs, restaurateurs and providores refer to their female relatives, families and heritage for their inspiration, and for grounding them in the ‘authentic’ traditions that surround their identity:

Mostly though, it will involve the cooking of their mothers and grandmothers because this is where true Italian cuisine comes from and where it is still kept (Manfredi 2003 p. 17).

In GL articles, a recognisably Italian name also lends the authority of ‘authenticity’ to restaurants, importers, providores, pastry and gelato shops. For example, in the following restaurant review, the chef’s background is embellished with details of his family as well as his work history:

Russo, who until early this year was wielding the knife at Brown’s in the QVB, is an Italian by parentage and by heart. His family comes from the southern region of Basilicata and he’s spent time working in Rome (Evans 2001d p. 6).

However, GL reminds readers that Italian food can be created by non-Italians as long as they have the right kind of understanding of the cuisine. In this instance, Japanese chef Yoichi Kurotani replicates the cuisine faithfully and ‘cooks with a genuine Latin passion’ (Evans 2004 p. 6). A Vietnamese or Italian heritage is not a prerequisite for accurate reproduction of
traditional cuisine, but GL warns us it needs to be carefully monitored by experts or infused with non-tangible fervour to be successful.

**Modern Vietnamese/Italian**

At a different level, ‘modern/contemporary’ reinterprets integral flavours and ingredient combinations, and applies them in non-traditional ways. I suggest this is a style that acknowledges a developing Australian way of presenting both Vietnamese and Italian cuisines adapting them with local ingredients and flavours:

In the mid-2000s, GL detected a trend that both Asian and Italian food was ‘modernising’. All over Sydney and beyond, you can now find Thai, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Japanese and regional Chinese cuisines lending themselves happily to a lighter, brighter, more contemporary style of cooking. Our pioneering modern Asian chefs have set a fast pace, updating Asian classics and reinventing their own Chinatown favourites to create new ones (Dupleix 2005 p. 8).

However, the GL reader is left to make his or her own inferences as to what ‘a lighter, brighter, more contemporary style of cooking’ was because no other information is given. The identity of the writer lends authority to the statement—she is an award-winning food writer, media personality and food editor (Dupleix ND) and well known to the GL readership. It seems also to be taken for granted that the reader—in their role of belonging to GL’s community of taste—will be familiar with the differences between traditional and modern Vietnamese cuisine. The reader is also expected to appreciate that to keep abreast in the contemporary foodscape it is necessary that restaurants update and reinvent cuisine quickly, and instigate successful changes. However, it is not necessarily clear what GL means by ‘Modern’ Vietnamese cuisine, because the writers give inconclusive impressions:

What is it about Modern Vietnamese that makes it so different from Vietnamese, and why does what you find on the plates in those ‘Mod Viet’ places vary so dramatically? (Evans & Thomsen 2004 p. 15).

This rhetorical strategy is used by the Evans and Thomsen (2004) appeals to the reader in the ‘community of taste’ to contextualise the statement. There is again no qualifying description—once the reader has been alerted by GL that this cuisine is different and
dramatically variable, they need augment the article with their own experiences. The implication is that GL readers are expected to be as discerning as the reviewer, preferring complex ingredients to over-simplified, bland food. The reviewer, as the arbiter of contemporary good taste, guides them towards flavour experiences that maintain the core flavours of the cuisine.

In an article entitled ‘A fresh twist on Italian classics’, Thomsen (2008) comments on this approach to contemporary Italian cuisine:

Meanwhile, his occasionally elaborate antipasti demonstrate an experimental playfulness with the classics. Spiced walnuts give contemporary texture and depth to an old classic ... Another old favourite, a beautifully arranged insalata caprese ($16.50), is modernised by the addition of white anchovies (Thomsen 2008 p. 7).

However, he moderates his comments and adds: ‘at the risk of invoking the further wrath of cucina tradizionale purists’ (Thomsen 2008 p. 7).

‘Cucina tradizionale’ is the model of authenticity that acknowledged, and protected by professionals from bodies such as the Council of Italian Restaurants in Australia (CIRA) which promotes ‘the values of Italian food and perpetuate(s) authentic Italian cuisine in Australia’ (CIRA). Although CIRA acknowledges the development of Italian cuisine in the Australian foodscape, it recognises that ‘there are boundaries however beyond which food is no longer Italian but Italian styled’ (CIRA). The contradiction seems to be that Italian cuisine can be both modern and traditional at the same time.

GL writers recognise the modernising trend of Italian cuisine, and relate it to the style with which it is approached:

Massimo Bianchi’s dishes are cooked with true Italian flair (and a light Aussie touch) at the Westin’s expansive (and expensive) dining room (Evans 2004 p. 6).

In another review, the writer gives a positive impression to the reader that Italian culinary traditions are respected in this type of food, but their interpretation is not hidebound.
Martini has been cooking for half her 31 years and she dishes up good, occasionally stunning, grub, all with a mod-Italian bent (Evans 2003b p. 6).

Karen Martini is one of the few Italian women to have made a career in what is particularly male-oriented restaurant scene and embodies an atypical role of women in the Italian restaurant scene. Her position emphasises a paradox of authenticity, because a woman is regarded as the dominant influence over domestic cuisine, but at the same time as being the inspiration for men in their commercial culinary endeavours. Which cuisine is authentic? According to Weiss (2011), both, because authenticity can be found in both domestic and commercial contexts. However, it is noted that all the other female cooks mentioned in the GL articles play a secondary role in the restaurant to their husbands or sons, or from a domestic, home-cook setting.

Not all the reviews are so positive, and there is mention of the ‘dumbing down’ of flavours, in that they should be stronger to be recognisably Italian:

Darren Taylor changed his restaurant focus from European to Italian: The flavours, however, don’t speak like a Latin lover. They need more gregariousness to make them really raunchy (Evans 2001c p. 6).

What makes flavours ‘gregarious’ and ‘raunchy’? According to the Australian Oxford Dictionary (2004), they should be ‘fond of company’ and ‘boisterous’. Therefore, it does follow that the flavours here are muted rather than bold, and are lacking Italian assuredness. As well, Darren Taylor does not have an Italian heritage, and may lack the intangible ‘gusto’ or passion. Further, he may be hindered by incomplete knowledge of culinary details an Italian chef would absorb in the home, for example:

John Lanzafame started cooking at the age of seven, when he rose at 5am and helped his Sicilian mother perfect pescatore (fish stew) for Sunday lunch. He began his apprenticeship at 14. Best dining experience ‘Eating with the extended family, nothing beats that’ (Evans 2002a p. 6).

There is no mention of Taylor having equivalent family experiences. Magee (2005) declares that any recipe can be reproduced as long as there is a reliable source of ingredients, but the problem, according to Manfredi (2003 p. 17), is that Italian technique is less codified than
French, meaning that is less transcribed into conventional recipe form. Cooks need to learn from those already proficient in the cuisine, and although books and recipes are useful, they are unable to communicate the essential ‘gusto’ of traditional Italian cuisine. According to most GL articles, someone who has not had the advantage of an Italian culinary background has an inbuilt disadvantage, and mastery of Italian cuisine by a non-Italian is an exception.

**Pan-Asian/pan-European**

In this section, I use ‘Pan-Asian’ to refer to Vietnamese flavours, ingredients or dishes that are blended with other South East Asian cuisines, such as Thai or Chinese, in a kind of culinary multiculturalism. ‘Pan-European’ refers to Italian flavours that are blended with cuisines such as French and Spanish. Pan-Asian/Pan-European cuisines respectively absorb Vietnamese or Italian cuisines into a fusion of dishes from countries in Western Europe or mainland South East Asia and China but not each other.

Tension seems to exist in GL’s foodscape between traditional and modern Vietnamese cuisine. On one hand, it is expected that there are culinary advances, but it seems that these same advances can lead the cuisine away from the very thing that differentiates it when referring to the boundaries of Figure 4.2. One reviewer reinforces the veracity of his reviewing principles for his readers, telling him he has ‘a self-imposed rule, which involved avoiding restaurants serving an Anglicised version of Asian food’ (Evans 2003a p. 6). This comment raises the question—does ‘modernised’ mean ‘Anglicised’? Are the ‘pioneering modern Asian chefs’, in the spirit of extending the repertoire of their heritage, instead compromising their cuisine too much and leading to it losing its integrity?

The flavours too dumbed-down and the dishes too confused to make it worth raving about (Evans 2003a p. 6).

Using this interpretation, one can conclude that Vietnamese and Italian cuisines both exhibit examples of ‘over-adaptation’, the integrity of a balance of ingredients and techniques, diluted by the fusion of its essential flavours and so making the cuisine unrecognisable. An ‘Asian’ restaurant, for example, can serve a melange of Vietnamese, Chinese and Thai cuisines, with herbs, spices and ingredient combinations wandering from dish to dish, cuisine to cuisine, so none of them are really related to the original cuisine except by name. This ‘pan-Asian’
approach could be caused by any number of interpretations—for example, the expertise of the chef and cooking staff, the demands of the diners, and the economic desires of the owners.

Cuisines and foodstuffs from diverse parts of the region are routinely grouped together as ‘Asian foods’. Asian grocery stores are generally packed with ingredients from all over Asia, juxtaposed in one shop. GL implicitly maintains this generic Asian cultural identity. On an everyday level, a certain homogenisation or convergence takes place:

The premises will reopen soon as a Vietnamese with Chinese and Malay influences (Bolles 2002 p. 2).

In this case, Pan-Asian food invokes a collective identity that is unlikely to be found in the countries in Asia.

RQ is one of the new breed of modern Asian eateries ... serving a mix of Asian cuisines ... RQ stands for Rice Quarter, which is the bit of South-East Asia around Vietnam, Cambodia and Thailand. All supposedly influence RQ’s food (Evans 2003a p. 6).

I contend that modern Asian is not the same than what I call pan-Asian, because according to GL, there are contemporary Vietnamese restaurants assiduously maintaining the flavours of traditional Vietnamese food, while in some pan-Asian restaurants the provenance of the dishes can lose distinction because of the drift of ingredients.

Flavours could be even livelier and spicier. Dishes are distinct as is but a little less sugar and more sharpness and spice wouldn’t go amiss (Evans 2003a p. 6).

According to this reviewer, each dish in a pan-Asian restaurant should be discrete and recognisable from a specific cuisine, but at the same time, displaying Asian commonalities. Given the possible diversity of dishes in such a repertoire, with different flavour nuances and cooking processes, it would seem an almost impossible goal to reach. It seems that for the most part, difference is enveloped by sameness in this particular representation of cultural identity (Ang 2004).

The representations that GL imparts about Vietnamese cuisine in this context seem to be in opposition—that the cuisine should be original but modern, differentiated but pan-Asian.
Nonetheless, this is not interpreted as a misrepresentation. Vietnamese cuisine is as dynamic as the foodscape it exists in, and has evolved from the original cuisine brought by Vietnamese as migrants in the mid-1970s, been publicised and accepted into the restaurant milieu, and has influenced Australian and other Asian cuisines that have adopted its flavours to create a hybrid Australian/Asian cuisine.

Italian cuisine in a pan-European context is registered by the GL food writers as well. Pan-European cuisine is often euphemistically described as being ‘inspired’ by Italian cuisine. This is evident where ‘very good Italian-inspired food from Adrian Way’ is reviewed:

The menu lists dishes under Italian titles such as primi, secondi, antipasto, but it’s not really Italian food as much as Italian-inspired food that angles towards the Mediterranean diet. And at first glance it’s an impressive menu [but] my risotto is so far from Italy it’s not even on the same continent (Evans 2001b p. 6)

The menu is organised in a typically Italian format, but the chef with the Anglo name is not able to control the quality that would differentiate the risotto in question as being Italian in anything other than name. Two more Anglo names are ‘inspired’ by Italy:

La Tratt’s chefs, Robert Green and Brendan Peace, cite their inspirations as Melbourne chef Guy Grossi, Sydney’s Ed Halmagyi, the prolific Italian-born cookbook writer Anna Del Conte and the Italian classic The Silver Spoon ... But I wish they’d worry more about cooking like Guy Grossi than dishes by him. The food is pleasant, the inspiration admirable and the prices great but it just misses by a shaved prosciutto. There’s formula when Italian cooking is all about heart and passione (Thomsen 2006 p. 7).

Is the integrity still recognised if pan-Asian and pan-European cuisines are one level away from ‘modern’ and when the cuisines have merged into the panoply of the pan-Asian mix? The result may be that GL’s foodscape is fluid enough to accommodate both original modern and pan-both cuisines, if they can be identified by the essential flavour ingredients, which are addressed in the next section.
Undifferentiated cuisine

Finally, I suggest an interpretation of ‘undifferentiated’ cuisine, where flavour components are incorporated into dishes either as a generic Asian/Italian culinary form, or synthesised into a dish to the extent that its provenance is not identifiable, as in the case of a review by Matthew Evans:

I was completely underwhelmed last year by venison medallions topped with diced pineapple and Vietnamese mint. Brave food, perhaps, but gastronomically misguided; tasting weird rather than wonderful (Evans 2002c p. 6).

Combinations of flavours that do not relate to any cuisine—especially unsuccessful ones such as Evans encountered—abound in the foodscape. For example, in satay pizza, the flavour combination has crossed an invisible line and is unrelated to any cuisine—the satay is vaguely Asian, the pizza is vaguely Italian. The combination may be commercially successful, but it has no connection to the integrity of either cuisine and so is generic or undifferentiated.

Core flavours

Having explored the dynamics of the cuisines in the impressions constructed by GL, it is relevant to raise one important question: is there an essential flavour of cuisines? One of the ways GL manages particular national cuisine representations is by recognised distinct geographical categories by their principle flavours. In the next sections, I reveal my investigation into the core flavours of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine as expressed in the GL articles.

Nuoc mam: Essence of Vietnam

The core flavour ingredient of Vietnamese cuisine is undoubtedly nuoc mam or Vietnamese fish sauce. Nuoc mam is a light brown, clear, delicate flavoured sauce. It is essential in nearly every savoury dish, either as a cooking ingredient or as an accompanying dip. Fish sauce is used in many South East Asian cuisines, but its ubiquitous use as a flavour ingredient is exclusively Vietnamese. Political and economic reasons exist to ensure that most of the fish sauce available in Vietnamese grocery shops in Australia is made in Thailand. A trade embargo imposed by the United States on Vietnamese products ensured that between the end of the Vietnam Civil War in 1975 until 1994 export was prohibited. Thai brands dominated the market gap, and Vietnamese production is still struggling to re-establish itself (Castelli 1994).
It has been suggested there might be a characteristic difference between Vietnamese fish sauces and those of other countries (Dougan & Howard 1975). Aficionados of fish sauce taste variations as acutely as wine experts, and Luke Nguyen of Red Lantern Restaurant says he can detect fine distinctions between grades, with the finest sourced from the island of Phu Quoc in southern Vietnam (Nguyen, Nguyen & Jensen 2008). To some of the GL readership, nonetheless, all fish sauce tastes the same, perhaps because the nuances are too subtle to register on an audience that uses the flavouring infrequently or has not been exposed to it at all.

Fish sauce may be unusual to the western palate due to its strong odour, but the striking flavour rewards of small quantities are worthwhile. GL adopts an educative position, assuring the reader that once this preliminary challenge is overcome, the delights of Vietnamese cuisine are theirs.

Think about Vietnamese and Thai cookery: fish sauce (made from anchovies) is a flavouring and as such adds gorgeous nuances (Egan 2004 p. 14).

The tone of the article is reassuring, the word ‘gorgeous’—usually applied to objects of beauty—emphasises an exotic impression. ‘Nuances’, a sensual word, evokes subtle shades and tones of flavour, refinement rather than robustness. The article reassures that although they might usually be challenged by the strong flavour of anchovies, this sauce does not reflect a heavy fish essence. The journalist presumes that some GL readers need to be educated about fish sauce, and cautions them to try to attain a balance when using the flavouring: ‘However, as with any condiment, a heavy hand renders them inedible’ (Egan 2004 p.14).

The essence of nuoc mam extends to nuoc cham, the next progression in discovering Vietnamese core flavours. Basic nuoc cham is a combination of fish sauce, rice vinegar, sugar garlic, chilli, and lime juice that is served at almost every meal (Choi, Isaak & Von Holzen 2005). A balance between salty/umami (fish sauce), vinegar acidic (rice vinegar), sweet (sugar) provides the base, and garlic, chilli and lime are layered over an adaptable base. There are many variations such as ‘fish sauce, palm sugar, lime, ginger and a little chilli’ (Austin 2002 p. 7) and ‘a Vietnamese nuoc cham-style sauce made with pounded chillies, tomato, palm sugar and fish sauce’ (Nourse 2003 p. 10).

The above examples deviate from the basic recipe, by the substitution of vinegar/lime with tomato. In this case, the substitution still replaces the acidity of, so that the flavour balance
can be maintained. The GL reader is alerted that they can define *nuoc mam* by its ‘style’ rather than relying solely on deciphering the ingredients, so they are doubly equipped to recognise features of Vietnamese cuisine.

An additional integral flavour ingredient is a selection of assorted herbs—comparable to the western side-salad—customarily served with lunch or dinner. GL enthusiastically informs the reader of this crucial feature:

The defining characteristic of Vietnamese cooking is the presence of basket-loads of fresh herbs and salad greens (Dupleix 2004 p. 8).

The wording implies how plentiful and generous the serving can be. However, in the recipe accompanying this article, and at odds with the statement, only mint and coriander accompany the dish, and neither on their own defines Vietnamese cuisine. Common enough to be bought in every supermarket, ‘ordinary’ mint has long been accessed in the foodscape due to its traditional pairing with lamb in Anglo-Australian dishes. The ensuing instructions further contradict the opening statement:

Serve with a few extra mint and coriander leaves and chilled lettuce leaves for wrapping (Dupleix 2004 p. 8).

‘A few’ is hardly ‘a basket-load’, and the recipe is defined by a classic *nuoc cham* dip, not the herbs. Is this a general symptom of ‘dumbing-down’ the cuisine? There are many characteristic herbs that are disregarded by GL—rice paddy herb, edible chrysanthemum—silently supplanted by pedestrian suggestions of basil, mint, and regular coriander as in this article. It seems contradictory that on one hand, the GL article lauds the cuisine, but on the other obscures it by providing such a pedestrian recipe.

In fact, the herb most often mentioned in GL articles was ‘Vietnamese mint’. This exemplifies a herb that has ceased being regarded as exotic and started being identified as an independent flavour addition to many non-Vietnamese dishes. I maintain that this signifies the acceptance of the flavour into the cooking and recipe development of Australians, incorporated into recipes that are neither Asian nor Vietnamese, and could be categorised as ‘undifferentiated’. Such is the case as in a recipe for ‘Polenta prawns with cucumber salad’, which instructs ‘1 bunch Vietnamese mint, leaves chopped roughly’ (Mangan 2003b p. 8). None
of the other ingredients listed is Vietnamese; in fact, polenta is a staple of the Alpine region of Northern Italy (Fulton 2005) suggesting the Asianisation of the Italian cuisine in the Australian foodscape.

GL maintains that *nuoc man*, fish sauce is the core favour of the cuisine, followed by *noc cham*. There seems to be less emphasis on other ingredients. GL tells us how a traditional Vietnamese salad should be presented, but then does not reflect this in the accompanying recipe. However, the wide acceptance of Vietnamese mint into recipes that are non-Vietnamese implies that elements of the cuisine have been absorbed into the foodscape and are used for non-traditional culinary purposes.

**Gusto: Core flavours of Italian cuisine**

In addition to ingredients, there seems to be an indefinable element that is believed by Italians and non-Italians alike, and is often communicated by GL journalists.

I have often asked an Italian chef why they cook something in a particular way and the answer clearly lies with their respect for tradition and cooking with passion and love (Hafner 2007 p. 14).

Passion and love are not cooking terms, but Italians use the word ‘*gusto*’, the Italian word for taste, to express this intangible culinary attitude. Gusto refers to more than the flavour of ingredients. In the context of this cuisine, it defines a kind of emotional zeal that should be evident in true Italian cooking. A common construction is that Italians learn at an early age the significant role food plays in their culture, and they are brought up discussing a broad range of enjoyable facets of food, including the pleasures of planning, procuring, preparing, serving and eating (Ochs, Pontecorvo & Fasulo 1996).

‘Traditional’ Italian flavours are much harder to define than are Vietnamese, perhaps because the cuisine is more regionally fragmented. According to La Cecla (1998), ‘standard’ Italian food is based on pasta, of which there are 298 different types (Traglia 1956 cited in La Cecla 1998 pp. 53-4). There are myriad sauces, gravies, dressings and condiments that are the flavour carriers, but culinary customs deem only certain combinations acceptable. Castellanos and Bergstresser (2006) observed that Italians are instinctively aware of these allowances and limitations on what may be combined, thus existing and accepted combinations are unlikely to be altered or changed. In the sample of GL articles downloaded, the regional names—‘*sugo,*
'ragu', 'bolognaise'—of a traditional Italian sauce with tomatoes, meat, basil, garlic and herbs were often mentioned. Traditionally, this sauce is served only in two ways: with fresh tagliatelle or in lasagne (Accademia Italiana Della Cucina 2011). It follows that if this tradition is not upheld, the individual flavour of the sauce could be authentic, but the resulting combination would be inappropriate and therefore the outcome would not correspond with culinary custom. To communicate to their readers accurately, GL food writers focus on the appropriate combinations of ingredients rather than expressing opinions about individual flavours. This concept is repeated throughout the analysis of GL articles on Italian as a strong emergent theme.

Rozin (1992) sought to define clear flavour principles in her investigation of world cuisines, and I maintain that she was successful in her analysis of Vietnamese cuisine as being dependant for its identity on fish sauce, lemon and specific seasoning combinations. However, her breakdown of southern and northern Italian cuisine was somewhat vague, especially in the area of northern Italian cuisine—which is a geographical construction in itself. She claims that tomato/olive oil sauces characterise the food of southern Italy (Rozin 1992 p. 97), based on the two classic combinations of olive oil/garlic/parsley and olive oil/garlic/fresh basil (pesto), blended with tomato and bell pepper. However, she does not mention any accepted combinations with pasta or other foods, and gives the impression that these sauces are solely southern Italian, although the same combinations exist in Mediterranean France (persillade and pistou). Using less olive oil and more butter and cream, Northern Italian cuisine is identified by Marsala wine, parsley, oregano and basil, but Rozin (1992 p. 156) does not separate out clearly identifiable flavours and settles on a combination of wine vinegar and garlic. When attempting to incorporate the complexities of Italian regional cuisine, one can understand why emphasis on ingredient combinations rather than flavour principles is more appropriate to Italian cuisine.

Italian food philosophy, according to GL writers, also depends on fresh, simple and clean flavours (Evans 2001a), derived from quality ingredients and particular cooking techniques (Manfredi 2003). GL often interprets traditional Italian flavour by drawing attention to artisan products like handmade smallgoods, often made by first-generation migrants using techniques from the past. The GL reader is educated how the manufacturing process affects flavour:

There are not many butchers like that left. Even in Italy today, most smallgoods are made in the factory, not artigano [by hand], the way dio
commande [literally, God ordered] (Pino Tomini Foresti interviewed by Newton 2003 p 12).

Castellanos and Bergstresser (2006) suggest that domestic intrusion into a traditional restaurant space is occasionally encouraged. In a review of Restaurant Manfredi, the chef’s mother lent gravitas to the menu by her authoritative contribution. ‘Franca kept the menu grounded in tradition with her hand-made pasta’ (Dale 2002 p. 16). Italian chefs often mention their family background as being influential, particularly their mothers and grandmothers, and although Italian women seldom seem to choose cooking as a career, their contribution is regarded with all seriousness.

GL writers recognise the cultural norms and regulations associated with traditional Italian food, and regularly communicate this background information to the reader reminding them constantly how the flair of combining ingredients elements is reflected in their skilful pairing. They also project the image that their reader understands that traditional Italian food is recognisable through knowledge of accepted culinary combinations, rather than one or more particular identifying ingredients. An element of intangibility, exemplified by the frequent references to ‘gusto’, passion and other emotive words completes their management of this cuisine in their construction of the impressions of the foodscape.

An Australian view of ‘normal’ food

Cultural food preferences encourage unity in society and help it to maintain its identity. Douglas (1992) suggests that societies are likely to see things as ‘taboo’ when they do not fit neatly into a society’s classification of what should be regarded as food. In Australia, ‘normal’ food comes from farm animals such as cattle, sheep and chickens and forms the model for ‘appropriate’ food in the Australian culinary environment. As such, there are aspects of cuisine that are acceptable in Vietnam and Italy but may be found foreign or unacceptable in the Australian context. GL usually keeps gastronomic stereotypes positive, and ignores the negative representations that it deems inappropriate for its audience. Recipes for Vietnamese turtle and Italian horsemeat are never published, because mainstream Australian culture is closely bound up with the perception of turtles and horses as pets or friends. Occasionally, however, a hint appears:
I’m not that interested in eating a beating cobra heart, as chef and author Anthony Bourdain did when he visited Vietnam. But that doesn’t mean I don’t love ‘normal’ Vietnamese food. I do. It’s fresh, clean and healthy. No wonder it’s so popular (Mangan 2003a p. 8).

The impression is managed in two ways: firstly, that fresh, clean, and healthy is ‘normal’, but eating cobra is not, thus those readers who would find the idea of eating snake’s heart repulsive are aligned with the writer, who justifies his disgust. In the prevailing Australian food culture, snake is not ‘normalised’, and GL gives a conservative rather than adventurous representation of what constitutes Vietnamese cuisine. However, there is also an appeal to food adventurers, who can argue that a cobra would be ‘fresh’ (they are killed in front of the diner in Vietnam), ‘clean’ (as opposed to ‘dirty’), and its flesh would be a ‘healthy’ source of protein as of any farmed animal. The cultural capital of food adventurers who have already tried this delicacy—or would be prepared to try it—is increased by their knowledge that they are more adventurous than a well-known Sydney chef, and moreover they are metaphorically connected to chef Anthony Bourdain, who promotes his television reputation as a culinary adventurer by consuming ethnic dishes that are regarded as exotic.

Conservative tastes are reflected in Italian fare in this excerpt from a review of a new cookbook in which the author admits to a similar lack of adventure:

Some of it is a bit too authentic—hare, wild boar and guinea fowl—but there are plenty of tamer recipes to get stuck into (Bernoth 2000 p. 4).

How can food be 'too authentic'? In this case, the message warns of the challenging flavours of game meats that many Australians find unfamiliar, and recommends other recipes for the faint-hearted. However the duality of the impression is that readers who have enjoyed these game meats—particularly as an in situ tourist experience—add to their cultural capital, while at the same time allowing those with conservative or bland tastes to align themselves with the credibility of the writer.
**Good Living’s misrepresentations and contradictions**

Misrepresentations and contradictions occasionally make it past the editor’s eye and appear in GL. GL’s audience is ‘able to orient itself in a situation by accepting performed cues on faith’ (Goffman 1959 p. 58), and the publication depends on this ‘sign-accepting’ tendency, or trust of its audience. Apparent mistakes would dilute this element and possible harm its reputation, not only with readers, but also with advertisers and other financial inputs. I argue that GL does not deliberately set out to mislead its readers—rather that its writers are themselves misled into sending GL’s audience the wrong message.

However, errors do occur from time to time. For example, one article confuses fish sauce with soy sauce in Vietnamese dishes:

The Vietnamese prefer light soy for dipping sauces and dark soy for cooking (Shun Wah 2001 p. 11).

In fact, Vietnamese use soy sauce sparingly in stocks and marinades, preferring *noc mam* for dipping and cooking (Nguyen, Nguyen & Jensen 2008). Shun Wah is an Australian of Chinese descent, so it may be that because of her ‘Asian’ background, GL presumed she would be an expert on soy sauce. Using the homogenising category ‘East Asian’ as an all-purpose term of reference, she provides a list of soy brands from China, Japan, Indonesia and Malaysia—but none from Vietnam—that can be purchased in an Asian grocery store in Australia. Apart from the fact that her research was flawed, why is it such a surprise that she made this small error? Possibly because her generic Asian identity leads the GL reader to assume she is an expert on all Asian soy-type sauces, when she is likely to be only as qualified as any other food journalist to write on the topic.

In addition, contradictory themes about Italian food reveal themselves over the ten-year timeframe of the analysis. Firstly, in the spirit of maintaining culinary stereotypes, GL seems eager to perpetuate the myth that all Italian women can cook, as if it is a birth right, although there are interviews with some Italian women admitting that they did not cook until they migrated to Australia:

When the family moved [to] Chullora, Iole had her first chance to wield the wooden spoon. ‘My mother had always done the cooking but I soon learnt
from my friends in Chullora’, she says. ‘I have never used a recipe or a set of scales. Everything I do is by my eye.’ Today Iole’s polenta, gnocchi in sugo, risotto, brodo and minestra are legendary (Harvie, Dupleix & Christopher 2004 p. 4).

Carla was eighteen when she migrated from Tuscany to Cronulla with her husband and two-year-old son in the 1950s. was 21, she had three children and had taught herself to cook the food of her childhood: gnocchi, ravioli and lasagne. ‘My father was a very good cook’, she says. ‘I remember him making ravioli and gnocchi’ (Dunn 2006 p. 9).

The tone of the articles implies that somehow they became experts because of their Italian heritage, not because they had to feed a family. Interestingly, Carla expressed this heritage associated with her father rather than her mother.

Secondly, in the Italian restaurant reviews I surveyed from GL, there was less criticism of the cooking if the chef had an Italian name. GL accepts that it is possible for non-Italians to reproduce the cuisine, but they never seem to be as masterful as Italian chefs. Usually, GL uncritically accepts that Italian is high quality, and only occasionally is this impression questioned, such as when Evans (2004 p. 6) admits that not all food in Italy is of a consistently high standard when he refers to food ‘cooked in an Italian manner, without the dry meats and overcooked seafood that Italy specialises in’.

This relates to a third recurring theme, the myth perpetuated that that Italian products are intrinsically better than Australian products. Gianmarco Balestrini, an importer of hard-to-find Italian delicacies, says:

I wanted to give a different image to the average Australian who travels and wants to know why does Italian food taste so much better in Italy? Because they cook it using better ingredients for a start (Greenwood 2008a p. 13).

In fact, the current model of food consumption in Italy always represented accurately in GL. Although fruit, vegetable and oil production and consumption is high, agribusiness and modern farming techniques are now the norm as well all over Europe. In the areas of meat and milk production Australian raw materials receive a superior stamp of approval from Italians:
In Australia, the meat is better than Italian meat; it’s the way they cut it. It just tastes better (Modica interviewed by Munro 2007 p. n9).

Luca De Rosa, a technical manager for the Italian company, Clerici-Sacco, told Paesanella (a Sydney-based cheese making company) the Queensland milk was some of the best he had ever seen (Greenwood 2008b p. 13).

Italy is not self-sufficient in meat production, and its supply does not cover its demand for meat products. In fact, there has been recent public concern over the ‘traditional’ housing for veal calves, and stock levels for cattle, pork and poultry and this has attracted environmental criticism. The production of all meat is operated with an industrial philosophy with a high concentration of animals and a modern managerial strategy (Cozzi & Ragno 2003). The dairy herd in Italy had reduced significantly from 1988, and is extremely fragmented due to the exclusivity of the localities of cheese, and it consumes more milk products than it produces (CLAL ND). GL fosters the impression that Italian food is unprocessed and artisanal, but for these reasons it is not possible on a sustainable level.

The GL articles gave a topical account of food and restaurant trends as they provided accessible records of progressive food developments in the public domain over time, and in doing so, it monitored the growth in public awareness about Vietnamese and Italian cuisine. This analysis of GL indicates that four themes of Vietnamese and Italian food have emerged in the Australian foodscape: traditional, modern, pan-Asian/Italian and undifferentiated. While the core flavours may be transposed into other dishes, certain combinations of ingredients are still recognisably Vietnamese or Italian unless the style of cooking has become generic or undifferentiated. Independently of the existence of misrepresentation or misunderstanding GL still provides its community of taste with the impressions of each cuisine. It communicates how in the Sydney area of the Australian foodscape Vietnamese and Italian cuisines manage their core flavours, and their treatment of each culinary style.
Chapter 5: Representing ethnicity in cookbooks

The analysis in the previous chapter investigated the impression management of Vietnamese and Italian cuisine from the perspective of the food writers who contribute newspaper articles to GL on a weekly basis. In the following chapter, six cookbooks—published in the same 2000–2009 period—will be analysed to give a complementary perspective to the research question ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’

The authors of the featured cookbooks differ from GL food writers in that they are presenting their images from an individual point of work, rather than as a cooperative performance team. Although supported by a publisher’s network, these authors use their own vision to establish a particular characterisation of cuisine that they share with their readership. The reader filters and absorbs their interpretations, and their impressions are passed into the foodscape. As Gallegos (2005) maintains, not only do cookbook writers provide instructions to assist on the preparation of food, but they can also be regarded as cultural intermediaries, thereby communicating knowledge of cuisine flavours by managing culinary impressions. As with the previous chapter, this chapter begins with a section on how the methodological framework corresponds with the analysis of cookbooks.

Dynamic construction of cookbooks’ representations of the foodscape

Continuing with Goffman’s (1959 p. 253) metaphor of theatrical performance, I establish how impressions of Vietnamese and Italian cuisines are managed in the foodscape by cookbook authors who enable the ‘dramatic effect that emerges diffusely from a scene that is presented’. In this case, the ‘dramatic effect’ is the impression of the cuisine, and the ‘scene’—or setting—is the cookbook. The critical difference between the GL food writers and cookbook writers is that whereas GL’s food journalists are concerned with expressing and emphasise ideas and information, cookbook writers are additionally occupied with the actual production of food in the kitchen. While their themes and writing styles may vary, they make their mark with the recipes.
The significance of cookbooks, according to Gallegos (2005), is that they maintain the flow of communication in culture. As such, they are sign-vehicles or signifying elements, through which an author manages impressions about a cuisine. Goffman (1959) proposes that these signifying elements can be divided into two forms: those that are deliberately ‘given’, and those that are inadvertently ‘given off’. When applied to cookbooks, deliberately expressed empirical information about the chosen cuisine in the book is ‘given’—recipes and cooking directions. However, unintended expressions are also ‘given off’ in the book’s text—narratives surrounding the cuisine such as emphasis on the cultural background and particular concerns of the writer—which influence the reader’s perception of the cuisine. These signifying elements combine to create the ‘front’ or dramatic stage used by the author to present an interpretation of the cuisine.

This chapter will concentrate on the frontstage—the presentation of cookbooks—and not on the backstage, the publisher’s network. While the publisher, designer, photographer and others are acknowledged in accounting for many aspects of the production of the book, the focus of the study is on the cookbook writer as the final authority on its presentation.

Any cookbook has a set of finite and predefined features such as the title, concept and style that give it a place in the genre, in the same way that when ‘an actor takes on an established social role, usually he finds that a particular front has already been established for it. ... Fronts tend to be selected, not created’ (Goffman 1956, p. 28). Although cookbook writers can manoeuvre among a variety of themes (Jacob 2010; Laurence 1994; Ostmann & Baker 1997), they are expected to stay within a recognised setting or cultural category, while at the same time communicating a point of variation in order to distinguish their product in the genre’s market. In addition, a cookbook must convey an impression of reliability in that the recipes can be successfully reproduced.

One of the most important aspects of recipe writing is accuracy, as readers will invest time and money in preparing the recipes, and errors can cost the publication a loss of goodwill and reputation (Laurence 1994; Ostmann & Baker 1997). Further, any sign that errors have been made and corrected are routinely concealed from the reader so the impression of infallibility is to be maintained (Goffman 1959 p. 43). This is why recipes submitted for publication should be tested and any changes and adjustments notes made before publication (Laurence 1994). Some writers have been known to develop a recipe up to
twenty times (Jacob 2010) but the effort of these numerous modifications can never be revealed in the published book. Additionally, incongruence, poor writing style, ‘the dissonance created by a misspelt word’ (Goffman 1959 p. 59) and other typographical errors that can disrupt the text need to be eradicated by any number of revisions (Ostmann & Baker 1997).

Cookbook authors also need to prevent situations where misunderstandings could occur, as part of ‘synecdochic control’ (Goffman 1959 p. 51), in other words, they need to maintain their expressive coherence. They must generally ensure that they have eliminated any ingredients or examples of convivial behaviour that might be found unacceptable by anyone foreign to the culture in question, or other inadvertent negative stereotypes.

Mystification is another way of creating a necessary social distance by the reader, so that ‘restrictions [are] placed upon contact [and] maintenance of social distance provide a way in which awe can be generated and sustained in the audience’ (Goffman 1959 p. 67). Exoticising the theme of the book is a way of promoting mystification, such as when food-based memoires or culinary adventures deliberately rely on creating distance between the reader and the theme. The cookbooks featured in this study all highlight historic, social and cultural specificities, creating exoticism by appropriating Vietnamese and Italian gastronomic practices and processes at the same time as delivering culinary instructions.

The cultural function of the selected cookbooks is to manage impressions about home, family, and hospitality—as well as their history and geography—and to create an image of Vietnamese or Italian cuisine that the audience wants to see. These books are aimed at a middle-class audience keen to explore different cuisines, whether for personal pleasure or social prestige, and perhaps at descendants of immigrants who are seeking to establish their own multicultural identity. The authors are likewise middle-class, and can be categorised, according to Duruz’s comments, as writers remembering the culinary pleasures of childhood or as professional chefs performing for an admiring middle-class audience (Duruz, 1999).

Just as readers of GL are encouraged to rely on the advice of its food writers who are researchers in their field, readers of cookbooks have to trust that the authors will give them a truthful rendition of the cuisine. Whether nostalgic or dramatic, or a likely blend of both, the authenticity of dishes and food habits are both central to these books. Goffman’s (1959)
observations on sincerity are particularly relevant here, as all cookbook readers want to believe that what they are reading is a genuine narrative, and what they are cooking is an expectation of a dish which represents the authenticity of the original cuisine.

The authors have all used authoritative sources (their own families, family cooks, their own or other’s restaurants) in describing their recipes, and they present themselves as the custodians of a traditional sense of hospitality. The readers of the cookbook envisage a different role or way of life, and a different culture—in other words someone else’s past—which may be why history and memories are given so much attention in most of these books. The authors also imply legitimacy in their inferences about cuisine by projecting believable or credible representations of the foodscape based on their own experiences.

The featured cookbooks were analysed in a similar method to the articles from GL, by linking Goffman’s (1959) notions of impression management to Fairclough’s (1995) CDA model. There is again an emphasis on the process of the production of the texts by cookbook writers rather than the processes of interpretation and consumption by their readers. Firstly, I give an overall description of each of the books individually, showing how the image of the Vietnamese and Italian cuisine is constructed, followed by a section on misrepresentations. Finally, I concentrate on analysing dishes common to each cuisine, decoding the processes and ingredients and interpreting the core flavours of each finished product.

The communication process between cookbook author and reader is shown in Figure 5.1. In this case, the focus is on how do cookbook authors approach the task. Who are these authors? What are the purposes behind the writing of these books? The author’s messages are assembled according to their relevance and value for the expected audience.
Figure 5.1: Dynamic construction of media representation of foodscape

Selection of cookbooks

The texts featured in this study were specifically selected from cookbooks written by Vietnamese Italian and Australian authors located in the Australian foodscape. The choice was restricted, as mentioned in Chapter 3, because the limited number of bookstores precluded browsing, and these books mostly had to be located and bought online. Other books that might have been appropriate were out of print, and others were published before 2000 or after 2009.

The three Vietnamese cookbook authors were Freeman’s (2002) The Flavours of Vietnam, Yeomans’s (2001) Green Papaya and Nguyen’s (2008) Secrets of the Red Lantern. The three Italian cookbooks are represented by Pepe (Cibo 2005), de Pieri (Modern Italian Food 2007) and Manfredi (Seasonal Italian Favourites 2009). It was noted in Chapter 3 that all the Italian writers were trained male chefs, while the Vietnamese authors who had been restaurateurs had no training. I refer to all the authors by their first names, to avoid confusion with the ‘Nguyen’ surname. I will refer to Manfredi as ‘Steve’ as this is the name he often identifies himself with. For further clarification, Appendix 3 contains a reference table of the cookbooks and their authors.
Three Vietnamese cookbooks

Cookbooks about Vietnamese food are prolific in the international cookbook market, but the themes of these three were culturally specific to the Australian environment. Meera Freeman situates herself in the local setting of Melbourne, and her recipes were developed with the help of the Vietnamese community there. Lien Yeomans interweaves her recipes in a narrative tracing her personal journey in Australia, while Pauline Nguyen’s book reads like a dramatic family history, interspersed with recipes for the complex dishes reproduced in her restaurant.

The Vietnamese Cookbook/The Flavours of Vietnam

The Vietnamese Cookbook, written by Meera Freemen with colleague Lê Văn Nhân, was published in Australia in 1996, and republished in 2002 under the title The Flavours of Vietnam. In the following analysis, I will be concentrating on the second edition of this book, but I mention the 1996 edition because it was the first Vietnamese cookbook published in the Australian setting. Coinciding with the cessation of Vietnamese refugee migration, it perhaps marks the beginning of interest in Vietnamese cuisine by the Australian middle class. According to Meera (24/11/2011 pers. comm.), The Vietnamese Cookbook was commissioned in 1993, after Penguin books had been looking for an author for some time. While writing the book, she developed a close relationship with the Melbourne Vietnamese community who, she says, were very generous with their time and insights. Meera learnt Vietnamese to have a real understanding of the cuisine and to get the correct accents for the text. She felt her responsibility, was to ‘give a true picture of the cuisine and a faithful rendition of the flavours ... the community loved the book and felt I had touched their true spirit’ (Freeman 24/11/2011 pers. comm.).
The production values of the first book are low-cost: a simple paperback cover, non-gloss paper and few photographs. In contrast, the second edition (2002) has an updated, hard cover, with higher quality paper, and more illustrations. On the cover of the first edition, the exhortation ‘authentic recipes’ is quoted by Jill Dupleix, a well-known cook and cookbook
author in the Australian foodscape. Dupleix’s equally prominent husband, Terry Durack, alludes to the ‘light, delicious and vietnameasy’ (sic) food on the back cover, assuring a potential customer that these recipes will not be complicated to cook, yet will produce non-fattening, tasty and authentic dishes. Both these writers were (and still are) doyens of the Sydney food scene, and their imprimatur would have been a marketing coup for the publisher at the time. Freeman’s collaborator, Lê Văn Nhân, adds authenticity to the contents with his distinctive Vietnamese name.

Colours play an important role for customers in making decisions about what they like and dislike, and thus are an important weapon in the publishers arsenal (Ou et al. 2004). The predominant colour of the first edition’s cover was green, which a majority of people see as symbolic of nature and ‘new beginnings’ and the table salad pictured in the cover photograph connects with ‘newness, youth and growth’ (Eiseman 2006 p. 25). This photograph represents the freshness of Vietnamese food, showing uncooked, unblemished fresh lettuce, cucumber, bean sprouts, mint and chives, juxtaposed with only one cooked item, spring rolls. The background of this picture is an artistically placed fan of unsoaked rice-paper wrappers. A pair of silver chopsticks aids Asian identification. Partially hiding the dish is a green band running parallel to the spine of the book showing the authors’ names in white, Dupleix’s recommendation, and a picture of a white bowl of red dipping sauce. The overall effect of the front cover of the partially hidden dish signals that Vietnamese food is fresh and simple, and will revealed similar authentic dishes like this inside.

On the back cover, green, terracotta orange, black, and white depicts the text on the upper half. Green spells out the words ‘simplicity, noodles, flavours, clay pots, and spices’ suggesting freshness, while ‘aromas, pickles, and fragrant broths’ are depicted in orange, a sacred Buddhist colour symbolising the energy of the life force (Eiseman 2006 p. 9). The lines ‘hot mint, rice-paper wrappers, enjoyment, dipping sauces and stir fries’ are printed in bold black, and the words ‘rice-paper wrappers’ and ‘dipping sauces’ penetrate the green band on the spine; black can mean power, but it can also mean oppression, according to (Eiseman 2006 p. 34), thus an interpretation could be ‘new beginnings permeated by oppression and suppression’ — a reference to the troubled history of Vietnamese immigrants. This green band also contains Durack’s approval in contrasting white script, the opposite of
black and a conciliatory colour, signalling the suspension of hostility in the creation of a new life.

_The Flavours of Vietnam_ does not appear to be targeted at Vietnamese cooks or readers. Vietnamese tradition recipes are rarely written down (Routhier 1989), and Meera developed all of the recipes by watching and questioning cooking procedures, then transcribing them into text. At in the time of the first edition, not all Vietnamese were fluent in spoken or written English (Cultural Diversity and the Family 1997), thus it can be assumed that the book was directed at an Anglophone readership. Additionally, the organisation of the Contents section reflects a traditional western culinary framework of classifying the foods into courses, such as ‘soups’, ‘appetisers and snacks’, ‘meat dishes’, ‘vegetables and salads’ and ‘desserts and drinks’. In fact, Vietnamese eating is carefully elaborated according to the concept of Yin and Yang and the five elements of water, fire, wood, metal and earth (Dang 2005).

_The Flavours of Vietnam_ hardcover edition was ‘a new and revised edition with a few more recipes but ‘otherwise, basically, a reprint to fill a request for orders when the first edition was completely out of print’ (Freeman 24/11/2011 pers. comm.) While the essential colour scheme was retained, the cover’s ‘look’ has been aestheticised with its focus on colourful and artful imagery. Set on a background of crisp white, black text accentuates the title, with the word ‘Vietnam’ in bold upper case. The authors’ names are depicted in terracotta orange. Two bowls of Vietnamese noodle soup (phở), dipping sauces and a dish of lime/chopped chilli are arranged for the cover photograph. An assumption is indicated that potential customers for the book would identify this photograph of phở as a core Vietnamese food, and understand the arrangement of the dipping sauces and lime/chilli dishes as markers of Vietnamese cuisine—previously exotic in 1996, but now recognisable due to widespread exposure and the ‘bedding down’ of the cuisine in the foodscape.

Although Vietnamese culinary traditions are often described in cookbooks by their regional variations (Phillips 2009) there is no sense of regionalism in _The Flavours of Vietnam_. Meera’s dishes reflect those of her local Melbourne community, populated by refugees from the south Vietnam, whose culinary style diverges from the central and northern provinces (Routhier 1989). Her research for the cookbook culminated in a trip to Vietnam, where she was ‘surprised and pleased to be able to identify and experience at the source so
many of the dishes I had been introduced to in Melbourne’ (Freeman & Lê 2002 p 4). Why ‘surprised’? Perhaps she expected the food to have been hybridised or altered in its translation from Vietnam to urban Melbourne, but the ingredients and cooking methods she encountered were identical to those cooked with by the Vietnamese community in Melbourne. I maintain that such close replication of the traditional cuisine by Vietnamese migrants, in this particular context, was part of their routine place making, and that modern and pan-Asian cuisine had not yet evolved in the Australian foodscape.

Sketchy biographical details are presented in the introduction to the book, followed by ‘Cooking Vietnamese’, an informational section with a brief description of the country’s history, identification of foods central to the culture, and menu suggestions and a short list of recommended utensils, with hints on where to buy and how to use them. According to Freeman, authenticity was the main criterion behind the selection of recipes for this book, and she recommends trying to source authentic ingredients whenever possible in her opening chapter (Freeman & Lê 2002). Meera’s philosophy was to transmit key features of the Vietnamese culinary environment to the reader, and to do so as authentically as possible. According to Magee (2005 p. 4), any cuisine is capable of codification, and accordingly is amenable to transmission, so any food culture, ‘can be transmitted and, as such, known in places other than its place of origin’. By further evaluating her culinary experiences in Melbourne alongside the food she identified in Vietnam, she shows that her collection of recipes was able to be effectively re-created elsewhere—and as Magee asserts, one of the most positive and benign results of globalisation is that all the necessary ingredients can now be obtained in most western economies, in this case Australia.

English, Vietnamese and botanical names (where applicable) are comprehensively listed and explained in a clear, methodical fashion, with over 50 headings and subheadings of ingredients that can be obtained, providing one has access to a Vietnamese grocery. Once these elements are assembled in the following recipes, the reader is assured that authentic Vietnamese cuisine can be reproduced. Messages that accompany each ingredient in the list—such as physical description, instructions on preparation, and what the correct accompaniment is—convey trust and culinary authenticity (Tomlinson 1986). The first section is an orienting feature for the user of the cookbook, concisely written to avoid
misunderstandings and making it easier for the subsequent recipes to be successfully executed.

A short poem in Vietnamese, translated into English, begins each chapter, articulating a Vietnamese cultural affiliation central to its focus on food. Chapters are divided into subsections, each with a brief forward—for example, under ‘Accompaniments’, there are subsections for salad, sauces and pickles. Meera’s recommendations are considerable, for instance, salad combines informational comments on raw ingredients, the end dish, how it should be eaten, and with directions to other recipes for suggested accompaniments. The messages presented here are designed to attract attention, and to invite the reader to use the recipe that follows (Warde 1994). For this dish, while there is a concern with variety of ingredients, the method or process is more important than the precision in their composition, with suggestions for improvisation based on personal taste and availability of ingredients.

The recipes do not vary from a standard two-part format—the list of ingredients and the instructions. Tomlinson (1986 p. 204) regards the instructions that underlie and inform the reader how to read the recipe as metarules, which he calls ‘external and/or comments about the recipe’. In The Flavours of Vietnam, the metarules are often seen in the final sentence, appearing in the recipe format but somewhat apart from the recipe itself, such as: ‘The combination of ingredients in this sauce appears bizarre to say the least, don’t be put off! The flavour is exquisite!’ (Tomlinson 1986 p. 30).

The presentation of this book is one of authenticity performance. The book is compact, the size of common recipe-book holders that are used in the kitchen, the font easy to read and the recipe instructions simply and precisely laid out. Rather than to simply read the text for an abstract account of Vietnamese culture and cuisine, the reader/cook is encouraged throughout to trust the author to guide them to produce the authentic flavours of Vietnamese dishes, to be transported to the country whenever a meal is prepared, and to use the recipes to form a positive interpretation of Vietnamese cuisine.

**Green Papaya: New Fruit from Old Seeds**

Green Papaya, written by Lien Yeomans, was published in Australia in 2001. Distinguished by its author’s life story intertwined with details of Vietnam’s ‘cultural and gastronomic’ history, Green Papaya is an example of Vietnamese cookbook writing in which
the authors autobiographical details are enmeshed with her recipes. The book is not a catalogue of Vietnamese recipes; rather, it is an intense collection of memoirs with recipes interspersed throughout. Lien’s cultural affiliation is North Vietnamese.

![Image](212x467 to 385x698)

Figure 5.4: Green Papaya: New Fruit from Old Seeds

Similar to *The Flavours of Vietnam*, the production values of this book appear economical: paperback cover, uncoated paper and a six page-block of black-and-white photographs. Two photographs dominate the front cover: the lower picture is a close up of herbs perilla and coriander, *nuoc cham* dipping sauce and rice-paper rolls, markers of Vietnamese cuisine—once unusual, now commonplace. The upper, more prominent image is of Yeomans herself, set against an unfocused background of a chef holding a dramatically flaming pan in a commercial kitchen. The colour and style of her dress—a vermillion Áo Đài, the traditional Vietnamese dress—reflects a mix of multicultural meanings and messages (Eiseman 2006 p 33), while a script font spells out the title in leafy green, the colour of renewal and hope (Lewis 1996).

Subtitles and Lien’s full name are depicted in lower-case white lettering, in capitalised script font. She explains in the preface how she devised the title and subheadings—*Green Papaya* was inspired by the cooking scenes from a movie, ‘new fruit from old seeds’ referred to her cooking heritage, and the subtitle, *How I seduced Australia with my food* encapsulates the exploitation of her culinary prowess to make a place for herself
in Australian society. The photograph of Lien does not signal her ethnic origin as Vietnamese until close attention is paid to her dress, so the photographs of herbs/dipping sauce/rice rolls is the main indicator in the cover that that the book is Vietnamese.

Lien’s heritage was from the north of Vietnam, and she freely admits to being more familiar with the Royal cuisine of Huế than that of the southern, highland or ethnic regions of the country. In *Green Papaya*, she invites the reader to view the culinary representations of the nation of Vietnam through the lens of north Vietnam. Her own cultural traditions dominate, but she incorporates recipes that reflect other geographic regions, acknowledging their different cooking styles. Her replication of traditional cuisine in the Australian context was part of finding her place, and some of the ingredient substitutions and inventions show how her culinary prowess had to adapt to the Australian foodscape at the time.

*Green Papaya* is not necessarily targeted towards Vietnamese cooks or readers. While there is nostalgia for the surrounds of her childhood, Lien conveys her story from the perspective of a unique Vietnamese woman choosing to live in an Australian setting. Although Lien is generous with descriptions of those from whom she learnt to cook, she gives no indication that she ever drew inspiration from written recipes. She learnt ‘the secret’ of how to make beef stock, for example, by watching and asking questions, the art of making perfect tea from her grandfather and how to cook flawless rice by practice. Lien transports the reader to the settings of her childhood through the cuisine, and by transcribing the recipes from memory to page, invites them into her story every time they cook one of her dishes. The cookbook becomes ‘reference, record and script’ (Phillips 2009 p. 47) for the staging of her life story and so the recipes have a literal connection to the author’s life chapters.

The organisation of the six chapters in the Contents section does not reflect a traditional western cookbook. Instead, each chapter is arranged as a sequential record of stages of Lien’s life history. The cookbook intermingles the recipes with the narrative, emphasising culinary practice as part of daily living and special occasions in both Australia and Vietnam. In the final chapter, only eight recipes appear in the western format of courses: starters, soups, mains, salads and sweets—a necessary arrangement for the restaurant she ran in Brisbane.
A glossary of ingredients and sources is at the end of the book, in English alphabetical order followed immediately by bracketed Vietnamese names, some with differentiated north/south names. There are nearly 70 entries recorded, although little information is provided on sourcing, such as in the case of ‘Ruoi: a seasonal sand worm greatly valued by Hanoians’ (Yeomans 2001 p. 212). The messages that accompany each ingredient are brief but occasionally vague—such as ‘Fermented rice (mẻ): made from old cooked rice and special yeast. It adds sourness to food’ (p. 212), gives no instructions on how to prepare it, where to obtain it, or how it is otherwise used as an ingredient.

A standard two-part recipe format lists ingredients and the instructions but there are no metarules (Tomlinson 1986) to inform the reader how to read the recipe. Some serving hints are offered, such as ‘Serve with Red Cabbage Salad’ (Yeomans 2001 p. 204), but on the whole, there are few menu suggestions on combining dishes for flavour and texture. While the recipes are complete, there are few instructions on preparation, and accompaniments suggests that the primary focus of this book is the narrative and assembly and presentation of the dishes seems to be a secondary consideration.

Lien seamlessly interweaves her recipes into her narrative and often uses them to reflect on a memorable happening from her past. She therefore establishes the connections between memory and cultural practice. By recounting the autobiographical details of her ongoing commitment to culinary expertise in both Vietnam and Australia, she showcases her representations of tradition and authenticity in this memoir/cookbook.

Secrets of the Red Lantern

*Secrets of the Red Lantern* is a substantial volume over 340 pages in length, containing more than 275 recipes. The production values of this book are lavish, beginning with the heavy fabric cover. The cover is divided into three sections: uppermost is a silk painting of red and white cherry blossoms on a branch outlined in shades of grey. The title, in red lower-case cursive script, runs across a black band on the centre of the book. Below, deep red fabric replicates of a swatch of red that was given to their grandmother upon her departure to Australia (Nguyen, Luke 02/08/2011 pers. comm.). The thick pages are very pale grey etched with a silhouette pattern of foliage. The deep red fabric colour gives a rich, elegant and refines impression (Eiseman 2006 p12).
Unlike the preceding books, this book incorporates many photographs that are divided into family or historical pictures and styled images of selected dishes. The earlier family photographs are in black and white and some are in sepia tones, signalling the nostalgic tone and texture of this cookbook/memoir. The book’s first photo appears before the title page, establishing the readers opening contact with a visual impression that completely dominates and fills the field of vision—the author Pauline (age 3) and her brother Lewis (age 2) in Saigon, in October 1976. Numerous photographs of this kind appear throughout the book. They are placed at the beginning of each chapter, foregrounding individual and collective memories. There is a gradually shift to colour images from the mid-seventies onwards as the sequence of family experiences unfolds, following the transition from ‘old’ Vietnam, to a refugee camp in Bangkok, and thence to their settling in the western suburbs of Sydney. As in most of the books chapters, Pauline’s meditations on her family’s relationships and memories lead her to associations with food, although occasionally in alarming ways as the recipes are sometimes used to emphasise ‘conflict, alienation and embarrassment’ (Oum 2005 p. 109).

The dishes are separated from the narrative text, and professional photography takes over from family images. There are roughly five or six photographs per section, and great care is taken with colour and positioning in the styling, providing a sophisticated but clear picture of how the finished product should look.
The recipes are detailed and informative, but the instructions presume a high level of cooking expertise and access to a wide variety of fresh and preserved Vietnamese ingredients. Positioned at the end of each chapter in traditional western format, each recipe takes up an entire page, often with a coloured photograph opposite. This division of recipes and narrative would have appeal on two levels—either the narrative or the recipes can easily be skipped over without disruption. The recipes, in standard two-part format, were contributed by Pauline’s brother Luke and husband Mark, both chefs, and are often accompanied by informative comments (metarules) from either person. The appetites of the eaters are presumed, such as ‘serves 4 as a main, or for six as a part of a shared feast’ (Nguyen et al p. 124), and unlike The Flavours of Vietnam, there are no indications on what else should be served in a shared feast.

The recipes are complex with many ingredients, but there is no glossary. By 2009, Vietnamese food had bedded down into the Australian foodscape so it is possible that the authors omitted it as being unnecessary for its community of taste, who might be prepared to do their own research into some of the more obscure ingredients. There are occasional suggestions about kitchen equipment, such as ‘in Vietnam, this dish is cooked at the table on a small frying pan over a charcoal grill. If you have a table top gas cooker, you can prepare this dish in a similar fashion’ (Nguyen et al p. 167). The substitute cooking process supplied means the dish can be replicated without having the difficulty of obtaining a traditional Vietnamese charcoal grill.

Some of the recipes require dedicated ingredients, such as Canh Chua Rau Muống, or tamarind soup with water spinach (Nguyen et al p. 68). The water spinach (ong choy) is not easily sourced outside a Vietnamese greengrocer and neither is elephant ear stem or rice paddy herb, so access to specialist shopping is an assumed prerequisite. There are no suggestions for accompaniments or combinations of dishes that would be incorporated into a meal. These omissions may be a barrier to using the recipes, because they require additional research, access to Vietnamese markets, and in many cases hours of cooking time. To me, The Flavours of Vietnam would have more appeal to anyone with a genuine desire to cook the recipes, and this book would be for reading only.

In this cookbook/memoire genre, the connections between memory and cultural practice usually invite the reader to focus on the food as a medium of emotional bonding,
social relations or community building and to replicate the dishes for the pleasure of experiencing the food of the author’s past. However, this cookbook/memoir situates its engagement with food against a background of displacement. The recipes seem to be disconnected from the narrative at times, and not necessarily the result of positive memories—for example, goat curry, the very first recipe (Nguyen et al p. 22), has negative associations for Pauline, and Luke later writes of ‘despising’ dishes made bitter vegetables (Nguyen et al p. 63).

(Mis)Representing Vietnamese cuisine?

Each cookbook has a its own subtext, or expressions inadvertently ‘given off’ by the author (Goffman 1959). These are in part the unique voice of the creative process of writing, reflecting personal style and attempting reducing the barrier between writer, reader and cook (Ostmann & Baker 1997). However, I hold the view that these expressions can sometimes give rise to misrepresentations and contradictions about the cuisine in question.

Tomlinson (1986 p. 208) mentions that there are numerous possibilities for mistakes to be made in following any of cookbooks instructions. He cites Grimshaw’s (1980) isolation of five types of ‘miscues’ that are possible between speakers and hearers, and parallels them for readers of instructions. One of these categories is ‘mishearings’, in which speakers and hearers collaborate in an attempt to correct the mishearing by ‘remedial work’. Tomlinson extends the concept to ‘misreadings’, the difference being that the reader is typically alone and must do all the corrections by himself.

The voice of Meera Freeman’s book, *The Flavours of Vietnam* is calm, concise and authoritative, and I found it impossible to find evidence of any misunderstandings that might arise when reading or cooking the recipes from this book. It is as if she has followed all the guidelines on recipe writing (Jacob 2010; Laurence 1994; Ostmann & Baker 1997; Whitman & Simon 1993). It is primarily focused on the success of recipes, how to source the ingredients, what utensils are crucial, interspersed with knowledgeable research on Vietnamese culture. A book for cooks, it never lapses into ‘instruction-ese’ with convoluted sentence or ‘recipe shorthand’ to put an extra barrier between the writer and cook, but at the same time never implies that the recipes are just a set of instructions instead of a creative process (Ostmann & Baker 1997). It is not of the food memoire genre, unlike the other two Vietnamese cookbooks in the study.
Conversely, *Green Papaya* could cause misunderstandings by what it does not say. Many of the recipes are over-simplified, having fewer ingredients, (see the recipe for Bún bò Huế in Table 5.1) and do not share consistent flavour elements with the recipes in other two books. It is written as though there is very limited access to Vietnamese ingredients, with many substitutions, and although *Flavours of Vietnam* was published beforehand, it is more comprehensive. There are no ‘metarules’ (Tomlinson 1986), or headnotes with useful information. As well, the specificity of Vietnamese herbs is not explained and is replaced with the general ‘bundle of fresh herbs of choice, hard stems discarded’, which gives the reader no indication of what they could be.

The *Secrets of the Red Lantern* gives much more detail to the recipes, with headnotes by both Luke Nguyen and Mark Jenson that draw the reader into the recipes with detailed preparation of ingredients. However, there are some areas that may cause a reader confusion, with inaccuracy and irregularity of conversions from metric to Imperial measures. Liquid and dry ingredients are presented as metric measures, with a bracketed conversion to ounces and or cups. The Imperial measures are for a United Kingdom readership, and but could cause confusion should a reader convert them, especially when converting large volumes. Cup measurements are Australian as opposed to American (although this is never mentioned), and there is inconsistency in the recommendations of the measurements (Markham 2007). As well, the personality of the narrative sometimes interferes with the recipe. As mentioned before, goat curry—which reads deliciously—has a negative headnote, and I would find it hard to eat it without thinking of Nguyen’s personal torment (Nguyen et al 2008 p. 22).

I decided to select a dish common to all three books, Bún bò Huế, and see how each book represented traditional Vietnamese cuisine in terms of flavour ingredients and cooking processes. I have placed the narratives to one side, and concentrate on the recipe as an example of how they serve to form impressions of the cuisine as it exists in the Australian foodscape.

**How to cook Bún bò Huế**

In all three books, the Vietnamese name was first in the recipe layout followed by an English translation, but there were no Vietnamese names in the index. The English version
varied for Bún bò Huế—in *The Flavours of Vietnam*, it was translated as ‘chilli beef noodle soup’ (Freeman & Lê pp. 66–67), in *Green Papaya*, ‘beef noodle soup’ (Yeomans p. 163), and in *Secrets of the Red Lantern*, ‘spicy beef and pork leg soup’ (Nguyen *et al* pp. 265–266).

**Ingredients**

The ingredients used for this dish are shown in Table 5.1, which gives a breakdown of twenty ingredients that were listed. There is a difference in the number of ingredients (15, 8 and 17 respectively) but each recipe has the four common flavourings of pork, beef, onion, chilli and fish sauce. Four more ingredients, garlic, cloves, cassia/cinnamon and lemongrass, are common to the two recipes from *Flavours* and *Red Lantern*. There is a wide variation of the remaining eleven ingredients that are not common to any other recipe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>The Flavours of Vietnam (15)</th>
<th>Green Papaya (8)</th>
<th>Secrets of the Red Lantern (17)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Water)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pork leg</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef (chuck, shin, brisket, oxtail)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion, white onion, shallot, spring onion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cloves</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ginger</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay leaves</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilli: dried, powder, sauce</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassia/cinnamon</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curry powder</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato paste</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish sauce</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemongrass</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annato powder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp paste</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black pepper</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.1: Breakdown of flavour ingredients for Bún bò Huế

It can be seen from this breakdown that the recipe from Green Papaya has the fewest ingredients, and this disparity would be expected to have an influence on the finished dish in terms of comparative flavour complexity. The next step was to analyse each recipe for its serving accompaniments.

Table 5.2 lists 14 ingredients given as serving accompaniments in the three recipes for the soup. Rice noodles and bean sprouts are common to the three dishes, with a further two, shrimp paste and chilli being common to Flavours of Vietnam and Secrets of the Red Lantern. This leaves ten ingredients that are not common to any other recipe.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>The Flavours of Vietnam (5)</th>
<th>Green Papaya (7)</th>
<th>Secrets of the Red Lantern (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Rice noodles</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shrimp paste</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sesame oil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bean sprouts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spring onions</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Banana flower</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Erygn (sawtooth basil)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemongrass</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilli (fresh)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon wedges</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnamese mint</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fish sauce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilli sauce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.2: Breakdown of accompaniment ingredients for Bún bò Huế

Initially, it seems that the three books have a relatively even number of accompanying ingredients, but closer inspection sees that they are grouped differently in all three recipes. *Flavours* suggests sesame oil and spring onions but *Green Papaya* recommends banana flower and sawtooth basil, both of which are slightly obscure, and salt, lemon and chilli, which is a condiment from the Hue area. *Secrets* was different again, advocating lemon wedges, Vietnamese mint, and fish and chilli sauces.

I expected the accompaniments to be far more similar in each book. Meera’s sources were migrants from the south of Vietnam, and possibly had a differing interpretation of the garnish. In the case of *Green Papaya*, I speculate that Lien’s familiarity with a northern Vietnamese dish is the reason for the difference. *Secrets of the Red Lantern* is also influenced by south Vietnam. The differences may also relate to personal preferences.

Processes

Process or methods often determine the success of a recipe. Table 5.3 shows comparisons between the cooking steps, and has been arranged to reveal the cooking times for each book’s recipe, the number of steps in cooking, and the ingredient additions during the cooking process.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooking process</th>
<th>The Flavours of Vietnam</th>
<th>Green Papaya</th>
<th>Secrets of the Red Lantern</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking time</td>
<td>30+10+30+30 (1 hr 40 mins)</td>
<td>No times given</td>
<td>60+30+90+60 (1 hour marinade, 3 hours’ cooking)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in cooking process</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.3: Breakdown of processes for cooking Bún bò Huế

Although no cooking times are listed in *Green Papaya*, Lien guides the cook by referring to tenderness and colour changes to determine the method. There is a great disparity between *The Flavours of Vietnam* and *Secrets of the Red Lantern*, largely because preparation steps and marinading are factored into the latter method. Combined with the long list of ingredients, this recipe is the most complex, and in my interview with Luke Nguyen, it was stressed that stocks and soups always had a long, slow cooking process at *Red Lantern* restaurant, at variance from restaurants that took shortcuts.

The steps in the cooking process were the intervals in the instructions when the cook was required to do something to the dish and Table 5.3 shows that the number of steps is fairly consistent. These steps incorporate flavour additions, and once again, *Secrets of the Red Lantern* was followed by *The Flavours of Vietnam* then *Green Papaya*.

As a cook, I know the importance of the order of ingredient addition and its overall effect the flavour outcome, and I would assume that the recipe given in *Secrets of the Red Lantern* would result in a more complex flavour experience than the other two. Not only are there a significant number of additional ingredients, but the cooking times allow for the maximum extraction of their flavours according to their addition to the recipe.

However, all three recipes demonstrate common recurring flavour themes—discussed in the following section—which distinguish the cuisine as Vietnamese despite differences between their individual recipes.

**Recurrent flavour themes**

Whether the Bún bò Huế had differing levels of complexity or not, when the cooking and serving steps were combined, in Table 5.4, seven common flavours emerge in the finished product.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>The Flavours of Vietnam(8)</th>
<th>Green Papaya (8)</th>
<th>Secrets of the Red Lantern(8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pork leg</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beef (chuck, shin, brisket, oxtail)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion, white onion</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5.4: Recurrent flavour themes

The overall flavour themes that emerged when the cooked dish was combined with the serving accompaniments they seem to have evened out. The combination of the meat flavours, onion and fish sauce and the addition of chilli are common to all three recipes. It is not unusual for the construction of dishes to vary according to who is cooking and what they have to hand, thus it seems that as long as the core flavours are present, whether in the dish or in the serving accompaniments the perception of genuine Vietnamese flavour is conveyed to the reader or cook.

Reconnecting the narrative with the recipe comparison, I reached the following conclusions. The narrative in Green Papaya seems to be more important to the author than focus on the accuracy of the recipes, given their comparative simplicity and the number of ingredient substitutions that are evident in the book. In contrast, The Flavours of Vietnam concentrates on the recipes and cooking methods, which overshadow the narrative. Secrets of the Red Lantern presents as the most complex of the three, in both its narrative and recipes. Pauline Nguyen’s book was published several years later, and had two advantages. One is that the more exotic ingredients in terms of flavouring herbs are now more familiar and accessible, as the cuisine has established itself securely in the foodscape. Secondly, many of the dishes from the book are featured in the Red Lantern restaurant, whose aim is to represent a highly elaborate interpretation of original Vietnamese cuisine (see Chapters 6 and 7). This would explain the complexity of the recipes. The three books combine to show how the authors managed the core Vietnamese flavours in different ways according to their personal perspectives, implying that traditional flavours can be manipulated. Even though the ingredients vary from recipe to recipe, the core ingredients allow other flavours to be layered into the dish, without compromising its authenticity. This shows that the culinary authenticity
of the cuisine is dynamic, not static in the effort to provide impressions of Vietnamese traditional flavours.

**Three Italian cookbooks**

As with Vietnamese books, the Italian cookbooks were selected for their themes that were culturally specific to the Australian environment. Self-published *Cibo* (2005) is situated in Adelaide, written by chef Salvatore Pepe who developed the recipes from memory, recipes brought from Italy or translated from Italian books. Although Amanda Ward is listed as a co-author she is not credited with any writing, only the publishing.

Stephano De Pieri and Stephano (Steve) Manfredi have written several books, and both are regarded as celebrity chefs. Manfredi occasionally writes for the SMH GL as well.

**Cibo**

Unlike the other recipe books in the study, *Cibo*’s abstract front cover gives an indication that it is a cookbook, using a dark red capsicum to suggest an association with Italian cuisine. Red is a symbolic colour of the heart, strong willed and expressing strong emotions (Eiseman 2006 p.12). Uncomplicated text spells out the title of the book, and the authors’ names. The back cover has a photograph of Salvatore in a kitchen, and three review blurbs by Adelaide magazines and Italian chef Armando Percuoco chef/proprietor of Buon Riccordo in Sydney, and vice-president of the CIRA. Percuoco also wrote the preface, which extols the virtues of Pepe’s culinary dexterity.

A one-page *Introduzione* begins: ‘In Italy, food is all about flavour’ (Pepe & Warde 2007 p. 9), explaining the attitude to cooking and eating in Italy, and how easy it is to assume this attitude in Australia, especially when ‘Cibo aims to take you on a food journey through Italy and help you capture the essence of this rich and diverse food culture in your own kitchen’ (p. 9).
As with other cookbook writers in this study, Salvatore merges the dual themes of nostalgia and culinary expertise (Duruz 1999) basing the sections of the book on the three areas where he has lived, Calabria, Firenze and Adelaide. He traces his journey in Italy with the Australian food environment, where at first he found it difficult to reproduce the cuisine he grew up with in Italy because ‘recipes brought from Italy or translated from Italian books resulted in flavours that did not match my food memories’ (Pepe & Warde 2007 p. 9). In this way, Salvatore sends a message to his reader of trust and authenticity, that in place of actually going to Italy, the reader can rely on his memories of the images and symbols of Italian cuisine, built on the inferences from the narrative of his life history.

In the Glossaria (p. 11) at the beginning of the book, Salvatore advises the reader how to cook like an Italian—no compromise on freshness—and emphasises the importance of food by citing a report that Italians spend more money on it than anything else. There are 29 ingredients listed in this section, their descriptions varying in length from one or two paragraphs to several pages on Italian wine. Although there are several misapprehensions that will be addressed later in the chapter, this information would be helpful to the reader.

The recipes are grouped in three sections named Calabria, Toscana and Australia, reflecting three settings that have had a profound influence on his food philosophy, emphasising the significance of regional diversity in Italian cuisine. Each recipe title has an Italian name in script above an English translation, and followed by a headnote.
These are used to explain the origins of the dish, give a fuller description of the main ingredient, or offer extra instructions on the cooking process. Notes and variations at the end of the recipes usually refer to serving instructions, such as whether the dish is suited to a luncheon menu, or accompaniments, or last minute instruction on finishing the dish before serving.

Every recipe in the book is generously illustrated with a full-page photograph on its opposite page, and rustic Italian scenes are reproduced on non-recipe pages. The food styling is a little outdated compared to the slick photography in Stefano de Pieri’s book, but it perhaps adds to the impression of authenticity regarding the original foodscape of the dish.

**Modern Italian Food**

Unlike the trend that is almost obligatory in Italian cookbooks, de Pieri’s *Modern Italian Food* (2007) has few references to his Italian heritage. His expression of Italian food, like Pepe’s, emphasises ‘fresh and simple’ over pretension, and the book is divided into chapters that reflect a theme rather than by traditional menu format. Rather than comparing Australian products to that of Italy, he encourages his reader to cook Australian produce with Italian style, underscoring the trend in his book away from the ‘over-use of tomato and garlic in favour of the smart use of olive oil ... with herbs’ (de Pieri 2007 p. iix).

![Figure 5.7: Modern Italian Food](image)

The dominant cover photograph is of Stefano himself, in a shirt of photogenic periwinkle blue, and the food takes a secondary position. He holds out a double handful of
salt, connecting the cover photograph to the theme of the first chapter of the book. Periwinkle is a positive colour (Eiseman 2006 p. 9), communicating geniality, conviviality and an open and expansive promise. The salt symbolises hospitality, friendship and loyalty (Parman 2002). On the lower half of the white dust jacket are four colourful, photographs that appear later in the book. The back cover features the quotation from Stefano in which he emphasised a philosophy that is ‘the underlying intention is to reaffirm the basic principles of Italian gastronomy: freshness, simplicity and lack of pretension’ (de Pieri 2007).

On the front flap of the dust cover, food magazine *Gourmet Traveller* adds a complimentary blurb, followed by a compressed version of the author’s Italian background and summary of the contents of the book, while the back flap gives mixed details of his personal and professional career, and his two previous publications.

The interior of the book has a bold design, and alluring photographs, by Earl Carter, some of the featured dishes and others of the landscape surrounding the restaurant location. The Table of Contents, as mentioned before, is organised by theme, which separates it from a traditional Italian publication format that is usually organised in menu-type indices that begin with a typical ‘Italian’ element such as the ‘antipasto’. In Stefano’s book, chapters named for salt, olive oil, wheat, polenta, and rice combine with sections of vegetables, fish, poultry and meat, and the recipes correspond loosely to each topic.

There is a subtle connection with the cover photograph and the first chapter, ‘salt’, begins with the aphorism ‘no salt, no flavour’ (de Pieri 2007 p. 2), followed by a brief history of salt, its virtues and advice to use it judiciously. The recto page has an arresting photograph of a salt mine, the foreground a desert strewn with saltbush. Each recipe in this chapter revolves around the ‘salt’ theme, beginning with ocean trout in a salt crust, salmon cured with salt, and more indirect salt ingredients like anchovies, salt cod, and including recipes for salt-cured pork. At variance with traditional menu categories, recipes for polenta for example, sit with recipes for sweet biscotti and cake with savoury squid and chicken livers.

Instead of beginning with expected informational comments, the cheese chapter is devoted to a diatribe against an ‘international conspiracy’ (de Pieri 2007 p. 202) condemning multinational cheese manufacturers, food regulators and governments for their role in ensuring that Australia cheese is made with pasteurised milk and that certain European
cheeses cannot be imported if they fall outside the food regulations. Stefano finds this authoritarian approach is unreasonable, and insists that without using raw milk for the cheese making process, ‘basic elements of flavour—ultimately it is all about flavour—and texture cannot be achieved’ (de Pieri 2007 p.202). The reader is also warned that most Italian cheese types found in Australia resemble the ‘real’ Italian product only in name, although the ban only applies to soft milk cheeses like gorgonzola, and not parmesan or other hard cheeses. In the ensuing section, Stefano gives information on how to identify genuine parmesan-reggiano, grana and taleggio at the same time warning against commercial brands, which, in his opinion, do not make ricotta or mascarpone with true Italian diligence. He also hints on his preferred brands for these cheeses.

Overall, the recipes are presented in a clear, methodical fashion. Their layout varies as they are presented in two formats—either one recipe to a page, with a full-page photograph opposite, or two to three recipes to a page, presented in columns without a corresponding picture. All the recipes commence with a headnote, whether a chatty suggestion from the author, the history of the dish, or information about an important ingredient in the recipe. Notes and variations at the end of the recipes usually refer to finishing instructions for the dish before serving. While the cooking processes are Italian, the ingredients are a mixture of Australian and Italian produce.

Seasonal Italian Favourites

As with The Flavours of Vietnam, the front cover of Seasonal Italian Favourites (2009) by Steve Manfredi features food from the book and a green-grey stuffed artichoke surrounded by softly focused boiled egg quarters provides colour. Bold upper case in white announces the name and author on the front, while on the back—white lettering on solid red—has none of the usual publicity blurbs from other chefs or magazines.

Inside, the book contains very little personal narrative, although the headnotes that are devoted to the main ingredient in each section are informative and written in a conversational style. Even the Introduction, which is usually employed to inform the reader about the author is surprisingly lacking in personal information. Steve has long been known as a celebrity chef in the cooking milieu, having owned successful restaurants and as a prolific writer of cookbooks and articles, thus his personal story is well known in the Australian community of taste and it may have been decided not to repeat it here. In line with the other two books, the
Introduction emphasises freshness and simplicity, and uses seasonality to support the layout of the recipes. He admits to ‘the occasional anomaly that seems to contradict the title’ (Manfredi 2009 p. 12) referring to a small number of recipes from other cuisines that he has included in the book, but justifies this irregularity by saying that ‘Italian food is not a fixed notion but an evolving cuisine’(p. 12).

Figure 5.8: Seasonal Italian Favourites

The recipes are presented under each heading, three to each double page, with the ingredients listed in a separate column to the method. This makes the recipes very easy to decipher. Further, each step is highlighted with an icon, so the cook can see immediately how many steps there are. Whether consciously or unconsciously, the page layout refers to one of the Australian cookbook featured in this research, Stephanie Alexander’s The Cook’s Companion (2004)—see Chapter 7—by including a list of flavours that complement the main ingredient. The main ingredient is also featured in a photograph of one of the finished dishes on each double page.

In similar ways to The Flavours of Vietnam, it is calm, concise and authoritative, and I found it impossible to find evidence of any misunderstandings that might arise when reading or cooking the recipes from this book. Like Freeman, Manfredi seems to have followed all the guidelines on recipe writing (Jacob 2010; Laurence 1994; Ostmann & Baker 1997;
Whitman & Simon 1993) by focusing on the recipes, although the ingredient lists and processes are far simpler than Freeman’s. It does not have a food memoire theme, unlike Pepe’s book.

**(Mis)Representing Italian cuisine?**

*Cibo*, being self-published, did not have the benefit of editorial rigor, and contains some outright mistakes in its research. Firstly, Salvatore Pepe (2005 p. 15) maintains that ‘instant coffee contains almost twice as much caffeine as an espresso’, when the actual proportion is directly opposite (UK Food Standards Agency 2004). He also uses the caffeine level to emphasise the quality of Arabica beans over Robusta for espresso, but neglects to mention that quality levels of both beans can vary, as can personal preferences (Coffee and Caffeine FAQ 2006).

Secondly, according to Pepe, ‘much of the wheat grown in Australia is the soft variety, which produces flour only suitable for white bread and cakes’ (Pepe & Warde 2005 p. 20). In fact, only a small amount of ‘soft’ wheat is produced in Western Australia, and Australia exports more than 50 per cent of its ‘durum’ wheat yield to Italy for pasta processing. Confusingly, he then goes on to say that there is little difference between standard of dried pasta made in Australia and that of Italy, except for special artisanal brands of dried pasta that are made from exclusively Italian-grown durum. In this, he is directly at odds with de Pieri (2007 p. 17) who giving advice for a recipe for home-made spaghetti notes that ‘there are various kinds of pasta flour available in Italian delis, but normal plain flour will do just as well if you can’t locate pasta flour. De Pieri later devotes a whole page to singing the praises of Australian flour and appears to have researched his topic thoroughly (p. 70).

Manfredi (2009) agrees that hard or durum wheat is preferred for dried pasta, but in his directions for fresh pasta he advises ‘a combination of eggs and soft wheat flour (plain or Italian 00)’, which is a further contradiction of Pepe’s view.

Each cookbook has a different subtext. Pepe (2007 p. 16) seems to find much Australian produce wanting, and writes nostalgically of artisan proscuitto, hen-fresh eggs, and prized Calabrian onions. He condemns Australian meat with faint praise, saying it would be better if hung the Italian way, and although he admits the seafood is plentiful, he manages to imply a note of disapproval saying it would be better if it were cleaned in sea-water, Italian style, than in ‘water full of additives and chemicals’.
Conversely, de Pieri uses his book as a kind of soapbox to vent his personal views—his stance on environmental issues, his ideas on pig farming, his contempt for sliced white bread, the banality of bastardised risotto. To Stefano, Australia is a ‘meat paradise’, although he finds cheeses lacking, for which he mostly blames cheese regulatory bodies that do not allow unpasteurised milk cheese to be used in the production or importation of soft cheeses. Stefano does not try to make Italian dishes based on childhood memories. Instead, he takes Italian cooking processes and techniques and shows the reader how to apply them using the best Australian and Italian ingredients.

Editing inconsistencies appear throughout de Pieri’s book, and there could be confusion as quantities are sometimes listed in metric quantities, then tablespoons/cups, in the same recipe. A recipe for ‘risotto al barolo’ (p. 241) for example, calls for 40g of butter at the beginning of the recipe, then ‘1 tablespoon’ at the end. On the same page, a recipe for zabaglione with fruits and one for sangiovese with peaches both require caster sugar, but the former calls for 80g caster sugar and the latter five tablespoons. A page on Conversions and Equivalents is equally confusing. The only indication that the conversion units for grams/ounces are Imperial or US, is a note that the US tablespoon is 15g and the metric measure of a tablespoon is 20g. An American cook would have to convert all recipe measurements from Imperial to US ounces, or grams to US ounces, which may result in a bit of hit or miss. It would have been much more useful (and trustworthy) to include consistent metric quantities, as a dish that fails because of imprecise quantities would not convey the expected impression of Italian cuisine as desired.

As mentioned previously, Manfredi admits that there are anomalies in his book, a ‘small’ number of recipes from other cuisines (p. 12). This may lead the reader to think that they are from another Mediterranean location, but misleadingly, a number of the recipes are acknowledged from an Indian source. As well, the headnotes for each section are entirely uncritical, thus it is difficult to see the personality behind the recipes, although he is supportive of Australian ingredients, and his opinions are upbeat and well supported by research. After analysing the two other books, I found this factual approach surprisingly emotionless, emphasised by little attempt to describe the flavours of any of his finished recipes. Moreover, Manfredi misleads by what he omits, rather than what he includes. Ingredients-wise, while his recipes contain far fewer flavour elements that the other two
books, the processes for each recipe are more explicit, with much more reliance on cooking times rather than relying on the reader’s visual acuity and previous experience to tell if something is cooked.

Pepe and de Pieri rarely give exact cooking times, using expressions such as ‘cook for about 10 minutes’ or ‘fry chopped onion in a little oil until soft’. Manfredi tends to favour more numerical timing ‘fry onion, garlic and capsicum for 2 minutes’. He uses numbers to manage possible misreadings of the recipe, or as an orienting feature for the cooking instructions to be successfully followed, while de Pieri and Pepe presume a higher level of knowledge and abstraction. Manfredi’s prescriptive cooking times have implications for flavour, because, if followed slavishly, they could result in an under-cooked or over-cooked ingredient. There is also an assumption that the senses of vision, and smell are not as important as correct timing. On the other hand, de Pieri and Pepe assume that the senses are far more reliable cooking instruments than the clock, and allow more culinary creativity.

Next, I will explore the impressions given by the three cookbooks by analysing the recipe for one dish. In the same way as I dealt with a Vietnamese dish, I selected fish stew to see how each book represented this traditional Italian recipe in terms of its flavour ingredients and cooking processes.

**How to cook fish stew**

Fish stew was a dish common to all three books. Pepe calls it *cacciucco* and he describes it as an ancient recipe for fish stew. De Pieri calls it as *guazzeto*, and says it is ‘almost a soup’ while Manfredi calls it fish stew. The ingredients and method identify it as the same dish, and I call it fish stew in this analysis. I do not include any narratives surrounding the recipe, and focus on the recipe as an example of other dishes that serve to form culinary impressions of Italian cuisine as it exists in the Australian foodscape.

**Ingredients**

The ingredients used for this dish are shown in Table 5.5, which delivers a breakdown of nineteen ingredients that were listed across all three recipes. While there is an appreciable difference in the number of ingredients (14, 10 and 7, respectively) it can be seen that each recipe has the common four ingredients of fish, tomatoes, onion, olive oil and Italian parsley.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Cibo (14)</th>
<th>Modern Italian Food (10)</th>
<th>Seasonal Italian Favourites (8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mussels</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cockles/vongole/clams/pipis</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>King prawns</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Calamari</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scampi</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flathead, white fish fillets</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>heads</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fresh/tinned tomatoes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tomato sauce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carrot</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Celery</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garlic</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Onion</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bay leaves</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Salt</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilli fresh</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian parsley</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lemon</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scallops</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White wine</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5.5: Breakdown of flavour ingredients for fish stew

Six more ingredients—mussels, shellfish, prawns calamari, salt and fresh chilli—are common to *Cibo* and *Modern Italian Food*. This leaves a variation of nine ingredients that are not common among the three recipes.
The disproportion in flavouring ingredients between the recipe in *Seasonal Italian Favourites* and the other two books is highlighted in this analysis indicating that the finished dish must lack comparative flavour complexity. This is mainly caused by limiting the seafood to one variety of fish, as each variety has its own flavour contribution and adding lemon, chilli, bay leaf and garlic as the other two recipes would also intensify the flavours. Manfredi relies on a carrot/celery/onion *soffrito* as a base for his flavour development. The serving accompaniments are included in Table 5.6, which lists the accompaniments suggested for the soup. Two serving suggestions from Pepe and de Pieri are identical, but Manfredi does not address serving suggestions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Cibo</th>
<th>Modern Italian Food</th>
<th>Seasonal Italian Favourites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chopped parsley</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>⋄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grilled bread rubbed with</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>⋄</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>garlic</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>⋄</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.6: Breakdown of accompaniment ingredients for fish stew**

Although Manfredi offers no suggestions for accompaniments, in the general list of flavours that complement the *Soup* section heading he mentions crostini—which is bread rubbed with garlic—and olive oil.

**Processes**

As mentioned in the section on Vietnamese processes, methods are also important in the construction of a dish. Table 5.7 shows comparisons between the cooking steps, and has likewise been arranged to reveal the cooking times for each book’s recipe, the number of steps in the cooking process, and the ingredient additions during the cooking process.
### Cooking process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cooking process</th>
<th>Cibo</th>
<th>Modern Italian Food</th>
<th>Seasonal Italian Favourites</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cooking time</td>
<td>10 mins for calamari preparation does not factor in time for preparing the other seafood. 10 minutes of seafood cooking (approximate)</td>
<td>No cooking times given</td>
<td>30–40 mins for fish stock preparation, 8–10 mins for cooking base vegetables, 25 mins for soup base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Steps in cooking process</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ingredient addition stages during cooking</td>
<td>1. Prepare calamari</td>
<td>1. Prepare seafood</td>
<td>1. Make fish broth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Prepare other seafood</td>
<td>2. Cook seafood</td>
<td>2. Prepare and cook soffrito</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Make tomato base</td>
<td>3. Make tomato base</td>
<td>3. Add tomatoes and parsley</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 5.7: Breakdown of processes for cooking fish stew**

Both Pepe and de Pieri are vague about cooking times, either omitting them altogether or approximating them, while Manfredi is very specific. De Pieri may be conveying the general notion that Italians cook by feel, although he accompanies each step with a description that helps the reader visualise the cooked ingredients, such as ‘simmer for a few minutes until the flavours meld’ (de Pieri 2007), while Pepe’s instructions are ‘cover tightly and simmer until the mussels and vongole are open’ (p. 108).

**Recurrent flavour themes**

Whether the fish stew had differing levels of complexity or not, when the cooking and serving steps were combined, in Table 5.8, five common flavours emerge in the finished product.
Table 5.8: Recurrent flavour themes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ingredients</th>
<th>Cibo (5)</th>
<th>Modern Italian Food (5)</th>
<th>Seasonal Italian Favourites (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seafood/Fish</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tinned Tomatoes</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olive oil</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Italian parsley</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chilli (fresh)</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Four ingredients are common to each recipe: fish, tomatoes, olive oil and Italian parsley. However, in *Cibo* and *Modern Italian Food*, the overall flavour themes for fish stew are much closer to each other than those of in *Seasonal Italian Favourites*. The depth of base complexity obtained by using a mixture of seafood gives a more flavoursome result than one single variety, and Manfredi’s *soffrito* base would impart a different flavour impression. As well, Pepe and de Pieri distinguish their dishes with fresh chilli, and give specific serving instructions for the bread accompanying this dish. The culinary impressions given out by this dish would be fish/seafood, tomato and olive oil and Italian parsley, augmented by the bread and garlic in the accompaniment. It seems that as long as these core flavours are present the representation of genuine Italian flavour is conveyed to the community of taste.

As with the Vietnamese cookbooks, I now reconnect the narrative with the recipe comparison, and put forward the following assumptions. The narrative of *Cibo* constantly reminds readers how difficult it is to reproduce authentic Italian food in Australia, and occasionally misrepresents the quality and substance of ingredients. Pepe seems to be using misplaced nostalgia to recreate the cuisine from another time and place. In contrast, the message from de Pieri is that while ingredients may differ in quality an Italian framework keeps the cuisine genuine, as long as it is overlaid with the best ingredients available, whether local or imported. Manfredi’s *Seasonal Favourites* is the least satisfying of the three books, with little personal connection established between reader and author. The veracity of the dishes is questionable, as the book includes dishes that are not related to Italian cuisine, which impinges on its image of authenticity. The three books combine to show how the authors managed flavours in different ways in their effort to create impressions of Italian traditional flavours, with varying degrees of success.
Chapter 6: The restaurant experience

The previous two chapters were dedicated to analysing the texts that contribute to the images about cultural identity and flavour that GL and cookbooks project into the foodscape. This chapter will examine the role of material artefacts and their influence, focusing in particular on how these are presented by Vietnamese and Italian restaurants in communicating their cultural identity in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours. While treated as a separate domain in this chapter, this analysis of material artefacts is woven into the broader ethnographic context by the strands of GL and cookbook text analysis and interviews with chefs. It is used alongside these other forms of evidence so that the particular biases of each can be understood and compared in answering the research question ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine’s flavour both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’ The ethnographic fieldwork of the restaurants was conducted concurrently with the interviews analysed in Chapter 7, occurring between 2007 and 2009. As previously mentioned, all restaurants were listed in the SMH GFGs of 2007 and 2008. In line with Chapters 4 & 5, this chapter commences with an explanation of how the methodological framework corresponds with the analysis of restaurants.

In Chapters 4 and 5, I compared the management of flavour to a theatrical performance from the perspectives of front and backstage in terms of its presentation in the texts of GL and cookbooks. In this chapter, I maintain Goffman’s (1959) notion of dramaturgical action, as a guide to collecting evidence from direct observations of the restaurants. By utilising this approach, I was able to infer how the restaurants in the study manage impressions of flavour and cuisine identity in the front and backstages—the dining rooms and kitchens—and the outside, or exterior of the restaurant space by their use of design and other material items necessary for running a restaurant business. The physical layout of the restaurant both inside and outside the space all have a role to play in communicating the cuisine to potential diners.

The façade of the restaurant space is also included in this study of material goods and objects in line with Goffman’s model (1959 pp. 134–135). In interpreting these spaces, I connect Goffman’s theory to the knowledge management strategies initially explored by
Polyani (1983) and further developed by Nonaka (1991) on how people manage their knowledge— in this context, knowledge of ingredients, cooking methods, flavour and so on.

Polyani (1983 p. 4) stated:

We can know more than we can tell. This fact seems obvious enough; but it is not easy to say exactly what that means. Take an example. We know a person’s face, and can recognise it among a thousand indeed a million. Yet we cannot tell how we recognise a face we know. So most of this knowledge cannot be put into words.

Following Polyani and Nonaka's understanding of how knowledge is managed, I can propose that people tacitly interpret signals about cuisine that they receive from all elements in the restaurant space, using not only the sense of vision, but also those of smell, and even sound.

In the previous analysis, in the GL articles and cookbooks, knowledge about food and flavour was put into words and easily communicated and shared. This is an example of explicit knowledge, written down and systematised into a form that can be available to everyone. However, in the analysis of restaurant spaces, signals about culture and flavour also can be tacitly understood without formal processing or being expressed. Nonaka and Konna (1998 p. 27) maintain that ‘tacit knowledge is highly personal, it is hard to formalize and therefore difficult if not impossible to communicate’. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2007), tacit knowledge is a type of embedded practical experience, different from conscious analytic thought, where there is a possibility of material symbolic meanings reflecting lived experiences. These cannot be easily articulated. Tacit knowledge, then, consists of ‘mental models, beliefs, and perspectives so ingrained we take them for granted, and therefore cannot easily articulate them’ (Nonaka & Konno 1998 p. 98). In culinary circumstances, the sense of smell can also be ingrained as an integral part of this implicit understanding. In this research, cultural knowledge about restaurants is assumed to be both explicit and tacit, embedded in the physical layout of the restaurant and the signs, symbols and artefacts (Bitner 1992) that are displayed both outside and inside the space.

Explicit knowledge is usually communicated by signs such as the restaurant’s name or the menu, or represented by icons—pictures, artefacts and other decorative motifs. The code
of conduct is explicit as well. Most people understand what to expect when they go to a
restaurant and they can easily describe what happens in one. Conversely, tacit knowledge on,
being based on cultural norms or local knowledge, is characterised by a certain lack of
awareness that people ascribe to a situation—‘you have to be inside it to know it’ (O’Connor
2004 p 134). This may affect customers and owners alike. Diners in a restaurant, although
paying little conscious attention to their surroundings, are responding to their tacit knowledge
when they interpret symbolic and metaphoric messages communicated by the material
cultural objects in the restaurant space. Material objects are therefore equally important
communication tools about the cultural identity of the restaurant as is any intervening social
experience. As Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p. 121) affirm, ‘social worlds are created out
of material goods as well as from interpersonal relationships, and meaning inherent in them’.

The intrinsic meanings in the collection and display of these artefacts draws attention
to aspects of material culture that are important to the communication of the cuisine. As
Goffman (1959) contends, any theatrical performance depends on material objects. The
‘props’ of various kinds in a restaurant include the signs and symbols embedded in the
overall décor, the table settings and menus and even the arrangement of tables, appealing to
both the explicit and tacit ways in which the diner manages their impressions of the
surroundings. The purpose of this chapter is to draw attention to the material displayed in the
context of the restaurant space, and to infer how it might engage the diner in creating
impressions of culinary flavour.

Material culture and cuisine 'ethnicity'

The objects in a restaurant have material qualities in that they have surface texture,
shape and colour. Since a restaurant is a social world, these aesthetic qualities in the physical
surroundings are important to the cultural construction of the space. Studying the physically
assemblage of the restaurant helps to make sense of the role that restaurants play in
influencing the migration and merging of cuisine flavours into the Australian foodscape. The
physical layout, the colour schemes, the furnishings and so on are deliberately designed,
whether by professional artists or designers, or ordinary people exercising those skills
(Meiselman 2008) and while their intention is to embody the practical and business interests
of the restaurant, they also communicate implicit values about the cuisine.
The design features can also direct the social relations of the restaurant in distinctive ways. The production and performance of a restaurant involves an initial creation of material circumstances, such as the design and construction/renovation of the façade, dining room and kitchen. Once the design is in place, it provides material opportunities for the exterior and front of house to communicate the cultural identity of the cuisine. The design can also pose physical constraints. While the dining room can easily be transformed by updating the colour scheme or repositioning furniture and furnishings, the kitchen is not as adaptable to modification because of the often expensive and specialised nature of commercial cooking equipment, and the permanent location of water and power outlets. This lack of flexible design in the kitchen can have implications for the performance of some culturally specific cooking practices, discussed later in this chapter.

Most material symbols work through the evocation of sets of practices within individual experience signifying they have abstract meaning through association and practice. Culturally aware individuals, such as those members of the communities of taste of GL, cookbooks and restaurants, have shared experiences and practices and therefore particular material symbols suggest common ideas. As a result, individual objects with unique cultural sources can be recognised through specific memory traces associated with a particular cultural object. Certain types of symbols relating to restaurant cultural identity have become embedded within the foodscape and have come to have a familiar meaning. For example, according to Hodder (2003 p. 396), Chinese restaurants in the Australian foodscape tend to be easily recognised because their material symbolism carries tacit and implicit meanings that are ‘embedded in a set of practices that includes class, status, goals and aesthetics’. On the basis of a set of practical associations, a member of a ‘community of taste’ can build up an implicit knowledge about the associations and impressions embedded in particular artefacts or styles, such as restaurant cultural identity.

To understand the role cultural identity plays in the construction of the cuisine experience, in my ethnographic approach I investigated the three ‘divisions’ proposed by Goffman (1959). Firstly, my analysis will focus on the outside presentation of each restaurant, secondly the front region, or dining room, and lastly the back region, or kitchen, all of which combine to communicate the cultural identity of the restaurant to the customer.
**Exteriors**

People make a plan to go to a restaurant. Even if the decision is made at short notice or on impulse, there is still an intention that is linked to the expectation of the restaurant experience (Russell & Ward 1982). The selection of restaurant type is subject to all sorts of sociological influences such as peer pressure and the acquisition of cultural capital (after Bourdieu 1984). However the decision is made, the façade of the restaurant is the first aspect that a potential diner sees. Besides, as Cherulnik (1991) asserts, people are extraordinarily consistent in their interpretations about categories of restaurant just from outer appearances, which shows how important the exterior is in communicating first impressions about the cuisine. Goffman (1959 p. 135) stresses the significance of the façade of the building:

> The wall that cuts the front and back regions from the outside obviously has a function to play in the performance staged and presented in these regions, but the outside decoration of the building must in part be seen as an aspect of another show; and sometimes the latter contribution may be the more important one.

Accordingly, the façades of the two categories of restaurant studied in this research, Vietnamese and Italian, were the starting point for the investigation into the role restaurants play in impressions of the migration of flavours and merging of cuisines. In the following sections, I analyse the features of the façades of the three Vietnamese and Italian restaurants, concluding with an interpretation of the styles to show how these façades have played a role in integrating the cuisine into the Australian foodscape.

**Vietnamese restaurant façades: Exterior collective patterning**

Some restaurants are designed as stand-alone entities or as part of a whole retailing concept, but many are converted from buildings that were built for another purpose. All three of the Vietnamese restaurants in this study moved into buildings that were already constructed or reconfigured to be used as restaurants. *Thanh Binh Cabramatta* (see Figure 6.1) is located in a nondescript brick building and was designed to operate as a Vietnamese restaurant from its inception.
Thanh Binh Cabramatta is established in the commercial heart of one of the hubs of the Vietnamese ethnic community in the working class suburb of Cabramatta in Sydney’s western suburbs. Thanh Binh is a district in south Vietnam, and this restaurant is owned by Thuy and Canh Huynh who bought the property in 2007 as an established business from Angie Hong, the owner of Thanh Binh on King, who used to own it and the Newtown restaurant that is also part of this study.

Although originally aimed at the internal market of Vietnamese and Chinese diners from the nearby shopping area, Thank Binh Cabramatta was anchored in the foodscape by GL. It publicises it as a sometime ‘destination restaurant’ for those readers who were prepared to travel to Cabramatta in search of an 'authentic' dining experience. To reach the restaurant from the railway station or any of the car parks in the area, one must walk through streets lined mainly with Vietnamese shops. The location is enhanced by the sensory traces of the, sounds and smells of food particular to Vietnam, creating strong associations with my own travel experiences there.

The façade is unassuming, set in among fabric and children’s apparel stores. Its extrinsic design details on the freshly painted awning and pavement signs are in red lettering, highlighted in white, on a bright blue background (see Figure 6.1). Chinese characters on the awning suggest the close relationship between Chinese and Vietnamese culture—shared religion, calendar and language. The restaurant has recognisable Vietnamese ‘style’ in common with many restaurants in Vietnam (2010 personal visit), which tacitly communicates the culinary aspects of the dining experience. A tiled floor, attractive but utilitarian furniture,
and a ‘no-frills’ approach to décor minimises operating costs and somehow exponentially raises expectations that the focus is on original dishes and flavours from Vietnam. Any diner—whether local or a tourist—could assume that the food flavours would be 'authentic' by implicit assessment of the design characteristics, combining the extrinsic signs of the exterior with the type of décor inside to substantiate their initial impression. This style of restaurant is seldom seen away from same-culture locales, so is closely associated with Vietnamese restaurant culture.

*Thanh Binh on King* (see Figure 6.2) is in a Victorian-era shopfront, previously occupied by an Italian restaurant. It takes the next step in the cuisine integrating into the foodscape. Instead of travelling to a far-flung suburb, Vietnamese cuisine is transported to a trendy inner city ‘eat street’, where there is competition from other Vietnamese restaurants in the area as well as other 'ethnic' cuisines. To capture the attention of restaurant browsers who traverse the sidewalk the exterior highlights its identity to those who often determine from the look of the shopfront what cuisine to select.

![Thanh Binh on King](http://simonfoodfavourites.blogspot.com.au)

*Figure 6.2: Facade: Thanh Binh on King* (http://simonfoodfavourites.blogspot.com.au)

The design of *Thanh Binh on King* is different to *Thanh Binh Cabramatta*. It presents a westernised format to appeal to their market of sophisticated inner-city diners who expect attentive service and favourable atmospherics along with their authentic flavour experience. Its Vietnamese cultural identity is leveraged by the light green décor of the outside walls implying *freshness*, a catchword associated with Vietnamese cuisine often suggested by newspaper reviews and cookbooks because of the prolific use of fresh herbs in the cuisine. At the entrance, a footpath-style portable signboard lists the opening hours, licensing
restrictions, contact phone numbers, and of the prospect of ‘classic’ Vietnamese food. The untranslated script offering Vietnamese noodle specialities but deciphering the text is irrelevant, because its use is as an extrinsic cue to underscore the culinary representation of the cuisine. An accented Vietnamese name in dark green adds to the rustic look, thought to strike a responsive chord in those seeking 'ethnic' cuisine (Girardelli 2004), which is further emphasised by the wood-framed windows that run along the length of the restaurant.

Through these windows, potential diners can make out more material symbols in the ‘frontstage’ dining room—paintings, wall hangings and sculptures that signal the cultural identity of the restaurant and add further support to the 'ethnic' theme. The restaurant is located in an area well known for its condensed mix of restaurants from many cultures where fewer cues from the surrounding streets identify the cuisine. Those eating at Thanh Binh Cabramatta must engage with the Vietnamese culture of the neighbourhood, but Thahn Binh on King needs to display more material symbols on its façade and in its dining room to communicate its origins.

Red Lantern (see Figure 6.3) is situated in a Victorian-era terrace house. The only explicit reference to it being Vietnamese is the unobtrusive subtitle on the signage—’authentic Vietnamese cuisine’. As a ‘destination restaurant’\(^5\), it has built such a reputation in the Australian ‘community of taste’ that diners are attracted from beyond its local area. Whereas bohemian Newtown attracts diners because of its multitude of culturally diverse restaurants, Surry Hills has a more sophisticated reputation.

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\(^5\) Defined by the World Food Travellers as “as restaurant that is so interesting, different, or special that people travel just to eat there.”
This restaurant has been based in its current location for more than twelve years, and when it was first established it was rare to see a Vietnamese restaurant outside customary population enclaves like Marrickville, Cabramatta and Fairfield (Nguyen, Luke 02/08 2011 pers. comm.). *Red Lantern* is the most upmarket of the Vietnamese restaurants in Surry Hills, and indeed Sydney.

The Victorian terrace house that *Red Lantern* occupies presents a striking façade with a sophisticated painted exterior of red highlighted in black. Although colours are invested with different meanings in China than in western cultures, it is generally accepted that in Chinese culture—and therefore likely Vietnamese by association—red expresses happiness and wards off evil, while black conveys gloominess (Kommonen 2011). That the restaurant is mostly red and uses black sparingly as an accentuating shade evokes a certain balance in the colour scheme especially with reference to the owners’ personal histories alluded to in Chapter 5.

*Red Lantern* does not rely on Vietnamese script on the restaurant’s sign—neither on any other part of the exterior of the restaurant—to identify the cuisine as Vietnamese. Nor is the restaurant name Vietnamese, although it does have Asian associations in the pairing of ‘red’ with ‘lantern’ in the restaurant context and this is reindorsed by cursory internet
research where I found that the name is not exclusive and is widely used by both Vietnamese and Chinese restaurants. Small lettering below the name is the only explicit reference made to the food as ‘authentic’ Vietnamese. The restaurant’s signs are in red and white lettering on a black background in contemporary font, so the exterior décor gives the impression of modernity even though the architecture of the building is from an earlier period. However, a culturally experienced customer would have little difficulty in establishing the type of cuisine it offers.

An oversized facsimile of the cover of the restaurant’s cookbook Secrets of the Red Lantern is positioned to the right of the entrance, its motif repeated as a decorative feature throughout the dining room. Following the current trend of chefs and restaurateurs publishing cookbooks based on their culinary histories and talents, the book in some ways embodies a crossover from one field to another, from eating house to publishing house. Publishing the book also lends tacit authority to the establishment and its lavish cover has become instantly recognisable due to its popularity in its community of taste. The recipes are explicit and replicable and extend the dining experience beyond the time and space of the restaurant in promoting perceptions about Vietnamese flavours. Further, the book reinforces a sense of belonging to the ‘community of taste’ by recognition of the cover graphics, thereby underscoring their acquaintance with the restaurant’s cuisine and cultural identity. If a diner is familiar with the content of the book, predetermined expectations of the cuisine and an awareness of the personal history of the owners are part of their explicit knowledge of the restaurant’s cuisine. Moreover, the cookbook advertises the culinary expertise of the establishment and is available for sale in the restaurant thus promoting the expansion of Vietnamese cuisine to the realm of domestic cooking.

A close examination of these three restaurants façades suggested that they each represented a stage in the integration of their cultural identity into the Australian foodscape. It is possible to propose that these restaurants typify stages of acceptance into mainstream dining. The first phase is represented by Thanh Binh Cabramatta, its no-frills façade tacitly acknowledging that it is a suburban restaurant whose main business focuses on providing inexpensive food without the intangibles demanded by the markets outside its local area. Its Vietnamese market means that is not striving for acceptance in the external construction of its 'ethnicity' and successful flavour acceptance may be more significant. The second phase is
exemplified by *Thanh Binh on King*, which has exchanged one cultural environment for another—that of an enclave of restaurants offering many multicultural cuisines. Compared to *Thanh Binh Cabramatta*, its target market is also different, because its clientele is mainly from the inner-city area. The exterior is decorated to emphasise a westernised version of its Vietnamese origins—its name and Vietnamese script on the signboard and windows are all utilised to signal its origins to the diner but at the same time indicating implicitly its adaptation to westernised taste. The third phase is epitomised by the understated *Red Lantern*, as its Anglicised name and location in an area that does not emphasis its cultural diversity, and communicates little overt indication of its cuisine. This implies that other elements support its promotion such as reviews and journal articles in GL and the cookbook, and television shows by its owner/chef.

As a final point, the owners of the two first restaurants Thuy and Canh Huynh and Hong represent first-generation immigrants while Luke Nguyen, even though born in Vietnam, embodies the generation of Vietnamese who were raised in Australia. Their restaurants reflect these generational differences. The restaurant in Cabramatta characterises Vietnamese food at its utilitarian version, similar to restaurants in Vietnam and in fact, Luke Nguyen’s parents owned and ran a similar establishment (Nguyen, Luke 2011 pers. comm). *Thanh Binh on King* can be seen as liberating the cuisine to an area that is known for its diversity of cuisines; thus, while it is still considered ‘ethnic’, it has progressed from the cultural enclave of Cabramatta to the multicultural enclave of Newtown. Conversely, *Red Lantern* has transformed and integrated Vietnamese cuisine into the foodscape to such an extent it has no need to stress its 'ethnicity' as a distinguishing factor, and appears to actively avoid any stereotype. Each of these restaurants, however, explicitly offers ‘classic’ or ‘authentic’ Vietnamese food to the diner.

**Italian restaurant façades: Collective patterning of the outsides**

The façades of the three Italian restaurants were similarly analysed for collective patterning in the extrinsic and intrinsic features of the exteriors. Like the Vietnamese restaurants in this study, the buildings were already constructed or reconfigured to be used for restaurant purposes, and any traces of former commercial or domestic usage were erased. *Pompei’s* (see Figure 6.4) is adjacent to the ocean boulevard of Bondi, *Elio* (see Figure 6.5) is
in a shopping strip in the traditionally Italian enclave of Leichhardt, and *Lorenzo’s Diner* (see Figure 6.6) is located in a popular ‘eat street’ strip in central Wollongong.

Italian stereotyping such as the display of Italian flags or national colours suggested by Bell *et al.* (1994) is rejected by each of these restaurant exteriors. They rely instead on subtler signs indicating that they offer Italian cuisine such as the restaurants names, which are personalised. This suggests customers in Australia are already familiar with these names as connected with Australians of Italian origin. Elio and Lorenzo are recognised Christian names from historical culture and Pompei is an Italian surname, well known as Italian from its volcanic tragedy. Recognition of Italian written language—perhaps it is the ‘o’ and ‘i’ on the end of the names—may reflect the prolonged existence of Italian culture in Australia, and suggests that the cultural experience of potential diners means they are better able to decipher the understated signage. Even though *Elio’s* Elio has moved on, the personalised name of the restaurant gives the unstated impression that it is run by an Italian owner, which is always appealing to patrons (Lu & Fine 1995). A further suggestion is that reliance on the words ‘authentic’, ‘original’ or ‘genuine’ displayed on the façade is no longer necessary to draw attention to the cuisine.

*Pompeii’s* occupies a corner position in a densely populated beachside suburb, one block back from the oceanfront. The area is tightly packed with restaurants vying for local as well as tourist custom.

The restaurant conveys its Italian setting with just three words: its Italian name, *pizzeria* and *gelataria* displayed on the sign. Most people are so familiar with pizza and gelato that the Italian origins are taken for granted. The restaurant needs no other exterior cues refer to its heritage—no national colours, no checked tablecloths, no raffia covered wine bottles here. Potential diners can see into the establishment from the ‘outside’ to the ‘frontstage’ through the wooden-framed glass walls. The eating space is not delineated by the walls—seating flows onto the footpath to become part of the outside. This implies a casual approach to dining along with informal fare whose consumption is not inhibited by recognised mealtimes. Further, *Pompeii’s* is marketed to and patronised by local residents (Pompeii 15/06/2008 pers. comm.) particularly families with children who can consume pizza without the encumbrance of managing cutlery.
Elio avoids typecasting as well, although its location in what was once a predominantly Italian migrant neighbourhood along with its name alludes to the restaurant’s culinary theme. The lavender footpath awning gives nothing away about its provenance, but the lack of footpath seating suggests a fine dining restaurant—according to the classic typology proposed by Muller and Woods (1994)—as opposed to the casual approach of Pompei’s.

Pompei’s ‘pizzeria and gelataria’ is indicative of its culinary offerings, but Lorenzo’s Diner has no other exterior identification than its name. The word ‘Diner’ is American, and can refer to a cafeteria as well as a restaurant, but Lorenzo Pagnan says he selected it to
evoke a more casual Italian dining style than his previous enterprise (Pagnan 15/06/2011 pers. comm.).

Figure 6.6: Facade: Lorenzo’s Diner (Anon ND)

Outdoor footpath seating here is not an option, and prospective diners are impeded from seeing into the restaurant due a steep slope increasing the height of the windows facing the sidewalk. Again, there are no stereotypical colours or symbols for the diner to rely on to suggest its cultural origins indicating that it has no need for overt signage.

When looking at the images for each of these Italian restaurants, there is little from the façades that set them apart from each other. Their personalised Italian names are almost the only signs that represent their cultural identity. Restaurants of this moderate/moderate upscale classification are appealing to culturally experienced customers and they also tend to be very conscious of style (Muller & Woods 1994 p. 32). Themed images of Italian restaurants are no longer fashionable in either food or design terms (Ebster & Guist 2005 p. 46), thus they are actually communicating more by exhibiting restraint on their exteriors.

Further explicit and implicit assessments are added to these initial impressions, when the diner crosses into to the dining area, to experience, either tacitly or explicitly, the signs, symbols and artefacts displayed in the dining rooms.
The frontstage

My approach to interpreting the restaurant dining spaces is similar to that of Beardsworth and Bryman (1999) and Shelton (1990) in that I base my study on subjective interpretation, trusting my own ability to read and interpret the complex and distinctive signs of the symbolic space of the restaurant dining room, in my case influenced by my previous restaurateur experience. In the following section, I begin to clarify how the representation of the dining room produces meanings about the cuisine for the diner.

Many restaurant dining rooms rely on distinctive signs to manage their customers’ expectations about the cuisine they are offering. Numerous articles have been written on the dining room as a symbolic space that effectively consists of a ‘theatre for eating’, where customers absorb cues from the architecture, décor and menu about the culinary possibilities of the meal (Bell, & Valentine 1997; Edwards et al. 2003; Finkelstein 1993; Gustafsson 2004; Muller & Woods 1994; Shelton 1990). Likewise, restaurant patrons commonly look for cues in physical design for indications about the setting:

The restaurant is built to portray messages. the orchestrated space, the bits of drama that flicker in the conversations, the ritualized exchanges, and the menu are part of a semiotic field surrounding the individual like text waiting to be read in the sense that the participants experience a fashioning of the self in concert with the surroundings (Shelton 1990 p. 507).

Accordingly, every restaurant is a symbolic space, with its own code, system of categories, rules and type of language that organises culinary meanings into socially coded forms. The layout of equipment and furnishings in the space, the signage, style of décor and artefacts that construct the ‘orchestrated space’ are created by the restaurateur to communicate culinary impressions to the diner. These material representations of the cuisine are embedded with meaning, and thus shape and direct the individual impressions of the diner.

Restaurant dining rooms

Goffman (1959) uses the example of restaurants to illustrate his definition of front regions, and advocates their reliance on the ‘stage props’ of material culture, as the frontstage
is the place where the performance is given and where the communication of culture and cuisine takes place. The theming of each restaurant in this study is closely linked to the culinary image it aims to portray.

In the case of these Vietnamese and Italian restaurant spaces, the theme is a natural consequence of the link to the owner’s heritage, and the setting is considered representative of the food’s country of origin. As mentioned above, two of the Vietnamese restaurants in the study, Thanh Bin Cabramatta and Thanh Binh on King, prominently display their cultural theme on the exterior, but Red Lantern and the three Italian restaurants rely on more subtle exterior markers, and are more revealing about their heritage in their dining rooms.

The cues that diners interpret from the dining room environment are a precursor to their impressions of culinary flavours, but they are not always able to be articulated and fall into the realm of being interpreted by tacit rather than explicit knowledge, as it is aspects and features within the dining room that ‘contribute towards and make up the atmosphere, something that is relatively easy to appreciate but rather difficult to quantify and describe.’ (Gustafsson 2004 p. 22).

This may explain why the application of quantitative sensory testing on the meal experience has been limited (Meiselman 2008), as the number of variables has to be controlled in order for results to be statistically analysed. Moreover, it has led to the suggestion that the relationship between context effect—social interaction and enhanced environment—is not necessarily consistent within and across meal components (King et al. 2007; King et al. 2004). However, Edwards and Gustaffson (2008) recognise that the variables of the interior, layout and design and other attributes, no matter how difficult to articulate, all have value as tacit elements in building knowledge about the restaurant. It is partially via the control of these physical aspects that restaurants are able to both retain their cuisine’s integrity and manage the dynamics of merging into the Australian foodscape. As Shelton maintains, the restaurant is not a static object, but a process that draws on tradition for its substance and is composed of a combination of emergent and residual elements (Shelton 1990 p. 509). In the following section, I show how the interior space of each of the dining rooms communicates not only the cuisine and culture to the diner, but its stage of incorporation into the Australian foodscape.
Vietnamese dining rooms

The dining rooms of each Vietnamese restaurant further emphasize the three stages of integration into the Australian foodscape I have proposed. The minimal décor of Thanh Binh Cabramatta typifies Vietnamese restaurants of its type.

The front section was destroyed by fire two years ago (see Figure 6.7), necessitating a costly three-month renovation (see Figure 6.8), and although the décor was updated, it was not significantly restyled.

Figure 6.7: Pre-renovation: Thanh Binh Cabramatta (Anon ND)
The décor is comparatively plain, with half-timbered walls, feature mirrors, timber tables and green bentwood chairs—a rustic aesthetic, and therefore appealing to ‘ethnic’ restaurant customers (Girardelli 2004). The only wall decoration is a single promotional poster of the restaurant’s signature dish (sugar cane prawns) and a vase of flowers on the bar at the rear of the restaurant. For space reasons, a drinks refrigerator is situated within the restaurant space, rather than behind the bar at the rear of the restaurant (see Figure 6.9).

The bar space has many uses, such as location for an espresso machine, glasses storage, extra drinks refrigeration, plate and take-away container storage, salad
accompaniments—in fact, anything but conventional bar usage as the restaurant is not licensed.

Cloth-free tables are easy to clean and inexpensive to maintain, and the cutlery is not pre-set in the European style favoured by many restaurants. A customer helps themselves from an assortment forks, spoons and unwrapped chopsticks arranged in a plastic basket on each table, along with bottles of fish sauce, vinegar, soy, chilli and hoi-sin sauces, and shakers of salt, pepper, and sugar. Tissue boxes supply the serviettes. Tea and menus are brought immediately to the table, and ordering is straightforward and fast. Salads of herbs, bean sprouts and lemon accompany all Vietnamese meals as a matter of course. The menu includes Chinese as well as Vietnamese dishes, listing the dishes in Vietnamese, English and Chinese language.

I identify *Thanh Binh on King* as representing the next stage in the progression that Vietnamese cuisine is making into the mainstream Australian foodscape. *Thanh Binh on King* is located in a conventional restaurant space, and was an Italian restaurant before taken over by Hong (12/08/2011 pers. comm.). Unlike the unadorned walls of *Thanh Binh Cabramatta*, a Vietnamese theme is communicated by various pictures of scenery (see Figures 6.10 and 6.11).

![Figure 6.10: Dining room: Thanh Binh on King](image)
This image is reinforced by a black and mother of pearl inlaid screen, a stone mortar and pestle and other decorative objects displayed on a bookcase along with sundry Vietnamese magazines, books and cookbooks (see Figure 6.12).

The overall decoration infers a reflection of what western customers expect to see and how they might identify the restaurant as Vietnamese. For example, a large feature painting illustrating an Asian-style boat against a backdrop of limestone karst is easily identified by culturally experienced customers as a representation of the Ha Long Bay seascape, a unique world-heritage site that is widely promoted. Another painting of Ban Gioc waterfall is similarly recognisable.
The wooden chairs replicate the rustic theme of the exterior. The tables are pre-set with a green and white porcelain plate, a green paper serviette, and fork, spoon and a paper-wrapped set of chopsticks at each setting—a nod to western hygienic preferences. The table setting is completed with water and wine glasses, rarely seen in a restaurant in Vietnam, as tea is the preference to water with a meal as, despite the historical French influence in Vietnam, wine production is not a major activity in the culture and the imported product is expensive (2010 personal visit). Including these glasses in the table setting indicates an expectation that diners prefer the western habit of water with meals, and that most of them will adhere to western custom of wine drinking. Extra cutlery and plates are stored in a waiters’ station in the centre of the restaurant and like Thanh Binh Cabramatta, the restaurant is not licensed—it is BYO—so the bar space is used for storing the coffee machine, extra glasses, wine coolers and other paraphernalia.

There are three separate menus, composed solely of Vietnamese dishes in bold font, with English translations below. Salad greens and vermicelli noodles are provided with the appropriate dishes, but any extra incurs a charge. A policy of charging for rice and tea—which would alienate the customer base in Cabramatta—assumes that an urban customer is habituated to paying extra for side dishes, as a similar strategy is common practice in Chinese and other Asian restaurants.

Representing the final stage of Vietnamese restaurant integration into the Australian foodscape, Red Lantern’s red-and-black theme is repeated through to the dining room, with black wooden tables and bentwood chairs (see Figure 6.13).

The walls feature abstract artwork and original paintings along with multiple facsimiles of the Secrets of the Red Lantern cookbook cover. Other decorative artefacts are bundles imaginatively arranged red plastic baskets hanging from the roof (see Figure 6.14).
Apart from the cookbook, none of these decorations is identifiably Vietnamese, unlike the theme of *Thanh Binh on King*.

Tables are set with contrasting rice bowls, chopsticks and serviettes, water and wine glasses—without the customary spoon and fork (see Figure 6.15). This restaurant is fully licensed, with an extensive Australian wine list, reinforcing its integration and acceptance into the Australian foodscape.
This notion of pairing Vietnamese food with Australian wine for flavour balance has so far not been addressed in the literature, and further study needs to be undertaken to see if there is an effect on how wine selections can or cannot affect the flavour integrity of the cuisine. In this context, the wine list draws attention to the use of high-quality Australian ingredients from particular geographic areas—referring to Burrawang chicken, South Australian prawns, Thirlmere duck, even emphasising the breed of beef cattle (Black Angus) used in its dishes. This suggests that Red Lantern’s Vietnamese flavours provide the culinary framework that is then modified and re-balanced by the inclusion of high-quality Australian wines and ingredients.

**Italian dining rooms**

What explicit and tacit indications of Italian cuisine are displayed in these restaurant dining rooms? Like Thanh Binh on King and Red Lantern, the Italian restaurants in this study relied on wall decorations and cultural artefacts to give clues about their provenance. *Pompeii’s*, the most casual of the three restaurants, used prints and rubbings of classical Italian panels on the focal wall of the restaurant (see Figure 6.16) with small wall tiles bearing stylised rustic themes positioned on various columns.
Inscribed on the wall above the waiter’s station/bar is the avowal (see Figure 6.17):

Our pizza is made with stone-ground, unbleached flour, extra virgin olive oil, natural yeast and sea salt. Our dough is proven for 36 hours in true artisan tradition. All ingredients in our pizza are freshly prepared every day and faithful to Italy’s regional cuisine.

Such explicit wording indicates that this is a specialised pizza restaurant with a unique way of preparing its main product. Although the separate ingredients are simple and inherently no different to any other kind of pizza base, their high quality—stone ground flour, extra virgin olive oil—combined with prolonged preparation draws diners’ attention not only to the restaurant’s adherence to traditional style, but to the development of particular flavours inherent in the process. Moreover, it stresses two elements of Italian cuisine that are
understood by the culturally aware diner—freshness and regionalism—differentiating it from competitors by emphasising quality and consistency of flavour.

A shelf above the waiter station/bar is arranged in a display of antique coffee grinders, traditional domestic kitchen paraphernalia and an ‘atomic’ coffee machine of classic 1950s design, reinforcing the Italian culinary heritage and furthering the artisan/regional ethic. A classically shaped vase piled with oranges in the dining room at Pompei’s (see Figure 6.16) adds another Italian-inspired touch to the decor.

Instead of tablecloths, tables are laid with butcher’s paper, an inexpensive method of keeping laundry costs low that also signals a casual dining atmosphere. Tables are simply set, with knife and fork arranged together on a paper serviette. Glasses remain behind the bar to be brought on request, and condiments are not pre-set. The high-quality wooden pepper grinders would be too expensive to set on every table as well as being a target for theft. The salt, an imported Sardinian brand, encourages further regional cues about the cuisine—the culturally aware diner would be familiar with its superior taste and texture than generic NaCl, and if not, the vivid label illustrates foreignness and exclusivity (see Figure 6.18).

![Image of Sicilian sea salt](image)

**Figure 6.18: Sicilian sea salt: Pompei’s**

The menu does not follow a three-course menu construction but begins with *antipasto*, or appetisers, followed by pasta, then main courses of veal, fish and pizza. Next are side dishes of salad and vegetables, out of the most common order of an Italian menu that would have them listed after the main courses. Course headings are in English—suggesting that diners are familiar enough with Italian that *antipasti* needs no further explanation—but
the individual dishes follow usual cultural practice with an Italian name in bold lettering and an explanation of the dish in English below. There are gentle hints to diners on the menu to remind them of the artisan approach of this restaurant—all the pasta is handmade every day and cooked to order, the veal is milk-fed. The aforementioned quotation is restated in the menu introducing the extensive pizza list. The purpose of the menu is then twofold: it not only provides a list of fare, but also acts as an educative device for customers about the original flavours from the regional cuisine of Napoli in Italy.

The open kitchen that is featured in Pompei’s is an illustration of the blending of frontstage and backstage activities, and will be discussed in a later section on the ‘backstage’ of restaurants, as will the similar configuration of Elio restaurant.

Located in Leichhardt, Elio has few decorative effects, indicating that it relies on its location in Leichhardt, its Italian name, and the clues the diner gleans from the open kitchen and the menu to project its origins. Its stark white paintwork is relieved by a painting in shades of grey that extends along the main wall of the entrance and front space of the dining room (Image 6.17).

![Image 6.19: Dining room: Elio](Anon, ND)

The restaurant dining room takes up two interior levels, with a courtyard at the back. There are no *objets* on display inside, although the courtyard has vine-covered terracotta walls hung with Venetian-style wall tiles which conveys a Mediterranean impression. The table settings give nothing away although the conventional setting with pale tablecloths and cloth serviettes enhances the restaurant’s upmarket impression. *Elio* is licensed, offering
mainly Italian aperitifs and wines, although some Australian wine is available. The real indication in the dining room that this restaurant offers 'authentic' Italian flavours is the menu. It is set out in accordance with Italian menu principles: Primi Piatti (starters), Pasta (pasta), Second Piatti (main course) Contorni (side dishes) Dolce (desserts) and Formaggio (cheeses), although Stuzzichini (appetisers) is unaccountably tacked on the end (Collin 2004 p. 192).

As is customary for the migrant restaurants in this study, the names of the dishes in each course are in the restaurant owner’s native language with the ingredients and information about the dish below in English. This menu combines Italian cooking techniques and staples such as oils and vinegars at the same time highlighting Australian and New Zealand regional produce. This approach matches that which CIRA (Anon, ND) calls ‘a developing Italian-Australian style, enriched with local flavours and values’, or ‘innovation with tradition’ where Italian cooking methods and essential flavour ingredients harmonise with Australian produce. This theme is continued by Lorenzo’s Diner, located 80 km south of urban Sydney in Wollongong, the third largest city in NSW with a population of approximately 200,000 (Wollongong City Council 2012).

![Dining Room: Lorenzo’s Diner](image6.20)

Figure 6.20: Dining Room: Lorenzo’s Diner

Few artefacts disclose an Italian theme in the reception area (see Figure 6.20) although subtle decorative cues can be found in the wall mural of a stylised olive branch (Image 6.21), and a matching second mural of wineglass and plate by the same artist (see Figure 6.22). The green and yellow colour scheme reflects olives and wheat (Pagnan 13/05 2012 pers. comm.).

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At the time of visiting for the interview, the tables were unset, but the usual arrangement is with main course cutlery, heavy paper serviettes and wineglasses (see Figure 6.22). This leaves the main identification of the cuisine to come from the menu.

The menu is categorised under headings of *Pane, Primi, Secondi, Contorni* and *Dolce*, with the usual explanations about ingredients and cooking methods below each dish. Although ‘*pane*’ translates as bread, a dish of plain olives included in this category, probably because there was no other place for it to be listed on the menu but also blending the category with the common western starters. *Antipasto*, a separate course at *Pompei’s* and *Elio*, is listed under *Primi*, or first course. The ingredients in each dish are listed, but not the cooking method, so apart from references to Italian staple ingredients—extra virgin olive oil,
tomatoes, garlic—there is nothing to indicate some dishes such as ‘Seared fish fillet [with] stuffed calamari on bok choi (an Asian vegetable) and master stock’ are the result of Italian cooking processes. Australian regional specialties are acknowledged, for example, ‘Cape grim beef fillet’, but generally the cuisine could only be identified by the wall mural and Italian flavour principles that appear on the menu.

Of the three restaurants in the study on Italian representation of cuisine, *Pompei’s Pizzeria and Gelateria* showed the most overt signs of its Italian origins, by explicitly and persistently drawing diner’s attention to the methods it uses to retain the flavour of its traditional Neapolitan pizza and gelato. The décor and artefacts supported the menu. Conversely, upmarket *Elio* depended on its menu to communicate Italian flavour principles and cooking methods while promoting its use of Australian regional specialties. Finally, *Lorenzo’s Diner* used only Italian flavour principles to convey its provenance. Interestingly, all the menus differ in their layout of courses, with *Elio* following traditional menu principles the most closely. The layout of most menus in Australia follows the French pattern of three or four courses, so it is likely that menu format has become hybridised between these two styles.

**The backstage**

If the front region—dining room—is where the public performance is given, the back region—kitchen—is where culinary impression of the cuisine is created by cooks and chefs for the restaurant’s diners, and from where the dining room receives assistance while the restaurant is in service. Backstage areas such as kitchens are generally located at one end of the place where the performance is presented, being separated from the dining room by a wall or a passageway of some kind (Goffman 1959). Usually, the front and back regions of a restaurant are adjacent, thus the restaurant dining room is closely connected to the kitchen, and each area supports the other in communicating culinary expectations to diners. A variation on this layout that has become popular worldwide is the open kitchen, meaning that the kitchen is located in the restaurant in full view of the diners.

**Kitchen design**

In Goffman’s (1959 p. 127) terms, the context of the open kitchen is an example of how backstage activities sometimes infiltrate the frontstage, and how a space can be both
front and backstage depending on what it is being used for at the time. While standard food preparation is not usually featured, in an open kitchen, certain dramatic elements of the kitchen are incorporated into the dining room’s theatre. When the customer is not present, it reverts to its backstage function. For example, in Elio restaurant (see Figure 6.23) food and equipment used in the preparation for dinner are scattered around the kitchen for the chef’s convenience, but are tidied away by the time the restaurant opens for business.

![Open kitchen: Elio](image)

**Figure 6.23: Open kitchen: Elio**

From my own experience as a chef, I suggest that there is a certain loss of control to be negotiated in having an open kitchen. Drawbacks I observe include sound levels and air quality issues, and restraint of personal behaviour by the chefs and cooks. As well, because diners can see the cooks and chefs, they may feel that they can talk to them at any time, and interrupt the flow of work at crucial moments (Walker 2011).

Two of the restaurants in the study, Pompei’s and Elio, have open kitchens. The open kitchen concept became fashionable in restaurant design in California in the 1980s and has since been accepted in many hospitality scenarios (Katz & Weaver 2003). These kitchens afford diners a partial view into the inner workings of the restaurant kitchen, but their scrutiny is necessarily limited by physical and temporal boundaries. Physically, an open design kitchen is usually separated from the dining area by a counter or partition with an
opening that frames the most visually appealing processes of cooking (Walker 2011). It usually focuses on a piece of equipment, such as the pizza oven in Pompei’s Italian restaurant while standard kitchen equipment such as refrigerators and storage areas are placed in other parts of the kitchen that cannot be seen. As the diners are only present during restaurant opening hours, they are temporally not included in the necessary pre-preparation or clean up on either side of the meal timeframe so these processes are not witnessed by the customer. This indicates that even in open kitchens, there is still a back stage in which flavour is constructed out of the sight of the diner.

Closed kitchens can demand popular attention too, especially the custom designed restaurant kitchens in the realm of haute cuisine. These can make a design and equipment statement suggesting that the backstage and frontstage share equal billing in the restaurant performance. For example, when relocating ‘Restaurant Daniel’ in New York, the investment in equipment for the ‘dream kitchen’ received extensive media coverage because the kitchen cost around $1 million to set up. It was built to the specifics of the owner/chef, detailed even down to the unique look of the pickup area, with ‘green terracotta tiles on the front wall and yellow lava stone on the countertops’ (Rubinstein 1999 p. 54). The state-of-the art equipment, according to the chef/owner, was ‘simply beautiful’, inspiring all the dishes to be a superb reflection of the kitchen design. However, most restaurants experience constraints in kitchen design that reflect budget and space limitations.

Unfortunately for chefs, most kitchens come as part of the restaurant package, and the luxury of designing their own kitchen from scratch is rare. The literature on restaurant design—and kitchen design in particular—stresses that the most important factor in determining the organisation of the kitchen is the menu—itself an outgrowth of the overall concept of the restaurant (Baraban & Durocher 2010; Katz & Weaver 2003; Walker 2011). However, given the high turnover of restaurant businesses, many kitchens are likely to have been designed with other menus in mind, and menu themes often need to fit in around the equipment that is currently in place.

Often restaurant kitchens have to work around a flawed design from a previous set up due the expense and or difficulty of repositioning equipment—which may cause further problems. It is also possible due to space constrictions. Kitchen equipment can be expensive and cumbersome, and has location requirements that dictate position, such as high voltage
power outlets for ovens or water outlets for wash-up areas, and thus cannot be reconfigured as easily as the furniture and fittings in the dining room. Moreover, it is good business practice to keep large capital expenditure as low as possible, so unless the restaurant has a specific context—such as Pompei’s that needed to install the pizza oven and a gelato machine specific to its focus—a business will use the equipment that is there or make only strictly necessary purchases.

Problems in kitchen design can affect the creativity of the chef, and consequently the communication of cuisine to the diner. In some cases, the restaurants in this study may have faced limitations to the extent that some dishes representative of the cuisine could not be listed on the menu because of the physical constraints of the kitchen. The kitchen layout of Thanh Binh on King, for instance, was preceded by an Italian restaurant (Hong 12/08/2009 pers. comm.) and may have been compromised by the previous kitchen design, which functioned for a different type of menu.

The equipment and kitchen layout can therefore dictate the menu in many restaurants, rather than the reverse. The kitchen reflects the character and style specific to the context of the restaurant, which, as Flynn et al. (2010) suggest, is how the cooking staff’s skill set deploys the kitchen resources and recipes to create dishes that reflect the restaurant’s history, style of cooking and the preferences of its customers. Moreover, the cooking methods that the kitchen can manage dictate the boundaries in the selection of dishes on the menu. Put simply, if the kitchen has no pizza oven, then pizza is off the menu. One response would be to purchase the equipment, but if it cannot be satisfactorily absorbed into the physical layout of the kitchen space, it can affect the efficiency with which the kitchen can meet restaurant demands.

This layout planning is an important part of the process design of restaurant kitchens (Baraban & Durocher 2010; Walker 2011), as theoretically there should be an unimpeded flow for the raw-to-cooked process. However, chefs and cooks need to be flexible when adapting to their physical environments, as kitchen design is often flawed (Birchfield & Birchfield 2008) especially when it is performed by non-professionals in the restaurant industry. As long as the design meets with government regulations—health, fire safety, building codes—there are no hard and fast rules, and mistakes can result in poor allocation of space, lack of inbuilt flexibility, cost cutting measures that affect the infrastructure and
impact on the ability to satisfy guests expectations (Frable, Foster 1997a; Frable, Foster 1997b).

Except for Thanh Binh Cabramatta, there were no outstanding design features because all of them were all set up with similar generic catering equipment—cook tops, ovens, washing up areas, and refrigerators. However, on closer inspection, the Vietnamese and Italian kitchens could be identified by their explicit display of different types of kitchen utensils.

**Kitchen utensils**

Among professional cooks, cooking implements in the kitchen are referred to collectively by the French term *batterie de cuisine*. This includes all utensils involved in the preparation of food regardless of specific function or type of material (ceramic, metal, glass, wood) (Katz & Weaver 2003). Studying cooking utensils shows the relationship among food types, utensils, and heat source—open hearth or enclosed cook stove. Since the heat source determines the design of the utensils, they determine the range of dishes that can be accomplished (Gamerith 1971, 1988, in Katz & Weaver 2003). In this case, the range of utensils in the Vietnamese and Italian kitchens elucidates the elaborateness or simplicity of the cooking that takes place there as well as the type of food prepared.

There are considerable cultural differences in the implements deemed necessary for food preparation, thus the *batterie de cuisine* of a Vietnamese kitchen is different from that of an Italian kitchen. Vietnamese cuisine depends on an open hearth for its heat source, and there are no ovens as we know them in Vietnam (Freeman & Lê 2002; Nguyen, P, Nguyen & Jensen 2008). In *The Flavours of Vietnam*, Freeman gives a summary of the main methods of cooking—boiling, steaming, grilling and frying—all of which are carried out over the heat. In contrast, the Italian *batterie de cuisine* differs with its pasta-specific tools, ovens and ranges, sauté pans, skillets, and heavy pots. Significantly, in the transformation process of cuisines to the Australian environment, there are tangible signs of cross-adaptation, where sauté pans and western knives appear in Vietnamese kitchens and Vietnamese utensils are adapted to other cuisines. For example, Pagnan (20/04/2009 pers. comm.) uses Chinese noodle baskets (small metal baskets attached to a handle) to cook individual portions of fresh pasta, see Figure 6.24.
However, it would be difficult to perform the whole repertoire of dishes from either cuisine as without a suitable heat source and utensils would have ultimate effect on the flavour. Pizza and pasta (Italian) and pho (Vietnamese) are far more successfully cooked with utensils inherent to the cooking method.

At first glance, all the kitchens in this study appear to be similar, with little to distinguish them when one scans the basic equipment. They have ovens, stovetops, salamanders and grillers, except for Thanh Binh Cabramatta, which was purpose-built and has no ovens. However, a closer inspection of Thanh Binh on King and Red Lantern reveals that while they retain the standard kitchen structure, it has been adapted it to suit the cooking methods particular to the cuisine.

The kitchen in Thanh Binh Cabramatta (see Figure 6.25) was designed especially to accommodate Vietnamese food, so no adaptation was necessary. A long line of gas stovetops (see Figure 6.25) groups designated areas for stockpots and woks reflecting the heat source.
This is complemented by a bank of microwave ovens above a row of rice cookers (see Figure 6.26), and a double basket deep fryer. Figure 6.27 shows some of the utensils that are used to create the cuisine, such as choppers of various sizes and baskets strainers, none of which would dominate in a western kitchen, although conventional knives were observed.
As with all commercial kitchens it conforms to government health regulations, so is designed to be easily cleaned and to avoid cross-contamination of food. However, it could not be easily converted to a western restaurant because it has been set up specifically to support Asian cooking methods with no ovens and its long row of gas burners. However, Thanh Binh on King has adapted its kitchen so its layout facilitates the production of Vietnamese cuisine. Figure 6.28 shows ovens below the gas cooktops, as well as western frypans and other utensils that supplement the Vietnamese *batterie de cuisine*, as shown in Figure 6.29.
The major overlay of the kitchen utensils that characterise the cuisine are shown in Figure 6.30, a storage corner tucked behind a bank of microwaves, with requisite stainless steel shelving compliant with council food safety regulations.

However, it is as though the character of the cuisine is expressed by the layer of utensils in the kitchen space. In the foreground of Figure 6.30 is a large, blackened pot, beside it a sieve covered with muslin indicating cooling contents. A distinctive round wooden chopping block airs on the bench contrasted by the two nondescript plastic ones behind it.
Opposite shelves are crammed with colourful rice holders and behind these is a stack of capacious pots, with two electric woks on the shelves below stacks of yellow noodles. This layering of integral cooking utensils over the prevailing space reflects Vietnamese culinary style.

The third kitchen, Red Lantern, is congruent with its exterior and frontstage image in that it shows less of its Vietnamese origins while still producing food that is recognised as 'authentic' Vietnamese. While there are utensils that are common to the other kitchens, such as the large pots and deep fryers seen in Figure 6.31, there are conventional stainless steel bowls, dessert moulds and plastic measuring jugs that were not observed in the other two restaurants.

![Figure 6.31: Kitchen area: Red Lantern](image)

Although a rice cooker and microwave can be made out in Figure 6.32, the impression of the kitchen is very orderly (see Figure 6.33), bearing more similarity to those of the Italian restaurants in the study.
Italian kitchens also have a layer of utensils that act as markers of the cuisine, such as gelato and pasta machines. Both Pompei’s (see Figure 6.34) and Elio (see Figure 6.35) have open kitchens, with pizza ovens situated so some of the diners can see the activity that surrounds them.
Figure 6.34: Open kitchen: Pompei’s

*Lorenzo’s Diner* (see Figure 6.35) does not list pizza as a course on the menu, and although the kitchen was designed from scratch (Pagnan 03/5/2012 pers. comm.), there are some areas that restrict the restaurant’s menu, such as lack of pizza oven and insufficient grill space.

Figure 6.35: Closed kitchen at Lorenzo’s Diner

In *Elio’s* open kitchen, the ‘salamander grill’ equipment is to the right of the pizza oven (see Figure 6.36) under which dishes are quickly finished by giving a final, ferocious blast of heat underscores the European cooking style.
The top of the pizza oven stores metal trays and other artefacts, and hanging from the ceiling are supporting utensils—a conical strainer (or chinoise), which is used for straining stocks or pressing food through the holes to make a fine puree, whisks and large spoons. The benches and shelves give no particular hint of the cuisine being prepared in the kitchen, being present in all kitchens as part of complying with food laws.

**Signalling cuisine 'ethnicity'**

Although Meiselman (2008) asserts that 'ethnic' restaurants have typical designs virtually worldwide, and that we all recognise the external design of Italian and Chinese restaurants, my research finds the claim only partially accurate. Four out of the six restaurants analysed in this chapter did not display overt signs of their cultural identity. Further, Bell et al. (1994) assumed that customers selected more Italian dishes in a restaurant decorated with an Italian theme of red-checked tablecloths, Italian flags, chianti bottles, Italian menu names and Italian travel posters. With the exception of menu names, none of the Italian restaurants in this study was decorated with this theme. Although I am not able to confirm that my view is shared by other people, my own expectation of the food in a restaurant so decorated would reduce my expectations of the quality of the food rather than enhance it. I propose that there is a further significant stage of acceptance of a cuisine and its culture into the foodscape where an 'ethnic' restaurant does not need overtly displays of culture from its country of origin, retaining it by other means such as the quality of food and variety of flavours.
The ethnographic data I collected from these restaurants suggests that there is a considerable division between the two cuisines in their acceptance into the Australian foodscape. Due to their relatively new positioning in the foodscape, the Vietnamese restaurants seem to be in a state of evolution revealing three stages of integration into the Australian foodscape.

Thanh Binh Cabramatta represents the first stage—a small, inexpensive restaurant providing mostly Vietnamese dishes for its local community. In this initial stage, the restaurant would have had to adapt to western commercial kitchen regulations, but not adapt its cooking methods. Although ‘discovered’ by culinary adventurers from the ‘community of taste’, there is no evidence that it deliberately targets an outside market beyond its own area. The other two restaurants in the study have had to adapt to existing kitchen facilities, and the kitchens are differentiated by a ‘layering’ of implements specific to the cuisine over the generic cooking space.

Thanh Binh on King in Newtown illustrates this second stage of how Vietnamese cuisine is accepted in the foodscape. The restaurant is differentiated from other culinary offerings, by relying in part on its stereotypical signs, both pan-Asian and Vietnamese to attract the notice of potential customers, in line with Bell et al.’s (1994) observations.

Consistent with the analysis of exterior, frontstage and backstage, Red Lantern exemplifies an important further stage. While its Vietnamese origin is apparent in the menu names, it relies on the refinement of Vietnamese flavours to communicate to the diner. Unlike the other two restaurants, Red Lantern is not competing in the market using so-called ethnic differentiation; rather, it competes with other restaurants in the neighbourhood on a mainstream level, without needing to display stereotypical images on its façade. Its kitchen closely resembles those of Italian and Australian contemporary restaurants conveyed by its minimal exterior, frontstage and backstage messages.

The Italian population has been established in Australia for an extra generation, and there is enormous popularity of Italian cuisine worldwide (Cinotto 2004). In contrast, Vietnamese restaurants are still in the stage of moving out of ‘ethnic’ enclaves and into the mainstream where familiarity with the cuisine is such that it is not necessary for them to draw heavily on their explicit signs of cultural identity. A restaurant like Red Lantern shows that
Vietnamese cuisine is beginning to be accepted as a mainstream cuisine, where people can read the subtle signs acutely because their tacit knowledge has developed through social learning and socialisation processes, facilitated by media such as GL and the cookbooks industry.
Chapter 7: Flavours of the Australian foodscape

The rationale of Chapters 4, 5 and 6 was to draw attention to how migrant cuisines have been influenced by the Australian environment in terms of ingredients, customer demands, and popular perceptions captured and constructed by the media. The following chapter investigates the reverse influence—how migrant cuisines interrelate with contemporary Australian cuisine and how they have influenced the flavours of the Australian foodscape.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the term ‘cuisine’ is interpreted in different senses. However, the explanations put forward there do not take into account the special case of restaurants away from their country of origin, which often use the national definition of the cuisine or have a selection of regional dishes listed on the menu. It was important that I selected a generic working definition in of my use of the word ‘cuisine’ as simply ‘a style of cooking’ (The Macquarie Dictionary 2010), for the sake of consistency in the focus of my thesis. The term ‘Australian cuisine’ refers to the Australian style of cooking as encountered in the restaurants that are the focal point of this research, and I used this scenario so Australian cuisine would not have to be viewed and written about separately from migrant cuisines. Australian cuisine takes its flavours from the Australian foodscape, where cuisines from different origins contribute and inform the culinary perspectives influenced by GL and cookbooks and consequently the decisions taken by chefs.

In line with the previous chapters, I firstly refer to how GL interprets the flavours of what it categorises as Australian cuisine, or the Australian style of cooking. Secondly, I consider how 'ethnic' cuisines are represented in the themes of three Australian cookbooks published in the 2000–2009 timeframe. In the final section, I analyse interviews from chefs of Vietnamese, Italian and Australian heritage to explore the reciprocal influences between Australian and migrant cuisines. Regarding my case studies, the aim of the analysis is to ascertain how Vietnamese and Italian chefs felt about their cuisines adapting to the Australian foodscape without compromising cultural identity and how contemporary Australian chefs believe their cuisine had been influenced by the acceptance of migrant cuisines in Australian communities of taste. In doing so, I focused on what ingredients and cooking techniques they

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identified as being crucial in retaining the identity of their cuisine, and what role they considered their restaurants play in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours. This section also focuses on the aesthetic challenges that are significant in the construction of identity and acceptance, and tension that exists between the expectations of clientele, and the entrepreneurial environment that chefs face in running a business while maintaining an acceptable level of culinary distinction.

**Australian, mod-Oz or contemporary?**

In Chapter 4, my investigation was directed into GL’s perception and communication about the Vietnamese and Italian cuisines in the Australian foodscape. I now reflect on how GL transmits its interpretation of Australian cuisine to its community of taste. As previously indicated, GL holds significant authority in the Australian foodscape due to its ongoing existence as Sydney’s premier broadsheet newspaper for more than 25 years.

As can be seen by the deconstruction of the articles in Chapter 4, Vietnamese and Italian cuisines are clearly defined by GL, characterised by their flavour, structure and provenance. The main contentions appear to be over their degrees of 'authenticity' in the Australian foodscape or how their principle flavours have been combined with other Asian or European cuisines. Judging by the content of many of the articles I sourced, Australian cuisine is not identified by the same parameters as apply to other ethnic cuisines. Many articles in GL refer to Australian cuisine by what it is not, rather than by what it is, but all of them make references to the tendency to merge flavours from diverse migrant cuisines into the cooking process.

I now consider how GL interprets the flavours of what it categorises as Australian cuisine. GL uses the three terms ‘modern Australian’, ‘mod-Oz cuisine’ and ‘contemporary cuisine’ interchangeably when it describes Australian cuisine. For that reason, I used these as keywords to recover data from articles written between 2000 and 2009. Using the Australia and New Zealand Newsstand (ProQuest) search engine, these keywords returned hits for modern Australian (147) mod-Oz (65) and contemporary Australian (6). Of these, many were irrelevant to the research topic or multiple keywords were present in each article. Most impressions were generated by reviews of restaurants whose cuisine was categorised as either
modern Australian or mod-Oz by the restaurant reviewer, with only three useable hits for contemporary Australian. For this analysis, articles were selected that specifically addressed the construction of Australian cuisine rather than sampling the output in a similar fashion to Vietnamese and Italian cuisines, because the pool was much smaller and therefore more manageable.

GL often emphasises that flavours of Australian cuisine are integrated with produce that is uniquely available to Australian chefs. At a cooking showcase in New York, for example, the produce was highlighted by what was described as a particularly Australian choice of flavours and cooking methods, characterised by an unusual and inventive blend of ingredients:

Coconut broth with steamed yabbies, roasted barramundi with lemon risotto and a selection of grain-fed lamb (Epaminondas 2002 p. 10).

Independent of historical evidence in current perceptions of contemporary cuisines, the coconut broth and lemon risotto mentioned here owe their provenance to Asia and Europe respectively, while the yabbies, barramundi and Illabo grain-fed lamb were especially shipped for the occasion by the chef rather than use US produce because he felt these are essential to maintaining the culinary theme of the dinner. The unique flavour combinations produced by the cooking methods and ingredients could then be unequivocally categorised as Australian.

Further opinions about the superiority of Australian produce are conveyed when GL food writers emphasise opinions about local ingredients from individuals who are respected for their culinary acumen:

I was surprised by the quality of the fish, of the shellfish. The meat, too—you just can’t get beef this tender in France (Nourse 2000 p. 10).

These articles not only imply the special attributes of Australian produce, but also the expectation of the singular way they are contrasted with other ingredients to produce a unique result:

The words ‘modern Australian’ (or ‘mod-Oz’) were oft repeated, and many reports listed a full array of ingredients as if in awe of the Asian exoticness
of our cooking. Lemongrass, daikon radish, ginger wonton, yellowfin tuna sashimi, sea urchin dressing, celeriac, rock oysters and so on (Jellie 2000 p. 8).

GL writers appear to tacitly agree that modern Australian cuisine flavours are a combination of ‘gutsy and bold’ (Evans 2002b p. 6) flavours combining the superior qualities of local produce at the same time taking many flavour cues from Asia. This is consistent with Greenwood’s views:

My spin on it is we are Asia, really, and whenever we use Asian ingredients, we use them so much better than any other country in the world that’s not Asian (Greenwood 2005 p. 12).

Another unique quality mentioned is the ability to blend Asian cuisine with European migrant heritage to produce Australia cuisine:

It comes as no surprise to be delivered an Asian dish in a mod-Oz restaurant perfectly executed by a young chef of European ancestry. We’re lucky to live in the most exciting Asian city outside Asia (Tabakoff et al. 2007 p. 12).

As mentioned before, the training model that influences Australian chefs is based on European culinary style rather than Asian methods. This implies that the architecture of European cuisine is creatively embellished with Asian influences in a distinctive way that is particularly Australian. This theme is further explored in the interviews with Australian chefs where they explain how they developed the capability to incorporate diverse cuisine flavours into mainstream European-based cuisine.

Ultimately, GL gives the impression Australian chefs are skilled in using ingredients of either European or Asian provenance resulting in a style of cooking that combines flavours firstly from unique produce and secondly with culinary influences from Asian and European cuisines, and thus contributing to in a dynamic Australian foodscape.

A further significant issue is the incorporation of flavours from Australian indigenous ingredients or bush foods, and GL suggests that it should be a major identifying principle for defining Australian cuisine. According to Bannerman (2006 p 33) the unselfconscious
incorporation of native ingredients into the existing food culture would give a convincing distinctiveness that cannot be provided by multiculturalism alone, thereby establishing what could be regarded as an Australian cuisine. In Santich’s (2012 p 75) view, they will be seen as emblematic of our food culture only when eaten widely and regularly. However, the limitation of this approach is that the use of indigenous flavours is not widespread, and may never be. One needs to continue to search for what an Australian cuisine might be, with or without the inclusion of these flavours.

**Indigenous flavours**

One of the recurring themes of the GL articles is that the flavours of bush foods have not been widely accepted into the Australian foodscape as easily as those from foreign cultures. Much of the literature related this to the ideological construction of Australian ambiguities around its indigenous cultural background (Hage 2000, Stratton & Ang 1994).

In accord with the views put advanced by Bannerman (2006) and Santich (2011), some GL food writers argued that the flavours of Australian native ingredients should provide the point of differentiation required for Australian cuisine to be truly original.

I’m talking about ingredients that kept the first Australians healthy for 60,000 years—kangaroo, quandong, Illawarra plum, emu, warrigal greens, crocodile, bush tomatoes, pepper berries, finger limes (Tabakoff *et al.* 2007 p. 12).

In my analysis of the articles, I could see that GL tried to promote this culinary niche with positive reviews of restaurants, chefs and cookbooks that featured these ingredients, in order to deflect the image that the bush food theme was mainly perpetuated in tourist-oriented enclaves as a kind of culinary artefact. This is a case where GL’s influence on its community of taste was met with resistance, underscored by chefs whose practical considerations outweighed the benefits of promoting the produce:

‘A lot of the products don’t come up to the normal criteria we’d set for anything we use: flavour, consistency and value for money’, he says. ‘I remember once getting some fresh lemon myrtle leaves at $100 a kilo and comparing them with fresh kaffir lime leaves at around $40 a kilo. The
kaffir lime leaf had a superior intensity of flavour and aroma’ (Newton 2000 p. 12).

As well as extensive supply chain problems, the quality of flavour limited the use of the ingredients in the consideration of cost versus return. Although native ingredients were export internationally, Australian chefs continued to resist the trend:

‘I use whatever’s quality. I use a lot of wild barramundi for example, because it’s a fantastic product.’ And native plant produce? ‘The whole bush food thing, I’ve just always thought it’s B grade produce. I’m sure there are things that I’ve not seen. To be really honest, if I had things sent to me I would use them if they were quality’ (Pryor 2002 p. 10).

By 2007, GL had to recognise that Australian bush food for the mass market was a lost cause (Tabakoff et al. 2007 p.12) although kangaroo continues to be listed on many menus:

‘Australian cuisine should have kangaroo’ says chef Jean-Paul Bruneteau, from Deep Blue Bistro in Coogee. ‘We shouldn’t be afraid of kangaroo. It belongs on a restaurant table, it certainly belongs on an Australian table. I’ve always had it on my menu and it’s always been the biggest seller’ (Lewis 2008 p. 17).

Kangaroo meat has the benefit of having a relatively sustainable supply chain and dedicated quality control (Pople & Grigg 1999). It is available in many supermarkets where it is sold in vacuum-packed portions for the domestic cook. Once encountered in a restaurant, a home cook can easily buy kangaroo meat, and because it is packaged and portioned akin to beef and lamb, it is more accessible. Other bush foods are included in articles and cookbooks, but are not so easily sourced.

GL’s attempts to encourage bush food flavours appear to have been met with resistance from both chefs and diners in its community of taste. Only a handful of chefs were sufficiently motivated to incorporate bush food ingredients into their cuisine suggesting that customer interest in the flavours could not be sustained. The decline in popularity of the ingredients in all but a select few restaurants reduced the chance of exposure. Therefore, bush
food ingredients were perceived as a novelty or a passing trend that was eventually relegated mostly to tourist restaurants and tourist trade. In GL’s interviews with chefs, many openly declared they were concerned with consistency of supply, quality of flavour and financial considerations, as well as their own ability to deal with the ingredients. While GL made chefs and customers aware of these flavours, their use was never widespread and did not integrate into the Australian foodscape as some GL writers predicted.

In the next section, I discuss how migrant cuisine has influenced the flavours that are used in cookbooks with Australian themes. As with the other two cuisines, there were few Australian cookbooks to choose from in the timeframe. The three I selected were Alexander’s (2004) *The Cook’s Companion*, *Australian Regional Food: the best chefs’ recipes* by Sally Hammond (2006), and *bills sydney food*: the original and classic recipe collection by Bill Grainger (2009). As with the Italian and Vietnamese cookbook authors, I occasionally call them by their first names, and they are included in the table of authors in Appendix 3. All were chosen because their recipes reflect ingredients that are easily obtainable in the Australian environment, as emphasised by Alexander’s (2004 p. 2) opening comments to *The Cook’s Companion*: ‘I have considered what you are likely to have on hand in the cupboard or refrigerator or kitchen fruit bowl, or an easily obtain from the neighbourhood shopping centre’.

Many ingredients in the book have been introduced to the Australian food environment over the last 30 years, with some far more recently. This applies equally to *bills sydney food* and *Australian Regional Food*.

**Flavour interpretations by Australian cookbooks**

Although the books were not chosen for the purpose of being closely compared, all three books reflect a commonality of ingredients and cooking styles from the micro to macro environment. The layered approach to place can be seen as an example of how consistently the influence of the Australian foodscape has spread from local to regional to national. *Bills sydney food* essentially reflects a small area of the eastern suburbs of its city, *Australian

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6 The book title is not in capitals. The forward by Terry Durack says: ‘The name was spelt in lower case, with the anarchic absence of an apostrophe’. 

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Regional Food explores produce and cooking from selected localities over a greater proportion of the country while The Cook’s Companion encompasses all Australia equally in its allegiance to place.

Figure 7.1: The Cook’s Companion (Anon ND)

The Cook’s Companion (2004), subtitled The complete book of ingredients and recipes for the Australian kitchen was increased and updated from the original publication in 1996. The book has been enormously popular, and reprinted twice from its initial run of 10,000 copies (Alexander 2012). It is well known in the communities of taste that value cookbooks and was reprinted in a larger, revised edition in 2004.

Twelve extra chapters cover ingredients she now considers essential - or at least important—including abalone, Asian greens, coconuts, kiwifruit, sardines, persimmons, tamarillos, turkey and venison (Wyndham 2004 p. 14).

In the short space of eight years, these extra twelve chapters trace significant expansion of the ingredients that have become embedded in the Australian foodscape.

The Cook’s Companion new edition covers a wide range of cuisine influences strongly inspired by French, Italian, Asian and Middle Eastern flavours—all of which are now reflected in the Australian foodscape. The chapters are organised alphabetically by ingredient, and are therefore produce-based rather than menu-based. Each chapter includes a list of flavours that complement the main ingredient. As well as complete recipes laid out on
the page, there are what Stephanie calls marginal recipes that are ideas for ingredients that can be put together quickly without the necessity of following the formal recipe process. A one-page introduction establishes each chapter, incorporating preliminary paragraphs on varieties and season, selection and storage, and preparation and cooking for every ingredient.

The concept of whether the recipes are ethnic or authentic is never raised—for example, ‘Vietnamese chicken and mint salad’ is referenced to Nicole Routhier’s *Foods of Vietnam* (1989). The responsibility of the book is therefore to encourage the reader or cook to be able to replicate the dish using flavour ingredients easily acquired from Australian supermarkets, whether they are located in the city or the country. In a similar way, pasta and noodles are treated as ‘essentially the same ingredient’ (Alexander 2004 p. 505) because of the similarity of ingredients and techniques used in their production. Any overlap of flavours between cuisines is regarded as a culinary inevitability, with Italian flavour principles meeting Chinese egg noodles as an example. Instructions on selection of dry pasta shapes are fluid, other than to loosely recommend general rules of thumb and common sense prevails ‘if all you have in the cupboard is spaghetti; then use spaghetti!’ (Alexander 2004 p. 507). These instructions are representative of the way in which the cook is encouraged to replicate a dish using the ingredients from the Australian foodscape.

No bush foods are listed in the book either in their own chapter or as ingredients in any of the recipes, except for kangaroo, which has a short section devoted to it. Three complete recipes, four margin entry suggestions and a list of complementary flavours—all of them European—are accompanied by a positive back-story on its health benefits and directions on using the prime cuts. The author concludes that using this product must qualify the dish as Australian, referring to the media interest in what constitutes Australian cuisine. In the recipes in this section, the integrity of the meat is shown to be best preserved by barbecuing or roasting—similar to indigenous cooking methods—and no Asian techniques are recommended. It seems that Asian flavours and bush food produce have not integrated, and are dealt with separately when Australian cuisine is communicated.

*Australian Regional Food: the best chef’s recipes* (2006) compiles recipes from regions from all Australian states although for some unexplained reason, it does not include the internal territories of the Australian Capital Territory and the Northern Territory. A
paradox is noted here that native ingredients are regarded as defining Australian cuisine, but no reference is made to the original people who discovered and used bush foods.

Figure 7.2: Australian Regional Food: the best chef’s recipes

The narrative of the book combines food and tourism and the recipes have been collected from chefs and food companies from each particular region. There is some call for branded products associated with the person supplying the recipe, so there is advice to purchase by mail order and on using substitute ingredients. Occasional recipes might not be easily replicated due to the difficulty of obtaining a core ingredient—for example, wallaby and possum have limited commercial availability. Eleven chapters are laid out in European menu classifications, beginning with a brief breakfast section followed by a six-course meal format with additional sections on biscuits, cakes and breads, and jams, relishes and spreads. The cookbook exhibits a wide variety of produce with a diverse collection of lamb, beef, venison, rabbit, pheasant, pork and seafood dishes sitting with regional cheeses, olives and wines. Apart from bush food meats, few indigenous flavouring ingredients are represented, although lemon myrtle, a lemon-flavoured leaf similar to citronella, appears in the heading of nine of the recipes.

As with The Cook’s Companion, French, Italian, Asian and Middle Eastern flavour influences can all be found in the recipes. South East Asian flavours are incorporated in many dishes, in some cases specifically referenced to a particular country. For example, ‘Asian Red Cabbage Salad’ (Hammond 2006 p. 53) is acknowledged as an adaptation of a mixture used
to make Vietnamese spring rolls, and recommends key flavour ingredients of coriander, mint, Vietnamese mint and noc cham dressing with sesame oil. This recipe comes from a Wilderness Lodge in the Kimberley region in far north Western Australia, indicating that Vietnamese cuisine has had an impact well away from the metropolitan centres where its community is mostly centred. Like The Cook’s Companion, the Italian origins of a recipe are acknowledged only in the techniques, for example, barley risotto (Hammond 2006 p. 105) and mushroom and pea lasagne (Hammond 2006 p. 87).

*Bills sydney food* subtitled *The original and classic recipe collection* was also a second edition. It has been updated from the original—the author explains that ‘this book combines the favourite recipes from our menus over the years, with ideas to simplify them and hopefully, the inspiration for how you might assemble them’ (Grainger 2009 p. 11).

![bills sydney food](image)

*Figure 7.3: bills sydney food*

It contains recipes for many dishes that appear on the menus of his eponymous string of cafés. From the concept of a single café in Darlinghurst, the business has expanded to a further two in Sydney and to others in Japan and the UK. In keeping with the theme of this cookbook, lavish photographic images of Sydney’s landscape reflect sea, beach and a perpetually relaxed lifestyle are displayed side by side with vivid food photographs.

The book is divided into chapters on breakfast, lunch and dinner recipes, along the lines of the café’s opening hours. While no Asian or Middle Eastern flavours can be found in either the breakfast or dessert sections, the ‘Lunch’ chapter, has two recipes that reference
Vietnamese cuisine. *Chicken noodle soup with lemon*’ (Grainger 2009 p. 85) is described as Jewish chicken soup combined with Vietnamese *pho*. The recipe combines Asian vegetables—‘green vegetables such as *bok choy*’—and Italian lasagne noodles, with ginger flavouring the chicken stock. There is no indication of specialised flavours until the garnish, composed of unmistakeable Vietnamese core flavours of lemon juice, fish sauce, chillies, coriander and mint. A further suggestion that additional herbs, beansprouts and lemon be offered as an accompaniment eludes to the distinct way that Vietnamese *pho* dish is traditionally served. The second dish that owes its provenance to Vietnamese cuisine is *Spicy prawn cakes* (p. 125). This recipe is also distinguished as Vietnamese by its classic *noc cham* dipping sauce, with the key flavour ingredients of garlic, chilli, sugar, lime and fish sauce. A recipe follows for *Vietnamese lemonade*, which reinforces the impression that both the recipes on this page are inspired by the flavours of Vietnamese cuisine. No bush foods are listed in any of the recipes, and there are no direct references to Italian cuisine, but the numerous and varied pasta recipes imply that Italian food has integrated into the foodscape to such a degree to be unremarked.

These three cookbooks were studied to see how successfully the flavours of Asian and European ethnic cuisines have merged into Australian recipes, reflecting their acceptance into the Australian foodscape. In all books, Vietnamese recipes are either highlighted with a brief reference to other cookbook authors, or accompanied by a remark about their derivation. In contrast, the provenance of Italian ingredients and recipes is barely mentioned. This suggests that the Australian representation of Italian cuisine has become so embedded in the foodscape that it does not need the additional explanations that still support Asian recipes. This reinforces the observation that that Australian cuisine is defined implicitly as being European, and explicitly as being Asian.

Of further significance is that Asian flavours are always confined to savoury dishes, and do not appear in any recipes for breakfast or sweets in any of the books. All three Vietnamese cookbooks analysed in Chapter 5 had recipes devoted to sweet dishes—sweet soups, cakes made from sticky rice and banana-flavoured delicacies, black sticky rice and sweetened coconut cream. On reading each Australian cookbook, there was scant evidence to show that these sweet dishes have filtered into the Australian cookbooks, implying that their communities of taste will accept only the flavour of the savoury dishes from Vietnamese
cuisine. In contrast, Italian recipes and ingredients for desserts, cakes and biscuits were frequently incorporated in the Australian cookbooks.

Time is an indicator of how fast flavour is adopted and diffused and how well a new flavour is accepted. Santich (1996 p 13) emphasises that tastes in food change over time. Personal tastes evolve throughout a lifetime as well as the shared tastes of groups of individuals in terms of familiarising with new flavours. She suggests that shifts in food preferences also coincide with other changes in society's values, structures and beliefs (p 14) In this sense, I propose that Italian sweets have had more time to integrate because of the culture's—and therefore the cuisine’s longevity in the Australian foodscape. Another interpretation might be connected with cultural proximity or distance but the acceptance of some dishes and not others in my view is more likely to be associated with time. Considering the tendencies of acceptance of cuisines by the Australian communities of taste, painted in the analysis of restaurants in Chapter 6, I speculate that Vietnamese sweet flavours may eventually integrate into Australian cuisine in the future.

Indigenous ingredients seem to have a limited impact on all the cookbook offerings. *Bills sydney food* does not include them at all, *The Cook’s Companion* only refers to kangaroo, and *Australian Regional Food* mentions only kangaroo, lemon myrtle and Davidson plums out of a considerable list of available products. Linked with the GL analysis the research suggests that using bush food ingredients has not become commonplace in the foodscape, and Asian and European flavours are preferred.

The next section is devoted to analysing interviews from chefs of Vietnamese, Italian and Australian heritage to find out how they communicate their ethnicity and maintain its integrity. Each chef talked about their background, their relationship with flavour and flavour balance, and challenges they meet in professional cooking. They also mentioned their approaches to ingredients, their thoughts about flavour balance, and their feelings about flavour. Some conversations lasted more than an hour, some less.

As mentioned in Chapter 3, all the interviews were conducted *in situ*, in other words, in the restaurants themselves. They were conducted outside service hours, between lunch and dinner when the chefs had time for a break from their activities. The interviews were semi-structured, with series of prompt questions used if necessary to ensure points such as
communication, flavour balance and culinary influences were covered. This enabled the stream of questions to be fluid rather than rigid so the interviews remained open-ended and assumed a conversational manner.

**Building flavours: Conversations with chefs**

I became immersed in the life of each chef during the interviews, hearing about their backgrounds and their philosophies on food. I reflect my personal involvement in this section and my conversations were chef-to-chef, diverging from conventional formality. A table of chefs and their restaurants is contained in Appendix 4.

Thui Huynh had journeyed from Vietnam to Australia as a refugee, and was a late arrival on the restaurant scene, having owned *Thanh Binh Cabramatta* for a relatively short time. Angie Hong had long been immersed in the restaurant business, although she originally came to Australian on a scholarship. Luke Nguyen was brought up in the restaurant world of his parents in Cabramatta, and has become a celebrity chef with a television series on Vietnamese food.

The backgrounds Italian chefs were equally varied. George Pompei was used to the restaurant life as his family had run a restaurant in Melbourne, and he spent time with relatives in Italy furthering his cooking career. Daniele Gianuzzi had recently come to Australia from Italy, and Lorenzo Pagnan travelled regularly between Italy and Australia, visiting family and refreshing his cooking ideas.

The Australian chefs all professed to have an 'unremarkable' background, and stressed the simplicity of their childhood memories of food. All had trained at TAFE, which gave them a common foundation. The cooking skills and techniques that these three chefs were taught were predominantly from the French system, which dominates many cooking schools around the world. This style dictates French cuisine is the ideal of culinary practice through its arrangement of courses, systematised culinary practices points of reference and standard (Ferguson 2004). Their styles ranged from fare produced by Tony Worland for his conservative country clientele to the radical molecular gastronomy style favoured by Karl Kenzler. Jason Hughes was positioned somewhere between the two, his French style open to experimentation.
Chefs nowadays are regarded as trusted persons of perceived gastronomic authority, with highly developed cooking skills and specialised culinary knowledge in their chosen field of expertise. Consistent with the views of many scholars (Fine 1996; Horng & Hu 2008; Rozin 2000; Schafheitle 2000), my view is that flavour is the main criteria that chefs rely on for the success of their businesses and they engage with cooking techniques, equipment, and quality of ingredients in order to achieve this end. In doing so, they face challenges from business pressures while attempting to maintain the integrity of their cuisine. Crucially, chefs have created new ways to experience and think about food and so the food prepared in restaurants not only reflects culinary tradition, it creates it as well (Trubek 2007). This role of restaurants and chefs is therefore vital in the migration, maintenance and merging of culinary flavours and challenges the assumed idea of the role of authenticity in the cuisine environment.

Most chefs trace their cooking careers from when they first began working in restaurants. However, all the chefs in this study were asked about their backgrounds and what effect, if any, they felt it had on their subsequent choice of career. The Australian chefs regarded their similar cultural upbringings as unremarkable:

*My background is mostly middle class to sort of working class Australian growing up ... Food-wise it was very unexciting—I was brought up on sort of meat and two veg (Hughes).*

*Family of four, parents weren’t that innovative in food, we did a fair bit of home cooking in the ways of sort of feeding a family of six that sort of styles ... I guess the most creative part of it would have been sort of cakes and biscuits ... but generally fairly basic. You know, steak and three veg (Kenzler).*

By describing their diet as ‘meat and veg’, the chefs were indicating the diet of their youth lacked variety. All three said they were not exposed to restaurants until they began their cooking careers:

*I had absolutely no food knowledge or skills, I didn’t come from a family who went out to restaurants at all. Very very sort of simple food at home. It*
wasn’t something I was brought up with, it was something I was exposed to later and yeah, just developed a passion for it (Hughes).

While the Australian chefs felt their culinary heritage was unexceptional, they did not see it as a long-term disadvantage—to them, there were other ways of learning how to cook that were not linked to domestic circumstances. They did not appear to think that they experienced Australian cuisine until they began cooking in restaurants, not considering that the food of their collective childhoods could be classified as a cuisine. As mentioned before, all three of the Australian chefs trained in their craft at TAFE, the primary Australian training provider for cookery and baking. Chefs do not have to embark on formal training in order to own or cook in a restaurant, but those who undertake training are normally indentured in a four-year restaurant apprenticeship with one day per week spent on formal study:

TAFE at that stage was in a bit of a change-over period; we were doing a lot of crossover stuff ... they were very old-school French and a bit of English sort of influences there. It was in that sort of transitional period before when TAFE was all being changed around a bit since then it’s modernised a little bit (Hughes).

At the time, there was a need for TAFE to update its offering to match the changes that were apparent in the Australian foodscape, and match the demand from businesses that needed chefs with the skills to reflect modern culinary trends and commercial approaches.

All three Australian chefs indicated that their ‘unremarkable’ Australian background gave them an advantage of being open to the culinary influences of migrant cultures so they were able choose what was most important to them in the innovation and development stages of their culinary style.

Conversely, the Vietnamese and Italian chefs felt that their heritage had a significant influence on the cuisine they presented later in their restaurants:

I was born in Australia and brought up in a typical Italian family ... so lots of different flavours, different foodstuffs (Pagnan).

Lorenzo’s family repatriated to rural Italy for a time, where he was immersed in the culinary lifestyle of his rural neighbourhood. Although he refers to this time as a ‘wonderful
experience’, he also spoke about the lack of culinary innovation he experienced in the rural environment:

In a lot of ways, Italian regional food is also like old food. A lot of the so-called traditional dishes from different areas of Italy are really steeped in this sort of history of the area and are not really reflecting what we want in modern society (Pagnan).

What does Lorenzo mean by the use of ‘we’? Is it from the market perspective of modern society? It seems that he realises a tension between the traditional and the inventive, and he is recognising the temporal dynamics of cuisine. He speaks as though traditional cuisine is a historical artefact and not a true reflection of the food that is consumed in contemporary society. Further, his comments may be recognition that the 'authentic' cuisine of regional Italy is completely disconnected with the construction of authentic flavour expectations in the Australian foodscape. Pompei also offers his insight:

I walked by a lot of gelato cabinets [in Italy], you know, I can … I can tell.
And I didn’t have a better gelato than ours. I’m not trying to say ours is the best in the world, but the reason why ours is better is because we put better things in it now (Pompei).

Making his own gelato for his restaurant must make Pompei particularly sensitive to its qualities, and he seems to be torn between loyalty for the Italian gelato that he tasted while also perceiving that he produces a generally more superior product outside its country of origin.

Both Pagnan and Pompei’s interpretation of the heritage of the family’s food culture in Australia was underscored by travel to their respective homelands, giving them the opportunity to compare and in some cases improve on the style of cuisine they encountered. Luke Nguyen’s first visit to Vietnam did not occur until adulthood, and he admitted that ‘I’ve actually never lived in Vietnam. What I know about Vietnam and its culture and its food is from Cabramatta’. Luke was immersed in restaurant culture from an early age. He sees this as an important influence on his pursuit of traditional Vietnamese food as the theme of his restaurant, Red Lantern, because he has decided ‘I want people to explore Vietnamese food, its ingredients and its flavour and its delicate characteristics’. Unlike Lorenzo and George,
he does not make a significant comparison of the cuisine in either country, only in the quality of some of the ingredients.

Overall, the chefs saw their own family background as being an advantage, whether they were Vietnamese, Italian or Australian. The Italian and Vietnamese chefs felt they had an advanced understanding of the proportions of ingredients needed to reproduce the flavours appropriate to their cuisine. The Australian chefs saw a benefit in having a neutral foundation, which they felt gave them freedom to experiment that they might not have otherwise. This indicates that the Australian cuisine may have looser requirements of authenticity than the 'ethnic'. In one way, this is an advantage, because of the freedom it gives them to devise their own culinary frameworks, but on the other hand, it may be a disadvantage because there is a lack of precedence to apply in their culinary development. There were some suggestions, however, that traditional cuisine perceptions might influence their proportional use of ingredients:

*You know if I went to an Italian kitchen ... I would probably put too much anchovies in 'cause I love that saltiness and the pureness of the anchovy. Whereas Italian chefs would have said oh you know just go light on that you know it's a kind of bit overpowering (Nguyen).*

From Luke’s reflection, it is evident the significance of his cultural perception of balance in the construction of flavour and simultaneously his emphasis on existing differences between cultural culinary norms.

The remainder of the thesis is devoted to the topics that arose from the thematic analysis of the conversations with the chefs. Seven themes were highlighted: culinary balance, adaptation to foodscape, challenges from business pressures, crucial cooking techniques and ingredients, the role of the diner and the significance of maintaining the integrity of the cuisine. It was important to analyse these conversations around these seven themes, firstly because of their connections to the other data sources, and secondly to develop a comprehensive view of the influences that they encountered which contributed to their philosophy on flavour development. These themes contributed to the overall impression of how migrant cuisines interrelate with contemporary Australian cuisine.
Theme 1: Adaptation to foodscape

The Australian chefs admit to the effects of multicultural cuisine influences from early stages in their cooking careers that gave them a view of their own style of cooking. For example, Jason mentions ‘I worked with a lot of different nationalities of chefs which essentially that’s the way I see that modern Australian food is, is a multicultural food’. Perhaps because of what they regard as a culinary neutral heritage and the exclusive focus of their training on French cuisine, the Australian chefs seemed to be in a position to absorb cooking styles from many different culinary sources although this might also be attributed to a lack of demand for authenticity. Authenticity here is represented as a juggle of specific inflections or 'contemporary' and 'traditional'. The extent to which the chef's own and consumer 'tastes' together with media- and industry fostered fashions for particular cuisines, cooking styles, ingredients and dishes all experimentation with actual tastes and symbolic meanings of dishes (Jean Duruz, pers. comm. 05/02/2013).

Chefs also refer to the advantage of the lack of hierarchy that exists in most Australian kitchen structures, giving them the freedom to experiment with a wide range of flavours. They mean that in some Australian kitchens, the management structure is flatter and more democratic, meaning that all kitchen workers can contribute to recipe development instead of all the responsibility being with upper management. Some of the chefs that had worked in European kitchens agreed that the kitchen hierarchy often leads to organisational power structures with a head chef and second chef in control, and the 'partie' system used to divide the different areas of preparation (Bloisi & Hoel 2008). Although they were trained in a mono-cultural French system at TAFE, they have a subsequent fluidity of culinary expression that they feel would be denied to them in European kitchens. Karl echoes this attitude:

*Overseas kitchens, European or whatever are lot more built on structure like they’re fairly regimented in how a thing’s cooked, whereas Australians we’ll get five different cuisines in one day or five different cuisines on one plate (Kenzler).*

These three chefs were not talking about the quality of training they received from TAFE, but how they perceive the overt discipline of an on-the-job apprenticeship that is a generally accepted element of restaurant culture in Europe, and how this relates to promoting
or stifling creativity. In their experience, the management of Australian kitchens is more fluid in its relationship to experimentation, and more inclined to promote flavours from the surrounding foodscape than to adhere to the imposed restrictions of kitchen hierarchy.

*I’ve come from a background where I worked in kitchens and restaurants and it’s like you fucking idiot you know what the fuck, you dickhead, get the hell out of here, don’t come you know it’s ah, this ego, hot-headed idiot chefs. And they wonder why their staff turnover’s so high and they wonder why the food’s shit you know and they wonder why they’re so unhappy. You come into our kitchen, we’re like a little family in there, you know (Nguyen).*

The Australian attitude was also seen as an advantage by other chefs who had trained in Europe and had heard of or experienced firsthand the hierarchy of the kitchen brigade.

This is not to say that any of them think Australian kitchens are lax in their organisation. However, they learn discipline in their apprenticeships and at TAFE, the discipline and kitchen management are the biggest differences between Sydney, for example, and London. Another Australian chef (not interviewed for this research) explained that in his experience in Sydney, the head chef usually has an amiable relationship with all his staff, and the kitchens in Australian are a lot calmer as a result at odds with his European experience (Lethlean 2012). A comparatively relaxed approach was cultivated by all the chefs interviewed as they felt that it reflected beneficially on the creative quality of their product.

Two of the chefs that were not born in Australia, Luke and Lorenzo, told me they involve the kitchen and floor staff in decisions about flavour regardless of their status and Luke articulates his philosophy: ‘*It’s my responsibility as the head of the kitchen to teach and if we can’t teach what’s the point?’*

It seems that no matter what the cultural background of the chefs, the flatter hierarchical structure of the kitchen promotes learning to the ultimate financial advantage of the restaurant, which is ultimately of benefit when it comes to the pressures that restaurants face in the Australian commercial environment.
Theme 2: Challenges from business pressures

According to Fine (1996), chefs must create flavours for the often restricted palates and limited appetite for culinary discoveries of their paying customers as well as exercise their own artistic aspirations. Restaurants are subject to financial constraints like any other businesses and all the chefs found their creativity limited principally by customer demands that dictate their food and utility costs. Some Australian chefs spoke of the constant pressure to balance their menu with their culinary ideals. For example, in common with Americans, Australian customers dislike offal. They find internal organs dirty, of unpleasant texture, and unhealthy (Lu & Fine 1995). According to Haidt et al (1997 p. 111), this relates to a ‘core emotion’ of disgust because organ meats remind humans of their own carnality and a related fear of dying. Mennel (1996) attributes people’s increasing ability and tendency to identify themselves with animals as a reason to avoid eating brains, eyes and testicles, and Lupton (1996) lists a number of factors, including appearance, taste smell as reasons given for not eating offal. Whatever the reason, this aversion provokes mixed reactions from those who have an appreciation of organ meats, and chefs have to adapt their cooking to potential customer distaste. This can also happen with other strong flavours, so even when chefs consider it an integral part of a dish, their prior experience signals caution:

You can’t go and put like duck livers on, ‘cause it just doesn’t work. I sort of try to steer clear of things like venison because people will want it well done. ... you’re not going to do anything like I said over the top, like, I don’t know, hot chilli type stuff, or offal and stuff like that (Worland).

Judging by the comments of some of the chefs, many restaurant customers appear to be inherently conservative eaters, and not all are as intrepid as chefs would like:

There’s one or two items on the menu which are for people who are really adventurous, and there’s a lot more which is not so sort of scary for people to try. People like to feel comfortable and to know what they’re ordering and that they can actually pronounce and they know what is actually going to be in the dish (Hughes).

Karl’s restaurant Ritual specialises in creating flavours at a molecular level, and the dining experience is carefully orchestrated to reflect his skill at matching flavours. Many
customers, however, are confronted by his unconventional approach. This conservatism is particularly challenging for the acceptance of molecular gastronomy in Australia.

The people last night, they were out for a dining experience and ... they brought their adult children along, and they just didn’t ... they weren’t into food at all. So that’s something we can’t overcome ... but we try and appease as much as we can (Kenzler).

This problem is not limited to Australian cuisine. Vietnamese and Italian restaurants have also had to make allowances for customer preferences:

They’re the customers so to make the dish more widely liked we took some of the bone off it. We still left it there for them to see because that’s the way I like it but we didn’t debone the whole thing altogether. And we left skin on there. Skin’s a texture I love so that’s one example so we’ve met 50/50 (Nguyen).

To remodel the dish, Luke instigated a two-way communication between himself and the clientele. Rather than remove or compromise the dish he was able to negotiate a satisfactory modification of one element but not at the expense of the overall flavour. The dish was adjusted until customers found it acceptable balanced with his judgement of the amount of bone and skin essential to maintaining the cultural integrity of the dish. In a similar way, Pompei adapted a pasta dish from the Italian region of Cortina:

It used to be made of rye flour. And we used to do it here but people didn’t like it. So now it’s made of a very small amount of rye flour just normally, it’s got a beetroot filling and it’s got a sage and poppy seed sauce (Pompei).

The slightly bitter taste of rye flour is not ‘normal’ to the Australian palate, but instead of omitting the flour altogether, or taking the dish off the menu, George retained a link to the traditional recipe by instigating a minor adaptation. In other words, both the flavour integrity of the dish was maintained and the customers’ acceptance of the rye flour encouraged according to the chef’s cultural understanding of the cuisine.
The chefs revealed tension between conservative tastes in diners and the perception by some researchers (Barthes 1961; Elias 1978; Finkelstein 1993; Lin & Mattila 2006; Shelton 1990) that novelty is central in the development of the restaurant and there is constant pressure from customers for chefs to innovate and keep the menu interesting. Hughes reflected around this aspect: ‘I suppose my job as a chef is to keep creating new dishes so that ... customers shouldn’t really have to ask for changes and different things’. In similar ways, Lorenzo offers his interpretation:

But you know obviously in a restaurant situation you’ve got to constantly tantalise tastebuds so you constantly have to try and get the next flavour sort of happening.

The allusion to ‘the next flavour’ indicates the strategies used by chefs to try both implement and reflect food trends from their communities of taste in order to stay relevant to their clientele. In fact, many of chefs welcomed the increasing sophistication of their customer’s palates, giving a variety of possibilities for this phenomenon. According to them, this sophistication comes primarily from the influence of television cooking shows that chefs felt depicted an increasing variety of cuisines and ingredients:

And we’ve noticed in the last two years that we’ve been here its slowly changing more towards an educated palate I suppose. And that’s just all about exposure. Slowly people are getting more and more educated about food, there’s more and more cooking shows ... and that’s all it takes is once people learn about different ingredients and different things they’re not quite so stand-offish and scared by it all, and that’s when it becomes the norm—standard knowledge for everyone (Hughes).

In the same sense Karl said he has noticed that ‘the customers are wanting to try a little bit different ... there’s influence of Masterchef and that sort of stuff where people are trying the get more creative’. This would imply that cuisines that are experienced vicariously through the mass media are followed up by expectations that restaurants can communicate those flavours in reality, and that diners can, reproduce them in a domestic setting, thus expanding the cultural diversity of the foodscape.
Overseas travel is also an influence on the community of taste. However, the influence happens in two directions: travellers become familiar with the culturally different cuisines, as in my case building my passion for food flavours. Restaurants prepare travellers to enjoy the flavours of the tourist destination. These were particularly noticed by chefs providing Vietnamese or Italian food:

[Customers] come here first before they go to Vietnam, and they will get the tip from us and say look where do I eat in Vietnam and what sort of thing, and then they come back and they ... they have the chance to compare what they eat first (Hong).

Angie prepares her clientele before they go on their travels, and Daniele sees customers reinforcing their impressions on the Italian food they have experienced abroad:

Many local people that have been come here a long time and they're medium age is after 40, so you get people that have been travelling around, they know what they like (Guzzini).

This indication of the global influence of travel experience and the domestic influence of television on the increasing awareness of cuisine flavours is paralleled by Hannerz’s (1990) notion of cosmopolitanism. He asserts that at the global level there is now participation in a world culture not bounded by territorial limits, while at a local level, television shows, such as Masterchef, open the possibility of a diversified acceptance of flavours. Accordingly, in the Australian food environment it is possible to develop cosmopolitan tastes without leaving the country.

**Theme 3: Culinary balance**

Reaching a shared understanding about taste and smell is not easy and creates difficulty in talking about flavour, because although food can be ‘good to think’ as Douglas (1982) among others puts it, these thoughts are not always easy to express and much discussion of flavour is imprecise. The chefs often relied on metaphors or similes to describe taste and smell. For example, Angie Hong describes the colour of a savoury dip that she serves as 'like chocolate sauce' and another as being 'the colour of weak tea'. Daniele Gianuzzi talks about eggplants shapes 'one is like it’s got ears, one has got a nose' and Luke Nguyen compares cooking food to giving a gift.
The next quote clearly illustrate how difficult seems to be to put in words what is actually a form of latent knowledge. Adjectival descriptions of the flavour (e.g. sharpness, sweetness) are applied to the ingredients Worland uses but he has difficulty articulating a precise definition.

So you roast up a bit of garlic and put it with some creamy mashed potatoes to cut that sort of, you know, sharpness or almost sweetness of the garlic as well. And you’ve got herbs and things like that and the saltiness ... without adding salt to your meat and all that kind of stuff. So they’re all sort of ... you can smooth it out with your fat and get all your ... I don’t know how to explain it but it just works (Worland).

However, he indicates an implicit knowledge at the heart of his understanding of what the balance of a dish should be. According to Ottenbacher & Harrington, (2007) chefs play around with ideas in their heads about which food items fit together or can be combined so that they will harmonize and end in a flavorful composition. This knowledge usually remains hidden and unspoken, but the process of creating the food flavours allows chefs such as Worland to externalise and thus communicate tacit knowledge (Nonaka 1991), although Garfinkel (1967) suggests full clarification is impossible as this kind of knowledge is developed from experience. This may be because of the lack of aesthetic discourse that occurs in most kitchens, and Fine (1992) claims that chefs’ remarks sometimes appear somewhat thin. In other words, they are used to making flavour rather than talking about it. This view is consistent with the scientific findings of my previous research (Link 2000).

**Theme 4: Crucial cooking techniques and ingredients**

The techniques and tools used either to replicate flavours or to incorporate them into Australian cuisine were treated by the chefs with varying levels of importance, but it was generally agreed that the respective techniques of Asian and European cuisines were more important to the success of replicating their cuisine than tools. Jason considers that ‘there’s certain techniques with Asian and Italian, because they’re different cuisines. They’re there for a reason, and to get the authentic taste you’d have to work with those techniques’.
One example regarding the significance of techniques was provided by Daniele, who was most scrupulous about the correct technique used to make *soffritto*, a basic flavouring combination of onion celery and carrot that is varied by additional garlic and herbs. According to Gianuzzi, the integrity of a *soffritto* is maintained by the technique, not the ingredients, and he warns of the consequences of taking shortcuts:

You just make a *soffritto* normally, just like garlic and chilli, but garlic has to be the way to cut as well. You can’t put in a blender just ... it’s bitter, you lost everything and it burns quickly (Gianuzzi).

Shortcuts are also seen as compromising the flavour of Vietnamese master stock that is used as a base in many Vietnamese soups. Luke Nguyen compares his interpretation with what he thinks are inferior versions. In his view, the technique of long, slow cooking is as important as the individual quality of ingredients:

Some cooks start to cut down on things ... I mean for my broths, I order 30 kilos of beef shin, 12 varieties of spices and herbs, lot of lemongrass and ginger and you simmer it for 24 hours. I simmer it throughout the night (Nguyen).

The importance of the method of cooking is also evident in Tony’s perspective, where he admits that he is commercially constrained when replicating dishes from Asian cuisine because of his lack of knowledge and ability, as his specialised techniques lie in the fundamentals of European cuisine:

A lot of French techniques. A lot of Italian techniques. But I mean this is ... how I’ve been trained ... the only reason I don’t sort of dabble into these other kind of cuisines as I’ve never learnt how to do that (Worland).

As mentioned previously, the European techniques are prominent in Australia training. Consequently, compared with the Vietnamese and Italian chefs, the Australian chefs relied much more on the techniques they learnt in training rather than on their cultural background to interpret flavours. For some of them, Italian cooking methods were more familiar than those of Asia. Their perception was that if they were to exactly replicate a Vietnamese dish, for instance, they would need to follow the technique closely and
concentrate on what treatment given to each ingredient, in contrast with the ease they could manipulate European styles.

Tools were regarded as being easy to adapt to circumstances, and in the photographs in the kitchen section of Chapter 6, it has been seen they freely borrow implements from other cuisines as if the end justified the means. One significant case already mentioned is how the Italian Lorenzo’s Diner uses Asian noodle baskets to cook pasta. Jason has a similar view:

> Tools aren’t, aren’t as important, more so because it’s the actual - things like mortar and pestle, that goes across cuisines. If you need to crush something or mash it up you use the mortar and pestle ... your knife is the most basic tool, and that doesn’t really matter if it’s a cleaver or a chef’s knife, it doesn’t matter too much. Tools aren’t as important as using the right ingredients and using the right method (Hughes).

However, this perspective might be limited. Hughes’s style is based on the foundations of his French training at TAFE, and he and the other Australian chefs may not have experienced the difference in utensils between European and Asian kitchens, as seen in Chapter 6, and never considered the heat source of these cuisines as being so significantly different.

All the chefs interviewed were also focused on their ingredients, and all spoke of the importance of beginning with quality produce, which will be discussed in the next theme.

**Theme 5: Importance of ingredients**

Each Australian chef had an individual way of utilising flavours beginning with the importance of using quality local produce when possible, and they were quite particular about their supply chain, as expressed in the next quotation:

> Say I start with some lamb which is coming up from locally it’s a place in Burrawang. I’ll start with an ingredient first this particular lamb has been pasture-fed by the butcher who actually processes it he runs his own lambs and it’s extremely good (Hughes).

All the chefs in this study placed great importance on where much of their produce is sourced. Kenzler felt produce was an integral part of his inspiration: ‘Because we can get
these unusual heirloom and fresh local products, we’re using them more … we definitely look for unique ingredients’. The chefs nurture a mutual understanding with their providores about the quality they need, and Tony reveals the trust that is established between them:

_Meat, I’ve got a guy in Blayney, Rob & Co, and yeah, he’s great, sources all the good stuff for me. A lot of lamb and stuff like that, comes out of Cowra, ‘cause that’s where the abattoirs are … it has to be good. So, yeah, he gets a lot of stuff from around for me, and the pork comes from Blayney, so I’m pretty spoilt with that_ (Worland).

Once they have decided on the base ingredient for a dish (lamb, pork, beef), the next stage of the creative process was explained. I illustrate this with two examples from Hughes and Kenzler:

_So I start with a base product and then work from there. Whether I want to do an Asian-based or Mediterranean so I think the first one I tried (and I do a bit of experimenting in the kitchen, when I do have time) was more French-based which was with potato and a different sauce. I wasn’t too happy with that one so then I’ve actually got it now with risotto so it’s just a matter of playing with it until you get that balance and it just feels right_ (Hughes).

_One of my specific dishes is, I guess a highlight, is our scallop dish and I’ve built in the layers as if you are a more of a bitter palate or a sweet palate, so I have a honey soil at the front and a really bitter soil at the back so you can actually gear your food to your palate and so you dip in a bitter soil or sweet soil depending on what you want so… I’ve got to basically bring foods out that they work together and they’re balanced and you know you get an overall experience_ (Kenzler).

These two quotations highlight the way both chefs talk about the intuitive practice of constructing what is essentially a flavour profile of a dish, and how this fits with ‘the tacit practical knowledge that the cook must bring to the stove’ (Fine 1996 p. 212). Hughes ‘feels’ the balance, trialling different ingredients until they fit his mental picture, while Kenzler, whose focus is on molecular combinations, treats his flavours as ‘layers’ which he plans to be
experienced on the front- and back palate. The flavour profile is based on the concept that flavour consists of identifiable taste, odour and chemical feeling factors plus an underlying complex of sensory impressions not separately identifiable (Keane 1992). Thus, the chefs display their tacit practical knowledge by identifying all the separate characteristics, assessing their intensity, then manipulating the aroma, flavour and aftertaste of the product.

As expected, influences vary between cooking styles. Jason was the most open to both European and Asian cuisine influences: ‘For me personally it tends to be the sun-drenched places such as the Mediterranean South East Asia that tends to be where I draw my main influences from’, whereas Karl preferred to explore flavours through their molecular flavour structure. This produces unusual ingredient combinations on the plate such as ‘maple wasabi and pecan’ but constructing the flavour profile at molecular level they give subtle or potent flavours depending on the desired outcome.

Tony preferred to stay with classic French cuisine:

*Beetroot chutney or an onion jam or something like that. And it goes well with goat’s curd and all that kind of stuff, nice and tart and creamy and, yes. Yeah. It’s good. I like that kind of thing.*

Comparing Australian chefs with Italian and Vietnamese shows a consensus in that they utilise the same processes in constructing the flavour of their dishes, creating flavour profiles the same way, and using them to create balance in their dishes. This is illustrated by Daniele, who explains his thought processes:

*Like today, there is this fish in the market. It’s good, it’s fresh and what can I do to just don’t overpower anything. And of course you need to have some interesting thing you know, like different thing, but nothing too over the limit you know? (Gianuzzi).*

Implicitly, Daniele knows how to bring out the best flavour of the fish, enhancing it with a light hand. He sets his own 'limit' flavour-wise, and is confident that this will translate to his customers' palates. Angie expresses a similar basis in her thinking about the flavours:
Go back to the fish that you just you know, cook it and then get a little bit of dry vermicelli to your bowl, your fish, and the shrimp paste and lemon and eat it, it’s amazing. (Hong).

She treats it simply, utilising just four ingredients to create her flavour profile for the fish. Altogether, there is a consensus with all the chefs interviewed that they first obtain the best produce to use as a base, and then intuitively layer patterns of flavour until they are satisfied with the balance. This process of flavour construction is supported by Fine’s rationale that ‘restaurant food has an aesthetic, sensory dimension and is evaluated as such by both producers and consumers’ (1996 p. 13). This aesthetic and sensory dimension is created by the chefs directing the aroma, flavour and aftertaste of the dish.

**Theme 6: The role diners play**

Thus far in this study, of the chefs and their views and practices, the culinary themes of the restaurants seemed to differ depending on what the chefs were trying to achieve in the Australian food context. As mentioned previously, restaurants are often the first places where communities of taste encounter new food flavours, sometimes supported by what they have read in articles such as those from GL, or from interpretations formed by reading or experimenting with cookbooks or in another ways not covered by this study such as TV shows and travelling experiences.

In the instance of the Vietnamese restaurants, the three chefs interviewed here were intent on preserving the tradition of their cuisine, while at the same time exposing their diners to unexpected flavours and preparations. They were sometimes limited by the availability of produce that is regarded as exotic in Australian—such as the snake and turtle mentioned in Chapter 4. However, because of the wide variety of fresh produce, they agreed that they could easily able to make substitutions if they believed they were not compromising flavour. Luke’s thoughtful approach to the dilemma of finding an acceptable substitute is evident in the following conversation:

So I’ve tried to find the closest fish to (catfish) and I’ve tried all these dishes and I’ve come across silver perch. It’s a freshwater fish from the river and it’s oily, it’s muddy, it’s fatty, it’s delicious and so I can cook that fish here.
And it’s not going to be the same as catfish but that fish, silver perch is great (Nguyen).

Conversely, the Australian chefs seemed more likely to seek out variety rather than substitutions, and aimed to achieve distinctive flavours and unusual dishes. Jason experimented with Asian and Italian cuisine, and Karl with unconventional flavour combinations. Tony was able to innovate within his preferred boundary of French and Italian culinary principles by pairing high-quality local produce with current food trends.

The Italian restaurants appeared to embrace the entire spectrum, with Daniele on one hand trying to retain the cultural authenticity of some flavours, and Lorenzo on the other adapting old methods to changing tastes and developing new dishes based on old ones. Situated between these two, George took some aspects of Italian cuisine as he perceived it and either sought to improve it—his gelato—or adapted it to local tastes, like his rye flour pasta. Whatever their philosophy, all the chefs interviewed were quite clear on how they individually retained the culinary integrity of flavours. To refer back to the concept articulated by Ottenbacher & Harrington (2007), the chefs in this study play around with ideas in their heads about which food items fit together or can be combined, so that they will harmonize and end in a flavourful composition.

**Theme 7: Retaining integrity**

There were some flavour ingredients that chefs considered indispensable for retaining culinary integrity. Culinary integrity means the flavour, appearance, texture, aroma and physical integrity of a dish, based on culinary ideals and aesthetic value (Fine 1992). It relates to the notion or perception of cultural authenticity of a cuisine, such a particular brand of tinned tomatoes from Naples, or regional fish sauce from Vietnam. These were considered indispensable flavour principles and were used widely in their countries of origin. However, fresh produce provided the principal foundation for flavour.

The three Vietnamese chefs insisted that in some ways, the flavours of Vietnamese cuisine were superior in Australia, mainly because of the quality of the raw ingredients, such as beef. Luke spoke of his reaction to his parent’s experiences: ‘even with my parents which is quite surprising is that they went to Vietnam for the first time in 30 years. How’s the food? It’s better in Australia, they say’. One could speculate that perhaps after 30 years, the
memories of the food in Vietnam had altered, but this perception is backed up by the other Vietnamese chefs. Thui also has a similar comparison:

I still found the food here taste nicer than Vietnam. Even if we took from the fresh one because the beef plenty, the veggie, everything’s good. In Vietnam, they very like poor quality, even their fresh. ... when I was in Vietnam I think the beef cooked from ... compare, nice, but when I come here I think better than there, when I come back to Vietnam I still love the food from here, I don’t know why (Huynh).

As referred in the discussion of Theme 3, Angie’s customers ask her advice on food if they are considering a holiday in Vietnam, and it seems they are often more complimentary of her offerings here, after having had the experience abroad. This fits with my point about travel influencing the acceptance of migrant cuisines, although not all travellers necessarily gain their perspectives about Vietnamese food from Australian-Vietnamese restaurants..

They come here first before they go to Vietnam, and they will get the tip from us and say look where do I eat in Vietnam and what sort of thing, and ... they have the chance to compare what they eat first, when they come back they say oh my God, your food is the best, you know like they always say that. They still prefer the Vietnamese food here (Hong).

In contrast, Daniele was sure that Italian cuisine could never be replicated in Australia. Although he was complimentary about Australian produce, he was less enthusiastic in general about Australian chefs’ abilities to cope with the finer points of the cuisine. He also cited a lack of understanding of the ‘proper’ combinations of ingredients, declaring that using cream instead of béchamel sauce and cheese with fish was an abomination. George agreed with him, ‘if we’re making a carbonara sauce ... you don’t add cream. People here always add cream for some reason. And it changes the dish’. However, Lorenzo had other views:

The different fillings that I would put in the lasagne, things that they wouldn’t necessarily like (in Italy). I might use smoked trout and leeks or use Jerusalem artichokes and prawns ... and they’re flavours that I really like and that are really contemporary and that people appreciate. Well,
there’s obviously no way that in the middle of the Venetta they would have ever got smoked trout or you know prawns or whatever (Pagnan).

Lorenzo’s feelings are that that using modern techniques and unusual ingredients reflects the contemporary foodscape more accurately, although at the same time, he emphasises that there are limits to innovative adaptation to the Australian foodscape in terms of retaining the culinary integrity of the cuisine:

*There are some things that don’t change like, for example, the way I make lasagne. They’re still the same way that my grandmother used to make it like in 1960 so you know 50 years ago so that recipe and there’s no point changing that because like everything that was good about it then still applies (Pagnan).*

Considering these different perspectives, there seems to be a tension in replicating Italian cuisine, a perpetual undercurrent of questioning of whether the cuisine is acceptable compared to that of Italy. Replicating ‘authentic’ or ‘original’ flavours does not appear to be an issue for the Vietnamese chefs. They seem to have worked out acceptable compromises to their cuisine and have added a comprehensive array of ingredients to their supply chain. In Vietnam, regional cooking styles appear to vary quite significantly (2007 personal visit) but discourse about the ‘authenticity’ of the cuisine in Australia was not evident in the interviews. However, the integrity of the cuisine was important to all chefs, and they did what they could to preserve it. By reflecting the same cultural background as their restaurants, Vietnamese, Italian and Australian chefs reassured their clientele of their expertise in handling specific cuisine flavours. Vietnamese and Italian chefs felt they were successful in adapting their cuisines to the Australian foodscape without compromising cultural identity and its flavours. These cuisines are now anchored in the Australian foodscape and have necessarily adapted to the new environment. Australian cuisine takes an inverse position in that it has adopted elements from incoming new cuisines. This dynamism is apparent in the Australian foodscape, which absorbs and reflects the constant flow of cuisines in a vibrant culinary environment.

The importance of obtaining the best ingredients that they could afford was emphasised by all chefs, because they relied on these elements as the basis for producing the
best flavours. In line with GL’s interpretation of the Australian foodscape, they all mentioned the high quality of Australian ingredients, and Vietnamese and Italian chefs were compared favourably, if not superior, to those that could be bought in the country of origin. This indicates that intent on keeping cuisine cultural identity, perceived by dinners as authentic, is enhanced by using quality ingredients and can in many cases improve culinary flavour.

Although there were challenges from business pressures, chefs were still in a position to experiment with new ingredients and develop their creativity. They managed this by adjusting dishes to customer tastes while still controlling the integrity of a dish, or avoiding ingredients that they knew clientele found distasteful. Some chefs were more likely to experiment than others were, and others preferred not to attempt dishes outside their level of control depending on their philosophy towards the cuisine they produced and their breadth of training. Finally, all relied on their own judgement to manage the integrity of cuisine, whether it was developed from their family background or from their training and experience.
Chapter 8
Conclusion: My impressions of the Australian foodscape.

At the beginning I pointed out the role of the Ferran Adria's gastronomy map in inspiring the theme of the thesis. The map (Appendix 1) appealed to me because it visually synthesises the connections between chef, server and diner, and reinforces the concept that cooking is a language through which creativity and culture can be expressed. This model of culinary communication extended my thinking wanting to explore further how chefs maintained the authenticity of their cuisines, enmeshed as they were in shifting pressures from the foodscape. From here I developed my research question ‘How is the integrity of a cuisine both retained and transformed in the dynamic culinary environment of multiculturalised Australia?’ which was my guide for the research I have presented in this thesis.

The aim of the thesis became to establish how chefs, restaurants and customers influence the integrity of cuisine flavours in the Australian culinary environment. Since this environment is constituted by multiple migrant communities of taste, I further considered how cookbooks and food news media contribute towards the assimilation of cuisine flavours from migrant cuisines into Australian cuisine.

My research objectives considered how food news media and cookbooks contribute towards the assimilation of cuisine flavours from migrant cuisines into the Australian foodscape, and how chefs, restaurants and customers influence the integrity of cuisine flavours in the Australian culinary environment.

I initially thought that interviewing chefs and observing their restaurants would be enough to answer the research question, but it soon became apparent that I would have to acknowledge other influences that were at work on the perception of culture and cuisine which were part of the foodscape. One of them was food media and hence I focused on how the impacts of texts from the weekly GL newspaper supplement and cookbooks construct impressions about cuisines in Australia. Enabled by the abstract concept of the foodscape I conceptualised for this thesis, I analysed these sources, considering them as public
representations of the foodscape and accessible to a broad community of taste. From this analysis, I merged the resulting themes from these multiple sources to address in this thesis the research question and sub-questions it generated:

1. In what ways do cultural perceptions of migrant cuisine define its identity in Australia?
2. How do Australian communities of taste expectations influence the ethnicity of flavour?
3. How do ethnic cuisines influence contemporary Australian cuisine?
4. How do chefs communicate the cultural identity of their cuisine?
5. What cooking processes and tools are crucial to retain the identity of a cuisine and why?
6. What role do restaurants play in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours?

In this final chapter, I organise my argument around these sub-questions to reflect on the issues raised in the thesis, in order to find answers to the initial research question and emphasize the main findings. In doing so, I consider the adaptations of migrant cuisines, their acceptance into the food environment and the influence they have had on the Australian foodscape, in particular regarding the restaurant cuisine. The selection of Vietnamese, Italian and Australian cuisines as samples allowed me to investigate how impressions of culture and flavour were managed from the perspectives of food media, cookbooks, restaurants and chefs.

The following section focuses on how the study answered the sub-questions, merging them to answer the research question.

The first sub-question was to find out how cultural perceptions of migrant cuisine define its identity in Australia. This featured most prominently in the analysis of the texts of GL and the cookbooks, although input from the chefs and their restaurants was not discounted. The analyses of how Good Living and cookbooks respectively revealed how cultural perceptions of migrant cuisine are defined in these areas of the media. The cultural perceptions of migrant cuisine are fabricated and maintained by the GL food writers who emphasise in their descriptions and analyses (backstage) and transmit them to their community of taste (frontstage). They are therefore in a situation of control in culinary opinion, and able to
influence it to reflect their own impressions. They therefore effect the definition of migrant cuisines in an Australian context. For example, they regularly use the term 'authentic' when identifying Italian food habits, and indicate when shifts have occurred away from what they perceive as the ideals of the cuisine. However, when referring to traditional Vietnamese cuisine, the term is absent, signifying that they pay less attention to Vietnamese regional food and fostering an impression that a national representation is preferred over a regional one.

GL writers also call attention to an Australian view of what food is acceptable (fresh, healthy) and what is not—eating cobra hearts or 'too authentic' ingredients such as hare, wild boar and guinea fowl. It imposes an innately conservative view of migrant culinary identity—as long as Australian culinary norms are not challenged, the identity of the cuisine is accepted.

'Authenticity' was emphasised in both the Vietnamese and Italian cookbooks, with a strong emphasis on the importance of ingredients and cooking techniques to the successful replication of a dish. Unlike the GL writers, the authors could be seen as flavour-makers, guides in the physical culinary processes of cuisine representation. Because of the concentration of each individual book on Vietnamese of Italian cuisine, their influence on identity definition was intense, creating a powerful imagery by using similarities between the ingredients needed and the recipes included, intermingled with the authors' biographical narratives. The Australian cookbooks absorbed elements of these migrant cuisines, and presented them alongside other recipes representative of Australian cookery. Significantly, there was a preference for Italian over Vietnamese recipes, as mirrored by the attention given to by GL, indicating that Vietnamese cuisine is not yet as mainstream as Italian.

Therefore the identity of migrant cuisines is defined by cultural perceptions gathered, in this case, from the GL writers whose job it is to interpret cuisines for their community of taste, and the cookbook authors, whose narratives form culinary representations of not only from their own journeys but through of the recipes they proffer.

To answer the second sub-question, Australian communities of taste expectations influence the ethnicity of flavour by exerting limitations of their acceptance of migrant cuisines. While the boundaries of many people may have been extended by their gastronomic experiences when travelling to the countries of the cuisine origin, there is still a limiting margin around
what is acceptable and what is not. For example, the idea of 'normal' cuisine was evident in the analysis of GL articles. GL writers usually maintained positive gastronomic stereotypes, and ignore the negative representations that they deemed inappropriate for the audience, reflecting conservative tastes in migrant cuisines, and even going so far as to warn readers against food that is 'too authentic'. This was also apparent in the cookbooks, which rarely included offal-based dishes, for example, reflecting a general aversion to this foodstuff, no matter whether it is cooked in a Vietnamese, Italian or Australian kitchen. Further, there was a difference in the allocation on of Italian flavour principles compared to Vietnamese—for example, traditional Vietnamese breakfast and dessert recipes were absent from the cookbooks, while Italian dishes were accepted in all categories.

The chefs in this study had to contend with similar parameters. To do this, they negotiated their own strategies in dealing with customer perspectives and expectations of the cuisine while achieving a balance between themselves as flavour-makers and the acceptance or rejection of their customers. Most adjusted their dishes to suit different tastes when customers were challenged by traditional cooking practices, such as the use of the skin and bone from goat, although the chef who explored molecular gastronomy was uncompromising in the dishes he served. Chefs from the Australian and migrant cuisines noted the culinary restrictions imposed by the general aversion to offal.

While Vietnamese and Italian cuisines rarely intersected, their influences could be seen in all the areas analysed in the thesis. In GL this was apparent that what they called 'contemporary' cuisine, where many dishes were inspired by ingredients and flavours from these two cuisines. More apparent still was the influence in Australian cookbooks, which in many cases did not even acknowledge that a recipe had Italian origins, so embedded has the cuisine become in the food culture. However, this phenomenon did not extend to Vietnamese recipes, which usually had an introduction of some sort about their origins.

The third sub-question focuses on the ways that ethnic cuisines influence contemporary Australian cuisine. In the Australian kitchens, there was not as much influence as was expected. Although the effects of Italian cuisine were apparent, Vietnamese and other Asian culinary flavours appeared as nuance in the use of peripheral ingredients such as vegetables rather than cooking methods. The combination of textures and colours suggested European
cuisine juxtaposed with Asian ingredients. According to the Australian chefs, this was not a rejection of the cuisine, but a reduced effect resulting from their own lack of knowledge. They were keen to avoid the pitfalls of ‘fusion cuisine’, so tended to stay within their own sphere of confidence.

The fourth sub-question asks how chefs communicate the cultural identity of their cuisine, was answered by observations of restaurant design and flavour. The cultural identity of cuisine is initially communicated by the extrinsic design characteristics of the exterior and dining room, in a combination of texts (menus) and type of décor (artefacts) in the dining room to substantiate the customer’s initial impression. This was more evident in Vietnamese restaurants than Italian or Australian ones. It is apparent that the more integrated into the predominant culture the migrant cuisine becomes, the more likely it is to shed exterior signs of its migrant origins, relying on other sources such as the menu and other more subtle signs in the decor to communicate its identity.

There were flavour ingredients that the chefs considered indispensable for retaining culinary integrity, such as a particular brand of tinned tomatoes from Naples, or regional fish sauce from Vietnam. These were deemed indispensable flavour principles because they were used widely in their countries of origin. However, fresh produce provided the principal foundation for flavour. Chefs, as flavour-makers, play around with ideas in their heads about which food items fit together, or can be combined so that they will harmonize and end in a flavourful composition. This knowledge usually remains hidden and unspoken, but the process of creating the food flavours allows chefs to communicate the cultural identity of the cuisine.

The answer to the fifth sub-question, relating to crucial cooking processes and tools firstly focussed on the heat source (open hearth or enclosed cook stove), which seems to be the fundamental process in retaining the identity of the cuisine. The heat source determines the design of the utensils, and they determine the range of dishes that can be accomplished. Having said that, it seems that in the transformation process of cuisines to the Australian environment, there are signs of cross-adaptation, such as sauté pans and western knives appearing in Vietnamese kitchens and Vietnamese utensils being adapted to other cuisines.

Vietnamese and Italian kitchens could be identified by their explicit display of different types of kitchen utensils. The range of utensils in the Vietnamese and Italian kitchens elucidates the
elaborateness or simplicity of the cooking that takes place there as well as the type of food prepared. However, tools were regarded as adaptable to circumstances, and in the photographs in the kitchen section of Chapter 6, it has been seen they freely borrow implements from other cuisines as if the end justified the means.

Australian chefs generally agreed that the respective techniques of Asian and European cuisines were more important to the success of replicating their cuisine than tools. French cooking processes are prominent in Australia training. Consequently, compared with the Vietnamese and Italian chefs, Australian chefs rely heavily on the techniques they learnt in training rather than on their cultural background to interpret flavour. They sometimes feel constrained when replicating dishes from Asian cuisine because of lack of knowledge about the cooking processes. Their perception was that if they were to exactly replicate a Vietnamese dish, for instance, they would need to follow the technique closely and concentrate on what treatment given to each ingredient, in contrast with the way they could manipulate European styles.

Finally, the sixth sub question undertakes the role restaurants play in the migration and merging of cuisine flavours. One of the primary functions of GL is to keep its community of taste informed about emerging themes in the culinary foodscape, and it constantly tracks the new restaurants and their chefs. It can be seen from the analysis of GL articles how restaurants interpret migrant cuisines, especially from Figure 4.2, the model of GL's representation of authenticity and how flavours are merged from the 'authentic' to the undifferentiated depending on the strategy of the restaurants. This occurred in both Italian and Vietnamese cuisines. The conversations with the chefs from migrant backgrounds raised similar observations, with some representing their cuisine as authentic or traditional, while others were more forthright in incorporating ingredients that would not normally be found in the cuisine they represented. Australian chefs were fluid in their acceptance and transmission of elements of migrant cuisine, as long as they were confident with their ability to handle their interpretation and application of the flavours.

In this thesis, gastronomic authenticity, or 'authenticity' was used to describe the differences between the cuisines studied in terms of their accepted relationship to whether the food is cooked according to the style and taste available in the original place of production, and recognised as such by people who have an intimate understanding of the culture and the
cuisine. The focus was on *how* a dish is authentic, rather than whether its authenticity was judged as an 'immanent' norm or an 'external' norm (Appadurai 1986). The chefs connected the notion of authenticity to the concept of maintaining culinary integrity. This was apparent in the voices of those who were representing the Vietnamese and Italian migrant cuisines, but equally important to the Australian chefs, who felt the key to expressing Australian cuisine was feel and flavour, rather than with obvious flavour principles. In other words, they felt that there was a particularly Australian attitude to the cuisine. This was expressed by the produce they had access to, the juxtaposition of flavours they used, and their openness to both traditional and experimental methods, although it may also have been a manifestation of the self representation of being Australian, as well as their gastronomic outlook.

This view of authenticity is entwined with the concept of the cuisines. On one hand, the migrant cuisines can be easily identified by their implicit and explicit markers, reflecting Australian perceptions of their national characteristics. On the other hand, Australian cuisine has become naturalised (i.e. invisible), and it is taken for granted that migrant cuisines are 'the other'. In a way, we are too close to see what differentiates Australian cuisine, and it may be that only by considering it to be 'the other' as well could further culinary traits be identified.

These findings may question 'traditional' definitions of authenticity, and of Australian cuisine itself, and further research in this area, focusing on the *how* of Australian cuisine, rather than trying to fit it into a predetermined framework might give more complete answers.

In my research I also wanted to draw attention to the interconnected physical and cultural aspects of flavour, and how it can be manipulated to communicate underlying assumptions about cuisine in society. This has social importance as food is a significant measure of cultural change, and therefore the acceptance of a cuisine into the foodscape might be seen as a sign that reflects the acceptance or not of a migrant community. Conversely, I wanted to explore which flavour influences from migrant cuisines have become integrated into the Australian cuisine.

So far there has been no methodical study of this phenomenon. It is sporadically written and argued about in the food media, but to my knowledge the production of
newspaper articles, cookbooks, chefs and restaurants has not been collated for study on how migrant food is being represented in the Australian foodscape.

The simple diagram below (see Figure 8.1) provided a pictorial view of the chapters to be discussed, and how they integrate with the research objectives.

![Diagram showing the integration of research objectives]

**Figure 8.1: Integrating the research objectives**

I knew that the research question and its themes were complex and that I needed to be embedded in a setting that would provide grounding for the research. This also had to be flexible enough to include different elements which became the four themes discussed in my analysis chapters. From the presentation of my findings the value of theoretical framework I constructed is evident, based on the notion of the foodscape and including its multicultural communities of taste. Through it I could inquire into my research question, design my theoretical framework and methodological approach, and analyse the data. The flexibility of this framework helped me to identify with the research question, connecting the text analyses, restaurant observations and interviews set within its context. The 'core' to this foodscape was the making of flavour, through which I could study how the perceptions of culture, flavour
and cuisine were perceived and communicated in order to create an impression of the culinary environment in contemporary Australia.

I adapted Ferran Adria's 'gastronomy map' to position the four influences from the foodscape that in my view significantly affect the impressions of culinary integrity (see Chapter 2). This map shows how I situated the impressions of cuisine in the foodscape, and how they are managed in order to communicate culinary integrity to the community of taste.

In my adaptation of the map, the representation of culinary integrity is composed of ingredients, cooking techniques, gastronomic culture and flavour. This is mediated by the four influences of impression management in the process of communication to the community of taste, which in turn has its own characteristics. The double-headed arrows convey the dynamics of the process, illustrating the flow of culinary information about the cuisine to the community of taste and back.

In presenting the main findings of the thesis, I return to the research sub-questions, linking them to the major themes that emerged from the data and consequently to the research question.

The analysis of GL and cookbooks revealed how these texts are used as communication devices in the management of the cultural perceptions of ethnic cuisine. When analysing these, I found that that the cultural perceptions of Vietnamese and Italian cuisines are managed in different ways by both these sources. It became apparent that GL has different ways of presenting Vietnamese and Italian cuisines to its community of taste. This begins with the simple observation that there were more 'hits' for articles about Italian than Vietnamese cuisine, and is linked to GL's interpretations of its readers interests. This is supported by GLs own research which revealed that Italian cuisine dominates the list of cuisines popular with readers.

From the analysis of my selected articles, it is evident that GL often conveys a romantic impression of Italy to its community of taste, emphasised by positive restaurant reviews which seldom involve any real criticism of Italian chefs, compared with non-Italian chefs who are also running Italian kitchens. Furthermore, GL favours the Italian heritage of chefs, providores and families far more than Vietnamese, and runs stand-alone articles on food experts who are frequently asked for their opinions. Italian provedores, for example, use
this space to promote Italian imports over Australian products, and their delicatessens are presented as vital repositories of authentic ingredients. They further imply that all Italian food should be artisanal to be a true representation, even though there is plenty of evidence that this is not possible to sustain. In this foodscape domain there seemed to be great significance placed on the authenticity of Italian cuisine, and regional identity of cooking styles is emphasised in interviews with prominent Italian chefs and business owners involved in the dialogue. The impression of Italian supremacy is encouraged even though Australian produce is acceptable. Consequently Italian food in Australia can never really reach this mythical standard.

Vietnamese cuisine appeared further down on GLs research list, and was as popular as French cuisine. However, less attention was paid to its restaurants, providores or heritage, and there was not as much deliberation about ingredients. There was a significant absence of debate of Vietnamese authenticity although, according to the Vietnamese chefs, regional variations in cooking styles are just as obvious in Vietnam as in Italy, according to the Vietnamese chefs. Is it taken for granted that if a restaurant or chef is Vietnamese then the cuisine presented is authentic? Or is it the case that the proponents of Italian cuisine generate more dialogue about the concept? There is not enough material for these questions to be answered by the analysis of GL's impressions of Vietnamese cuisine. Whatever the answer, the perceptions of Vietnamese and Italian that GL presents seem vastly divergent. This separate treatment in my view suggests that the trend for Italian cuisine dominates over Vietnamese and other Asian cuisines, and more detailed attention is paid to its nuances.

A dynamic of four overlapping type of cuisine categories emerged from my study of GL, and I related this to its reinforcement of cultural perceptions. I referred them as 'traditional', 'modern', 'pan-Asian /pan-European' and 'undifferentiated' versions of both cuisines. The Vietnamese and Italian restaurants in this study fall into the categories of 'traditional or 'modern', because their chefs were intent on controlling the principles of their cuisine, and not allowing any blurring into the other two categories. Although GL's reviewers were less harsh on pan-Asian/pan-European dishes, they tended to regard these two groups as inferior. In that sense it seemed to be communicating that the legitimacy of a cuisine rests with its creators attempting to confine its culinary heritage.
GL usually avoided recipes for anything could not be cooked using 'normal' Australian ingredients, and was careful not to confront its community of taste with specific cultural food habits, such as the Italian fondness for offal and game, and Vietnamese partiality for dog meat and turtle. Why would this be? One possible explanation is that although GL sees its role as an arbiter of current information, it concomitantly reflects conservatism. On one hand it expects the reader to be with it at the cutting edge of food trends, its reviewers and writers always recognising the new and the unusual. But on the other, it hides aspects of food production that it thinks the same reader would find confronting. This dissonance shows in the article on a Vietnamese food experience that renounces the eating of 'beating snakes hearts' for a preference for 'normal' food. In other words, Vietnamese and Italian cuisine could only go so far in the Australian foodscape and not be 'too authentic'.

Both GL and cookbooks regarded Australian bush foods as ethnic, and the perception of these was also sometimes managed in contradictory ways. GL seemed to make a concerted attempt to popularise bush food, but articles dwindled after 2005. The inconsistency that I found was that while several noteworthy food writers upheld the view that Australians should be incorporating bush foods as an aspect of defining Australian cuisine, a number of unflattering comments about bush food ingredients was also published, notably from chefs who found the quality, quantity and price a barrier. It seems that bush foods are 'good to think', but the practicalities of dealing with them are limited. In this instance, it is the perceptions of the Australian community of taste that are influencing the ethnicity of flavour by accepting only one of the truly Australian products, kangaroo. The cookbooks supported this view. Of the three, one did not mention bush foods at all in its ingredients list. The other two limited their recipes to easily sourced kangaroo meat and a few flavouring ingredients.

The cookbooks could also be seen to influence the cultural perception of cuisine by their combination of narrative and recipes. The Italian and Vietnamese cookbooks clearly communicated the characteristics of their respective cuisines, whether the themes were nostalgic, upbeat or instructional, notwithstanding the expectation that the recipes were to be cooked or not. They also communicated common flavour principles even when their recipes diverged, as I showed in the breakdown of the recipes of a common dish from each cuisine.
The Australian cookbooks on the other hand were not nostalgic and focussed on the present, including the acceptance of migrant cuisine flavours. One feature that I found significant was the distinct lack of Vietnamese influence in any of the recipes for breakfast, dessert or other sweets, and so the cuisine was limited to influencing savoury dishes only. Furthermore, Vietnamese recipe origins were acknowledged but not Italian ones, reinforcing my interpretation that Italian cuisine is now so embedded in the Australian foodscape that it no longer needs to be remarked upon.

Further attention can be drawn to the way migrant cuisines interrelate with contemporary Australian cuisine. GL worded this as 'Asian influence' or 'Italian style' in its restaurant reviews and articles, while Australian cookbooks exhibited a wide range of cuisine influences strongly inspired by Asian and European flavours. Although I noted the extensive acceptance of Vietnamese mint as a garnish in GL recipes, cookbooks and chefs were more discriminate in their balance of flavour principles. While there was occasional East-West fusion evident in bill's sydney food, for example, where Jewish noodle soup met Vietnamese phở, it was handled with respect to the overall purpose of the dish, and to me the balance of flavours was implicit. Chefs cited the difficulty of balancing flavours as an important challenge in managing the integrity of their cuisines, and spoke of being especially wary of the dangers inherent when fusing flavours from Asia and Europe.

The Vietnamese and Italian chefs also spoke about communicating their cultural identity. The Vietnamese chefs were as careful as the Italians in their respective treatment of dishes, constructing them to reflect the culinary flavours of their own cultural heritage. Much of their skill relied on memory refreshed with travel experiences to their country of origin, against which they measured the quality of their output. When adapting dishes to suit Australian palates they maintained their culinary traditions, and negotiated acceptable outcomes without sacrificing flavour.

All the chefs, Australian, Vietnamese and Italian, spoke of the ways the community of taste can have an effect on the perception of cuisine. They agreed that their customers were becoming more sophisticated in their approaches to new flavours, encouraged by media and their own travel experiences. As mentioned in the thesis, some customers sought culinary advice before venturing to Vietnam or Italy, and on their return they offered positive comparisons about the quality of the cuisine they experienced in Australia. Others, however,
had more conservative preferences, and preferred to stay within the boundaries of 'normal' food. This uncovered a seemingly contradictory effect, where the clientele was both conservative but demanded that the food be up to date with the latest trend. This contradiction provides both challenges and opportunities for the chefs to respond to— as individuals and as the market demands.

While flavour was one way that chefs communicated their ethnicity, the impressions were also managed by the appearances of the front- and backstages, the dining rooms and kitchens. My initial observations incorporated the 'outside' or facades, and it was here that I identified an interesting phenomenon that was reinforced by the appearance of the dining rooms and kitchens. The Italian restaurants I studied had very little to distinguish them as ethnic when viewed from the outside, other than their Italian names. On the other hand, the three Vietnamese restaurants all show marked differences in the impressions that they conveyed from the facade right through to the kitchen.

When I observed the restaurant dining rooms, I found the Italian restaurants chiefly relied on their menus to communicate their cultural identity, rather than their decor. However, Vietnamese restaurants reflected three levels of recognition according to their location and décor. One was embedded in its local neighbourhood, and had no need to seek outside customers, so the signs of its ethnicity were targeted at a local Vietnamese market. The second depended on explicit 'signs, symbols and artefacts' (Bitner 1992) to be interpreted by a wider clientele in order to distinguish itself from other ethnic restaurants in its location. The third displayed the characteristics of the Italian restaurants, with understated signage and outward appearance.

This theme continued through the dining rooms to the kitchens. Once again, there was not a striking difference between the three Italian kitchens, although I noticed some crossover between cuisines in the use of utensils. This shows recognition of the value of other cuisines' cooking methods, for example, an Italian chef told me that Chinese noodle baskets were perfect for cooking pasta portions. The three Vietnamese kitchens, however, showed a similar gradation in style to their dining rooms, with the first purpose-built to reflect the heat sources fundamental to the cuisine (no ovens), and cuisine-specific *mise-en-plus*, while the second overlaid its western-style kitchen design with Vietnamese utensils and cooking equipment. Once again, the third restaurant kitchen most resembled the Italian kitchens, with a reduced
overlay of Vietnamese utensils even though the chef emphasised the minute attention that he paid to the authenticity of the cuisine's flavours. This brings the question of how the material conditions in Australia influence the capacity to keep the authenticity of a cuisine. The shared patterning that emerged from all sources was that because of the different cooking methods between Asian and European cuisine, the equipment that supplied the heat source was indispensable, but other smaller tools such as knives were not.

In conclusion, I would like to highlight four main knowledge contributions that emerged from my study.

Firstly, I argue that Italian cuisine is so embedded in the foodscape that it only needs to send subtle signals about its provenance, because its community of taste can easily identify through their senses the signs that are communicated in the core elements of the cuisine, including the selection of dishes, flavours, smells and its presentation in the plate.

Secondly, Vietnamese cuisine is still in the process of acceptance in the Australian foodscape and some restaurants need more overt display of ethnicity. This may be why there is less information about Vietnamese cuisine than Italian, as GL is mostly responsive to its readers. The authenticity of Vietnamese food is never questioned, while it seems to be an ongoing dialogue around Italian food, with more emphasis on the familial and domestic influence on Italian cuisine. In this context, it is evident that the restaurants are left alone to educate the community of taste without much help from the media.

Thirdly, the more accepted an ethnic restaurant, the more the kitchen resembles an Australian one. All of the kitchens were set up with similar generic catering equipment—cook tops, ovens, washing up areas, and refrigerators, with the exception of Thanh Binh Cabramatta, which had no ovens, and differed from the others in that it had been custom-designed to meet local demand in the Cabramatta area.

Finally, a cuisine maintains its integrity depending on the philosophy of the chef, who is the final arbiter of what goes on the plate whether that chef is Vietnamese, Italian or Australian.

These four points I have mentioned indicate some of the ways the perception of cuisine is managed in the foodscape, and as I mentioned before, there are many more that are
significant for future research. For instance, how the community of taste could be expanded, or study on the increasing acceptance of ‘ethnic’ cuisines. Analysis of internet resources, such as food blogs, online recipe compilations, and other sources of online activity could extend the text analysis methods used in this study. Another area to explore is the influence of cooking shows, either types such as Masterchef—cuisine as competition—or cooking programs devoted to particular cuisines.

The foodscape as conceptualised in this thesis introduces an important theoretical framework that allows food researchers to include the complexities of the context in which restaurants are operating. Specifically, it will provide the hospitality industry with important understanding of the multiple forces that comprise the restaurant industry. Conceptualising the field as a foodscape would provide a sound theoretical structure with which to study any area of culinary impression, especially when it is extended to include concepts developed from setting or text analysis as shown in this research. This framework can contribute therefore to decipher the dynamics of cuisines within any foodscape. Although the relationship between Goffman’s (1959) theoretical perspectives and the restaurant is not new, its use for the understanding of cuisines in the foodscape framework extends its value for the theorisation of other aspects of communication of cultural perceptions of cuisines as performance. My analysis presented in the previous chapters highlighted Goffman’s theory of impression management as particularly salient in the understanding of the restaurant industry. Its application in this thesis provides a succinct way of interpreting a hospitality experience or environment that can be expanded to other hospitality experiences.

I would like to finalise this conclusion with some reflection on how the findings of this thesis contribute to the advancement of this area of research into the educational context. It incorporated elements of cultural studies into the field of hospitality, to lie alongside quantitative research in the area. The foodscape model I proposed in this thesis can be developed as a tool to understand and support training systems of hospitality, in kitchens as well as other food-related areas. It can also be used in the study of gastronomic practices, with particular emphasis on flavour principles and cuisine structure. The research could also be part of future study articulating what chefs understand as the balance of flavour, which appeared as a systematic challenge from all chefs independent of the particular cultural characteristics of their cuisines.
Finally, I would like to refer to the personal contribution of this thesis. This thesis has mapped a significant personal transformation for me as a chef and as an academic in the area of hospitality. Although I no longer work in kitchens, my current position enabled my once fleeting thoughts to grow to fruition. I appreciate that I have the chance to advance my perspectives on the integrity of flavour, and that they will have a meaningful place in the culinary world of the future.
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Ferran Adria's philosophy: Gastronomy map
(adapted from Adrià, Soler & Adrià 2003)
Appendix 2: Breakdown of hits for Italian and Vietnamese keywords

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### Appendix 3: Authors, cookbooks and cuisines

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