

# Metro

## Best Schools in Auckland



**\$50 DINNERS**  
Restaurant  
favourites that  
won't break  
the bank

**CHOOSE THE  
RIGHT SCHOOL**  
Unique rankings  
plus expert advice

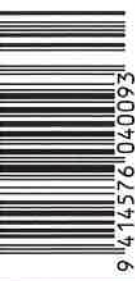
**VIDEO LESSONS**  
Desperately  
seeking teachers

**WELCOME TO HIS  
RUG NIGHTMARE**  
When Bob Harvey  
took ayahuasca

**DON'T MISS...**  
Our picks of the  
film festival



7 AUG 2016  
9 INCL GST



**HAN***Go for: Suchbulgu-i*

If there's proof positive of our widespread acceptance of Korean food, it's Parnell's Han. This busy little restaurant makes no concessions to European palates — you must order from the suchbulgu-i (barbecue) menu: we really like the wagyu beef, though serious carnivores will savour "Han's authentic BBQ", which includes pork belly, skirt steak and venison; both come with ssam veges, vegan kimchi and rice. You cook it over a little ceramic charcoal barbecue that is brought to your table: they say it's for one but you'd be well placed to share it and add a starter. Service is friendly and amenable.

*100 Parnell Rd, Parnell***Korean****HANSIK***Go for: Soybean-and-kelp soup*

If you have time and inclination, you really should order a set menu here. Hansik is a step above most Korean restaurants — you'll find it in a gloriously bricky space in a restored warehouse at Victoria Park — and specialises in set menus, which are

layered and complex. We recommend the Sky, which is \$39: there's so much food, they bring it out on a trolley and you find yourself wondering if it really is all for you. Failing that, don't miss the soybean-and-kelp soup, which appears on all of the set menus and acts as a sort of bass note to the entire dinner. It's a strikingly simple dish, a hearty broth in a stoneware pot thickened with soybean paste; you can upsize it with sliced beef or seafood, but it's hearty enough on its own — savoury, deep umami flavours that have you reaching for more.

*19 Drake St, Freemans Bay***Korean****HUGO'S BISTRO***Go for: Veal schnitzel*

Hugo's may be the perfect downtown restaurant: long and narrow, with brass and green corduroy and a blush plaster wall, it's busy with corporate lunches by day, but cosy and intimate by night. The food hits all the right notes: classic dishes, tweaked and pulled just enough to keep them interesting. You should consider the pasta of the day here — it might be pappardelle with ragu, or it might be spaghetti with scampi; failing that, head straight to the

veal schnitzel, generously crumbed and cooked just so, with a crunchy exterior, served with a puckery green apple-and-caper slaw and a burnt lemon. It is a dish at once thoughtful and comforting and perfectly balanced. Don't choose wine: ask them what's good and be prepared to be pleasantly surprised by what comes over.

*67 Shortland St, central city***Contemporary** ●**iVILLAGE***Go for: Basket chat*

A beacon of warmth and welcome — not to mention a refuge from the sad surrounds of Victoria Park Market — iVillage has a loyal raft of regulars. It's easy to see why, when first-timers are treated like friends and straightforward plating gives little hint of the heady flavour wallops to follow. The chat of diced potato, peas and black beans spiced with cumin, chaat masala and chutney lights up with a generous sprinkling of sweet fresh pomegranate seeds, which cut delightfully through the chilli and coriander. It's big enough to share, as is the hearty lamb biryani, served in a deep pot with a light wheat flour crust, and threaded with fried onion, slivered almonds and lip-tingling chilli. Pretty parasols, ornate wooden doors and an enormous copper bowl filled with fresh rose petals and tea-light candles complete the picture.

*210-218 Victoria St West, Freemans Bay***Indian** ● ●**IMA***Go for: Lebanese lamb shoulder*

Here's how it works best: you choose from seven protein dishes — the slow-braised-to-melting lamb shoulder is our favourite but there are excellent chicken, fish and vegan options, too — which are served with five set sides for the table. Owner/chef Yael Shochat proudly proclaims everything is made from scratch, and it shows in no-shortcuts sides such as Tunisian grilled-carrot salad flecked with parsley, bitey feta and a whiff of chilli, and Arab rice studded with lentils, pine nuts, pistachios, almonds and caramelised onion. Like the vibe and fit-out, service is casual and homely, and because it's all about Mediterranean-style sharing, Ima is popular with groups and families. Solo diners are also well catered for thanks to the adaptable menu and a commendable

**RIGHT**—  
Hokkaido miso ramen  
at Ramen Do, Eden  
Terrace.

**OPPOSITE PAGE**—  
A chef prepares  
barbecue meats at  
BBQ Duck Cafe.

**KEY**

- **BYO**
- **ESPECIALLY GOOD FOR VEGETARIANS**
- **VEGAN FRIENDLY**
- **PRE-SHOW MENU**

