



Clockwise from above:
author and cook
Charlotte Ree; and her
book, *Heartbake*.

BAKE MY HEART

Like many, for Charlotte Ree, cooking is a language of love. But love doesn't always forge a straightforward path, and in her new book *Heartbake*, Ree details the bittersweet journey from divorce to dating and beyond. What initially started out as a commission for a cookbook turned into a memoir-meets-cookbook. The first half of the yolk-yellow hardback details Ree's childhood growing up with a mother with mental illness; the blossoming and then breakdown of her marriage; and the discovery of her identity in her 30s. While there are hardships, it's never pitiful or hopeless, but instead a soulful and real account of a life well lived. "No one's life is perfect and you never know what's going on – it's messy and imperfect. But no matter what happens, just by opening up you can feel less alone," says Ree. The latter half of the book has the recipes that punctuate Ree's journey and convey the healing power and joy of food. "The recipes are the ones that are crucial to the story," says Ree. "My mum's spinach pie; the tiramisù I made after kicking a guy out for not wanting to have sex with him; the brownies I made for the man I fell in love with."

For Ree the book ends and begins in heartbreak, but it hasn't stopped her from sharing it all with the world, reclaiming her power through words and food. "Is it beautifully serendipitous that the book began and ended in heartbreak? Absolutely. Is it something I would never wish upon my worst enemy to experience? Absolutely," says Ree. "But also have some of the most golden and extraordinary things come out of that? Without a doubt, and this book is the epitome of that. For me it's the ultimate bible of self-love, and if I ever doubt myself I will look at that." *Heartbake: A Bittersweet Memoir* (Allen & Unwin, \$39.99)

THREE TO TRY NEW WAVE WINTER STAYS

1 Basalt, Orange, NSW

Pot belly indoor fireplaces, large standing stone baths and views overlooking the foothills of Canobolas make Basalt a cosy haven when exploring the Orange region. The new luxury accommodation boasts three beautifully appointed lodges situated on a family-run cherry orchard, just a short drive from the boutique wineries and fine dining establishments for which the wine region is famed. After a day of cellar door-hopping, sip your spoils while sitting by the roaring outdoor fire at dusk. basaltorange.com.au

2 Kyah Hotel, Blue Mountains, NSW

A Palm Springs-inspired oasis in the Blue Mountains region may not instantly make sense, but add in slick service, pastel tones, a complimentary breakfast bar and wood-flanked hot tub and you'll understand Kyah's lure. There's also a small onsite garden, which supplies the modern produce-driven restaurant, Blaq. theyyah.com.au

3 River Drive Motel, South Gippsland, Vic

Paying homage to drive-in hotels of yesteryear, this pared back hotel sits alongside the Tarwin River. The five-room, self-contained accommodation has Victorian plantation hardwood furniture and a regularly rotating collection of artworks by Australian painters and ceramicists. riverdrivemotel.com.au

