

# 2025 Australia Restaurant Industry Trends

THE ERA OF SUPERHUMAN HOSPITALITY™

How brands are using tech to deepen relationships and exceed diner expectations.





**FOREWORD** 

# Entering the era of SuperHuman Hospitality<sup>TM</sup>



In a world where AI and automation are transforming industries, one thing remains constant: people crave human connection. Restaurants, pubs and bars are no longer just places to eat they're sanctuaries for shared experiences, personal interactions and unforgettable moments.

At the same time, operators are under immense pressure, balancing rising costs, labour shortages and increasing guest expectations. They must deliver exceptional, personalised hospitality at scale, all while remaining both efficient and profitable. The good news? Technology, AI and automated systems are helping rewrite the narrative, providing hospitality businesses in Australia and across the globe with the tools they need to enhance—not replace—the human touch.

#### This is the era of SuperHuman Hospitality™.

An era where tech, AI and automation empower operators to work smarter, anticipate guest needs faster and create experiences that are hyper-personalised. Where fully integrated ecosystems put the guest experience at the center, helping businesses drive loyalty, efficiency and profitability.

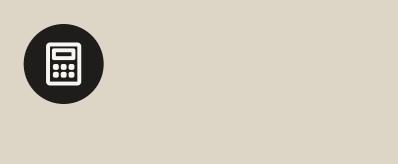
At SevenRooms, we believe hospitality is both a science and an art. Our technology powers the science—using AI, automation and data to streamline operations and personalise experiences—so operators across Australia can focus on the art: the creativity, warmth and human connection that make every moment unforgettable.



Allison Page Founder and Chief Product Officer, SevenRooms



# The tasting menu



#### INTRODUCTION

To deliver on rising expectations, high-touch hospitality needs high-tech



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Making hospitality SuperHuman

#### INTRODUCTION

# To deliver on rising expectations, high-touch hospitality needs high-tech

Despite some relief with recent rate cuts, inflation remains a significant concern for Australians. With rent, labour and <u>food prices on the rise</u>, Australian businesses are entering insolvency at the highest rate in four years, and hospitality is one of the hardest-hit industries.

Yet when Aussies do choose to splurge, dining out tops the list, proving that exceptional hospitality and experiences should remain a top priority. In response, many restaurants are turning to technology to streamline operations, reduce costs and continue delivering high-quality guest experiences.

To guide hospitality strategy in the year ahead, we surveyed 1,000 consumers and 250+ operators across Australia, in addition to analysing SevenRooms global platform data.



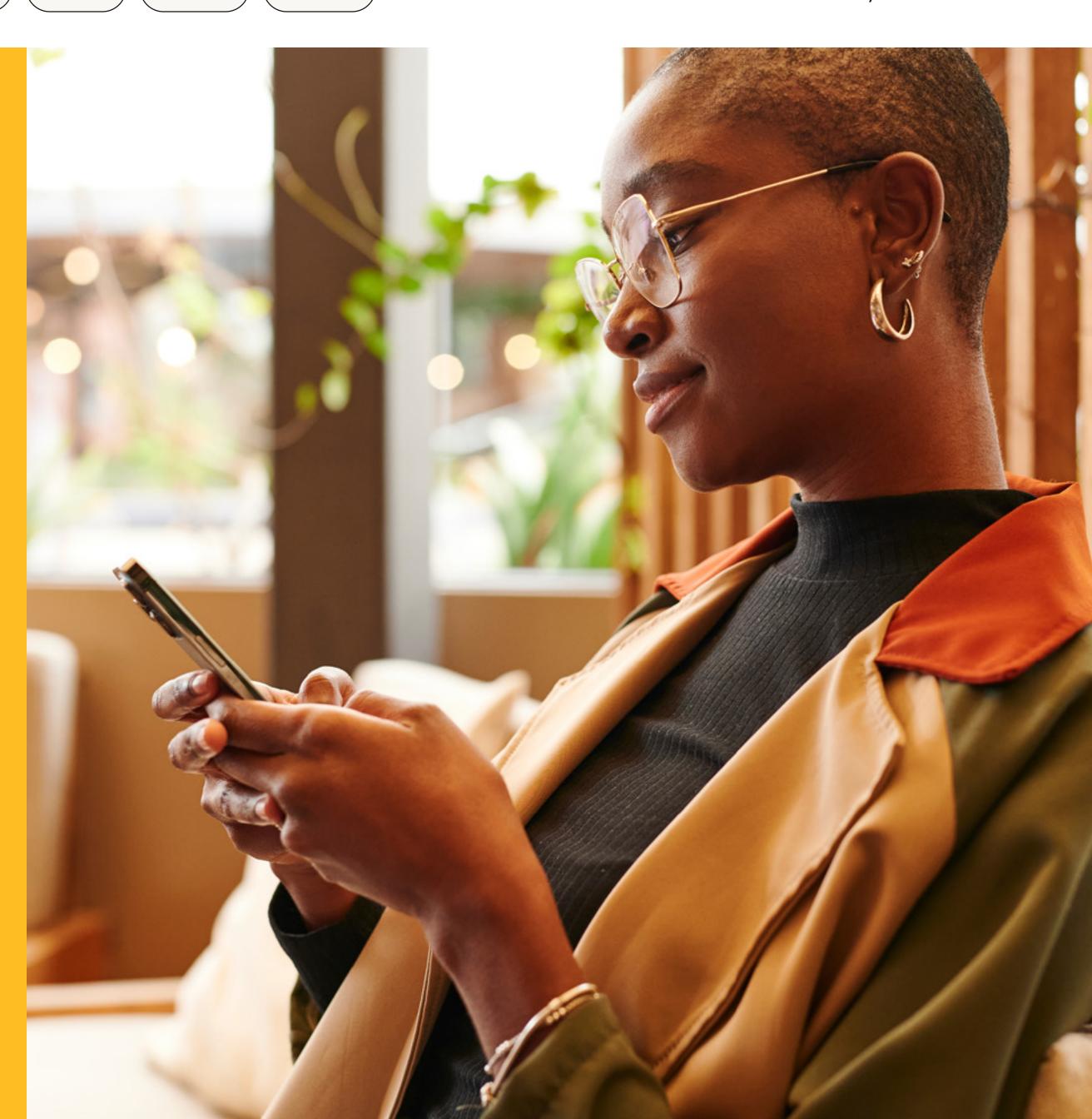






# Savvy diners and smarter search are reshaping restaurant discovery

Diners are driving the discovery journey—from social buzz to online searches—while embracing AI for seamless booking. To keep up, operators must meet consumers where they are, both across discovery channels and in reservation tech.



Today, 95% of Aussie diners use online resources to find new restaurants, with social media and Google being the top channels. This showcases the importance of having a strong digital presence.

At the same time, Al is becoming part of everyday life, and consumers are adapting quickly. Nearly three-quarters of diners are comfortable using AI for reservations, yet most restaurants have yet to integrate Al into their reservation process.

"Restaurants need to feel confident that AI systems are accurate, reliable and ethical—especially with guest data. As AI enhances dining experiences, trust will follow and pave the way for wider AI adoption, transforming the restaurant industry for the better."



Kinesh Patel Founder and Chief Technology Officer, SevenRooms

Brand

Labour

Closing

TREND #1

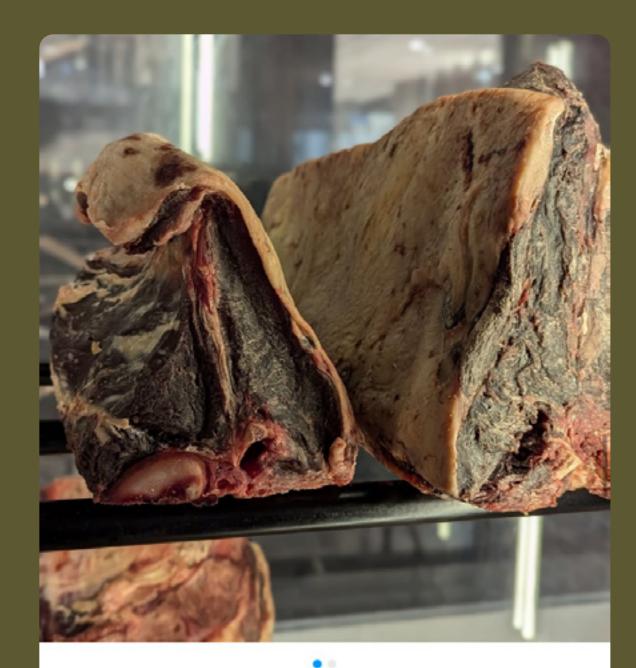
## The restaurant social influencer trend is overbrand collabs are in

Almost half of consumers (47%) use social media to find new restaurants. And this jumps to 73% among Gen Zers. However, less than 1 in 10 Aussies (8%) now discover new restaurants via social media influencers.

Operators know that social is key, but influencer reach is drying up as algorithms shift and consumers are increasingly drawn to more authentic content.

They're now turning to brand collaborations where they can reach new, highly engaged audiences. 42% of Australian operators plan to invest in brand collaborations this year.

#### Hospitality brand collabs shine on social



hazel\_melbourne Take a closer look at our dry-aging cabinet... Currently on the menu: a T-bone from Charlie Davis and his small-scale family farm on idyllic Flinders Island. Rich grazing land and exceptional attention to welfare and sustainability make this one a cut above the

Supplied by @harveststack.co and served with saltbush butter.









This summer season, Captain Baxter has partnered with Minuty to bring the Mediterranean to Melbourne.

A luxurious afternoon awaits on Sunday 27th October as we toast to an indulgent summer and celebrate the unity of wine, sun, and sea.

<u>Hazel Melbourne x Harvest Stack</u>

Captain Baxter x Minuty

# Social is a vibe check, but Google is prime real estate for booking

In 2025, Google is adapting to the modern dining discovery journey, making updates to rankings based on social media, web presence and reservation inventory.

Google Ads is the top marketing channel for operators in Australia in 2025 with nearly half planning to invest.



#### Nearly 1 in 3 consumers

discover restaurants on Google



#### 42% of Aussie operators

are investing in organic Google strategies in 2025



#### 48% of Aussie operators

are investing in paid Google Ads in 2025

Closing



#### Think of your Google listing as your digital display window

Discovery

Revamp your <u>Google Business Profile</u> to include experiences that guests may be searching for, like "outdoor dining" or "trivia night."

Keep your business hours, website, menu, social media links and photos updated. Regularly monitor reviews and post on social to keep your feed fresh.

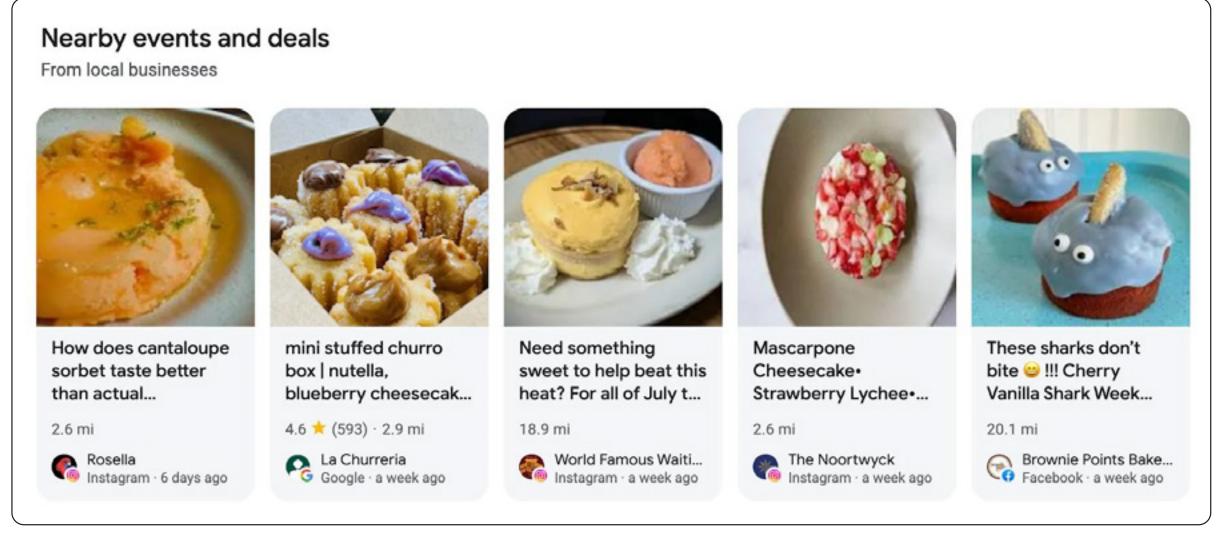


Image courtesy of Google

"An optimised Google Business Profile increases local discoverability and makes it easy for diners to book with you. It's a tool for local marketing that helps diners find exactly the information they care about and gets them in the door."



Ashley Do Global Business Development, Google



## The next big opportunity for AI is in reservations

Diners are adapting faster than restaurants are innovating. Nearly three-quarters of Aussies are comfortable using Al in the reservation process, but most operators aren't using Al to process reservations.

Around half (46%) of restaurant operators currently using Al are using it in marketing—primarily for predictive analysis to inform campaign strategies and video generation—but Al-assisted reservations are lagging behind.



#### 74% of consumers

are comfortable with Al in the restaurant booking experience



#### 27% of operators

that use AI are using it to process reservations

### Let AI book the tables so you can craft the experience

To meet consumer demand, set up Alassisted booking systems to help process phone, email, text and chat reservations.

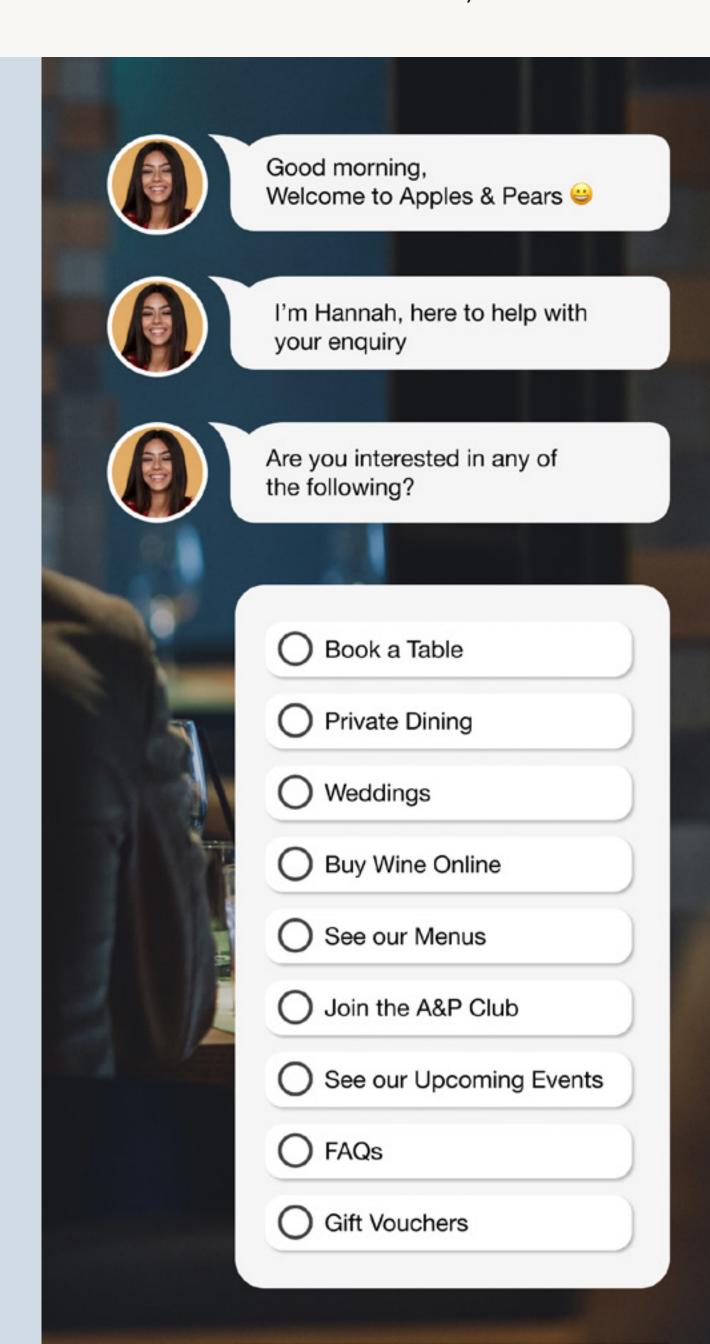


#### More than 1 in 3 consumers

are open to AI helping out when they're running late (38%)



are comfortable with AI booking or modifying reservations over the phone (32%)



Brand



Introduction

Discovery

**PERSONALISATION** 

# To scale personalisation from text to tableside, the human touch alone won't cut it

Guests expect high-end experiences and personalisation at every turn. To keep up, operators have to overcome tech hurdles.



Brand

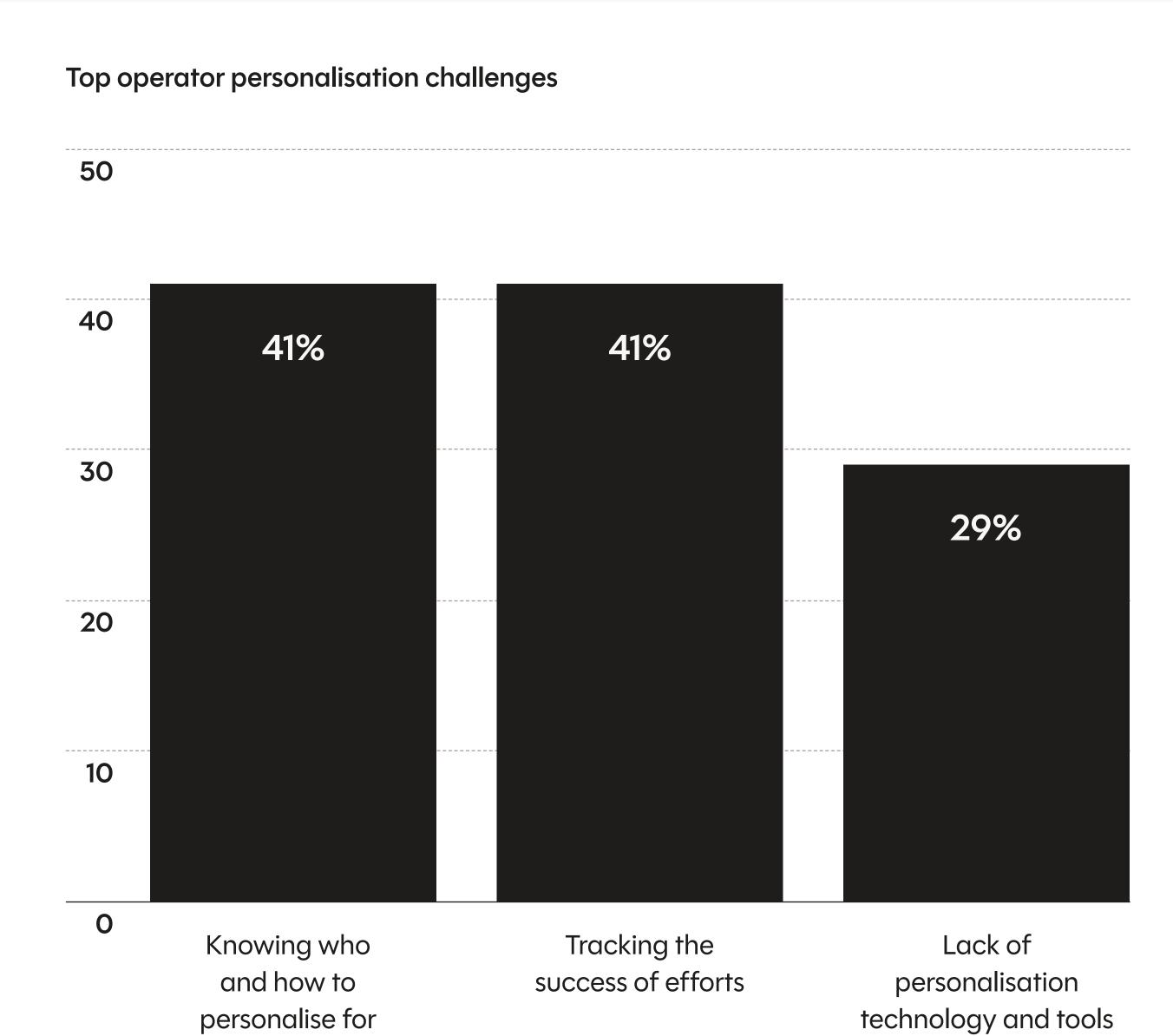


# Guests expect personalisation, but it's hard to get right

Today, personalisation is what drives guest loyalty and engagement. While email remains dominant, text is emerging as a key engagement channel, with diners eager to exchange their info for VIP treatment and exclusive offers.

Small hospitality touches, like remembering a guest's birthday or offering a commemorative menu, make a big impact. Yet many operators struggle to scale personalisation.

Tech and automation are now empowering operators to deliver **SuperHuman Hospitality™** at scale.



# High-end dining adds personal touches at every turn, but challenges persist

Operators appear confident in the personalisation of their in-service guest experience, with just over half (51%) stating they effectively personalise it to a great extent. Still, almost all operators face challenges with personalisation in both marketing and in-service.

For personalised marketing, 55% of Aussies say the top perk they want from restaurants is birthday and anniversary promotions, but 45% of operators don't offer them. For personalising the in-dining experience, just about half of operators (52%) offer recommendations based on past history or preferences, and less than half offer tasting menus customised to preferences (43%), but consumers are looking for these touches.



Use a restaurant CRM to personalise guest experiences

With guest profiles that build themselves and industry-proven marketing templates, SevenRooms' CRM, Marketing and Operations platform helps you personalise every guest interaction and measure the impact on your bottom line.

#### Consumers' highest ranked in-dining personalisations

- - Preferred seating
- Tasting menus customised to their preferences

Recommendations based on past dining history or preferences

#### Consumers' highest ranked personalised marketing offers



Birthday or anniversary perks



Exclusive offers or early access to events



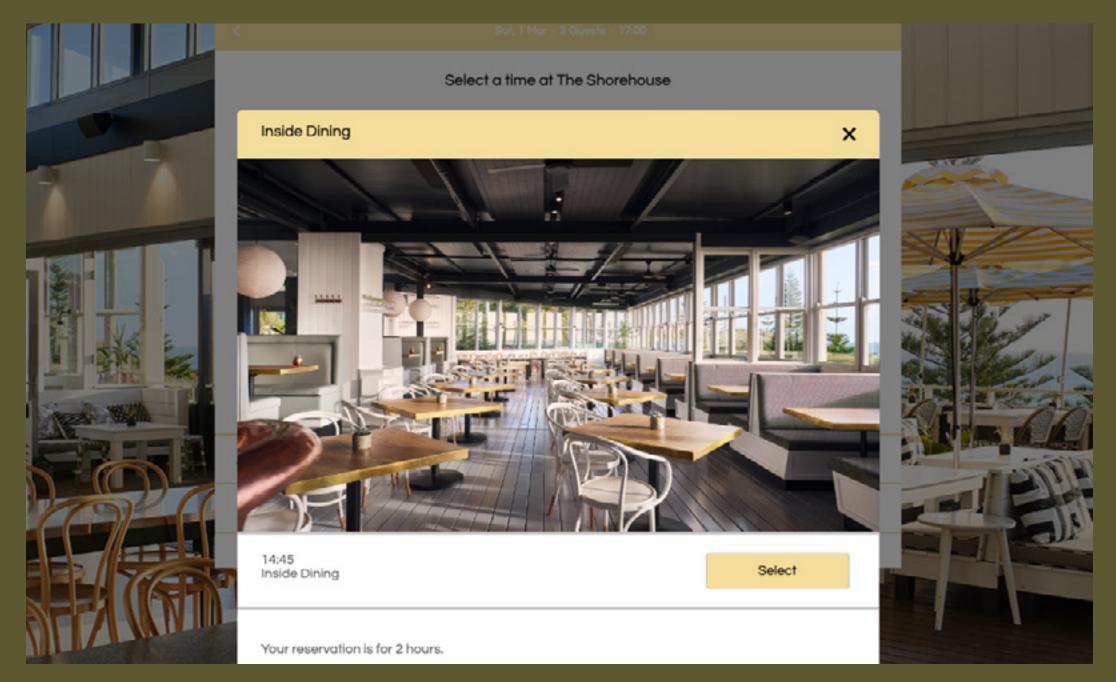
Reservation offers that match their typical dining schedule

#### Leading restaurants offer experiences that draw the eye

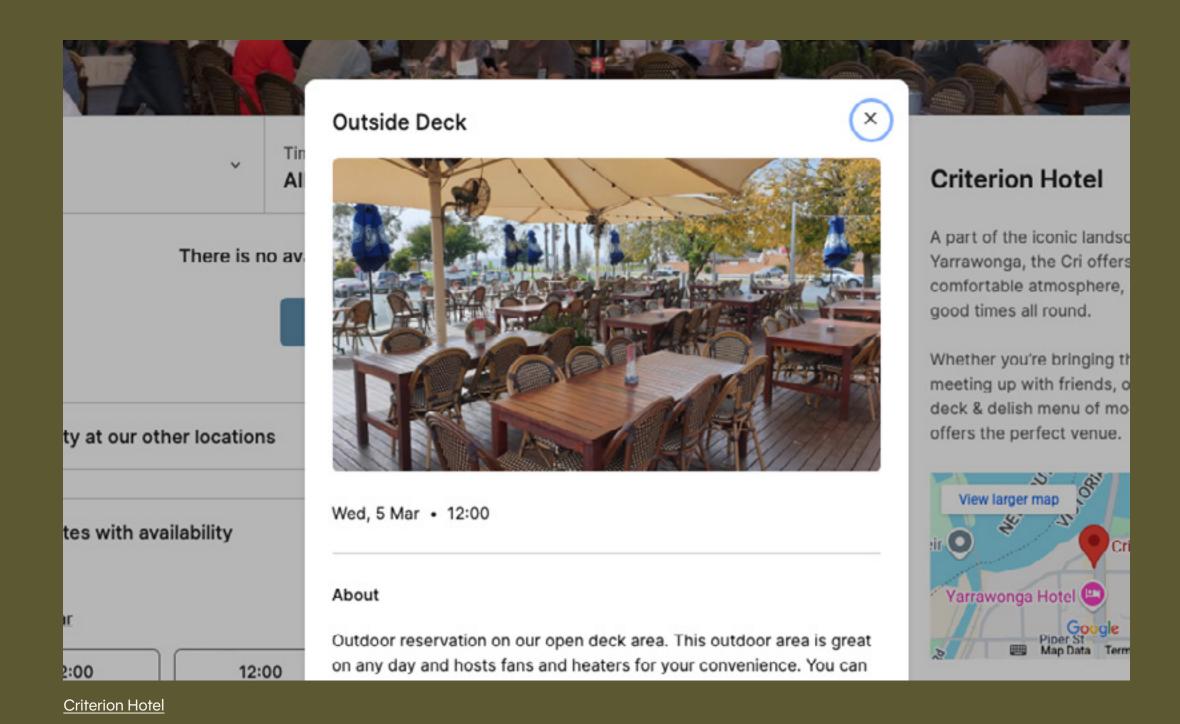
According to consumers, the best booking experiences include knowing which seating area they're reserving, seeing photos of the dining area and being able to text for a reservation.

When reserving at The Shorehouse in Perth, guests get a glimpse of the picturesque seating.

Discovery



Criterion Hotel includes pictures of their seating options, including an inside deck, outside deck and bistro.



The Shorehouse

### Personalised emails turn clicks into covers

For promotions, menu updates, special events and merch, email is still the top choice for updates. SevenRooms' data shows that personalised email marketing—delivering the right message to the right guest at the right time—drives higher engagement and revenue.



#### 74% of consumers

prefer connecting with restaurants via email



#### 56% open rate

Average open rate for targeted, automated emails



#### 12X more revenue

Targeted, automated emails generate 12X more revenue per email than mass sends<sup>1†</sup>

Revenue is calculated based on bookings from email campaigns linked to completed POS spend data; if unavailable, an average spend per cover is used. †Data sourced globally

#### Personalised email campaigns driving the highest repeat visit rates<sup>†</sup>

- Auto-sending the wine list before the next visit for 'Wine Spenders'
- Auto-sending the current menu to first-time diners before their first visit
- Tagging 5-star-feedback guests and auto-sending a thank you from GM

#### Top-performing email subject lines with 70%+ open rates<sup>†</sup>

- Your pre-selected banquet menu
- <name>, see you again soon?
- A heartfelt thank you from us

Introduction Discovery Personalisation

Experience

**Customer Journey** 

Brand

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Closing

### Emails are still cool, but texts are coming in hot

Email may still be the go-to marketing channel, but text is an untapped opportunity you can't ignore—47% of Aussies prefer connecting with restaurants via text.

Nearly 1 in 3 want a text when a hard-to-book reservation opens up, and 1 in 4 Gen Zers and 1 in 5 Millennials prefer texts for promotions and discounts. Yet only 38% of operators plan to invest in text marketing in 2025.

#### Top revenue-generating text campaigns from SevenRooms operators include<sup>†</sup>

- Holiday celebrations like Valentine's Day and Mother's Day
- Weekend on the deck
- Last call for NYE reservations



#### 47% of consumers

prefer connecting with restaurants via text



24X

Average ROI for text marketing on SevenRooms<sup>†2</sup>



\$2,835

Average revenue generated per text campaign on SevenRooms<sup>†1</sup>



\$110,240

Highest revenue generated from a single text campaign on SevenRooms<sup>†1</sup>



89% of consumers

Introduction

could be enticed to sign up for a restaurant marketing program



#### **HOT TIP**

Leverage local perks and tailored offers to drive marketing sign-ups

More than 8 in 10 Aussies are open to signing up for restaurant marketing updates rising to 97% among Millennials. Their top incentives? Partnerships with local businesses offering unique perks. Women are especially interested in getting recipes of their favourite dishes, and men are more likely to be interested in experiences like wine clubs.





High Flyers, rest assured - the venue has been thoughtfully curated to ensure your utmost comfort, no natter the weather, guaranteeing a



Friday, 14th February 2025 I From 5pm

Your Valentine's dinner awaits. Join us for an intimate evening and spoil your loved one with a romantic three-course set menu & glass of Veuve Clicquot Champagne on arrival for \$145 per person.

Menu highlights include Yellowfin tuna with embered tomato & verjus vinaigrette, Skull island prawn with fermented chilli vinaigrette, dry aged rib eye, and vanilla custard tart for dessert.

Reserve your table now for an unforgettable Valentine's celebration.

\*Please note, a 72 Hour cancellation policy applies.

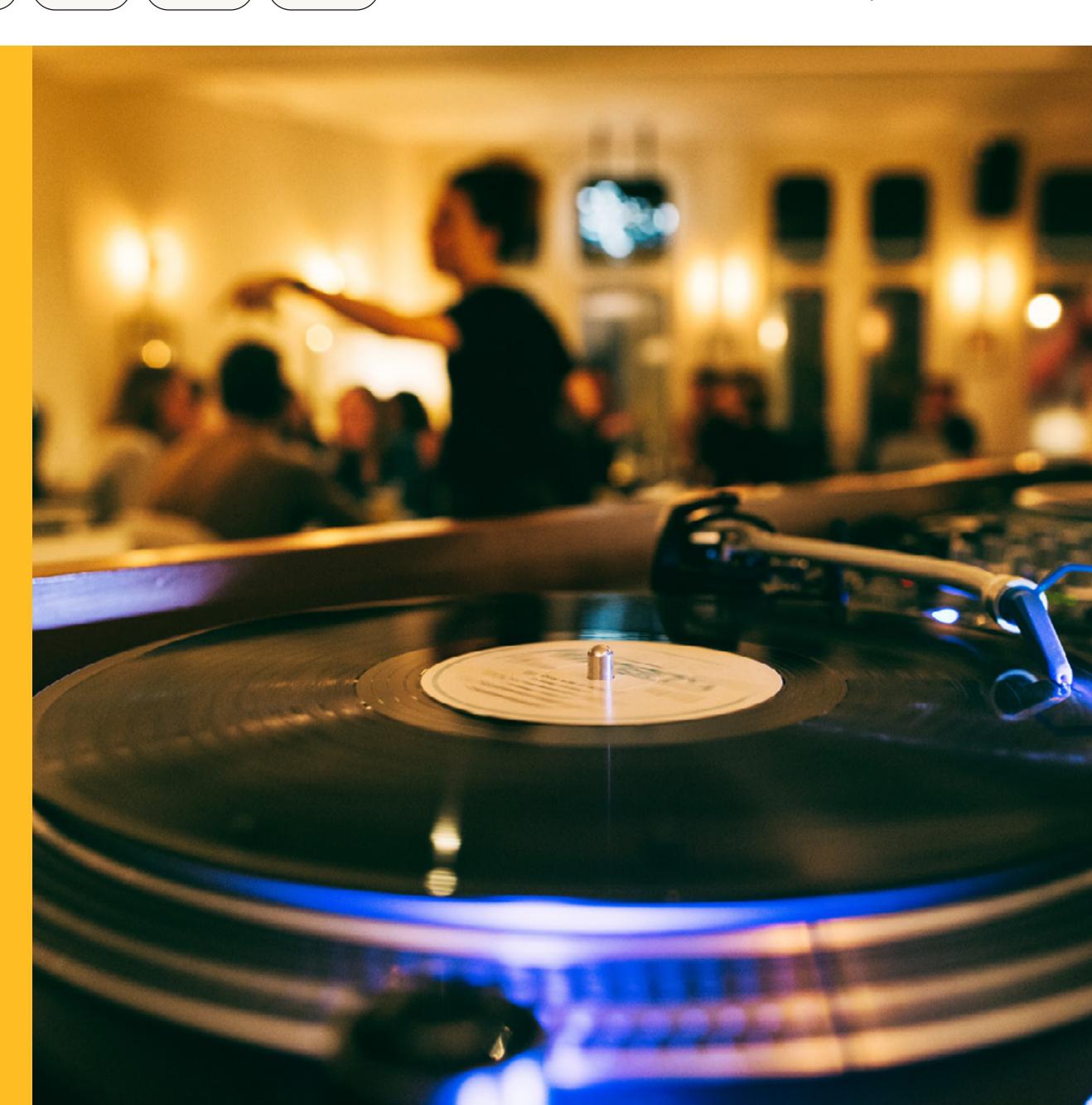




**EXPERIENCE** 

# Aussies are spending mindfully but splurging on luxe experiences

Even with economic challenges, guests are willing to pay a premium for special events and luxury experiences.



Introduction

# Despite economic concerns, guests still value premium dining and entertainment

Most Australians are willing to spend up to \$97 per person for a meal out, and while economic concerns are present, Aussies are splurging on upgraded experiences when dining out.



#### 74% of consumers

plan to or have already returned to a restaurant after a unique experience



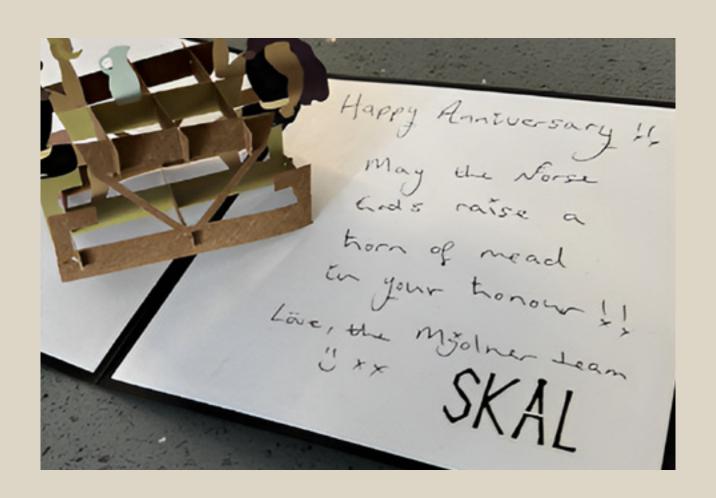
#### \$143M+ in incremental revenue

generated by SevenRooms AU operators from events, upgrades, experiences and prepayments in the past 12 months

"This thoughtful act has proven to me that not all restaurants ignore the reservation notes section. And because of this experience, I have recommended it to many friends and look forward to dining there again."

#### Rachel

A guest who was pleasantly surprised by a restaurant's response to her reservation note



**Customer Journey** 

TREND #1

Introduction

# Diners are hungry for elevated experiences worth the splurge

Discovery

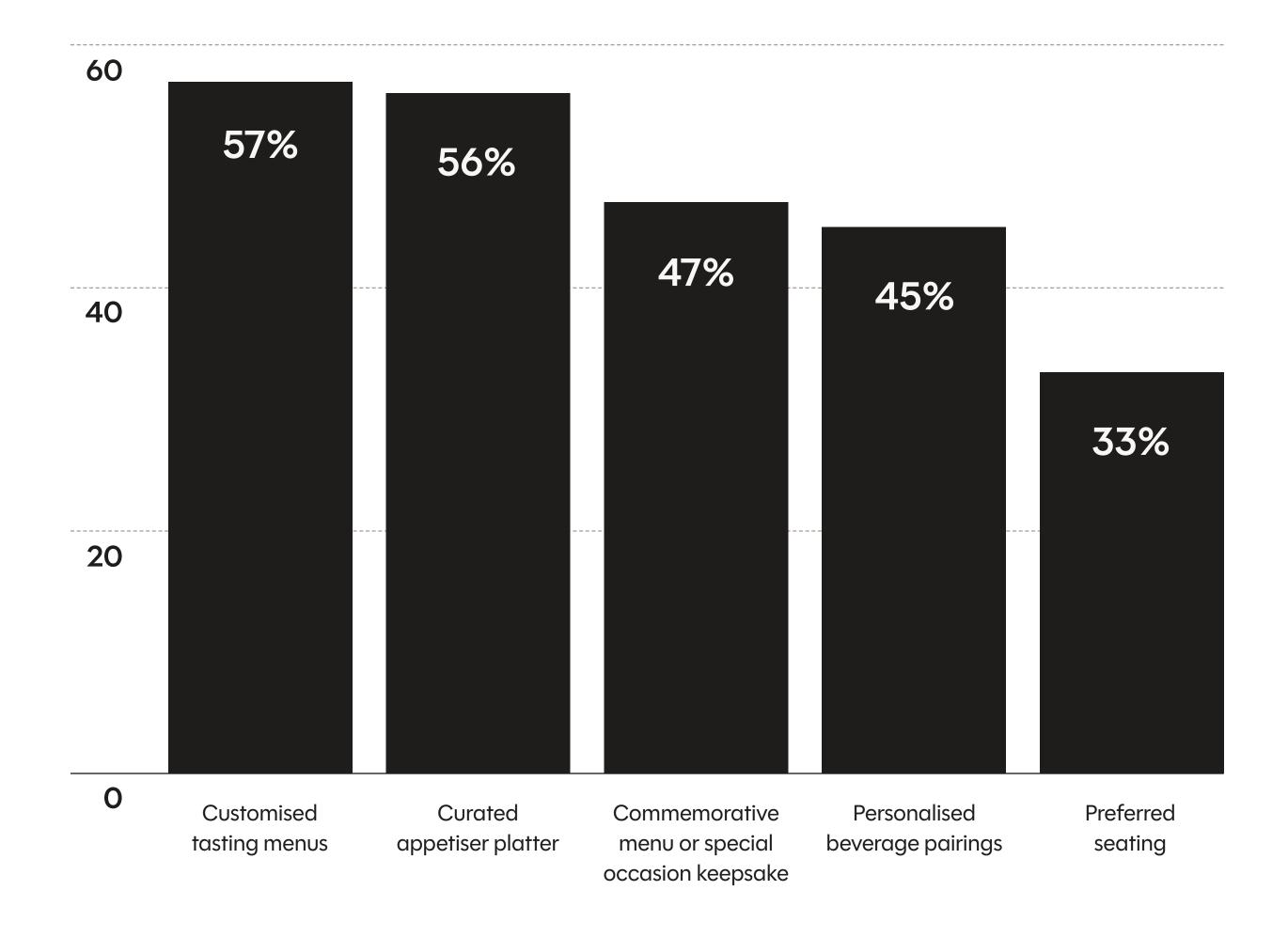
Personalisation

Experience

Aussies are willing to pay extra for personalised touches, like custom tasting menus and appetiser curation.

For holidays and special occasions, they'll spend even more on elevated experiences like specialised menus and keepsakes.

#### Personalised experiences diners are willing to pay more for



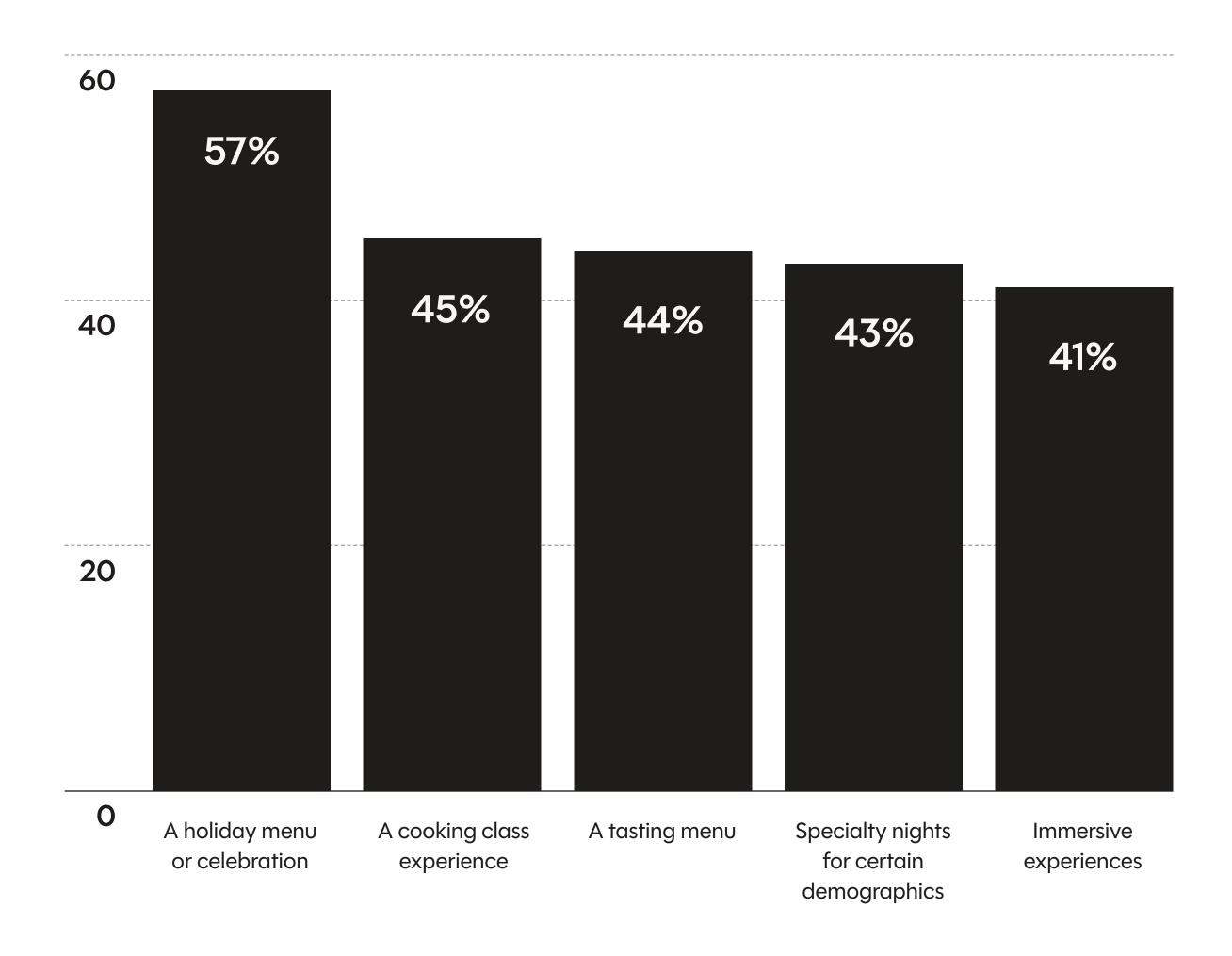
Brand

Labour

Closing

#### Introduction

#### Dining experiences consumers are willing to spend more on compared to a typical meal



### Chiswick Woollahra highlights special events

Aussies can find interesting events for any taste at Chiswick Woollahra.

CHISWICK Menu What's On Weddings & Events

#### Reservations

#### What's On at Chiswick Woollahra.



Wednesday 26 April

Sunday 30 March

#### An Evening with Hewitson Wine | SOLD OUT

Join us for a showcase of Hewitson Wines as we welcome cricketer-turned-winemaker Dean Hewitson to guide guests through the wines of his estate, alongside a three-course pairing menu. Only 11 spaces for this intimate experience!

#### Jazz on the Lawn

Join us as we close out the Woollahra Festival 2025 with an afternoon of smooth jazz on our stunning lawn. No need to book; simply turn up for a special summer sip & snack menu in the heart of our community.

BOOK YOUR SPOT

FIND OUT MORE



Introduction

## Restaurants tapping into the experience economy are opening up new streams of revenue

Restaurants are finding creative ways to maximise their existing offerings by adding upgrades, whether that's taking advantage of seats with a view or largeformat food or drink options to drive revenue.

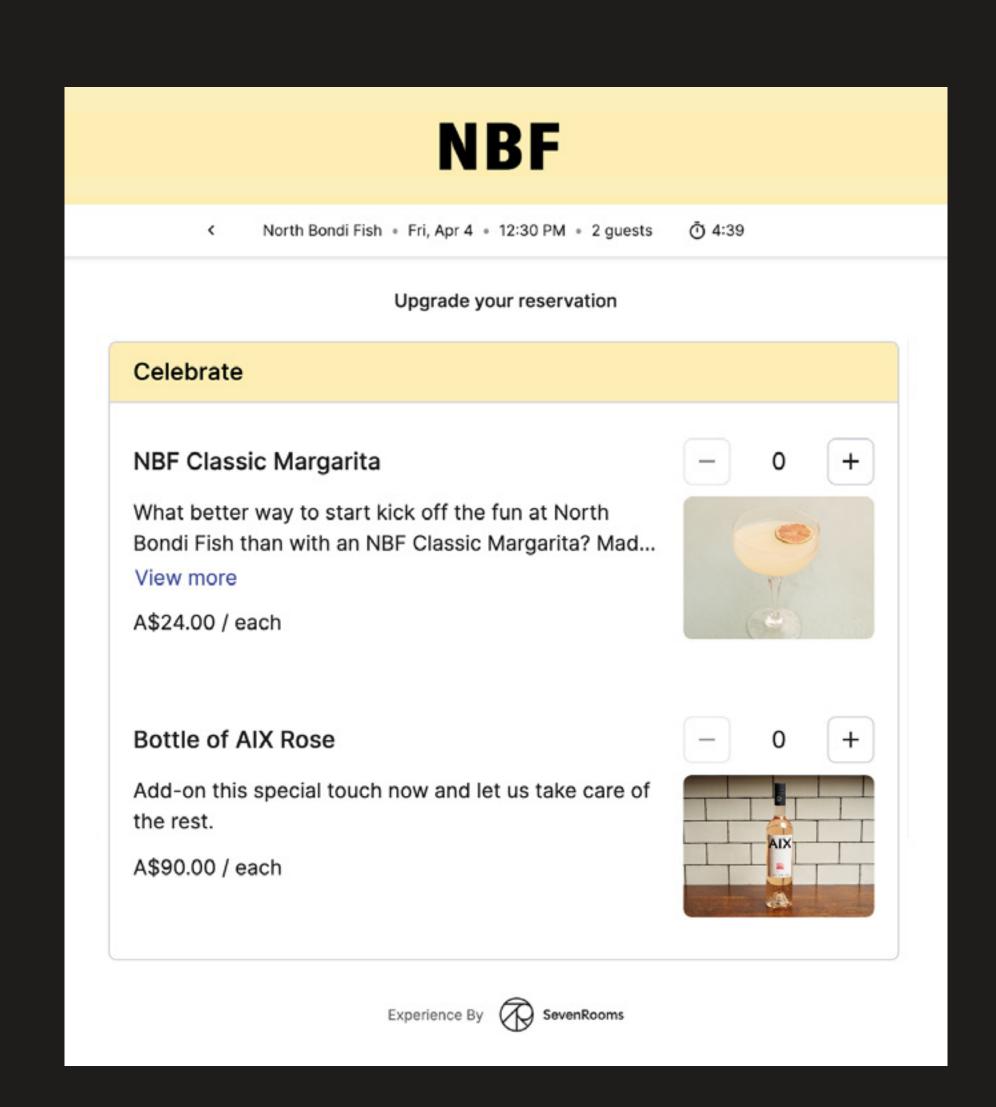
Think about the experience holistically—when consumers want to "make a day of it," they're willing to pull out all the stops. For example, on weekends, North Bondi Fish offers guests the option to enhance their reservations with bottomless drinks or by adding a margarita or bottle of rosé.



#### **HOT TIP**

Work with what you've got

Maximise what's already in your dining room by offering reservation upgrades, such as priority seating, to drive revenue. Use high-quality visuals to showcase the experience.





Discovery

Closing

Types of experiences at SevenRooms venues with the highest price points



Scenic views



Themed or seasonal dinners



Holiday celebrations, like New Year's Eve parties

Most popular upgrades for SevenRooms venues beyond the dining experience



Traditional afternoon tea



Birthday gift bags



Seasonal bouquets from a local florist

"The younger demographic[s], Millennials and [Gen Z], are really looking for overarching experiences rather than just 'I'm going to get food and drink at the pub'."

> Robert Squillacioti Chief Marketing Officer, Solotel

> > SOLOTEL®

**Customer Journey** 



Introduction

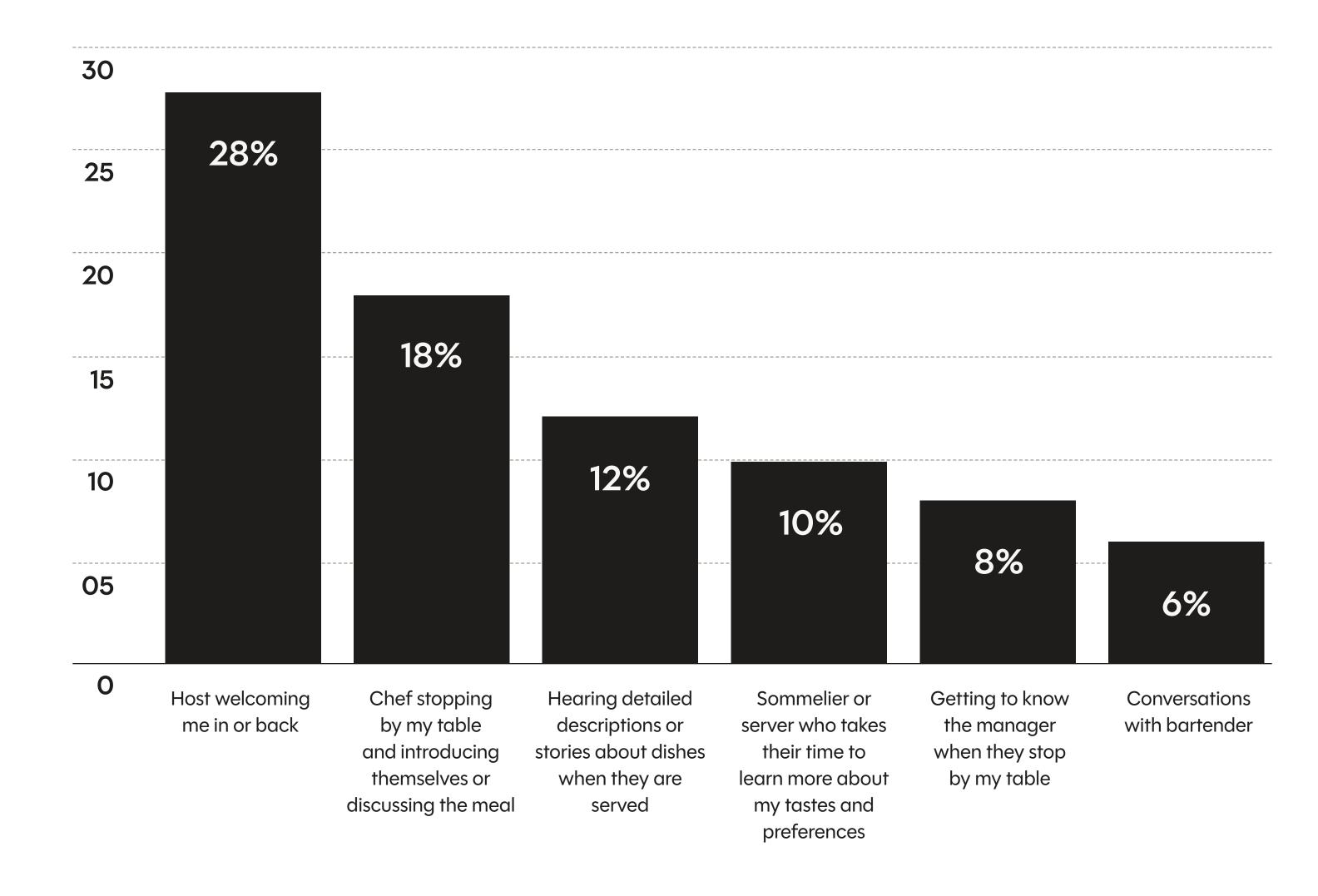
# Don't overlook the impact of 'back-to-basics' hospitality

The most-valued staff interaction by guests at a restaurant? Saying welcome back.

Simple measures like the host welcoming guests back and the chef stopping by the table go a long way with diners, driving them to recommend restaurants to their networks and return for future visits.

82% of Aussies value personal interactions with the staff, but many operators (39%) said they struggle to personalise guest experiences due to lack of time during busy shifts.

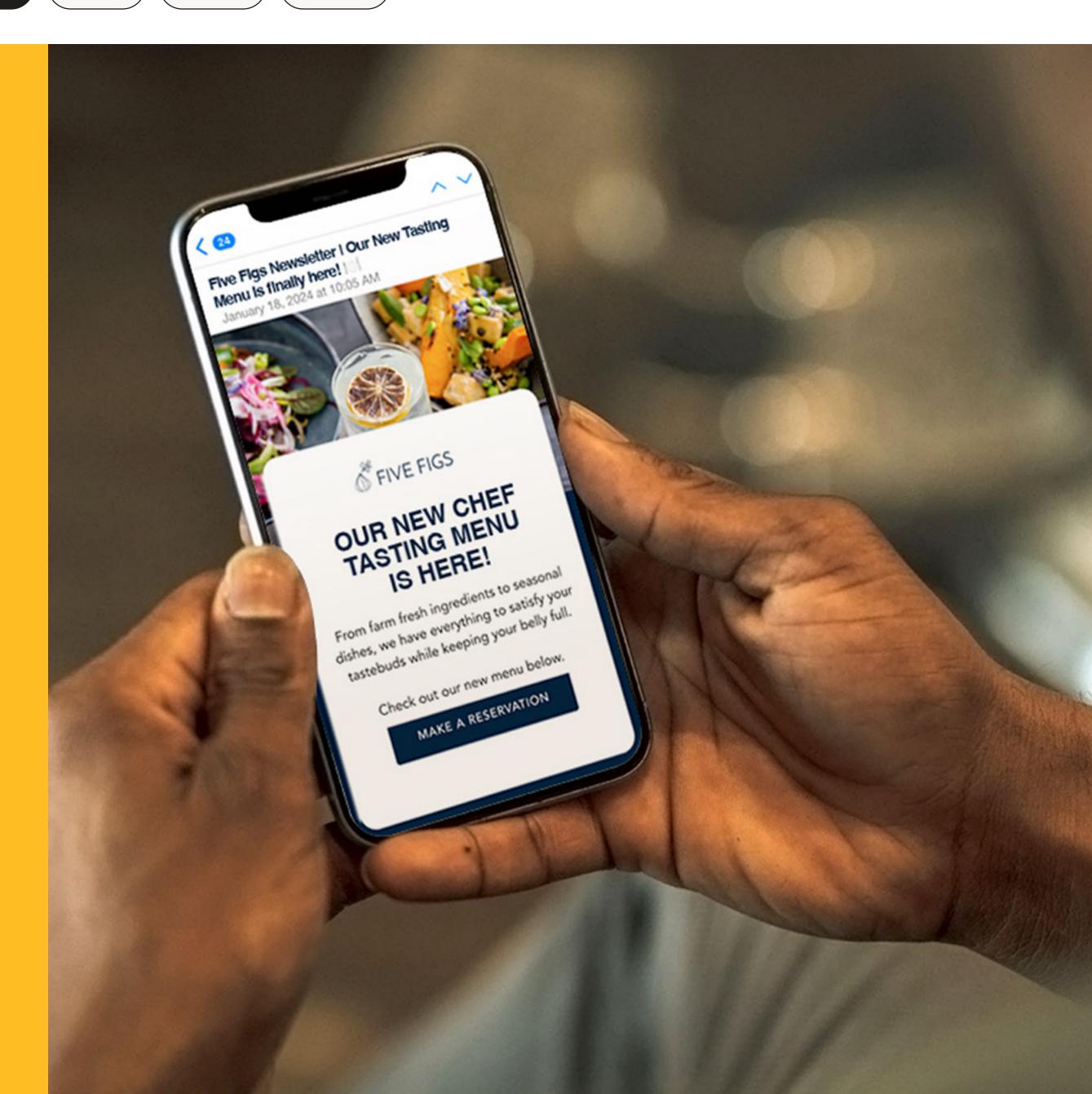
What interactions with staff do you value the most while dining out, if any?



**CUSTOMER JOURNEY** 

# Restaurants are growing revenue and relationships beyond the dining room

Restaurants are increasingly showing up for consumers in new ways pre- and post-dining, opening up new revenue channels.





## Restaurants are selling more than meals, they're selling a lifestyle

Aussies want to stay connected to their favourite chefs and restaurant brands beyond the dinner table. From exclusive recipes to curated merchandise and special treats, these offerings create a deeper relationship with guests while unlocking new revenue streams for restaurants.

Restaurant merch and gifts, like <u>Aalia's reservation offerings and add-</u> ons, also serve as built-in brand awareness tools, turning loyal guests into ambassadors and amplifying word-of-mouth recommendations—a critical strategy for any restaurant marketer.

At the same time, personalisation is key to enhancing the digital guest experience. Diners are not only willing to share their information for a more curated experience, but they're actively seeking tailored recommendations pre-and post dining.

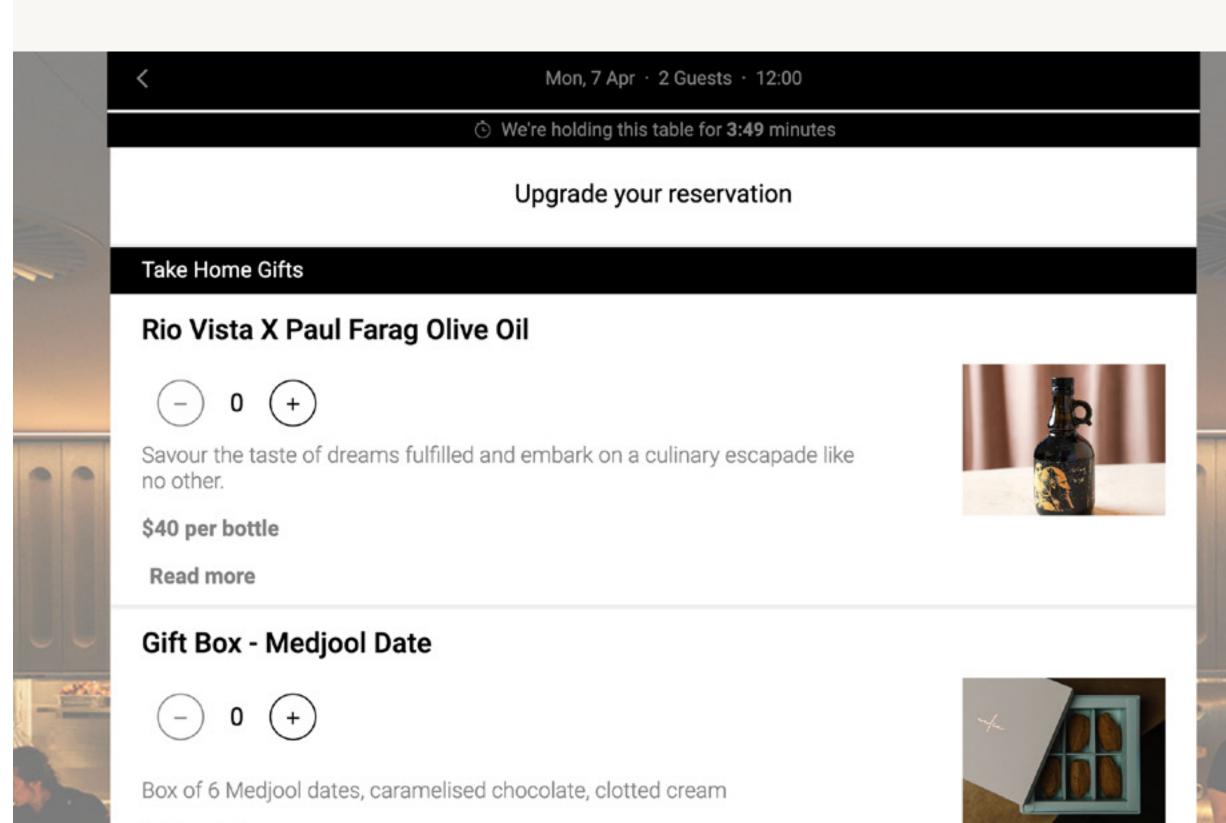
#### Consumers are embracing their favourite restaurant brands



\$45 each box

#### 77% of consumers

would buy a different type of offering from restaurants, like cookbooks or cocktail kits



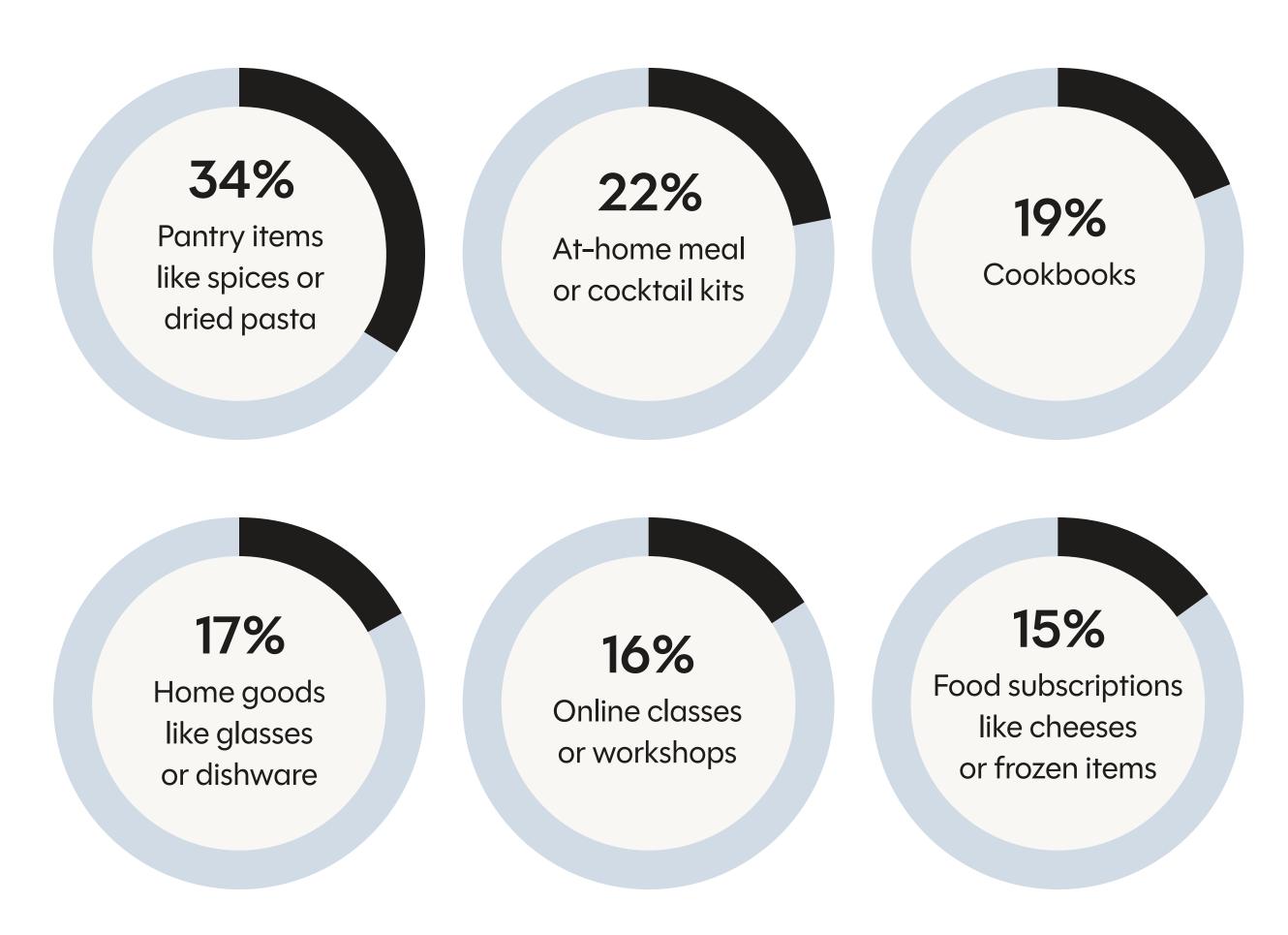
# Aussies are hungry for more diverse offerings

Today's diners want more than just a meal—they want a piece of your brand. From cookbooks to wearables, restaurant-driven retail is on the rise.

Women are more interested in food items for onetime purchase (e.g. pantry items), and men are most interested in branded merch.

Don't miss the opportunity to expand beyond the dining room and give guests new ways to show their love.

#### Products consumers would buy from restaurants



# Asking diners for data and deposits isn't a deal breaker

Our research shows that guests are not only willing to share their information with restaurants but are also open to opting into marketing, making the reservation process a key opportunity to encourage opt-ins.

At the same time, providing credit card details to secure a table or join a waitlist has become standard practice, and many diners are comfortable paying reservation deposits.

These strategies help secure bookings and reduce last-minute cancellations, yet only 24% of SevenRooms venues in Australia charge cancellation fees. On average, cancellation fees are \$79.

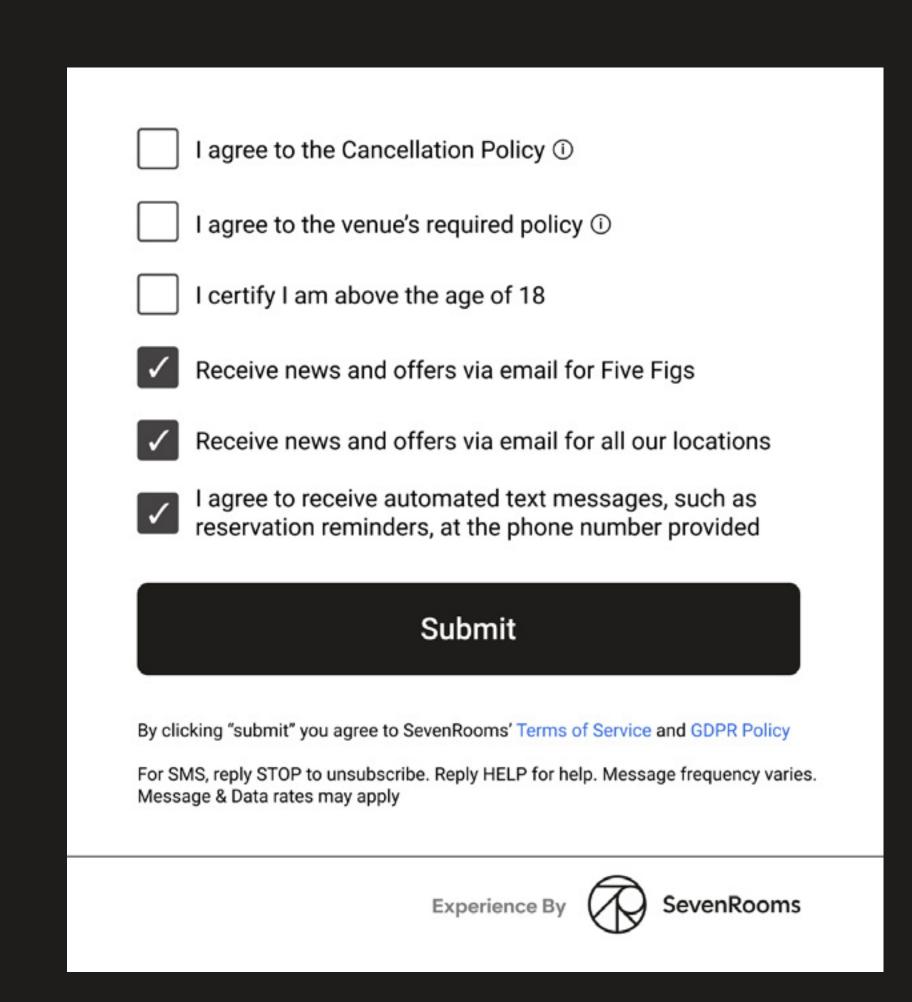
What has recently deterred you from making a restaurant reservation?

24%
Being asked for card details

23%

Being asked for too much personal data

13%
Being asked to opt into marketing



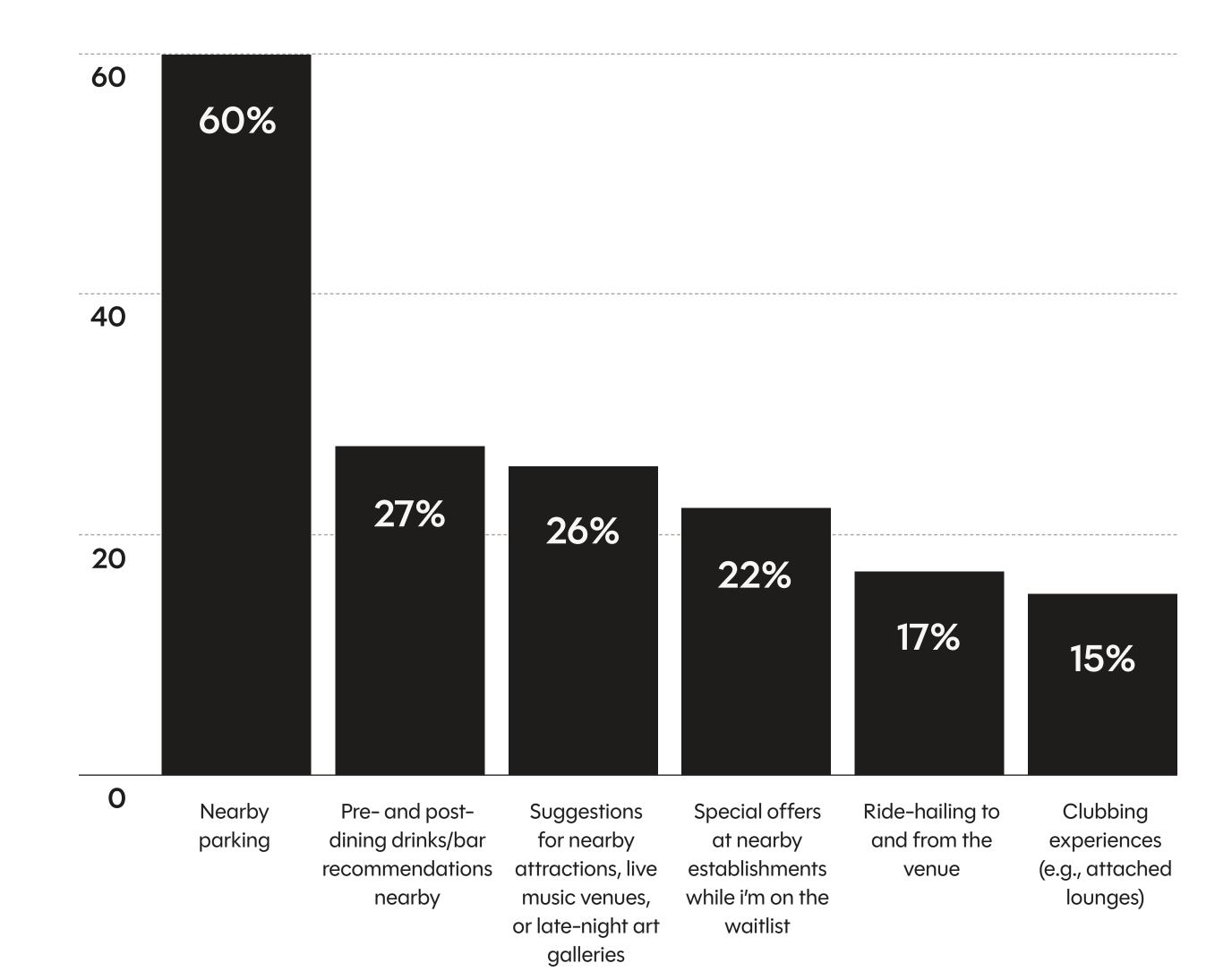
# The rise of concierge hospitality in restaurants

Aussies find thoughtful outreach pre- and post-dining valuable. They're looking for more holistic, curated dining experiences than just brunch or dinner alone.

Try partnering with other brands and offering thoughtful recommendations as a way to grow within your local community.

And consider your audience—Gen Zers are more likely than other generations to prefer restaurants to suggest nearby attractions, live music or art galleries that align with the restaurant's vibe.

#### Which restaurant services, if any, are valuable to you pre- and post-dining?



Discovery

**BRAND** 

# A strong brand flavour fosters long-term loyalty

It's more important than ever for restaurants to continually refine their brand to stay relevant, attract the right guests and foster long-term loyalty.





Introduction

# Trust wins tables: why brand equity matters

Personalisation

Discovery

Brand trust and connection <u>significantly influence purchasing</u> decisions among Australians.

To stay relevant and build loyalty, restaurants must continuously analyse customer behaviour, sentiment and interests, refining their brand to attract the right guests.



#### **HOT TIP**

Having access to customer data guides business growth

Vandal, a vegan restaurant in Sydney, used SevenRooms CRM to collect guest data to understand their audience and refine their brand identity. This helped them connect with their local community to better serve their customers. Read the full story.



# Restaurants are over-reliant on reviews and dining room observations

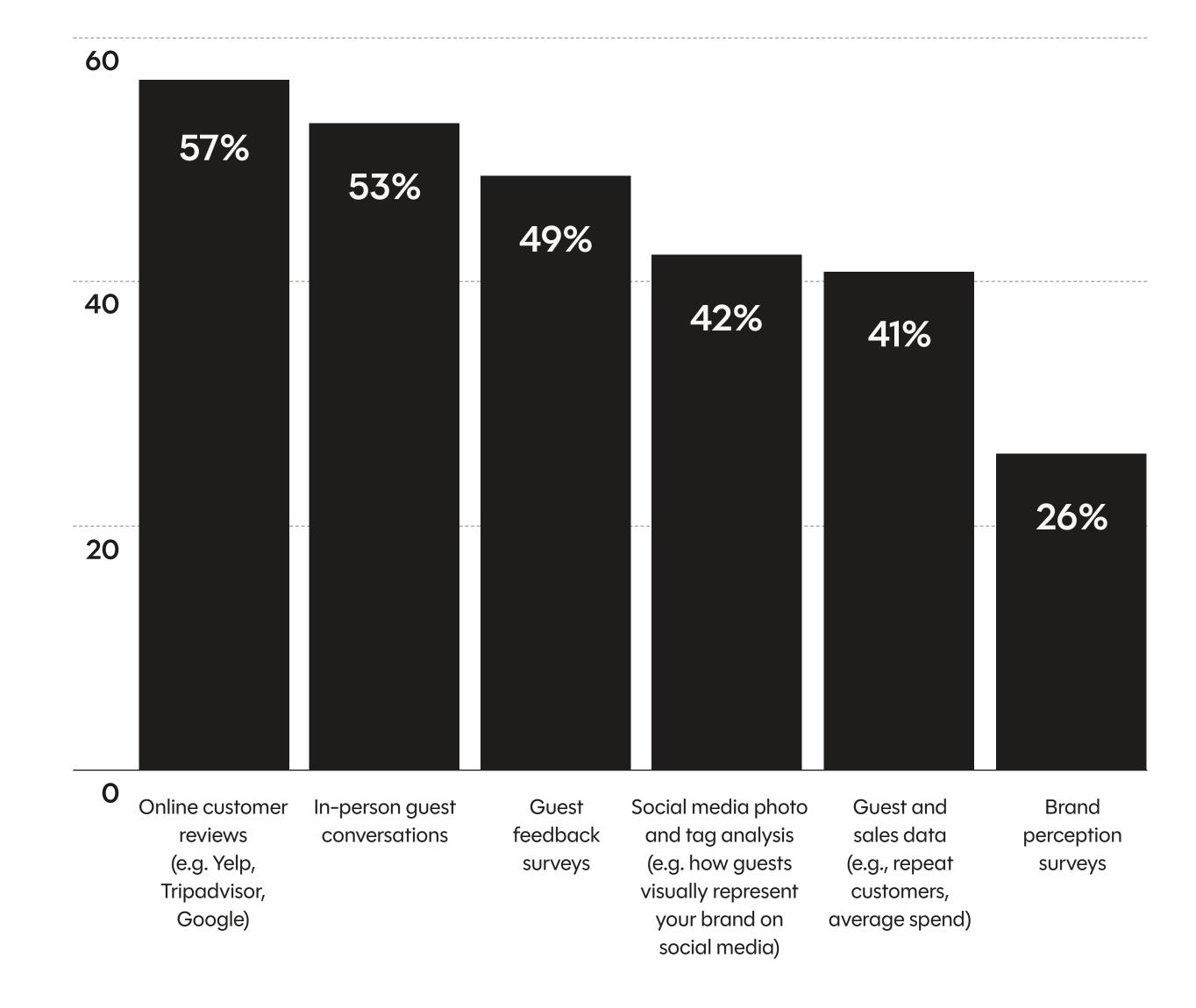
Operators are over-reliant on online reviews (57%) and in-person guest conversations (53%) for evaluating guests' perception of their brand. They are also using dining room observations (36%) to determine who their ideal guest is.

Reviews can be skewed or <u>fake</u>, and dining room observations often only represent a sample of your audience.

Smart tools like <u>automated reputation management</u> help restaurants proactively collect guest feedback, helping them understand guest sentiment in their dining rooms to inform and enhance dining experiences.

This feedback is then combined with guest data from sources like your CRM, point of sale (POS) system and social media to keep a more accurate pulse on who your guests are, and what they think of your brand.

How, if at all, does your organisation evaluate your guests' perception of your brand?



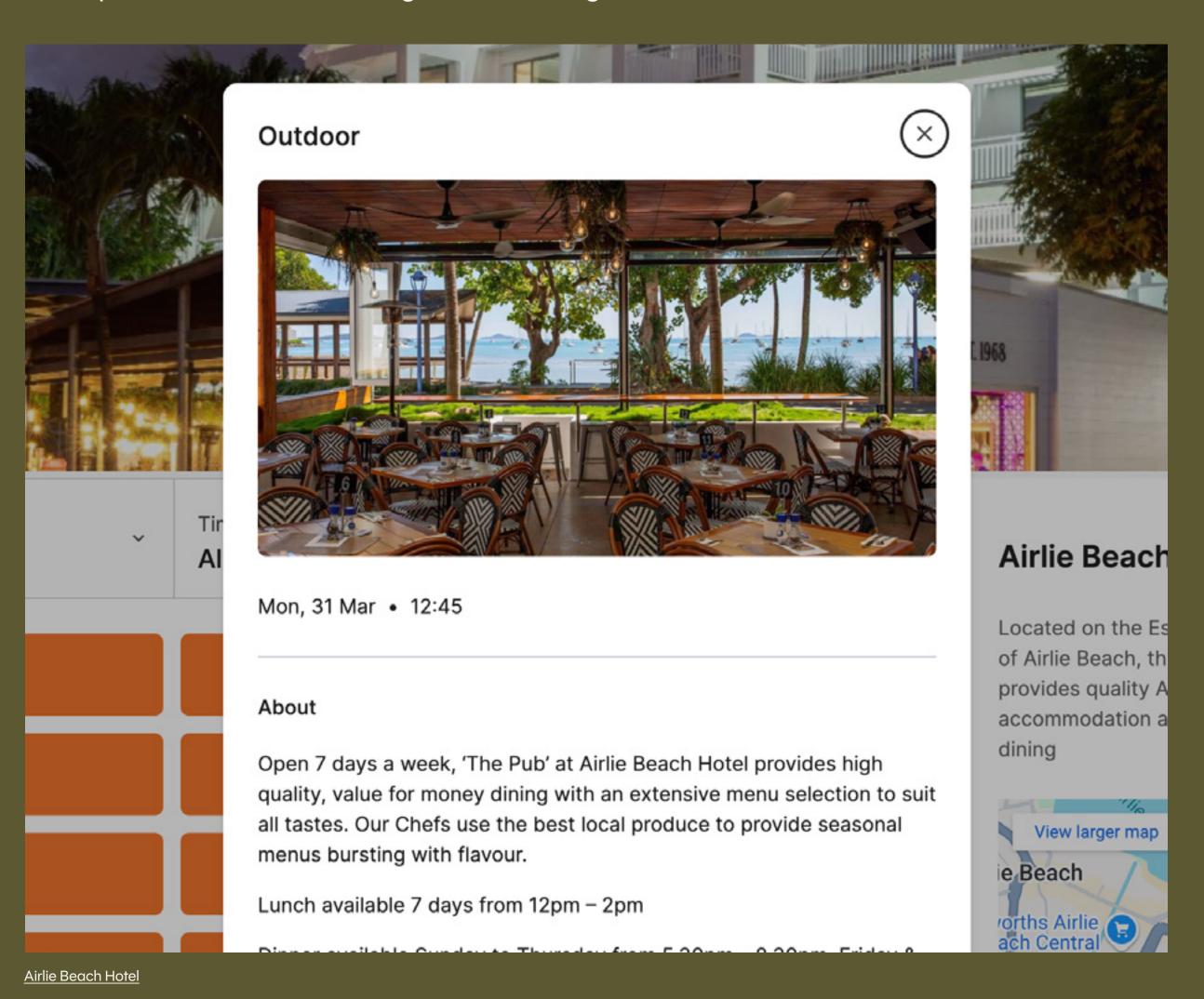
# Hospitality keeps guests coming back

Discovery

Hospitality and service (53%) is the main way that Australians connect with a restaurant, followed by design aesthetic and atmosphere (39%).

Good service and thoughtful touches are a necessity, and a strong, on-brand aesthetic isn't just social media bait—it enhances the in-service experience and increases retention.

#### Example of a reservation widget showcasing the view and vibe at the Airlie Beach Hotel



**LABOUR** 

# AI is serving up smoother restaurant operations

When AI takes over the heavy lifting, restaurants can deliver better experiences, with most operators already seeing the benefits of using AI in their operations.





Hospitality operating expenses have skyrocketed in recent years, and menu prices are up 4.3%. Restaurants are seeking ways to reduce labour costs to stay afloat.

Al offers a lifeline, helping operators streamline manual tasks, cut costs and optimise efficiency in an era of rising expenses and shrinking margins.



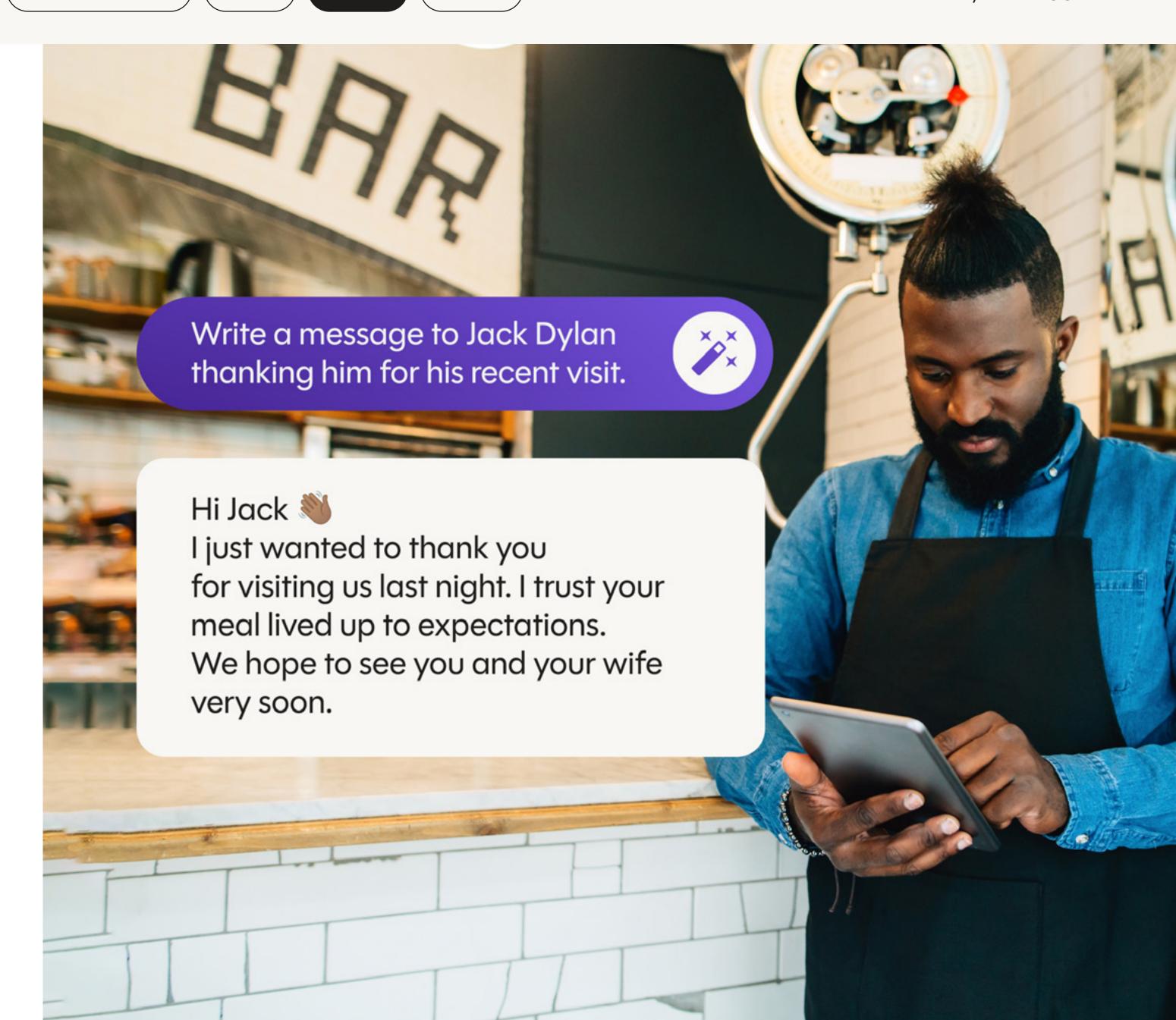
65% of operators

are already using Al



99% of operators

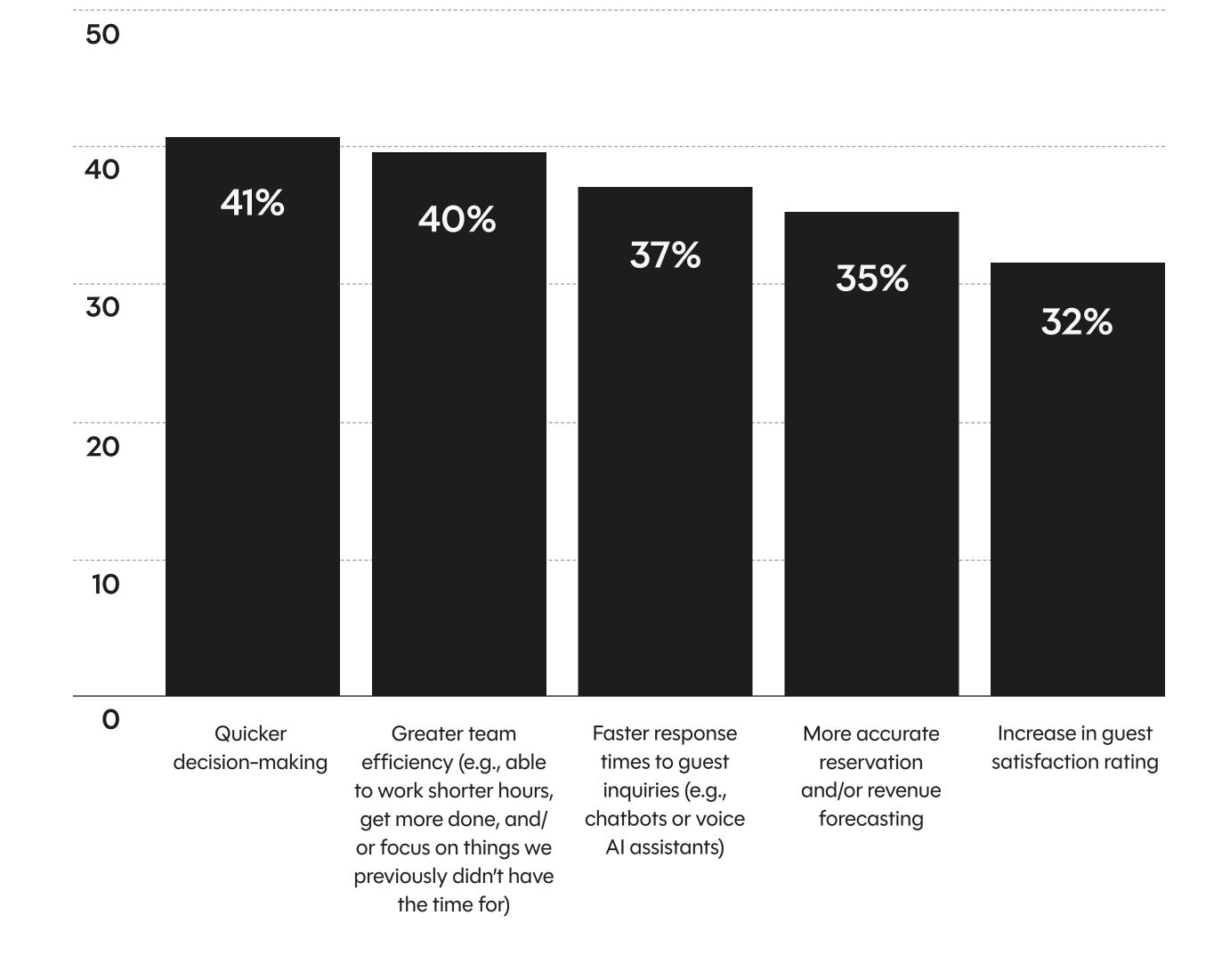
using AI have already seen benefits



## The data's in— AI improves decision-making and team efficiency

By speeding up decision-making and improving team efficiency, AI allows staff to focus on delivering memorable, high-touch experiences that build loyalty and drive revenue.







According to SevenRooms operator data, restaurants using <u>SevenRooms Al solutions</u> respond to guests faster.



#### 27% decrease

in time to respond to guest messages including emails, SMS and reviews\*

February 2024 - November 2024



#### 35% increase

in the number of responses to reviews from the restaurant\*

February 2024 - November 2024



#### 50% increase

in the number of messages written and sent in 60 seconds or less\*

October 2024 - December 2024

"SevenRooms' AI Feedback Summary helps us stay on top of things. By the time the weekly summary comes in, most issues have been resolved, but it's helpful to see the overall trends clearly. It helps us keep our eyes on the prize. It's been really useful for the whole team."

Andrew Strickland F&B Manager, Gosford RSL



## By delegating manual tasks to AI, operators can focus more on the art of hospitality



46% of operators

use AI in marketing



37% of operators

use Al in customer service



36% of operators

use AI for data analytics

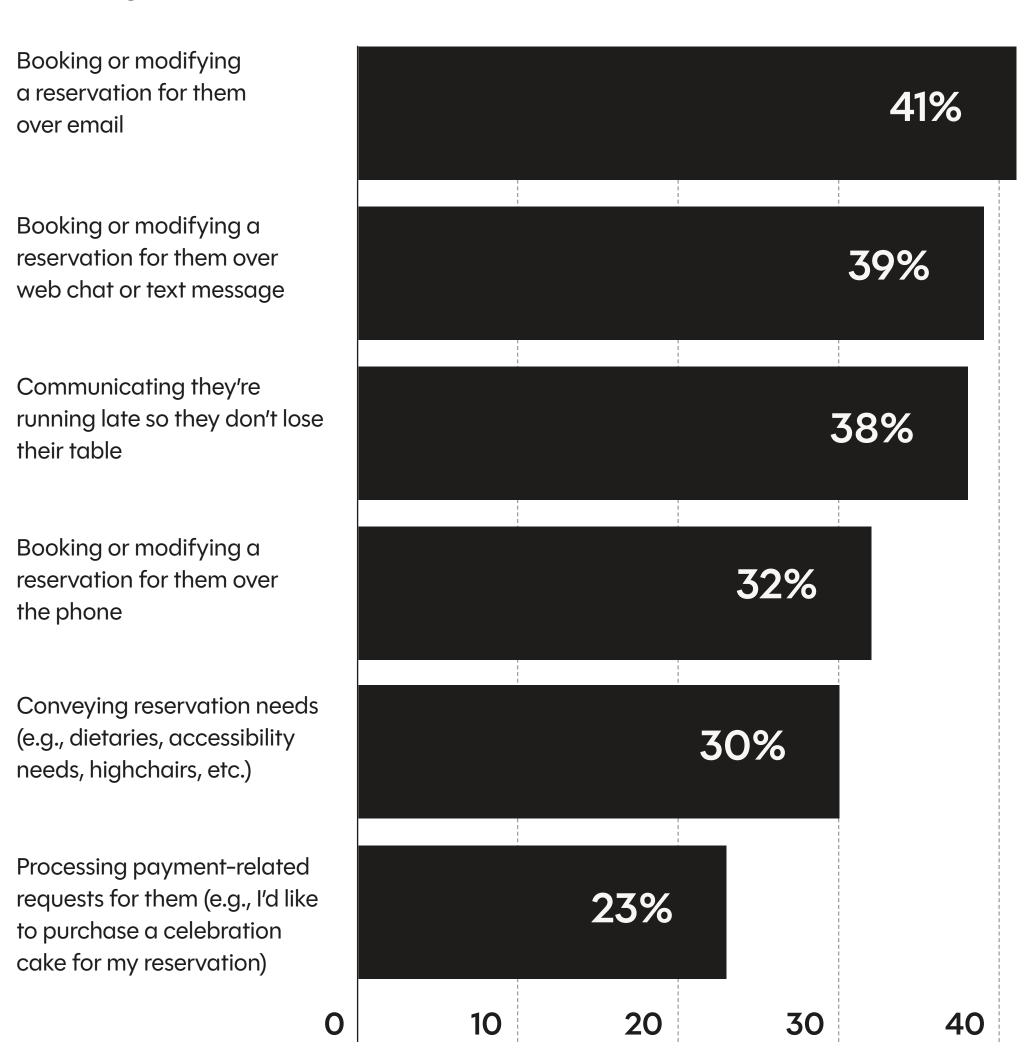


#### **HOT TIP**

Invest in AI & automation to drive greater efficiencies

For operators looking to get started using AI, top investment areas include: guest feedback summaries/responses, reservation and table management, voice AI, automated booking confirmations, and guest profile building.

### Where consumers are comfortable with Al handling restaurant communication





# Making hospitality SuperHuman

Join 13,000+ global restaurants that trust SevenRooms

**GET A DEMO** 



"In recent years, the hospitality sector has faced countless challenges. Yet, the industry has risen to meet them. Today, we're entering an age of SuperHuman Hospitality<sup>TM</sup>, a golden era where venues are tapping into the tools, data and insights that empower them to deliver deeply personalised, high-touch human hospitality experiences at an unprecedented scale.

SevenRooms' automated CRM, Marketing and Operations platform is powering this transformation, helping restaurants streamline operations, increase revenue, delight guests and keep them coming back."



Paul Hadida Managing Director, APAC GTM, SevenRooms

## Research methodology

#### **AUSTRALIAN CONSUMERS**

SevenRooms partnered with Censuswide Research—a third-party, professional research and consulting organisation. Total sample size was 1,000 Australian consumers. Fieldwork was undertaken between 27 December 2024 and 6 January 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of all Australian adults (aged 16+).

#### **AUSTRALIAN OPERATORS**

SevenRooms partnered with Censuswide Research—a third-party, professional research and consulting organisation. Total sample size was 258 Australian operators (hospitality decision-makers). Fieldwork was undertaken between 24 December 2024 and 15 January 2025. The survey was carried out online. The figures have been weighted and are representative of Australian hospitality operators.

#### **SEVENROOMS PLATFORM DATA**

Anonymised internal data representative of Australian and globally-based restaurants using the SevenRooms platform from January 2024-December 2024.

\*Unless otherwise indicated, all statistics reflect the survey results collected by SevenRooms

