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Octogenarian Paul Lynch left some big shoes to fill, especially for 21-year-old Davis Yu — the son of property developer David Yu, and once Olympic slalom hopeful. Lynch's, his South Yarra restaurant on the fringe of the Botanical, was an institution. For 30 years, Lynch dished out varying European fare to a core clientele of South Yarra locals and Melbourne gastronomes. But when Yu took over, he opted to lift the palette from the moody dark purple and brown velvets to a light Scandinavian chic. "In the past it would feel almost choking in here. But it's next to the Botanical Gardens; it should be fresh and light," said Yu. He and designer Paul Hecker of Hecker Guthrie were mindful of Lynch's long past and its rapport in the community. Yu again "we couldn't just dream up a design that obliterated the old clientele of Lynch's. You want them to come here and still think this is their restaurant." So although modernity and lightness were the criteria, The Millswyn has slightly provincial, aged touches that tap back into the building's heritage — the original timber floorboards exposed, Italian porcelain lights, galvanised pendants, and traditional cabinetry. The spaces themselves have been reutilised. Upstairs has been reopened to the public, but in keeping with the Victorian terrace house style, Yu put back in a couple of walls to create three top deck spaces, including a cocktail bar, private dining room and Scandinavian 'speakeasy', if there could ever be such a thing. Yu has assembled a team brimming with global experience, including head chef Nathan Johnson, "not poached", said Yu, from Maze Grill — the last stop of a long tenure with the Ramsay empire before he replied to Yu's newspaper ad. Yu said Lynch visited The Millswyn recently and gave Johnson and his classic French flavours the nod of approval. Looks like South Yarra's foodies are in safe hands. **venue**

### LYNCH MOB

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