

COVER STORY

A portrait of Bradley Michael, a man with short dark hair, smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue or black textured blazer over a black crew-neck sweater. He is positioned in the foreground, slightly to the right. The background features a wooden wine rack on the left and shelves with bottles on the right, creating a sophisticated restaurant atmosphere.

Bradley Michael and his team at Sydney premium steakhouse, 6HEAD, are continually gaining accolades and return customers. Not bad for a restaurant less than a year old. By **Frank Leggett**

A person wearing a grey suit is standing in the foreground on the left side of the frame. The background features a bar with multiple shelves filled with various bottles, likely spirits. The lighting is warm and focused on the bar area. The title 'HEAD FIRST' is overlaid in large white letters.

HEAD FIRST

There are a few things that make a good restaurant says Bradley Michael and hiring the right people is one of them.

Bradley Michael, CEO of the Seagrass Boutique Hospitality Group, talks about the company's latest award-winning establishment, 6HEAD. This premium steakhouse sits in a heritage building on the waterfront of The Rocks in Sydney, enjoying sweeping views from the Opera House to the Bridge.

How did you find the dramatic site for 6HEAD?

It was offered to me by the Sydney Harbour Foreshore Authority of the NSW Government. They had restored the heritage-listed Campbell's Stores and they approached me to position an upmarket steakhouse in one of the spaces. The plan was to have a range of dining options and we were their steak option. We were first off the ranks so I had my choice of positions.

Any problems in regard to the heritage status of the building?

Dealing with heritage issues was very difficult. It took nine months to build the restaurant and was an expensive operation. To protect the sandstone walls, we had to effectively create a building

inside the existing building. The whole restaurant is one hundred millimetres off the sandstone walls. We have two stations downstairs and two spaces upstairs. Trying to get all the spaces to work together without touching or damaging any of the heritage materials was very difficult. Then there was the problem of placing a kitchen in the space. The whole process was challenging and time-consuming but very effective.

Who was your designer?

We had an exceptional designer from South Africa, Callie van der Merwe. He's very experienced on new builds that work with heritage aspects. We wanted the look to be kept very simple and true to the existing space. When you enter the restaurant everything feels like it's been there for many years. It certainly doesn't look like we retrofitted a new restaurant into the space. Everything belongs.

The furniture was the main expense because we wanted leather chairs and solid tables. The brief to Callie was to create a steakhouse feel and give honour to the First Fleet. He did an exceptional job and there isn't a better position in Sydney. The

The logo for Restaurant & Catering Australia (R&C) features the letters 'R&C' in a bold, sans-serif font. The ampersand is a stylized blue figure that resembles a person with arms raised, positioned between the 'R' and 'C'.

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[Click here to watch Bradley Michael talk about the last year at the Seagrass Hospitality Group.](#)

sweeping views from the Opera House to the Harbour Bridge add a presence and energy to the space.

What is the reason for the restaurant being called 6HEAD?

When my marketing team did some research on the site, they discovered the building was originally used for settlers to keep their livestock. When the First Fleet arrived in 1788, they housed all the cattle in the space we're occupying. The six head of cattle, two bulls and four cows, escaped and ended up in the Nepean Valley. They started breeding; that's how the English realised Australia was a fertile breeding ground for cattle. We named the restaurant 6HEAD to honour the six

cattle that were responsible for starting cattle farming in Australia.

Where do you source your meat?

Meat is categorised by different marble scores, which is an indication of tenderness and flavour. We purchase the best of the grass-fed, the best of the grain-fed and the best of the Wagyu, and place that on the menu in 6HEAD. We only use one supplier who works closely with the farmers. The cattle are all black Angus and red Angus, and our Wagyu is Mayuwa Wagyu. Our supplier receives the meat after slaughter, sorts the marble score, ages the meat and then supplies it to us.



6HEAD won Best New Restaurant at the 2019 National Savour Australia Restaurant & Catering Hostplus Awards for Excellence. Are awards important?

Yes, they are, particularly because it gives the staff a sense of achievement. To be named the best new restaurant in Australia was a big accolade for me and all our team. It was wonderful to win that award and it may encourage people to come and try the restaurant but it's up to us to ensure the quality is consistent and the service is exceptional. At the end of the day, it's all about the customers and their satisfaction.

To what do you attribute the success of 6HEAD?

There are a few things that make a good restaurant. Hiring the right people is key. Then you must give them a clear focus and build passion and drive so they take ownership of what they do. Consistently purchasing the best produce is essential. Finally, the team needs to be incentivised towards a common goal. Once all that clicks, you have a good restaurant.

It doesn't matter how nice a restaurant looks; without the right produce and the right people working towards a common goal, it won't work. It can't work. **R&C**

R&C

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