



For immediate release

Muse named **Regional Restaurant of the Year** in the Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2027

Hunter Valley restaurant retains Two Hats for a twelfth consecutive year

Troy Rhoades-Brown was 24 when he opened Muse Restaurant in the Hunter Valley. Nearly 18 years later, the restaurant he built has been named **Regional Restaurant of the Year** in The Sydney Morning Herald Good Food Guide 2027 and has held Two Hats for the twelfth year running.

“Nearly 18 years in, this means more than I can easily put into words,” says Rhoades-Brown. “When I look back at where we started, I don’t think about awards. I think about the people. The chefs and front-of-house team who gave years of their careers to this place, and the many who have gone on to do remarkable things of their own. Every one of them is part of what Muse is today.”

A GARDEN THAT SHAPES THE MENU

The honour arrives as Muse enters one of the most creative chapters in its history, and much of that energy begins each morning in the garden.

Gardening has followed Rhoades-Brown through every home he has lived in, each vegetable patch a little more ambitious than the last. His current garden in the Hunter Valley is the one he always hoped to build: the equivalent of more than 100 standard raised beds, a greenhouse, a berry orchard, fruit and citrus trees, chickens, composting systems and worm farms.

“I’ve always had a vegetable garden in some form,” he says. “This is the one I dreamed of. Growing is a different discipline to learn. It’s therapeutic, physical and calming all at the same time, and creatively, the garden and the kitchen have become deeply connected. You find yourself writing the dishes whilst watching them grow, weeks before they reach the kitchen.”

This year, the garden has moved from supporting role to starting point. Produce can travel from bed to plate within hours, and whatever can’t be used at its peak is preserved, carrying one harvest forward into the months that follow.

Nowhere is that clearer than in Troy’s Garden, the opening course at Muse. It is never quite the same twice: a portrait of the garden on any given day, bringing together vegetables, herbs, leaves and flowers with preserves from harvests past.

“The garden has brought a spontaneity I love,” says Rhoades-Brown. “After all these years, I still want Muse to challenge us. I still want to walk into the kitchen excited. The garden has opened that door a little wider for me, and I feel like we’re only at the beginning.”

BRINGING THE GARDEN INSIDE

That thinking extends to the dining room, where a renewed interior of timber, deep greens, leather, stone and natural textures is now underway, designed to carry the feeling of the garden to the table rather than recreate it.

“The garden has become part of who we are, and it feels right that the room starts to reflect that,” says Rhoades-Brown. “The space, the food, the wine, the way our team looks after people. I want it all to feel like one story. Muse will always be Muse. This is about understanding ourselves a little better and drawing every part of the restaurant closer together.”

THE PEOPLE ON THE FLOOR

Through every change, the Muse service team has been a constant. Their style of hospitality, deeply knowledgeable yet genuinely warm, has become as much a signature of the restaurant as anything on the plate, and some team members have looked after the same guests for many years.

“A great restaurant has never been defined by the kitchen alone,” says Rhoades-Brown. “It’s how you’re welcomed, the conversation at the table, the wine that’s poured, how you feel walking out the door. Our service team carries an enormous amount of knowledge and makes it feel completely natural. The kitchen and the floor need each other. Neither exists without the other.”

A TWELVE-YEAR RUN

Muse earned its first Good Food Guide Hat in 2011 and has held Two Hats in each edition since 2015, a run that has spanned different teams, different chapters and almost two decades of change.

“Twelve consecutive years at Two Hats is something I’m incredibly proud of,” says Rhoades-Brown. “That kind of consistency never comes from one person. It comes from a team choosing to care about the details, every single service. So much of the work in a restaurant happens where no one sees it, and this recognition belongs to all of them.”

“I still feel lucky every time I walk through the doors of Muse. To be named Regional Restaurant of the Year at this point in our story is very special.”

Ends

ABOUT MUSE Founded in 2009 by chef and owner Troy Rhoades-Brown, Muse is a Two Hat fine dining restaurant located within Hungerford Hill Estate, in the heart of the Hunter Valley. Troy’s garden is central to the restaurant, shaping a menu grounded in the region and complemented by a renowned wine offering led by Head Sommelier Melinda Beswick.

Muse is open for dinner Wednesday to Saturday and lunch on Saturday. Reservations: musedining.com.au.

Photography Credit: Emily Weaving | [@weaving](https://www.instagram.com/weaving)

For media enquiries, editorial features or imagery, please contact:

Krysten Rhoades-Brown - krysten@musedining.com.au

[Website](https://musedining.com.au) [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com/musedining)