Please and thank you: proper table manners

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Anyone watching cooking show contests is likely to notice some diners' penchant for licking food from their knives – and will either judge them to bits or shrug with indifference.

Most people fall in the former category, either finding it gross or a big no-no in the table etiquette stakes.

Back in the day, table manners were considered super-important and all sorts of weird rules applied. These days, things are thankfully much more relaxed but a few non-negotiables remain when it comes to table etiquette. If you don't want to be looked down on – or even put people off their food – it pays to take heed.

Here are five of the most telling table rules and ones to live by:

1. Never lick your knife. Don't even do it at home because you may forget and do it in public. Delete the habit if you have one.
2. Always wait for the whole table to be served and ready before beginning to eat – unless there's general agreement that that rule be waived.
3. Don't use phones or devices at the table. If you must take a call, excuse yourself and go somewhere else.
4. When food has been eaten, always leave your knife and fork parallel to each other and in a roughly north-south position. This alerts wait staff that you are finished and also signals good manners.
5. Cloth napkins should be laid on your lap not long after you're seated, and roughly folded – not scrunched – and placed beside – not on – your plate when finished.
6. Acknowledge wait staff and treat them with respect. Staff are people too and are just trying to do their job. Give them acknowledgement such as a smile or nod if they fill your water glass, and thank them when they bring your meal or clear your dishes. Remember, the wait staff you deal with are generally not those that make decisions regarding food, prices or the dining environment, so be sure to not direct any undue negative feelings toward staff.

Locally sourced Aussie ingredients transform into Greek and Mediterranean flavors at 1915. (Supplied)

Venture out, be seen at 1915

This winter, there's no better place to be than beneath the iconic North Geelong smokestack, within a century-old red-brick boiler house at Federal Mills. An electric atmosphere and powerful local history have been reignited by chef Andy Symeonakis of Kingsleys Steak and Crab House, Hellenic Republic and the Lorne Hotel.

Andy and the team at 1915 serve up top-notch, locally-sourced modern Australian fare that reflects a Greek heritage combined with Mediterranean flavours.

The venue name, '1915', celebrates the year in which the Federal Woollen Mills was first opened as the largest manufacturer in the region.

The soaring two-storey conversion of a heritage-listed boiler house is a sight to behold, with original exposed brick, industrial features and an impressively high vaulted ceiling.

An iconic window façade is the centrepiece for the split-level space with a ground floor, mezzanine and adjoining roof deck. You'll find a cocktail bar on each level, mixing in-demand signature concoctions, such as Powerhouse Spritz, or the more decadent White Chocolate Passionfruit Martini – these are not to be missed!

1915 is perfect for intimate dinners, long table celebrations, cocktail catch-ups, and everything in between. The venue also has the capability to host up to 550 of your nearest and dearest for birthdays, weddings, or special celebrations of any size. With over 400 free car parks on site, the 1915 team looks forward to your next visit.

1915 is located at PH2, Federal Mills, 33 Mackey Street, North Geelong. The venue is open for lunch and dinner, seven days per week. Bookings are recommended and can be made via www.1915.com.au or 0499 33 1915.