

A Very Good Place to Start

—Edwin Chow and Sam Chow

There is only one option left: you have to get inside that building. It is the only way to find out the identity of the Iron Chef, even if it means fending off any security system that Matt Preston may have prepared: perhaps a pack of vicious Rottweilers, or a portcullis of titanium-grade cutlery.

Sneaking around the side of the building, you search desperately for anything that might grant you access. At the end of the lane-way is a large air-vent, and you speculate that, if you can just remove the grill at the end and crawl a little way into the vent, you may just be able to hear what is going on inside.

Ten minutes later and you have the grate off. As soon as you do so, a strong whiff of salty air hits you and you are reminded of past summers on the beach, or more unpleasantly, of Chinese takeaway. Undeterred, you drag yourself into the vent and listen intently for noises from within. Sure enough, you start to hear muffled voices.

“Matt, I need your help. I’ll do anything!” The Iron Chef’s voice does not sound remotely Japanese. It has a rustic Australian twang to it.

“I just don’t know how! I’m a critic, not a chemist!”

“Just tell me how to disguise it. And I can’t do it with red meat; last time he got served red meat he chucked a wobbly and ripped that poor chef’s head off! It’s gotta be something else.”

“How about some cuisine from the States? Bagels? Pretzels? Enough sugar and salt in that kind of food to hide anything!”

“I was thinking maybe Chinese. . . He likes Chinese! . . .”

The voices become more and more faint, but as you wait for a little while longer, you begin to hear some notes being played on a piano. It seems that they have decided vent off some steam with a bit of merry music-making. Blessed with perfect pitch (though unfortunately not of the baseball variety), you get your note-book out and jot down the arrangement.

