

PERSONAL OZ FOOD & TRAVEL

IN
PERSONAL OZ
TOMORROW:
FASHIONTHE NEXT KATE MOSS
CARA DELEVINGNE
AND HER GROWING
LEGION OF FANSFIRST BITE
JOHN
LETHLEAN

Could this be Lauren Murdoch's next gig?

SYDNEY institution 3 Weeds, a long-time player in the gastropub league, says goodbye to head chef **Leigh McDivitt** at Christmas after three years. The place has had its share of awards but had fallen out of focus with the critics recently. That may change, because what's really news is who might fill his shoes. The pub's **Michael Hogan** wasn't returning our calls or email last week but we hear he has his heart set on one of Sydney's top women chefs, **Lauren Murdoch**, the former head of Merivale's pumping French bistro Felix. Murdoch has been travelling and temping around Sydney since leaving the Hemmes family's employ earlier this year but we know she's looking to get her teeth into something in the new year. "No comment," was her polite response to First Bite. 3 Weeds includes a restaurant and bistro and Murdoch — if it gets across the line — would certainly add a little PR oomph to the business. Stay tuned.

SOUTH Australia's award-winning Fino — just named the state's best regional restaurant by *The Advertiser* — will replicate itself next year in the Barossa. Chef **David Swain** and partner **Sharon Romeo** have done a deal to create Fino Seppeltsfield within one of Australia's oldest wineries, Seppeltsfield Wines. **Warren Randall** (Seppeltsfield Wines managing director) ... wants to have a really excellent destination restaurant up there, so it looks like David and I are going to be doing a lot of driving next year," says Romeo.

AS reported here a month ago, New Zealander **Christian McCabe** has confirmed signing for the space recently vacated by **Nic Poelaert** in North Carlton that was his restaurant Embrasse. McCabe, best known for his Matterhorn restaurant in Wellington, will create The Town Mouse there, offering casual bar drinks and food as well as formal dining. McCabe has been at Melbourne's MoVida Aquil more than a year, looking for sites. He says he's juggling applications from three potential "name" head chefs. No clues, sadly.

MEA culpa ... Or whatever the Spanish equivalent is. Last week we said Stokehouse would be the first Aussie restaurant with a Spanish Jospoer coal-burning oven. Wrong. **Frank Camorra** has one at his new Sydney MoVida.

THE first Thai restaurant to get a Michelin star, Nahm in London, headed by Aussie **David Thompson**, closes in two weeks. Nahm opened in 2001 at The Halkin, a chic Belgavia hotel owned by Singaporean billionaire **Christina Ong**. Thompson will concentrate on the other Nahm — in Ong's Bangkok hotel The Metropolitan — which nudged inside the S. Pellegrino world's best list this year.

IT was a very short season for Frenchman **Jerome Lagarde** at Sydney's Risto Ananas, the faux French brasserie at The Rocks headquarters of businessman **John Szangolies**. Lagarde was recruited from China but whether it was a lukewarm review in the local broadsheet or slack numbers, Lagarde became the old guard within three months of its launch. Across from Cut (another Szangolies restaurant) comes **James Privett**, who leaves his sous chef at the steak place, **James Knight**, in charge there.

FLYING under the radar in Melbourne's CBD, Red Spice Road has expanded to a second outlet at the QV shopping centre. Long-time executive chef **John McLeay**, will oversee both.

SYDNEY'S **Luke Nguyen** has obviously found his casino experience satisfying. Having made a success of his casual Asian noodle joint — Fat Noodle — at Sydney's Star, he is set to repeat the franchise at Brisbane's Treasury Casino, and there is talk of taking it to Cairns too. The design is by Sydney firm **Luchetti Krelle**, which was responsible, among others, for Momofuku Seiobo and Bistro Ananas, both in Sydney.

QUOTE of the Week: "There is undeniable power to Bourdain's vulgarity, but a lot of it reads as entitled immaturity. Suggesting that aggression is the only appropriate existential response to the demands of restaurant cooking — that hardened hands and focus are best matched with hardness throughout one's life — he simulates teaching sophistication, then teaches solipsism. What it shows, mostly, is a lack of self-respect."

Author and former Chez Panisse cook **Tamar Adler** on fellow author **Anthony Bourdain**, in *The New Yorker*.

MARCO Pierre White, legendary MasterChef host, stropky Brit and Knorr stock cubes ambassador, "was in Jimmy's Bar the other night", says our source in the Victorian rural village of Daylesford. "He ordered an iced chocolate but didn't like what he got, saying something about how it should be layered, not a homogeneous whole. So he demanded the various elements of the drink so he could make it himself, which he did."

SO you want to buy some sustainable seafood? Great, you're right on trend. But before you order that line-caught whiting from that fashionably eco-aware restaurant, buy that can of dolphin-friendly tuna, or whip out your controversial sustainable seafood guide, can you tell me what the term "sustainable seafood" means?

It's possible that never before in the history of Australian marketing has a term of such indeterminate meaning made so many waves. Seafood sustainability is big business, and it's getting bigger. As the recent federal government decision on the marine park — locking up 2.3 million square kilometres of ocean around Australia for the sustainability cause — and the ban on the supertrawler Abel Tasman shows, Australians are increasingly receptive to messages about ocean health and fishery management. Yet start asking around — chefs, the fishing industry, conservation groups, research agencies — and it seems there are as many definitions of sustainability as there are fish in the sea.

In times of confusion, you need heroes. On the one hand, the media's favourite green seafood group, the Australian Marine Conservation Society — criticised by the fishing industry and others for alleged lack of rigour in the production of its sustainable seafood guide — has writer **Tim Winton** and chef **Kylie Kwong** as its champions. On the other, the international Marine Stewardship Council's newest local heroes are ... a prawn and a toothfish.

Last month, Australia's largest prawn fishery, the Northern Prawn Fishery (at about 750,000 square kilometres, it's also the commonwealth's largest fishery) became the seventh in the nation to gain the tough eco-tick from the MSC, after a 15-month certification process part-funded by Woolworths and the WWF. And in August, the mighty Patagonian toothfish from Heard Island in the Antarctic, aka Glacier 51 Toothfish, swam up from its home 2.5km under the sea — about as deep as it gets — into the bright lights of MSC attention, a breakthrough for a fish long tainted in Australia by a reputation as an overfished species.

While the London-based MSC is not new here — in fact the West Australian rock lobster was the first product in the world to gain MSC certification, in 2000 — until now, most of its hero fish have proved a difficult catch for consumers: you probably won't find yelloweye mullet or pippies from the Lakes & Coorong fishery, or even that WA lobster, at your local fishmonger. Unless you're a local. On the other hand, you can buy banana and tiger prawns from the Northern Prawn Fishery (usually sold under the Austral Fisheries brand) at Woolworths and Coles, although red-tape requirements mean they won't be labelled with the blue MSC tick until sometime next year. Toothfish is a little more elusive — from February, the super-premium fish will land at restaurants such as Rockpool Bar & Grill and Flying Fish in Sydney, and Newmarket and Chin Chin in Melbourne — but at least now you won't have to fly to Japan, China or the US to enjoy it (in the US, the fish is marketed and recognised under the name Chilean sea bass).

"Certified products do attract a premium," says Austral Fisheries chief executive **David Carter**, explaining why the company decided to undertake the lengthy and expensive certification process for its prawns and toothfish (another toothfish, from Macquarie Island, also earned the tick earlier this year). "It's about trust. Surveys have shown that people trust NGOs like the MSC."

In September, the West Australian government showed its faith in that trust, partnering with the state's Fishing Industry Council to invest \$14.5m in the MSC scheme. Over the next four years, all 46 fisheries in WA will undergo pre-assessment for certification.



Austral Fisheries general manager **Andy Prendergast** displays some of his catch, which has been approved by the Marine Stewardship Council

Not everyone is such a fan of certification. Some, like Sydney seafood marketer **John Susman**, question its necessity. We are, he points out, a 75 per cent net importer of seafood, much of it from countries with far weaker fisheries management than our own.

"We are a First World country with some of the most robust (fishing) regulations in the world," he says, citing the 1999 Environment Protection and Biodiversity Conservation Act. "Is there really a need for costly third-party validation?"

The main driver of certification, he believes, is the lack of a united voice from the fishing industry. "Not even the industry has an accepted, nationwide definition of

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WHERE TO BUY MSC SEAFOOD

Northern Prawn Fishery banana prawns are available at Woolworths and Coles. NPF tiger prawns will be available through Christmas at selected Woolworths stores.

Glacier 51 toothfish is available in Western Australia at Seafresh, Innaloo and Myaree; Universal Seafoods, Canning Vale; and the Canning Vale Fish Market; in Melbourne, at Jetty Fresh Seafoods, Preston Market and South Melbourne Seafood, South Melbourne Market.

sustainability," he says. "So instead we have rockstar chefs and others stepping into the vacuum to tell us what sustainable means when most of them don't have a clue. They're talking about 'feed conversion ratios' (a reference to aquaculture) at the same time as they're selling wagyu, champagne and Italian mineral water and driving Range Rovers. Give me a break."

"If you compare Australian fish to wagyu or battery pig, fish really doesn't look too bad."

Susman reflects widely held concern about the impact of misinformation on people's buying habits. "People are growing scared of seafood," he says. "They're

scared of having rocks thrown at them if they eat tuna. The east coast tuna and billfish fishery is one of the best-managed fisheries in the world."

Among chefs who can claim exception to the ignorance rule is Sydney restaurant **Red Lantern's** **Mark Jensen**, known for his work in questioning the environmental credentials of whatever he puts on his menu. Currently, that includes MSC scallops from Canada and MSC prawns from Spencer Gulf.

"It's good that there's a variety of certification organisations around," says Jensen, who's also written a book, *Urban Cook: Cooking and Eating for a Sustainable Future*. "I don't favour any one in particular because they can tend to make blanket statements, so I prefer to ask my own questions about the supply chain."

Perhaps the widespread confusion on the subject is the reason people's good intentions on seafood don't always make it as far as the checkout. **Patrick Hone**, executive director of the Fisheries Research and Development Corporation, quotes data from the Australian Seafood Co-operative Research Centre showing that while the majority of consumers

Susman suggests your best bet is to buy Australian

show a willingness to pay more for sustainable seafood, only about 5 per cent actually do.

"There's no doubt the intent is growing," he says. "People want to make sustainable choices, but price is an important factor in their eventual decision."

Like many in the industry, Susman suggests that if you're a seafood shopper with a conscience, your best bet is to buy Australian.

"We are world's best practice. So let's buy local and get on with it," he says. "And if you want to feed the kids a \$9 prawn laksa, then you need to recognise those prawns are coming from a Third World country, with all the question marks over sustainability that implies."

Which leads us back to the beginning. What do you mean by sustainable? Here are three definitions — choose the one you like best. Of course, there's a qualifier: each is intended to apply primarily to wild-catch fish, rather than farmed. And that's another story.

• "Fisheries are ecologically sustainable when stocks of both target and non-target species are not overfished ... and when the health, natural balance and productivity of marine ecosystems, populations of threatened, endangered or protected species and marine habitats are maintained. A truly sustainable fishery meets the long-term needs of fishermen, consumers and the environment together." — **Tooni Mahto**, Australian Marine Conservation Society

• "Seafood sustainability is not just about saving dolphins — as important as that is. It's also about commercial, cultural and ethical sustainability." — **John Susman**, marketer

• "It's the use of best-practice science and management to deliver reliable fisheries production forever." — **Dave Carter**, Austral Fisheries

THE FAB FOUR

Stylish toiletries bags

MICHELLE ROWE

HAZEL BAG
ATTIC ACCESSORIES

THIS vibrant little hold-all is covered in an Autumn Poppies design, although Attic Accessories lets customers choose whatever print they like on its wide range of made-to-order bathroom bags. Functionality is a priority — both interior and exterior are fully waterproof, bags can be opened up to hang in the shower, and there are enough pockets to keep travel essentials tucked safely away. \$52.95. More: atticaccessories.com.au.

CARRY-ALL TRAVELLER
APPLE & BEE

AN elegant Japan Silver print is one of several fabric options for Apple & Bee's compact carry-all. The perfectly formed bag is deceptively spacious, with four zipped compartments to hold all manner of bits and bobs that can't be left behind. The exterior is made of organic cotton, there's recycled PET plastic inside, and the bag features Apple & Bee's trademark logo toggle and lining. \$69.95. More: appleandbee.com.

NUUKA BAG
MARIMEKKO

PUT a splash of colour into your carry-on luggage with this gorgeous toiletries bag in Finnish design company Marimekko's iconic Unikko floral print, in hot demand since 1964. The pretty-as-a-picture Nuuka travel bag is machine-washable, has four large pockets to stash your mini travel items and cosmetics, and sports an easy-to-carry handle. \$US54 (\$51.70) online or \$62 in Australian stores. More: marimekko.com or (02) 9299 0372.

SHELL TOILETRY BAG
CATHERINE MANUELL

A DETACHABLE and adjustable strap means this cute toiletries case can double as a small handbag if you're looking to introduce some bold colours to your daywear. Manuell is renowned for her stylish but practical travel bags and this lightweight bathroom bag in Colourful Arches fabric (it also comes in a pretty red, green and cream Jewel Flowers print) is no exception. \$49.95. More: catherinemannell.com.

THE MAX FACTOR

2012 DJW RIESLING,
CLARE VALLEY \$23

YOU have probably gathered by now that the 2012 vintage was an absolute blinder in South Australia's Clare Valley, especially for the riesling grape: as the wines have begun to appear in our bottle-shop fridges over the past few months they've been met with breathless reviews, show trophies and an insatiable thirst among wine-lovers. This is a gorgeous example: intense aromas of dark, glossy green kaffir lime leaves, super-refreshing, tangy flavours of crisp green apple and a long, dry finish. The price quoted above is what you'll pay through the cellar door. It is available on some restaurant wine lists for between \$34 and \$46. www.wilsonvineyard.com.au



FOLLOW THE READER

Rock and roll with Angelina

LES SULLIVAN
PAMBULA BEACH, NSW

A FEW days from Fremantle on our voyage from Sydney to Southampton, we had the first indication the previous week of smooth sailing was not going to last.

In the middle of the Indian Ocean, Angelina began to rock and roll and a morning visit to the engine room and bridge was cancelled. Angelina had met Georgette.

Angelina was the Italian Flotta Lauro Line's 24,000-tonne Angelina — "the beautiful lady in

blue", as the crew called her. Georgette was a tropical hurricane in Angelina's path. By mid-afternoon, Angelina was being buffeted by 100km/h winds and rolling and pitching violently in the face of mountainous waves at official "Dead Slow Ahead" speed.

Angelina felt more like a submarine than an ocean liner.

My wife, our two young children and I took to the safety of our stateroom. During one mighty roll, we watched with a mixture of

terror and amazement as books, toiletries, a bowl of fruit and a radio started to slide across the dressing table to be projected against the far wall.

The ship's chaplain, while reciting the rosary on the games deck, was flung about and broke his collarbone. Terrified passengers knelt in the passageways and prayed for deliverance.

In the dining room a glass door had smashed and furniture was lashed together.

As it was too dangerous to move, stewards brought ham rolls and apples, but like most passengers I was too seasick to eat.

Determined to photograph this experience, I staggered outdoors and saw the crew had uncovered the lifeboats ready for lowering.

We did not sleep that night and kept our lifejackets, wet-weather clothing and a torch within easy reach.

But overnight Angelina escaped Georgette's salty embrace

and we sailed towards Cape Town in smooth seas under a blue sky.

On arrival in Southampton, *The Daily Mail* reported that one 18m wave had rolled the Angelina 25 degrees, and that 55 passengers were treated in the ship's hospital, eight of whom had fractured arms and legs.

Undeterred, we have booked our 13th cruise for March.

They don't have hurricanes in the Great Australian Bight ... do they?



RANT OR RAVE

Send your 400-word contribution to our *Follow the Reader* column. Published columnists will receive a choice of Marimekko case for iPhone 4/4S or 5. The study cases are made from 100 per cent polycarbonate and come in a range of Marimekko prints, including geometric Kaivo and floral Unikko. \$59. More: marimekko.com.

Send your contribution to: travel@theaustralian.com.au.

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