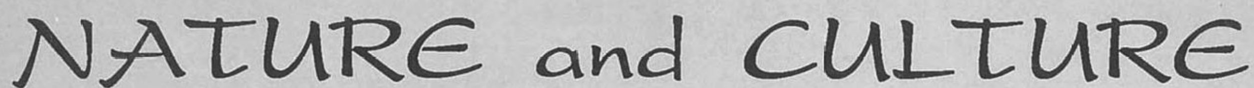

Proceedings of the Seventh Symposium

of

Australian Gastronomy, Canberra ACT

Editors

Mary Brander, Betty Meehan and Elizabeth Minchin

COMMITTEE

Mary Brander

Rosemary Brissenden

Michael Chin

Dorothy Davis

Margaret Emery

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Photographer: Alex McKay

NATURE and CULTURE

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Canberra in spotlight

FINE DINING

ROSEMARY BRISSENDEN

HAS CANBERRA reached the point at last where it might draw an accolade from time to time on the national food scene? After the seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy that was held here from March 7 to 10 we have reason to expect so.

The symposium is a gathering of some of the country's most dedicated foodies who get together for three days once every two years somewhere in Australia to focus on the subject they love. They hear papers on a wide variety of topics, sample the food and wine the organising committee has chosen, and happily perform that most unnatural of acts: eating breakfast together.

The focus was entirely on Canberra. And how did we show? Over the three-day period, I was amazed and delighted to discover the extent of the good things available in this region and the talents of the people who present them to us.

At an informal supper on the opening night 10 local winemakers held tastings of their wines. Max Lake's comment on the wines was that they included "a lot of good wines, some ordinary ones and one brilliant red". Pretty good news for a still very young wine industry. Two poets read a range of Canberra wine poems and there was a buffet featuring some excellent produce of the region: smoked trout from Braidwood, smoked lamb, lamb prosciutto and hot smoked galantine of quail from the Poacher's Pantry in Hall, mesclun, tomatoes and mixed apples from Ross and Penman, growers of fine herbs and vegetables in Pialligo, and a variety of excellent cheeses from the ABC factory in Tilba.

On the breakfast table each morning were great bowls of sweet juicy blackberries, raspberries and peaches, again supplied by Ross and Penman. Next to them were breads, rolls, focaccias and croissants from the Cornucopia Bakery in Braddon — breads that take seriously their role as the staff of life: breads heavy with grains or olives or herbs or fruit and nuts; breads that really set you up for the day.

I've eaten a lot of good bread in a lot of good cities — much of it in Australia, by the way — and in my view Cornucopia's is up there at the top.

Huge mounds of Bega unsalted butter accompanied them, providing the perfect base for the home-made jams and preserves brought by symposium participants and the smoked trout and tuna given by two generous Tasmanian firms.

Two lunches were brought to our cloister by Canberra restaurants: a gourmet picnic with a variety of terrines, breads, fruits and cheeses provided by Dominique's restaurant in Kingston, and a Turkish feast from Ottoman Cuisine, of Manuka. The latter was particularly well received by the cognoscenti from interstate, and its emphasis on light and tasty vegetable and fish dishes provided an unintended but memorable contrast to the relentless carnivorousness of the banquet that night.

The planned culinary highlight at the symposium was a local chefs' dinner. Chefs and staff from three top restaurants cooperated to put on this impressive event at the Lobby. Fiona Wright and Keith Ashurst, of the Lobby, Daniel Collard, of Chez Daniel, in Manuka, and Meg Lillis and John Flack, from Fringe Benefits Brasserie, worked enormously hard with the help of local suppliers to present a meal of the best the region had to offer.

One supplier in particular played a pivotal role on this occasion: Stuart Ross, of Ross and Penman, personally nurtured many of the gourmet vegetable items required. In the process he demonstrated clearly the value for cooks and restaurateurs of direct access to growers.

Wines were selected by the symposium organising committee. An introductory glass or two of Doonkuna 1992 sauvignon blanc was served in the rose garden accompanied by some interesting oysters from Wagonga Inlet. These were not your "full cream" type oysters but they were very tasty in their muscularity and had a quite striking identity of their own.

Next came an appetiser of Poacher's Pantry smoked duck, ginger-pickled nashi pear from Pialligo and mesclun dressed with hazelnut oil and raspberry vinegar. The wine was a refreshing Lark Hill chardonnay 1991.

Daniel Collard's double-clear consomme with an infusion of Asian herbs, shitaki mushrooms and kangaroo dumpling ("a Chinese ravioli purse of kangaroo"!) was the highlight of the meal and was a splendid reminder of Daniel's mastery of the consomme. Its delicate drama needed no wine accompaniment and none was provided.

It was followed by a char-grilled cutlet of South Coast kingfish — in my view the pride of the region's seafood — unfussed over and simply served in the best way it could be when so fresh — with lemon and parsley-flavoured extra-virgin olive oil. Accompanying the kingfish was a Madew Rhine riesling 1992.

For many present, if the meal had stopped here it would have been memorable. Gastronomes after all prize quality more than quantity. They tend to lose interest at the point where fine judgment of flavours gets lost in a surfeit of food. And that's what happened with the three courses that followed.

The first of them — the main one — was full of local interest. Slices of saddle of wild hare were roasted pink with a duo of sauces, one based on a glaze employing specially collected local wild mushrooms and one a Dijon mustard sauce. With it were a tiny hare pie, a delicate celeriac timbale, a mound of onion marmalade and some confit of beetroot. Everything on this plate was interesting, cleverly executed and flavoursome in its own right; together, however, the combination was over the top and much too busy.

Foodies from interstate judged it a sign of lingering gastronomic gaucherie in Canberra. They shuddered to note that two more courses were to follow and reserved further comment for the accompanying wines: a Lake George pinot noir 1988, two 1990 cabernet-merlots, one from Helms and one from Brindabella Hills; and the Jeir Creek botrytis semillon sauvignon blanc 1991, which caused quite a stir when it came with the dessert.

For me the symposium left a clear message for Canberra restaurateurs: there's no longer any doubt that we've got the skills and the produce; what remains to be worked on is the confidence and maturity to exercise restraint.

INTRODUCTION

IT is with delight that we are able to present you with the record of activities that took place in Australia's capital, Canberra, during the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, 7 to 10 March 1993. This date was set to coincide with the National Word Festival.

Canberra had never before seen such a gathering of some of the best people in the food industry in Australia, Asia and the United Kingdom, as well as people who simply love to learn about food and everything to do with it.

Without the hard work and dedication of the Canberra Committee and so very many other people who supported us, including friends from Gastronomy groups in Sydney and Melbourne, the Symposium would not have been the success that it was. A separate list of these people appears elsewhere in the Proceedings.

Photographer: Alex McKay

At the first Committee meeting in October 1991, we tried to establish a focus for the Symposium. At the conclusion of the meeting and after very lively discussion, we still had no decision on the theme. It was at the next meeting we agreed that, because we are the 'bush capital', our theme would be Nature and Culture, a theme broad enough to allow plenty of flexibility. And a large number of people responded with offers of papers. Though at the last moment a couple of people were not able to present their papers, we still had so many that we were forced to include some concurrent sessions.

It seems that at these symposia everyone wants the time to speak to each other and relax as well as to listen to wonderful speakers – theoretical and experiential explorations of food and wine. Since we meet only every eighteen months it's always very exciting to be together again. It's always disappointing that many important people are missing, in this case, especially the originators of the Australian Symposium of Gastronomy. We were very pleased to have the company of Michael Symons for a short time, at the Poets' Supper on day one.

It was gratifying that people came not only from all over Australia, but also from the United Kingdom, Hong Kong, Japan and Indonesia. Our special guest and keynote speaker was the distinguished international food writer, Claudia Roden, who gave a wonderful paper on the food of Italy. Claudia was a charming, warm and lively personality whose contribution was an important factor in establishing the tone of the Symposium.

When it came to publishing the proceedings, our task was much easier because many of the paper-givers were able to provide us with their paper on disk. In the case of those who spoke off the top of their heads we have included an abstract in lieu of the paper. Thanks to the untiring efforts of Alan Saunders (with help from Cherry Ripe), who recorded every session on tape. We do not have the space to include discussions.

As well as recording the papers presented we have also done our best to record information about everything else that happened: from our delicious breakfasts to what must have been the most amazing theatrical banquet of the decade, if not the century, designed and 'delivered' by Gay Bilson. Much has been written about it, and we have included some of this material in the proceedings.

Finally, we thank everyone who came. We look forward to the Eighth Symposium of Australian Gastronomy!

Mary Brander, Rosemary Brissenden, Michael Chin, Marion Halligan, Dorothy Davis, Margaret Emery, Peter King, Betty Meehan and Elizabeth Minchin.

Sunday

7 March

CANBERRA

WALTER Burley Griffin (1876-1937), a Chicago landscape architect, was awarded first prize in an international competition for the design of Australia's national capital in 1912.

He was born in the village of Maywood, eleven miles west of Chicago on 24 November 1876, the eldest of four children of an insurance agent. He graduated from the University of Illinois (Department of Architecture) as a Bachelor of Science in 1899 and was employed in the architectural office of Dwight Heald Perkins. In 1901 Griffin was associated with Frank Lloyd Wright in his Oak Park Studio, but in 1905 went into practice on his own account.

In 1911 the Australian Government launched a competition for the design of the yet unnamed national capital to be built on the Limestone Plains, 200 miles southwest of Sydney.

A contour model of the site was put on display in Chicago, as were similar models in London, New York, Washington, Ottawa, Paris, Berlin, Cape Town and Wellington. As a competitor Griffin received copies of the surveys carried out by the government surveyor, geological reports and two eight feet long reproductions in colour of cycloramic water colour paintings which gave a 360 degree view of the site.

The competition Board of Assessors failed to agree on which of the 137 designs submitted should be given first prize. Mr King O'Malley, Minister for Home Affairs and an American by birth, adjucated, and endorsed the majority recommendation of the Board that the first prize of £1,750 should go to Walter Burley Griffin.

Walter and Marion Burley Griffin

Griffin married Marion Mahoney on 23 June 1911. She was the second woman to graduate in Architecture from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1894, and had worked in the office of Frank Lloyd Wright with Griffin.

Marion was responsible for the beautiful drawings which accompanied Griffin's design entry. She claimed it was due to her that Griffin completed the drawings, which were sent off at the last moment to meet the closing date in February 1912.

In July 1913 Griffin visited Australia and was appointed Federal Capital Director of Design and Construction, a position he was to hold until it was terminated in 1920.

In 1914 Griffin and his wife moved to Melbourne where he was engaged on planning the national capital

Photographer: Bob Cooper

and in conducting a private architectural practice. He planned the layout of the New South Wales town of Leeton and to a lesser extent, Griffith, and the suburb of Castlecrag in Sydney.

In Melbourne Griffin designed some remarkable houses, the Newman Roman Catholic College at Melbourne University and the Capitol Theatre and office block.

In 1924 Walter and Marion Griffin moved from Melbourne to Castlecrag to supervise its development.

The Depression caused Griffin's practice to dwindle but he was still able to be innovative in the design of municipal incinerators, one of which, at Willoughby, New South Wales, has been listed by the National Trust for preservation.

In October 1935 Griffin was commissioned to design a library for the University of Lucknow and left Australia for India. He died there at the age of 60 on 11 February 1937. Marion Burley Griffin died in Chicago, in August 1961, at the age of 91.

Reference

Commonwealth of Australia Federal Capital Competition: City and Environs – Walter Burley Griffin's prize winning entry in the 1911 competition for the design of Australia's national capital – Canberra. Poster published by Clareville Press, Torrens, Australian Capital Territory.

Photographer: Bob Cooper

THE VENUE

Photographer: Betty Meehan

THE Symposium was held at Blackfriars Conference Centre. The Conference Centre is part of Blackfriars Dominican Priory, situated in pleasant surroundings in north Canberra. The spacious building includes a peaceful enclosed garden and plenty of walking space. The Mount Ainslie-Majura Reserve is within walking distance of the Priory.

As was to be expected in a priory, symposium participants were accommodated in small and simply-furnished rooms. However, most rooms had a pleasant view and were made more welcoming by the addition of a small vase of fresh flowers and bush leaves placed on handmade and much-loved doyleys – and a small parcel of homemade shortbread biscuits.

Photographer: Alex McKay

TASTING OF CANBERRA DISTRICT WINES

The wines featured at the Symposium were the cool climate wines of the Canberra district.

On the first night of the program there was a tasting of wines from 11 wineries of the Canberra district. In the cloisters of the Priory, the owners and winemakers of Benfield Estate, Brindabella Hills, Doonkuna Estate, Helm's, Jeir Creek, Lark Hill, Madew, Murrumbateman Winery, Park Lane and Westering attended to personally present a selection of their wines and to discuss the wines. A range of grape varieties and styles were shown: dry whites from chardonnay, riesling, sauvignon blanc and semillon; dry reds from cabernet sauvignon, shiraz, merlot and pinot noir; sweet whites from semillon, sauvignon blanc and riesling. Max Lake commented that there were a lot of good wines, some ordinary wines and a brilliant red.

Wines served at the Local Chefs' Dinner on Tuesday 9 March were all from the Canberra district. After tasting and re-tasting a wide range of wines of the district in the six-month period prior to the Symposium, the Committee selected Doonkuna Sauvignon Blanc 1992, Kyeema Semillon 1992, Lark Hill Chardonnay 1991, Madew Rhine Riesling 1992, Lake George Pinot Noir 1988, Brindabella Hills Hilltops Cabernet Merlot 1990, Helm's Cabernet Merlot 1990, Clonakilla Shiraz 1990, Jeir Creek Botrytis Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1991 and Lake George Muscat to complement the dishes presented by selected Canberra chefs.

The Committee appreciates that the number of wines presented at the Local Chefs' Dinner was possibly more than some symposiasts would have preferred on a single occasion. The Committee's objective, however, was to provide the opportunity to sample the quality and the breadth of varieties and styles made in the district, having particular regard to the small scale of their production and consequent limited availability outside the district. With hindsight, another option would have been to present some of these wines, and others made in the district, at the French Picnic on Monday and at the Turkish Feast on the Tuesday.

Photographer: Alex McKay

EXHIBITION – CULINARY AFFAIRS: PLACES AND HISTORY

THROUGHOUT the symposium, a small photographic exhibition of Australian places associated with food was on display outside the seminar rooms at The Priory. The exhibition was prepared by the Australian Heritage Commission (AHC) especially for the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy. All of the places depicted in the display are listed in the AHC's Register of the National Estate. Places included in the exhibition were:

- **Mount Ophir Winery, Rutherglen, Victoria**
  This picturesque winery was built in the late 1890s for the Burgoyne family and operated until 1957.
- **Palace Hotel, Perth, Western Australia**
  Built in 1895, the Palace Hotel reflects the buoyant spirit of Perth during the Gold Rush era. The Palace replaced an earlier pub which dated from 1883.
- **Wittwers Flour Mill, Handorf, South Australia**
  This 140 year-old self-driven mill was built by one of the earliest Handorf settlers. The mill served as a wool and grain store before conversion in 1970 to a restaurant which has become renown for rollicking Bavarian Hofbrauhaus banquets in true lager style.
- **Macaroni Factory, Hepburn Springs, Victoria**
  The factory was built in 1859, by Pirtro and Giovanni Lucini to provide macaroni to the over 20,000 strong Swiss-Italian community which established itself in the Daylesford area during the Gold Rush. Macaroni from the factory was sent all over Australia and even exported to Italy.
- **Playford Club Hotel, Pine Creek, Northern Territory**
  A corrugated, galvanised iron structure which served as a pub for over 60 years from 1889 until 1957. The pub was originally erected as a terminus hotel for the Pine Creek Railway.
- **Sugar Mill, St Helena Island, Queensland**
  St Helena Island became a penal settlement in 1866. The first crop produced by the prisoners was sugar cane and a sugar mill was built on the island. The high-standing sugar cane was thought to provide too much protection for would be escapees and was replaced by other crops such as potatoes and lucerne.
- **Shell Midden, Willandra Lakes, New South Wales**
  This Aboriginal shell midden is on the shores of Lake Garnpung in the Willandra Lakes system, near Mildura. It is composed of thousands of freshwater mussel shells (*Velesunio ambiguous*) and represents many meals eaten by the Aborigines of the area 20,000 years ago.
- **Duntroon Dairy, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory**
  Possibly the oldest building in the Australian Capital Territory, the dairy dates from the early 1830s and formed part of the Duntroon property granted to Robert Campbell in 1825.

Photographer: Norman Plant

- **Oyster Harbour Fish Trap Site, Western Australia**
  These low barriers of stone were used by Aboriginal people to trap fish. Such structures are vulnerable to destruction and this is one of the best preserved examples in the southwestern region of Western Australia.
- **New Churches Wine Tavern and Restaurant, Melbourne, Victoria**
  The building that currently houses the New Churches wine tavern and restaurant is part of a Melbourne historic conservation area which includes a range of Victorian period residences in different architectural styles.
- **Baker's Oven, Pine Creek, Northern Territory**
  The bakery at Pine Creek dates from the early 1920s and was, like the Playford Club Hotel, built of corrugated iron. Behind the bakery are a number of corrugated iron sheds which include the bakery's two brick ovens.

THE BOOKSHOP

Artist: Jeanette Fry

THE University Co-op Bookshop from The Australian National University campus set-up a display and sale of culinary and associated books including many written or edited by participants. The Symposium committee organised a marquee which was set up in the courtyard for this purpose. Many participants took the opportunity to see and/or purchase books during breaks over the course of the Symposium.

TABLE TILES

SYMPOSIASTS may like to know a bit more about the ceramic table tiles used during the Poets' Supper and the courtyard lunches for spreads of cheese, meats and fruits.

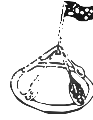
Philip Lakeman and Graham Oldroyd produced the table tiles for the Symposium from their extensive range of table ceramics, which includes platters, cafe tables and dinner plates.

A commissioned work of six ceramic mural panels by Graham Oldroyd and painter Michael Ramsden, completed in 1988, hangs in the Members' Gallery of new Parliament House, and were part of the Wednesday morning's tour of the artworks of new Parliament House. This work preceded the development of the glazes and techniques now incorporated into the 'lyrical' foodie designs of Graham and Philip's table ceramics.

The tiles in use during the Symposium were available for purchase at very reasonable prices. All were sold and now adorn the kitchens at various symposiasts.

Photographer: Alex McKay

Photographer: Alex McKay



MENU and WINE

Oysters
supplied by Australian Oyster Marketing Co-operative Ltd, New South Wales

Lamb loin with herb crust
Lamb prosciutto
King Island peppered sirloin, cold smoked
Gallantine of quail, hot smoked
supplied by Poachers Pantry, Hall, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Smoked trout pâté
supplied by Bondola Trout Farm, Braidwood, New South Wales

Mesclun salad with a dressing of basil red wine vinegar and olive oil
supplied by Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory
and
McLaren Vale, South Australia, (olive oil)

Tomatoes
supplied by Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Australian Capital Territory

Smoked trout
supplied by Butts, Albury, New South Wales (donated by Margaret Parker Catering)

Olives
green organic from Leeton, New South Wales, supplied by Club Vedge, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory and Kalamata olives from McLaren Vale, South Australia

Breads and crispbread
donated by Swiss Bakehouse, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Butter, unsalted
donated by The Bega Co-operative Society Ltd, Bega, New South Wales

Cheese: Tilba Club and other varieties
donated by ABC Cheese Factory, Central Tilba, New South Wales

Snowy Mountains goats cheese
from Hobbitt Farm, Jindabyne, New South Wales

Apples, mixed varieties
supplied by Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Served with a selection of Australian wines chosen by Sarah Adey

THE Symposium committee ordered and/or collected almost all regional food for the supper. It was prepared in the kitchen and set-up in the cloisters around the courtyard by committee members Peter King, Margaret Emery and Dorothy Davis, assisted by symposiast, Jill Stone.

Photographer: Alex McKay

ENTERTAINMENT

Cathie O'Sullivan

Harpist composer and singer, Cathie O'Sullivan entertained the symposiasts with *Food of Love: Music and Poetry from Canberra*, in which she drew on the poetry of Robert Brissenden, David Campbell and Shaw Neilson to perform:

Fox
David Campbell and Cathie O'Sullivan

The Old Track R.F. Brissenden

First Light at Wilson's Valley
R.F. Brissenden and Cathie O'Sullivan

The Moon was Seven Days Down
Shaw Neilson and Cathie O'Sullivan

Two Songs with a Spanish Burden
David Campbell and Cathie O'Sullivan

Nectarines R.F. Brissenden

Photographer: Alex McKay

Ann Edgeworth and Philip Grundy

Canberra poets Ann Edgeworth and Philip Grundy delighted symposiasts by reading a selection of poems by Canberra poets:

The Label Geoff Page

Paradise Ann Edgeworth

A Pledge Geoffrey Dutton

Letter from Italy
R.F. Brissenden

A Drunk's Defence
A.D. Hope

Vinum Deorum
Philip Grundy

After the Lunch Peter Kent

Monday

8 March

BREAKFAST

Breakfasts were all held in the dining room. Those committee members who were living-in shared the responsibility for setting-up breakfasts, with the help of the kitchen staff.

MENU

Juice
supplied by Blackfriars Priory

Coffee
blend prepared by Grinders, Melbourne, Victoria

Penelope Sach Petal tea, and Australian (Madura) tea

Assorted jams and jellies
made and contributed by symposiasts

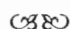
Breads and pastries
from Cornucopia Bakery, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Butter, unsalted
from The Bega Co-operative Society Ltd, Bega, New South Wales

Raspberries, blackberries, peaches and nectarines
from Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Smoked salmon and smoked tuna
donated by Aquatas and Tassal, Hobart, Tasmania
(organised and delivered by symposiast, Barbra Blomberg)

Jams, jellies and biscuits contributed by Symposiasts Jane Adams (cumquat marmalade), Lillian Alden (raspberry jam), Barbra Blomberg (raspberry and blackcurrant jam), Lois Butt (damson jelly and hazelnut bread), Ann Creber (spiced apple butter, marmalade, biscuits), Margaret Emery (plum jam, seville marmalade), Margaret Findlay (raspberry jam), Richard Hosking (black cherry jam), Belinda Jeffery (cherry and redcurrant jam), Maria Kelly (plum jam), Diana Marsland (caramelised fig jam), Barbara Santich (crabapple jelly), Rosemary Stanton (quince jelly), Jill Stone (bramble jelly), Judith Sweet (raspberry and dark plum jam), Hilary Wright (cherry plum and apple jam), Sue Zweep (biscuits), plus other unidentified contributors.



COOKING IN ITALY – TRADITIONS, CHANGES AND TRENDS

Claudia Roden

THE trips I made in Italy to research a series for the *Sunday Times Magazine* taught me a great deal about the country in an intimate kind of way. Italy is a particularly good example of the way food is bound up with and reflects the life, history and culture of a people.

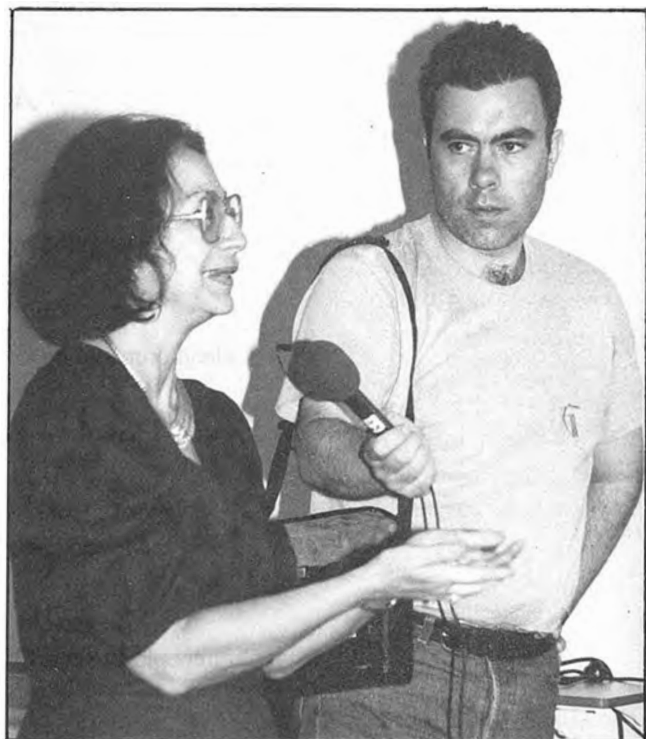
Once upon a time what we knew as Italian food was limited to a few dishes which included spaghetti bolognese and a la carbonara, veal Marsala and liver alla veneziana (what Italian restaurants all over the world had in their set menus). It is only in the last few years that the incredible diversity of the cooking has been revealed – even to Italians. There is no such thing as Italian cooking. The cooking is regional, it is Sicilian, Piedmontese, Neapolitan, Venetian and so on – not national.

We should expect culinary diversity from a country where the landscape, vegetation and climate constantly change (there are hills, mountains, plains and coastline) – and where every town and village is totally different from the next. The architecture, the ambience, the way people behave is different and you can hear different dialects and even different languages (as in Friuli and Sardinia where menus are in two languages).

But the extraordinary diversity is a legacy of Italy's fragmented past and its division, until the unification of the country less than a century and a half ago, into many independent sovereign states. There were kingdoms, duchies, lordships and republics, papal and city states, and each had its own history, culture and traditions.

After the decline of the Roman Empire, Italy became a many-centred universe. In the Middle Ages each big town, in central and northern Italy especially, conquered and managed the surrounding land, and the great sea towns had their own colonies around the Mediterranean. These towns and communes were ruled by different laws and institutions (they were also constantly divided by economic and political rivalries, bitter conflicts and wars).

A kaleidoscope of foreign influences – the French in Piedmont, Austrians in Lombardy, Trentino-Alto Adige and Veneto, Yugoslavs in Venezia Giulia, Spaniards in the south, Arabs in Sicily – reinforced the differences. These differences are particularly apparent in the cooking. (Raisins and pine nuts and couscous in Sicily, yeast cakes like panettone in Verona Lombardy.)



Photographer: Alex McKay

The south has a tradition of unity in diversity because the regions shared the same rulers and destinies and this is apparent with a greater similarity of dishes and the dominance of Neapolitan cooking. But in the north and central Italy where there are hardly two cities that shared the same succession of rulers or had the same cultural heritage, there are more local specialities which belong to cities. When King Victor Emmanuel of Piedmont was proclaimed King of a united Italy in 1861, the component parts of the new nation were disconnected and extremely diverse.

The great cleavage, partly historical, partly climatic and economical, was that which divided the north from the south, the former Kingdom of Naples whose inhabitants belonged to another civilization from the north.

The 20 administrative regions which were formed after the war correspond more or less to the states that existed before unification and their particularism has not been cancelled out. Each region is a world in itself with its own identity. Local patriotism – *campanilismo*, is such that each feels strongly about its food and lays claim to having the best cooking in Italy. (They also tell you that the produce of the next region gives you cancer.) That there are hundreds of different types of pasta of different shapes and sizes and at least 2000 dialect names illustrates the

independent anarchic spirit of Italy which independence did not change.

Cooking also reflects social change. Italy has changed dramatically since the Second World War and it is still changing. The political writer Giorgio Bocca writes in *Italia che cambia* (Changing Italy) that it has changed more in these last few years than in the preceding 3000.

There were industries in the north at the end of the 19th century. But, until the 'economic miracle' after the war, Italy was still mainly an agricultural country, where a system of share cropping prevailed – *mezzadria*, by which peasant farmers lived on estates as tenants and cultivated the land, giving half the produce to the landlord as rent. Estates were large and divided into fields or *podori*, each housing a family community headed by a *mezzadro* or *cappoccio*. Farming methods were archaic. Peasants were busy all the year round growing wheat, maize or rice, vegetables and fruit. Wine was made on each estate and, in many, olive oil also. Every farm kept pigs, rabbits and poultry. In the north and centre they also bred a few calves for the market. They made cheese and cured pork. But the harvest often failed and life was hard. Until then the cooking had remained little changed for hundreds of years.

The cooking of Italy has its roots in that kind of life. It is basically home and country cooking for large families, a combination of peasant food and the grand dishes that belonged to the nobility which were prepared by the peasantry on special occasions – some only once a year at carnival time. The different styles may have a city stamp but they have their roots in the land. Town and country in Italy have always been closely bound. Since the Middle Ages big towns in north and central Italy owned the land around them and the rich and noble spent a good part of the year in their country houses. In the south, feudal landlords had castles in the country while the agricultural population lived in walled hilltop towns for protection and went to work in faraway fields everyday. The courts were something different. They often had French cooks (as early as the Middle Ages) especially after the French revolution brought them out in search of work. In the south, head cooks are still called 'monsu' in the local dialect after the French word 'monsieur'.

Because the cooking of Italy is so varied and diverse and because it was never formalised as it was in France, there is no 'haute cuisine' or 'cuisine bourgeoisie' or classic national cuisine. But now cooking is a very important profession and catering schools all over the country teach what they call 'classic' cooking which is basically French with the best known Italian dishes so that their pupils can find jobs all over the world (most do seasons in different resorts in Italy and travel between the seaside, lakes, mountains and ski resorts). They seldom teach their own local dishes (except when they get American or Japanese students),

When Italy was rapidly transformed in the fifties and sixties into a highly industrialised modern consumer society where women went out to work and had little time to cook, the old life was swept away. The *mezzadria* system was abolished in the early sixties. The government gave credit to tenants to buy their land at an interest of only three percent, but peasants still abandoned the land for the cities and factories. People from the poorer south invaded the richer north in search of work and a better life or went abroad. With this industrial, economic and social revolution came a change of eating and cooking habits (the easier, less time-consuming dishes were kept up) and a homogenising of cultures.

Now the culinary borders have been confused and there is no longer a precise geography of food. The great differences were between north and south. Before the war you could divide Italy according to cooking fats. There was butter in the north, pork fat in the centre and olive oil in the south. The Italy of polenta and rice and of boiled meats was in the north, and the Italy of pizza and dry pasta was in the south. Black pepper was used in the north, hot red pepper in the south. In the north they cooked with wine, in the south with tomatoes.

The past 45 years have seen the *'invasione pizzaiola'* and the adoption of dry pasta, both hardly ever eaten in the north before, in every corner of Italy. Mass-production of foods has brought standardisation. You see the same fresh pasta vans everywhere in the hill villages and sea towns. The same factories make all the different regional salamis and cheeses. Even buffalos that provide rich milk for making *mozzarella*, which were once only in the south, are now also raised in the north. Throughout Italy you find soft elongated rolls called banane and hard crusty rolls (light and airy and half empty inside). They are the breads of the North – of Lombardy, Piedmont and the Veneto – and they have replaced the dozens of regional breads. The use of olive oil has become widespread (in the past a bottle of olive oil might have lasted a whole year in a family in the north) and few people now will eat pork fat, even in the south. Cooks in all the main cities are mostly from the south – from the Abruzzi, Apulia and Sicily, and this has had a major influence on national tastes.

Many of the old traditional pastries which were part of the ancient rituals to celebrate religious festivals are now mass produced and sold all the year round. Once every town and village had its own

version of *petits fours*, sweet bread rings, fritters in the shape of ribbons, hard biscuits to dunk in wine, and they all had pastries filled with ricotta, nuts or candied fruit. Now they are often much the same.

Italy like all other countries has succumbed to fast foods and has gone through many fashions in eating, from steak and salad after the War (a reaction against meat only once a week which had been the case for most country people) and French cuisine in restaurants, to a proliferation of hamburger, sandwich and salad bars and *nouvelle cuisine*, going through the 'threes and fours' when everything – spaghetti, omelettes, pizza – had three or four cheeses and three or four herbs. Now there is concern with health and dieting and the cult of the new (they call it '*cucina creativa*'). I was offered a *risotto tricolore* in the national colours with chopped tomatoes and kiwi fruit and another with wild strawberries and found menus full of things like prawns with whisky, and ravioli filled with crab and vodka or with smoked salmon. Almost every restaurant offers smoked salmon in various forms – chopped into tagliatelle, sliced with mushrooms or mixed with salad. One could say that smoked salmon from Scotland and Canada is the most important unifying factor in restaurants throughout the country. Italians have also developed a great passion for green things, wild things and raw things, especially for *radicchio, rucola* (rocket) and *funghi porcini*, which are available everywhere all the year round. (Unity has come through experimental eclecticism.)

But despite all this, regional cooking has survived, and perhaps because of this, it is reflowering. Nostalgia and fascination for the past and the quest for identity has brought a revival of interest in traditional cooking and a respect for genuine produce. Every region has its *'appassionati di cucina'* who care passionately about their food and hold fiercely onto their dishes. In Emilia Romagna alone there are 100 confraternities of people whose purpose, apart from conviviality, is to uphold the standards of one particular food such as fritto misto or tortellini. Members go in group tastings and complain if for instance the broth does not have golden globules (they have usually been removed for the dieting brigades).

As their world changed and the old traditions seemed to be vanishing, and when they seemed to lose touch with their roots, people began to hanker for the good things of the past. Afraid to lose forever their culture and their link with the land, Italians have started to 'rediscover' their individual culinary heritage in the old everyday foods of the countryside. They call it *il recupero* and *la riscoperta*. The dishes which evoke the 'happy days' when peasant farmers had ten children, and families were close and patriarchal, when the kitchen was the living room and meals were convivial and full of noise and laughter, are very much in fashion. Poor peasant dishes like maize flour *polenta* and *pasta e fagioli* (bean soup) and those based on bread or dried chestnuts or made with offal or wild plants are particularly popular. (I have had dishes which were brought by Italo American chefs from California.)

In Italy the past is not far away. The generation that cooks in the old way, the *nonnine* (little grandmothers), is still there, and inspired chefs go to them for recipes (they all say their recipes come from *le nonnine)*. Many showed me handwritten recipe books as well as old cookery books, including facsimiles of books written by men who cooked at court (some of which were printed during the Renaissance) which they used. These chefs follow the seasons, use local ingredients, track down homemade produce and band together to get farmers to raise quail, ducks, geese and game (which had almost disappeared). They explained that they wanted to update and revitalise tradition, not embalm it, and that their rediscovery is really a *'riscoperta creativa'*.

There is a certain mystification going on and what someone called 'nostalgic kitsch'. Some of the dishes which are revived never really existed like *tortelloni* filled with nettles. At a restaurant in Parma the chef-owner offered me *tortelli* stuffed with apple, saying it was an old local dish. When Massimo Alberini, the culinary historian, who was of the party, told him not to make up stories, he said that the recipe might not have been codified but that his grandmother made them.

Soon after Italy was united Emilia-Romagna, with Bologna as its capital, came to represent the ideal Italian cuisine. Now it is the cooking of southern Italy that is the most appreciated. *'La scienza in cucina e l'arte di mangiare bene'* by Pelegrino Artusi now called 'L'Artusi', published in 1891 and reprinted more than a hundred times, was the first book to deal with Italy as whole. The author, fired by patriotic fervour and the desire to create a national cuisine from the multitude of regional ones so that 'Italians could understand each other at table'. Artusi came from Forlimpopoli and Emilia was his model. Emilia's dishes which he describes with special enthusiasm form the bulk of his recipes. He told his readers to 'take a deep bow when you meet Bolognese cooking'. He ignored the dishes of the Italian South or transformed them by reducing or eliminating garlic, onion, spices and peppers, by increasing the quantities of meat (he wrote for an emerging middle class who could afford) and adding butter and velvety *'besciamella'* sauces. Before Artusi books had been written by cooks attached to royal courts and contained dishes that were for a great part French.

The popular writer Ada Boni continued in the manner of Artusi. It is only in the past few years that books on the cooking of the regions have been published in Italy. (Still most regions which had different ways of making pasta – with only flour and water and without eggs or with flour and egg yolks only and in various proportions of water, flour and eggs – are now using the standard Bolognese way with 100g flour per egg.)

Bologna became famous for gastronomy when the university, the first in Europe, opened in the 12th century and the city became known as 'la grassa e la dotta' (the fat and the learned). Her reputation as a gastronomic centre has flourished ever since. In the fifties and sixties Bolognese cooks won international prizes, but today in this age of health and cholesterol awareness and dieting, their cuisine has lost some of its prestige because there is too much emphasis on meat, charcuterie and cheese (Emilia is the region of Parma ham and Parmesan cheese) with pork fat and butter and too few vegetables. (In Emilia today they are re-introducing from the past, simple peasant vegetable dishes which Artusi ignored.)

Now it is the cooking of southern Italy – the famous 'Mediterranean diet' that is most appreciated. (When I phoned randomly in Milan to ask people what they ate, the reply was not the Milanese *risotto* which takes too much time nor the *osso buco* which is too rich and heavy, but pasta and the Mediterranean type dishes cooked with olive oil.) American nutritionists were the first to discover the merits of the healthy low-cholesterol 'Mediterranean diet' (it was Ancel Keys). The food of the early Italian immigrants who came to America mostly from the south had been considered poor and unhealthy (social workers were sent to encourage Italo-Americans to change their eating habits). Now it is considered the best because it is rich in grain, pulses, vegetables and fruit with plenty of fish, little meat and olive oil as the cooking medium. It is also full of strong flavours and aromas and what the Italians call 'fantasia'.

Authentic local food is not easy to find in restaurants because Italians do not want to spend very much to eat what their grandmothers can make, and want to try something new. For years French food guides only commended restaurants with 'creative' cooking so there was no incentive to stick to tradition, while state catering schools teach classic French and international cooking with the better known Italian dishes, so that students are able to find work anywhere. It is in the *trattoria*, and the family-run restaurants where the owners themselves cook, that you are likely to get the real thing. Since tourists have become more adventurous and started to ask for local specialities, more and more *'piatti tipici'* have begun to appear on menus during the tourist season and some restaurants offer the kinds of things that no one wants to do at home any more because they take too long or make the house smell of frying all the year round.

The owner of a restaurant in Umbria was angry that I wanted only traditional local foods. 'Why must we remain stuck in the past?' he complained. Food is always changing and that is natural, but now that changes come through the media and all the world is getting to be the same, what appeals and fascinates and touches the heart is that which distinguishes Italy, which recalls her past and which is part of her precious heritage and traditions.

It is easy to understand that a country so full of natural beauty, art, music and tradition, with a quality of life that can still warm the heart (at least in parts) has a food that is simple and unaffected but full of rich flavours and delightful touches.

Coffee, Petal tea, Australian tea
(for details see p.15)

Assorted biscuits
made and contributed by Symposiasts

Photographer: Alex McKay

NATURE AND THE SEASONS IN JAPANESE FOOD CULTURE

Richard Hosking

IT is fundamental to the Japanese outlook that they are a unique people. So strong is this feeling, that they cut themselves off from the rest of the world for two and a half centuries in an effort to avoid foreign influence. It was during this period, the Edo period, which lasted from the beginning of the sixteenth century to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Americans forced their way in, that the foundations of the modern Japanese ways of life and thought were established. No doubt this isolation fed and reinforced the sense of uniqueness, which is at times so bizarre that a large part of the population believes that it is only in Japan that the four seasons, spring, summer, autumn and winter exist. It is a cultural myth which even used to be taught in school. So many people I have spoken to, both young and old, have expressed surprise when I have referred to the seasons abroad, and this despite the fact that television now brings the world into the Japanese home and the all-time favourite of classical music is Vivaldi's *Four Seasons!*

Alex McKay

I am not suggesting that the Japanese are in any way strange in having such beliefs, as every society does, but it is certainly easier for an outsider to be aware of them and it is also true that in Japan the four seasons **are** very distinct. The Japanese also believe they are close to nature in a way that Western people are not. Certainly they seem to accept nature, including human nature, in all its variety, in a way that we often find difficult, even though they seem to feel less responsibility for it beyond their own immediate needs.

Seasonal changes are very much a part of nature that the Japanese like to make much of. When it comes to food, they have four main ways of marking the passage of the seasons. Firstly, and most obvious, are the different foods that are harvested in each season. Secondly, seasonality is emphasised by decorations and garnishes that are well-known to symbolise a particular season. Thirdly, the dishes cooked vary from season to season. And fourthly, the china and pottery on which the food is served is chosen for its appropriateness to the season.

Spring

Spring comes first. Very much so in Japan, where everything new seems to start in spring – the new school year, new jobs, new annual budgets, and people mostly move house in spring. Spring in Japan is famous for *hanami*, outdoor drinking parties arranged on the pretext of admiring the cherry blossom. But, as the Japanese say, *hana yori dango*, food and drink before flowers.

Spring is the time for a great variety of fish[1] and, especially in late spring, lots of vegetables including *sansai* (mountain vegetables) picked from the wild. Important among the fish are anchovies (*katakuchi iwashi*), garfish (*sayori*), rockfish (*mebaru*), flathead (*kochi*), blackbream (*chinu*), flounder (*karei*), hairtail (*tachiuo*), whitebait (*shirauo*), trout (*nijimasu*), conger eel (*anago*) and in late spring, Spanish mackerel (*sawara*), red bream (*tai*) and bonito (*katsuo*).

Apart from familiar vegetables such as cabbage, spring onions (*wakegi*) and spinach[2] and in late spring and early summer onions, potatoes, French beans, broad beans, garden peas, tomatoes, aubergines and cucumbers, the Japanese spring vegetables include lotus root, butterbur (*fuki*), bamboo shoots, chrysanthemum leaves, milk vetch (*rengeso*), water dropwort (*seri*) and udo (*Aralia cordata*). There is

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1 I have tried as far as possible to find out and use the appropriate Australian names for the fish mentioned in this paper, a difficult task, not least because fish names are notoriously variable and inconsistent.

2 *Spinacia oleracea*. Different from what is usually called spinach in Australia (seakale beet?).

also a large selection of oriental brassicas such as mizuna (*Brassica campestris var. lanciniifolia*), as well as a large selection of roots, shoots, leaves and flowers picked from the wild and known as *sansai* (wild vegetables). The best-known of these are the young fronds of bracken and fiddlehead ferns. *Sansai*, though free for the picking, are considered rather luxurious and so are not usually included in the Zen vegetarian cuisine.

As for fruit, the remains of the autumn's persimmons and apples and the winter's strawberries are the mainstay. Meat and poultry, though very popular, are not part of the traditional diet, nor can they really be considered seasonal.

Some typical spring dishes would be fish in season served as sashimi or grilled, finely chopped *sansai* mixed with steamed glutinous rice (*sansai okowa*), cooked salads (*aemono*) of young milk vetch shoots with a dressing of vinegared miso or *mizuna* with a dressing of tofu and sweetened *miso* or spinach with a sesame paste dressing. Lotus root, the holes filled with mustard, is served as *tempura* (fritters).

Of course there are many side dishes that could be served at any time of the year but which might be given a season garnish. In spring, perhaps the most typical garnish is a sprig of young *sansho*[3] leaves. These are called *kinome* and have a very aromatic, peppery flavour with a slightly numbing effect on the tongue. They could garnish almost anything but look very good against the white background of tofu.

The favourite designs for tableware to be used in spring will figure cherry blossoms, willow trees, *kinome*, and for late spring, wisteria and flags. The preferred colours are fresh pale blues and greens.

Summer

Spring in Japan is followed (except in Hokkaido) by the rainy season, which is incredibly humid (often over 90% humidity) and lasts from the middle of June to the middle of July. Everyone feels very lethargic and pupils slump over their desks enervated. During this period, *ume* (*Prumus mume*), a kind of apricot (though usually referred to as a plum) comes into season. *Umeshu*, an alcoholic drink (14%), is made in many Japanese households at this time by macerating ume in white spirit with crystal sugar and drunk especially towards the end of summer. It is believed to alkalise the blood, a desirable effect, since it is also believed that late summer exhaustion is caused by acidity of the blood. *Niume*, ume boiled with sugar and soya sauce, are eaten as a snack or relish. Nevertheless, appetites wane at this time and everyone waits for the rains to stop and summer to arrive. And when it does, it brings with it huge shoals of squid, a great Japanese favourite. Squid fishing done at night is one of the pleasures of a summer evening by the seaside is to see the fishing boats with their lanterns bobbing up and down attracting the squid with their light. I enjoy the sight though I don't particularly care for squid. But I do enjoy the sweetfish (*ayu, Plecoglossus altivelis*) which are taken from the rivers from mid-summer to late August. In some parts of Japan, cormorants are trained to catch ayu but can't eat them because of the rope around their throats. This kind of fishing is also done at night and parties are held on river fishing boats. One fisherman can control a number of tethered cormorants, and as the sake flows, fresh ayu are consumed in quantity.

Other summer fish are tuna (*maguro*), jock mackerel [yellowtail] (*aji*), grunt (*isaki, Parapristipoma trilineatum*) similar to the king snapper or rosy Job fish.

Apart from the Japanese pumpkin and sweet potato, summer vegetables are mostly familiar ones such as carrots, sweet peppers and leeks. Green asparagus and okra are especially popular. As for fruit, the mildly flavoured (to me, insipid) loquat is in season as well as the Japanese pear, which is crisp like and apple, though more moist. Grapes and peaches are also in abundance. Melons start to come in, with watermelons being extremely popular.

Throughout most of Japan, especially the Pacific seaboard, the summer heat is felt all the more acutely because of the high humidity, which in some places such as Hiroshima doesn't even let up at night. Day temperatures above 40°C with 80-90%+ humidity have to be endured and naturally the emphasis is on light, cool food. Chilled *somen*, wheat noodles that are normally served cold, are a great favourite, as is cold tofu, served with a dressing of soya sauce and a topping of shredded nori seaweed and grated ginger. Egg 'tofu' and sesame 'tofu', dishes which resemble tofu in shape and texture, are also very refreshing. The fish, when not eaten raw (*sashimi*), are usually grilled with plenty of salt and ayu is particularly good when cooked in this way. In the dog days of mid-summer much is made of eating freshwater eel (*unagi*) *kabayaki* to keep up one's strength (because of the high fat content of the eel). Kabayaki is a method of grilling used for various fish, especially various kinds of eel. They are filleted, skewered and grilled over charcoal while being basted with sweetened soya sauce. The grilled eel is then placed directly on top of a bowl of hot rice.

Spring and summer are obviously good times for eating cold rice dishes such as sushi and onigiri (rice balls). Rolled sushi with cucumber inside and crisp

[3] *Zanthoxylum piperitum*, similar to Szechwan pepper, *Zanthoxylum bungei.*

nori seaweed on the outside is very refreshing. A delicious summer way of eating hot rice is to mix in with it some finely chopped leaves of the beefsteak plant (*shiso, Perilla frutescens crispa*).

Aubergines are at their best in mid-August and can be served in numerous delicious ways. They are very good in miso soup, and also simmered in water flavoured with soya sauce, sake and sugar. There are also some excellent pumpkin dishes. The Japanese pumpkin is fairly small, and with cooking, the skin becomes soft enough to be eaten too. It can be simmered in sweetened water, served as a cooked salad with sesame dressing and makes wonderful tempura (fritters) as does aubergine. Tempura above all is a prawn dish, (the bigger the prawns the better) and, though available all year round, is very much a summer dish.

Any fresh leaves will make a good summer garnish, but above all, the green leaves of the beefsteak plant (*shiso*), and as for tableware, suitable patterns would figure sea waves, aubergines and anything that suggests coolness. Chunky glass is often used to suggest ice, and glass vessels in general are much used throughout the summer, though not, of course, for soup, which is served in a lacquered wood bowl all year round. Chopstick rests and wrappers are also often chosen to suit the season.

Autumn

From the middle of summer to the end of September the Japanese not only have to put up with an awful combination of heat and humidity but typhoons come in quick succession wreaking havoc. However, by the middle of October the climatic horrors have generally subsided and the season of mists and mellow fruitfulness is ushered in. Late October to early November is certainly the best time to be in Japan, and of course there is a rich harvest from land and sea. *Matsutake*, the justly famous mushrooms that can cost up to $100 and more each can perhaps best be appreciated in a Kyoto dish called *dobin mushi*. Tiny individual teapots called *dobin* are filled with very delicate stock containing pieces of chicken and matsutake and also ginkgo nuts, which are another autumnal treat. In fact the lovely autumn yellow leaves of the ginkgo tree are one of the main garnishes of autumn, though inedible. To add to the feast of delights in the little teapot, a few slices of the zest of *yuzu*, the Japanese citron, which now comes into season, are added. The stock is poured into a small sake cup and drunk, whilst the more solid things are taken out with chopsticks and eaten.

Another autumn delight from Kyoto is *yudofu*, for one-pot cooking at table is coming in with the cooler weather and *yudofu* is one of the best. *Yu* means hot water, so this is tofu heated in hot water at table. The diner lifts a piece of tofu out of the hot water, dips it in a dip of thin soya sauce mixed with lime juice, or better still, but later in the season, the juice of bitter oranges, grated white radish (*daikon*) and a little red chilli. Eating this in a temple garden in Kyoto overlooking a pond full of colourful carp, with the maple leaves turning red and the ginkgo, golden, must be one of the more poignant experiences of being in Japan.

Chrysanthemum leaves are back in season again in autumn and so are lotus root, cabbage, spinach and carrots. Carrot greens are also sold as a green vegetable and make very delicate tempura. They are also prepared as a cooked salad with sesame dressing. Potatoes, sweet potatoes and taro are now in as well as burdock, the great source of dietary fibre for the Japanese. The sweet potatoes are a great favourite, particularly with children, who rush out into the street when they hear the itinerant vendor's whistle and buy them hot off the barrow. They are roasted in a drum containing hot pebbles in which they are rotated. The same method is used for roasting chestnuts, which also come into season at this time. So long as they can avoid the rain, wonderful figs have quite a long season and persimmons arrive in abundance. The Japanese insist they should be eaten while still crisp, like an apple.

The fish of the season are mackerel (*saba*), saury pike (a kind of barracuda) (*samma, Cololabis saira*), salmon (*sake*), shad (a kind of herring) (*konoshiro*), and whiting (*kisu*). Crabs and oysters will start to come in and will get better as the weather gets colder.

Rice cooked with chestnuts provides a very tasty and nutritious dish at this time and the full range of one-pot dishes (*nabemono*) becomes available. All you have to do is have your large earthenware pot (*donabe*) full of kelp stock and sitting on a burner at table. Any vegetables you like plus tofu, chicken, meat, fish or oysters are put into the pot until cooked. Each diner has a bowl of dipping sauce the same as for yudofu and dips things into it as they become ready. Towards the end, noodles or pounded glutinous rice cakes (*mochi*) are added. At the end, you have a pot full of the most wonderful, nutritious soup stock, which is usually thrown down the sink.

Ginkgo leaves have already been mentioned as an autumn garnish, but even more important are the maple leaves turned red. As an edible garnish, ginkgo nuts are also used. Tableware will mostly be in warm browns, reds and gold and there is a great preference for wooden plates, whether lacquered or not.

Winter

One of the delights of winter eating in Japan is the

yellowtail kingfish (*buri, Seriola quinqueradiata*), which is excellent eaten raw as sashimi, makes wonderful teriyaki (grilled with a sweetened soya basting sauce) and is perhaps best when simmered whole with *daikon* (giant white radish) by a method known as *aradaki*, in which the water is flavoured with sake, soya sauce and sugar. The fish is succulent, the daikon counteracts its oiliness and usually a sliver of yuzu garnishes it with its wonderful aroma.

Other fish in season at this time are garfish (*sayori*), sardines (*ma iwashi*), carp (*koi*) and toado (toadfish, puffer), the notorious *fugu*. Fugu is considered a great delicacy not so much because of its flavour, of which there is very little, but because of its texture. The Japanese, like the Chinese, consider texture sufficient reason to eat something even if it tastes of nothing. *Konnyaku*, a tasteless, rubbery jelly made from the root of the devil's tongue[4] is another case in point. Fugu contains a fatal poison in its liver and only licensed chefs are allowed to prepare it for sale in shops or eating in restaurants, but it is an easy fish to catch and every winter people die because they've caught some or bought some unprepared and think they can prepare it themselves. Oysters, of course, are even better in winter than they are in autumn.

Burdock and lotus root continue in season and turnip and the deep red oriental carrot come in, as does the Chinese cabbage, *hakusai*, which comes into its own with the one-pot dishes. Several of these have already been mentioned, but in addition there is *sukiyaki*, in which slices of beef and vegetables are cooked in soya sauce, and sake with masses of sugar, then dipped in raw egg and eaten. Though not to my taste, it is an extremely popular dish.

Much more to my own taste is *oden*. A great variety of things such as potatoes, hard-boiled eggs, chunks of daikon, little bundles of kelp, blocks of konnyaku, various types of fish-paste sausage and tofu are simmered in stock at table (or on a stall in the park). Whatever you want is fished out, to be eaten with **very** hot mustard. This is a rather rough and ready treat. Much more refined is *chawan mushi*, a savoury custard steamed in tall cups with a lid. The custard, made from eggs and stock, contains prawns, slices of fish sausage, ginkgo nuts and lily roots (*yurine*) and is topped with a fragrant slice of yuzu.

A typical winter soup would be bean-paste (*miso*) soup containing julienne of daikon and strips of fried tofu. A suitable cooked salad would be spinach with a walnut paste dressing. Boiled foods are much eaten in winter and a typical example would consist of boiled bamboo shoots, snow peas and shitake mushrooms served together with boiled chicken and prawns.

The winter fruits are above all the citrus fruits, especially mandarins. Various kinds of lime are also valued, as are *dai dai*, the bitter oranges. Dried persimmons are a great delicacy at the end of the year. Then there are excellent local apples. And strawberries. We usually think of strawberries as a summer fruit, but in Japan they are grown in vinyl hothouses set up on the rice fields, which are empty after the rice harvest and will not be needed again until late spring.

The table settings for winter tend to continue as for autumn up till the end of the year, and from the beginning of the new year are symbolic of early spring. This is a little confusing since on the one hand the coldest day of mid-winter is traditionally considered to occur about the 20th of January, but also the traditional symbolism of new year is based on *shin shun*, 'new spring'. This is largely to do with the change from the old calendar, which celebrated new year and the beginning of spring in early February, to the Gregorian calendar now in use. 'New spring' is above all symbolised by 'plum' blossom (*ume*, the Japanese apricot). Cranes in flight, pine trees and bamboo are also suitable symbols for this period of the year. Lacquerware is used as much as possible for serving dishes, and as a garnish, sprigs of pine needles might be used.

New Year and pickles

In this brief survey of Japanese seasonal foods, I have not described the traditional foods of the greatest Japanese celebration, New Year. Suffice it to say that the main feature is cold foods, mostly boiled, packed into a set of tiered boxes called *jubako*. If you think it is strange to serve up cold foods in the middle of winter, remember that many Australians eat roast turkey and vegetables followed by steaming hot plum pudding in the middle of summer!

Pickles are served at every Japanese meal. There are innumerable varieties, but as they are mostly not intended to keep, the season's pickles are made from seasonal vegetables.

Freshness

It is not surprising that a people that feels so close to nature should value highly the freshness of food. Tinned foods are shunned to the extent that most Japanese kitchens don't have a tin opener. With daily shopping for food, frozen foods, too, are avoided to a surprising extent. Of course a lot of the fish comes frozen to the shop, but is thawed out (except for prawns, crabs and lobsters) before being sold to the customers.

Obviously the ultimate in freshness of fish would

[4] *Amorphophallus rivieri var. konjac*

be to eat the fish while it is still alive, and this is what is often done. It is known as *ikizukuri*, and I have witnessed it often. A magnificent, large, live fish is presented to the diners, then filleted, sliced for sashimi and replaced on the skeleton. At this point, sake is often poured onto the eyes of the fish and the whole thing jerks. You can be assured the fish is fresh. I was once with a small group of people and was offered tiny live whitebait. When I asked what they tasted like, I was told that they tasted of nothing, but you could feel them wriggling down your throat. After all, there are even non-Japanese who will swallow oysters alive. When I declined them, I was rebuked for disrupting the unity of the group. I replied that you could make anyone do anything with that argument. In the end, group unity was preserved by no-one eating them. They all said they didn't really fancy them anyway. Here is what a spokesman for the Japan Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals says:[5]

> Eating live fish is part of our unique Japanese culinary culture. Westerners eat dead fish, we eat them live. It's just a cultural thing. We are not being cruel, we want to have the best-tasting fish. If the fish were prepared simply for show, like for TV, we would be very much against that.

Making a display of the killing, it seems, is what upsets people.

As for inanimate things such as fruit, it used to be until quite recently that the Japanese wouldn't touch a banana that was beginning to get brown spots, or a tomato that was turning red. Greenness was the sign of youth and therefore freshness. This has changed such a lot quite recently that tomatoes are now normally sold red and bananas with black marks on them can no longer be bought at throwaway prices. As mentioned earlier, persimmons are always eaten before they start to get at all soft, at which point they are rejected.

The changing times

People have often expressed their fear to me that the traditional Japanese food culture will die out in the face of fast food from abroad. In my opinion, so long as there are rich people in Japan wanting to eat at high-class restaurants, the importance of seasonality will survive in Japanese food culture.

But ordinary people tend to eat what is readily available in the supermarkets. Nowadays, with onions from New Zealand[6], apples from Australia and fish from the seas of the world, seasonality is disappearing fast from the meals of the average home. Out-of-season foods figure largely on the daily menu. Nevertheless, even in the average home, seasonal changes will still be observed in many ways. For example, it is unthinkable, just not done, to serve one-pot dishes (*nabemono*) at any time other than autumn or winter. Every autumn people hope they will have a chance to taste this year's matsutake mushrooms. Chilled somen noodles and watermelon will only be eaten in summer and fresh *sansai* vegetables are only in spring.

Thus the Japanese continue to express their feelings of closeness to nature and observe the changes of the four seasons which mean so much to them.

[5] *The Daily Yomiuri*, 29 April 1991

[6] Japan ranks top in the world as an importer of food, 6% of which comes from Australia. Shrimps, prawns and lobsters are imported to the tune of US$3,000,000,000. Tuna and bonito imports are worth $1,100,000,000 and coffee $600,000,000 per annum.
The Daily Yomiuri, 12 Jan. 1993.

NOTES ON CULTURE AND COOKING IN INDONESIA TODAY

Sri Owen

MANY people that I've talked to in Australia say that the next big wave in this country will be Indonesian food. Then they give various reasons to explain why it hasn't quite happened yet. Naturally I would like to help make it happen, and one way to do this may be to explain a few factors that are at work in Indonesia itself. This brings me straight to international cuisine, because so many of these factors are operating from outside the country.

One thing that puts people off Indonesian food is the menu in so many Indonesian restaurants, inside the country and overseas: always the same old dishes, *nasi goreng, bakmie goreng, sate, gado-gado...* One reason for this is that there is very little tradition of restaurant cooking or restaurant eating; the two best places to eat have always been the home or the street. Indonesians enjoy their food, and communal eating plays an important part in traditional, religious and social life; but ordinary meals are usually simple, eaten quickly and not lingered over. Where a Frenchman would say, "What restaurant is appropriate to this occasion?" an Indonesian says, "Where is everyone going today?" People get used to eating the same thing every day and aren't very keen to try anything new. Inhabitants of one region don't know or care much what people in other parts of the country are eating. As a result, the commonest type of restaurant is the *rumah makan Padang*. Some Padang restaurants are good, many are not. They offer a standard selection of about a dozen dishes, and all of these are plonked down on the table in front of you; you eat and pay only for the ones that you want.

At the top end of the market, in many big hotels in Jakarta, Bali and elsewhere, the guest is faced with a buffet groaning under an assortment of richly-spiced and sauced dishes, each labelled with its Indonesian name. This is the modern version of the famous, or infamous, *rijsttafel*: a Dutch invention, which the tourist trade later sold back to Indonesia as the food component of the local culture, and which the European chef has had to do his best with. Many Indonesians are still convinced that a fixed-price rice-table, often with accompanying cultural performance, must be good public relations for traditional hospitality. At such a table, the inexperienced guest tries to sample everything, piles it all on his plate on top of a mountain of rice, and ends up with indigestion

Photographer: Alex McKay

but no clear recollection of what he actually ate.

This lack of a restaurant tradition raises the question of how far the chefs have been trained in their own country's cooking, and of whether a 'classical' tradition or body of recipes and techniques can be said to exist in Indonesia at all. The 'classic' *rijsttafel* was that which was served every Sunday in the Hotel des Indes in Batavia in the 1920s and 1930s to a clientele made up mainly of Dutch planters and businessmen: an era and a society as remote now as those of Baghdad in the days of the Caliphs, and very remote even then from the Indonesian population who lived and worked all around. For them, a spread like this would be associated with a great occasion: a rich family wedding or circumcision feast, or a celebration of *panen*, a village harvest-home supper. Especially for *panen*, all the women of the village who were not in the fields would be busy in their kitchens, collaborating but also competing with each other to provide the best dishes at a communal meal such as would take place once or perhaps twice a year.

So where is the new Indonesian menu going to come from? This question has been answered, in a very practical way, by Detlef Skrobanek at the Jakarta

Hilton. For him, the first problem was to get good food to diners efficiently. In his book, *The New Art of Indonesian Cooking*, he describes the work that he and his team of twelve Indonesian chefs did as 'applying modern cooking methods to what is essentially a village cuisine'.

The results are indeed far removed from the village and the harvest festival. This is a 'translation', a free and bold one. Many dishes are adapted from traditional originals. I shall not give examples here; I commend his book to you, and shall leave a copy with the Symposium organisers for general reference.

I find it instructive to compare Detlef Skrobanek's methods with my own, since we are both trying to do the same thing though our concepts of East-meets-West differ greatly. To my mind, he has gone a little too far in internationalizing this food; for example, he cooks all his meat very rare, which is quite alien to Indonesian tastes, and all his sauces are passed through a fine sieve, so that they lose the rough texture that Indonesians expect in a sauce. My *gule kambing*, as I make it nowadays, still uses a more traditional sauce than his, but now I serve it with medallions of lamb, not as the 'liquid lamb stew' that is described in my early books. His 'beef in *rendang* sauce' is a fillet steak in a rich coconut-milk sauce that really has no point of contact with authentic *rendang* – which, in any case, is a method of cooking, not a sauce.

I submitted a paper on Rendang to the 1984 Oxford Food Symposium. After a lengthy account of this traditional Minangkabau dish, I quoted Yohanni Johns' book, *Dishes From Indonesia*. Mrs Johns and I were both born in Padang Panjang; she is now a university lecturer here in Canberra. She writes:

> It is difficult to describe what makes *Rendang* rendang. What I think happens is something like this. As the cooking proceeds and the coconut milk becomes oil, it is absorbed into the pieces of meat; and with the constant gentle heat, the meat actually fries from inside. This is what gives a suggestion of crispness to the richness of the flavour, and makes the inside of the meat so smoothly and evenly cooked.

Rendang should remain *rendang*, just as roast beef and Yorkshire pudding should remain themselves and not be transformed into something else. In fairness to Mr Skrobanek, however, the problem in his book may be one of mere language. Some of the translations from Indonesian into English are not really very accurate: for example, what he describes as 'rendang sauce' is actually a *sambal goreng* sauce; but both could be called, in English, 'a rich [or spicy] coconut sauce', and indeed have been so described by a number of writers on Indonesian and Malaysian food.

Detlef Skrobanek generously arranged for me to sample eight or nine of the new dishes at a magnificent dinner in the Taman Sari restaurant of the Jakarta Hilton. The host was Prahasto Soebroto, an Indonesian who was at the Sydney Hilton for several years before becoming Food and Beverage Manager in Jakarta. The menu included:

Duck Breast on Peanut Sauce
Clear Prawn Soup with Lemon Grass
Yellow Tail Fish in Sour Turmeric Sauce
Lobster Mousse on Pancake Net
Tamarind Sherbet
Lamb with Spicy Veal Stuffing
Roast Javanese Beef Fillet
Soursop Sherbet
Tropical Fruit and Fermented Rice
gratinated with Cinnamon Sabayon and
Coconut Ice Cream

It was a memorable meal; but it was a very special occasion, because few of these dishes have gained permanent places on the menu. They are European dishes with an Indonesian flavour, but they have not established themselves with the wealthy Indonesians who eat there. Of course, I would never want to preserve 'authenticity' in ethnic cooking at the expense of good food. I suggest that it is possible to translate food from one culture to another quite faithfully, but only if the 'translator' is thoroughly familiar with both culinary 'languages' and their backgrounds.

There are other approaches. One of them is faithful adherence to tradition, the rescuing of dishes that might otherwise be forgotten: in a well-known Thai restaurant in Sydney, this approach is represented by David Thompson, of whom Cherry Ripe wrote: 'he takes more care with his Thai food than most Thai restaurants – and possibly even more care than most Thai restaurants in Thailand do'. I have recently met two exponents in Indonesia. One is Donny Yudono, an experienced chef who is now a senior instructor at the Hotel Academy in Bandung. I met him in West Sumatra, in the town of Padang. I've already mentioned Padang restaurants. Donny Yudono and his team are creating a series of Padang menus which structure these dishes into a meal, usually with one or two alternative choices in each course. Their only concession to western taste in the actual cooking is that they hold back on the chilli.

They cooked two of their menus for me at West Sumatra's newest and most beautiful hotel, the Hotel Pusako at Bukittinggi. The menus will become a regular feature in the hotel dining room. (Incidentally, this is one of the few top Indonesian hotels whose Executive Chef, Baharuddin, is a local man. It also

serves the best *nasi goreng* I've had anywhere.) *Padang* food at its best is excellent, and we ate well. I suggested, though, that tourists from the west are going to want their food cleaned up – bones, fat and gristle removed in the kitchen and discarded, however wasteful this may seem to an Indonesian chef or his customers. Donny Yudono agreed with me, up to a point – he felt that the fat should be left on the meat, at least in the *Gulai Gajebo*. (See the recipe appended to this paper.)

Another cook who stays closely within the traditions of her region is Bernadeth Ratulangi, of Tomohon, up in the hills near Manado in northern Sulawesi. She runs a guesthouse or homestay with a restaurant. She trains her kitchen staff meticulously over a long period – one of the dangers at the moment is that the new generation are not learning the skills of their parents. She grows her own vegetables and rice on her own land around the house – she also introduces new vegetables to the region, such as asparagus and curly parsley. She plans to become a supplier to the new Manado Beach Hotel – professional vegetable suppliers are vital to the success of a new cuisine. They have been created from nothing in Java and Bali during the past twenty years; that is one reason why you eat so much better in Bali now than you did in the good old days. And she produces wonderful *Minahasa* food, with many dishes which I had never heard of before.

But although Mrs Ratulangi's standards are professional, she is perhaps better described as a dedicated amateur, running her business more as a hobby than as a livelihood. Someone who is thoroughly professional is Otto King, an Austrian chef who has commanded kitchens in a string of top Indonesian hotels and has particularly left his mark in Bali and the next-door island of Lombok. His influence can be seen in the menus of hotels such as Sanur Beach, Nusa Dua Hotel, Nusa Indah Resort, Putri Bali, and Senggigi Beach.

He and his Indonesian wife have recently launched their own restaurant in Bali, with a menu nicely balanced between Austrian and East-meets-West. This is the sort of menu that makes you hungry. One example of his cooking is a Balinese seafood basket, not in itself a very new idea: in most Bali restaurants, it means a collection of bony fish, overcooked in too much oil, served with a strong chilli *sambal*, and eaten off a plate which is too small for the diner to handle the food with comfort. Otto King does it the way it should be done, the fish filleted and lightly cooked, served on a banana leaf in a beautiful earthenware bowl, accompanied by avocados and a piquant dressing, and eaten from good-sized plates.

Of course, such plates cost money, and the Bali Edelweiss restaurant is still too expensive for most Indonesians – though this will change as the country becomes more prosperous. Here's something even more expensive. Since I came to Sydney ten days ago, there has come to my notice in the current issue of *Vogue Entertaining* an article about the three Aman resorts in Bali. At one of them, the first Executive Chef was an Australian, Genevieve Harris. Obviously I haven't eaten there yet, but judging from the photographs in the magazine the food closely parallels that of David Thompson; the Indonesian dishes are contemporary recreations of tradition, but the presentation is immediately appealing to the most sophisticated eye, whether Western or Asian.

I admit that my examples so far have been taken rather from the top end of the tourist trade, the remote paradises and the five-star hotels. But lower down the market we find the food courts, which are becoming as popular in Indonesia as they arc in Australia and many other countries. A big one has just opened, also in Bali: the Amanda Food Center on the bypass near Nusa Dua, aimed specifically at local hotel staff who know what good food is but can't afford restaurants. It's bright, clean, cheerful and cheap, and the food is street food, which at its best is excellent because street traders are specialist professionals who have to survive tough competition.

An even more ambitious scheme is about to be launched in central Jakarta by William Wongso, a businessman who already owns several successful restaurants. His food court will open later this year in the basement of the Sarinah Department Store, and will have stalls selling food from all the regions of Indonesia, cooked by selected street traders in modem hygienic conditions and served by waitresses with the ordering and billing handled by computer. This will compete directly with McDonald's and Kentucky Fried Chicken, who have major operations on the same site or very near it. If this venture succeeds, attracting tourists and foreign residents alongside the office workers of Jakarta, it will do something to support my belief that almost any traditional food can appeal to contemporary international taste; and a taste which everyone shares doesn't have to be a lowest common denominator fixed by international corporations.

Postscript

After this paper was written, and only a day or two before it was read, I unexpectedly met Genevieve Harris in Sydney. She told me that the year she spent in Bali was a formative one for her, and she intends some day to go back; but meanwhile she felt she had a freer hand in Australia to develop what she had learned from Balinese cooks. She said that her desire

now, which I strongly share, is to see the growth of a true Indonesian cuisine, inside the country and abroad. This will be based on accurate research and knowledge of traditional dishes, but it will use only the best and freshest ingredients, and will cook and present them in ways that are equally acceptable to everyone.

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GULAI GAJEBO

(Brisket of beef cooked in West Sumatra style)

This dish is typical of the chilli-hot cooking of the Padang area, a style that is popular all over Indonesia. Traditionally, it is made with slices of beef that have a lot of fat on them. It is made richer still by being cooked with a lot of coconut milk for a long time. The large quantity of chillies used make the sauce quite red, and the tamarind gives a pleasant sourness.

My version here is an improved recipe which was demonstrated by Donny Yudono, a senior instructor at the Akademi Pariwisata Bundo (a privately-run Tourism Academy) in Padang. However, he still left all the fat on the brisket. I suggest any fat should be discarded before serving.

1 kg (or 2 lbs) brisket, in one piece
1.1 litres (or 2 pints) cold water
1 tsp salt
284 ml (or 1/2 pint) very thick coconut milk

For the paste

4 shallots, chopped
4 cloves garlic, chopped
4 red chillies, seeded and chopped
1 tsp chopped ginger
2 tsp chopped fresh turmeric or 1 tsp turmeric powder
2 tbsp tamarind water
2 tbsp coconut milk
2 tbsp peanut oil

Other ingredients

1 stalk of lemon grass, cut into 2 then bruised
3 kaffir lime leaves
a small piece of fresh *galingale*
2 *salam* leaves (optional)
salt to taste

Put the brisket and cold water into a large saucepan and bring to boil. Add the salt and simmer, skimming it often, for 1 hour. This can be done a day ahead. Keep the meat and stock separately in the fridge. The next day discard all the fat from the stock and measure 570 ml (or 1 pint) of stock for cooking the meat. Cut off all the fat from the meat, and slice the meat thinly.

Put all the ingredients for the paste in a blender and blend until smooth. Cook the paste in a saucepan, stirring often, until you get a good aroma; then add the stock. Continue to simmer for 15 minutes and add the slices of meat and the other ingredients, except the coconut milk. Continue to cook slowly for 20 more minutes, then adjust the seasoning. Up to this point the cooking can also be done in advance. Keep aside in a cool place.

Just before you are ready to serve, heat the meat in the already reduced stock, discard the *galingale*, lemon grass and *kaffir* lime and *salam* leaves, and add the coconut milk. Simmer and stir for 5 minutes only and serve at once, with boiled rice or potatoes.

For 4-6 people.

SOUTH EAST ASIAN FOOD REVISITED

Rosemary Brissenden

Ph pher: Alex McKay

MY paper this morning will be a far from polished one, so I'd better explain what it's all about before I start.

Last December I was commissioned by Penguin Books to do a revision and update of my book *South East Asian Food*, first published by British Penguin in 1969. *South East Asian Food* had been the first book in its field at the time it was published, and it remained in print until about 1988. By then, of course, huge changes had occurred both in the region itself and in the level of knowledge and appreciation of its food in Western countries. There had been a total revolution in terms of ingredients available – particularly in Australia – and few of the culinary constraints that had forced me occasionally in the 1960s to find substitute ingredients or to leave the occasional one out applied any more. Though I'd been back to the area quite often since the 1960s, food had not been my primary focus. I had a lot of reconnaissance to do, and have spent the last nine weeks in Vietnam, Laos, Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia doing it. I arrived back two days ago, and what I'm giving you today is a comparison of the food scene I recently found in South East Asia with that of 28 years ago based on general impressions and notes quickly cobbled together. It would be as well to remember in the process that I may still be too close to the material to be properly objective and analytical about it.

It's not a very enviable position being the third speaker in a session, with much of what you say running the risk of being repetitive. A lot of my material will probably touch on matters that Sri has already talked about. At the same time I'll be drawing some water from one of the same conceptual tanks as Claudia. Where Claudia sees that tank as half-full, however, my tendency will be to see it as half-empty. I want to project a model which may upset a number of people but I think it is time to do so.

South East Asian cuisine in 1965

My original *South East Asian Food* was based almost entirely on contact with the families of many Colombo Plan friends I had made while a student at Melbourne University in the 1950s and with a rather lively South East Asian community in Canberra later in the decade. This time around I spent less time with families and more time in capital cities. I concede that what I have to say may be skewed a little on that account.

In 1965 the situation that I encountered was one in which cuisines that were essentially family- and locally-based were beginning to assume national profiles. In most South East Asian countries, as Sri pointed out, there was very little in the way of a restaurant scene at that time – certainly not one as we know it today. Any cooked food available outside the home was provided either in small Chinese family restaurants or via the mobile stoves of hawkers who walked past houses signalling their presence by sounding special notes or patterns of sound unique to them. People would stop the hawkers and order their specialties to be cooked on the spot and eat them as snacks or as spontaneous add-ons to meals prepared in the household kitchen.

In the case of Indonesia, as I think Sri also pointed out in her Indonesian book, the hawker culture was highly developed only in Java. In Thailand it was more universal, fed no doubt by what had become an overpowering Thai addiction to snacks – though I've read somewhere that even in Thailand food hawkers are largely a twentieth century phenomenon.

Singapore and to some extent the larger towns in Malaysia (they were just detached) provided the exception to this picture of cooked food outside the home as marginal. Banana leaf restaurants and roadside eating were an important feature of life there. The history of these, however, serves only to reinforce my point about the family being the normal focus of food provision and food lore at the time.

In mainland Malaya (as it was in colonial times) and Singapore, the plethora of street and shopfront

providers of Indian and Chinese food had sprung up as a response to a shortage of wives and families among indentured labourers imported into Malaya in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

In these situations employers provided food and other necessities in the tradition of the homeland. Indian labourers on the plantations mostly came from South India and were vegetarian. Vast vats of dhal and vegetable curries would be prepared for them, and since most Indians hated the idea of eating off plates or using spoons that would have been used by others, the food was dolloped out on to banana leaves to be eaten with the fingers. When increasing numbers of the immigrants began to settle permanently in the 1920s and 1930s, overcrowding became a problem, particularly in the larger towns such as Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Sex ratios improved only slowly and this in combination with bad living conditions often made home food preparation impossible or problematic. Enterprising members of the communities stepped into the breach and began to make available cheap food of the kind formerly provided on the plantations and mine-sites. It was food grounded in the traditions of the homeland using locally-available resources.

For the Indians, shopfront banana leaf eating houses serving simple food sprang up in the Indian districts such as Serangoon Road in Singapore at a time when both eating in public or eating food cooked by strangers would have been unthinkable in India itself. For the Chinese, inexpensive dishes – noodles in particular – were cooked and eaten at countless foodstalls in the streets. Malaysia's dynamic street food culture owed its development to a widespread absence of either family or 'normal' home.

[As an aside, there's no doubt that much of the uniqueness and distinctiveness of Malaysian food today stems from the legacy and vitality of its street cooking. Of course the acclaimed *nyonya* or *Peranakan* cuisine of an earlier group of Chinese immigrants who had prospered, settled in the country and taken Malay wives has contributed a unique heritage in the form of a blend of Malay and Chinese techniques, ingredients and flavours. But because of its confinement to the homes of a single community – and that a rather particular one – theirs is a heritage which remained largely hidden for a long time. The brilliant adaptability of the later but more accessible street-cooking, on the other hand, led quickly and quite publicly to the creation of many dishes not found anywhere else in the world. (The huge range of Singapore noodle dishes is but one example.)]

To sum up, at the time I was researching the original edition of *South East Asian Food* I found a group of rich and unique national cuisines emerging on to the world. With the exception of Malaysia, those culinary identities were synonymous with family cooking and you could feel fairly confident that they would be handed on to coming generations in all their richness. In the case of Malaysia the close symbiosis between the food-stall culture and everyday life engendered the same confidence.

South East Asian cuisine in 1993

The changes that are apparent in 1993 have left me rather depressed. In fact I'm going to be really provocative and say that I now worry that the distinctive cuisines of South East Asia may be in the process of losing their definition and joining a push apparent elsewhere in which, in the name of eclecticism and through the agency of a powerful 'restaurant culture', we may all end up eating the same 'international indeterminate' food wherever we go. 'Pacific rim' cuisine has always had me slightly worried but the prospects seem much more threatening in South East Asia where traditional cuisines are so much more **vivid** than ours ever was.

What is the basis for these worries?

First there are the effects of the predictable onslaughts from outside. Kentucky Fried Chicken, Pizza Hut, McDonald's and Dunkin Donuts are visible in cities everywhere. Many people, especially the young, go first for this kind of fast food nowadays, possibly even more than they do here. The supermarkets in Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur and Bangkok now package local foods and local dishes in 'convenience form'. These compete on the shelves or in the refrigerators with imported foods, and are often given misleading names and labels which, with middle-class households relying on supermarket food to the degree that they now do does not encourage much sense of culinary heritage.

No country (with the possible exception of Burma, where I did not go and whose truculent isolationism represents another kind of problem) has escaped the impact of tourism, of vast media and communications expansion, though some, like north Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos have begun to feel it only lately. This has led or is leading to the entrenchment of an international restaurant culture which brings with it the culturally detaching notion of the chef as hero or heroine. Chefs now trip all over the world and bring back, introduce or invent new dishes and fashions. Chinese chefs in Singapore go to Hong Kong and when they return they cook Hong Kong versions of dishes instead of Singapore ones. A German chef comes to Jakarta to work at the Hilton and introduces 'nouvelle Indonesian cuisine', then writes a book about it which becomes the talk of Jakarta. All the food halls in Singapore now have booths which serve 'pure' Hong Kong noodles,

and so it goes on...

In terms of the nurture of an 'authentic' Malaysian cuisine there is another kind of influence coming in from outside which I see as regrettable, though it may seem a bit obscure. In 1965 one would have found very little North Indian food in Malaysia or Singapore, since the Indians who had settled there had mostly been Tamils brought either directly from South India or via Ceylon. South Indian food was what the banana leaf restaurants served and this was what also figured in Indian home cooking. The style and the techniques of South Indian cooking, based as it is on rice and coconut milk, were neither unfamiliar nor incongruent to Malays and their presence had brought a creative interaction of some subtlety into the development of Malaysian cuisine. Nowadays, however, North Indian dishes and menus as well as South Indian ones are promoted in many Indian restaurants and among a wealthy and mobile Indian professional class. Given that North Indian food is yoghurt, ghee and bread-based, its presence has introduced an element of palate confusion on to the scene, particularly as trendy cooks and caterers often now serve aggregations of dishes from the different communities as an example of 'modern' Malaysian cuisine.

Please don't misunderstand me. This is not to say that South East Asian cuisines are not capable of resisting or adapting outside influences or that they cannot benefit or become enriched by them. Indeed we know that they **have** benefited from just such eclecticism in the past. Enormous culinary enrichment resulted from early Indianisation, from the spice trade and from Chinese trade and immigration all over South East Asia. Where would any South East Asian cuisine be, after all, without tamarind, without the chilli or curry spices, without the *wok* or soya sauce, all of which arrived in one of these ways? It's the sheer speed and scale of the present onslaught which in my view is dangerous and entirely unprecedented.

The second thing that is a worry is the pace and ferocity of economic growth and urbanisation that is occurring in the region, and the way in which these are eroding the ability of people to maintain any culinary heritage. I haven't had time to get figures together but I'm sure everyone is aware of the crippling levels of migration from the country to the city that have occurred in South East Asian countries in the past two or three decades. Traffic congestion and urban sprawl in the main cities of the rapidly industrialising countries of the south is now horrendous. A growing economy, and a burgeoning middle class has seen an enormous growth in households where both partners work and live in houses some distance from the centre of town. Such houses offer both space at an affordable price and provide some protection from the pollution of the inner city. Time spent on the roads getting to and from work is often ridiculous – not because the distances are excessive but because of sheer traffic snarls and congestion on the roads. (In Bangkok, which is admittedly the worst place in this regard, it has been estimated that people spend at least 40 days each year on average on roads to and from work. I frequently drove home with people after work to perfectly 'normal' suburbs in Bangkok spending close to three hours in the car in the process, and I sometimes found myself stalled for so long in buses at non-functioning intersections that not only all the other passengers but also the driver simply fell asleep as if this was the normal and expected thing to do).

Again on the home front where traditional continuities were once maintained by grandmothers who managed the household and kept the standards up in the kitchen, there are new generations of grandmothers who are not home-bound. And of course, and understandably, no-one welcomes the loss of independence associated with being a domestic cook any more.

A variety of responses are at work in these situations and they all point to the erosion of what used to be a strong culinary stewardship and tradition at the family level. Many families – urban ones at least – don't indulge in normal home cooking any more. Some stay in town to eat in order to escape the worst of the traffic at the end of the day. Others go to supermarkets at lunchtime and buy pre-cooked dishes or plastic bags with pre-cooked sauces and ingredients to be assembled when they get home or pick-up the fast Western food the kids ask for. Still others stop off at street stalls in their neighbourhoods which set up in the evenings with pre-cooked dishes in the knowledge of a thriving commuter market.

In Singapore where social disciplines have contributed to the avoidance of many of the environmental excesses I described above, those very disciplines have also produced their own inhibitors. 'Street food' has been sanitised and tidied up into food halls which in general are becoming much less individual and somewhat homogenised. Nor does the glorification of the work ethic and the pressure to 'keep up with the Lees' in a consumer society leave too much time for a creative home cookery to fill the gap. Though the restaurants remain brilliant, theirs is a band which, as elsewhere, threatens to plays an increasingly 'international' tune.

Add to these things the blow that the Pol Pot years delivered to Cambodia's once-proud kitchen culture, the loss of a generation of cooking knowledge in the north of Vietnam through evacuation and famines, and an expected rush of Thai tourism and commercial activity in Laos following the opening of the Mekong

bridge, and I don't find the future as bright on the culinary front as I did 28 years ago. Don't get me wrong, though – this is not an argument against modernity or economic development. I just find it a pity that the development is proceeding along so familiar a path.

Photographer: Richard

Artist: Jeanette Fry

Photographer: Alex McKay

LUNCH

A French picnic in the Priory courtyard, prepared by Dominique and Basilisa Clevenot from Dominique's Restaurant, Kingston, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory.

MENU

Duck liver mousse with green peppercorns

Country style terrine with hazelnuts

Venison terrine with cepes

Domestic rabbit terrine with prunes

Domestic rabbit terrine with figs

Duck terrine with pistachio nuts

Jambon et tête de porc persillé

Friande à la Saucisse

Salads

Cheeses

Fruits

Bread

Served with a selection of Australian wines chosen by Sarah Adey.

LIVING OFF THE LAND – NGUNNAWAL ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND FOOD IN THE CANBERRA REGION

Betty Meehan

THE junction of the upper Murrumbidgee valley, leading north from the Monaro, with the southern tablelands and Lake George is now the site of our national capital. John Lhotsky (1835:67) predicted as much when Canberra consisted of only a handful of farms on the Limestone Plains:

> Limestone Plains form a point where the principal roads, the great road from Sydney, that to Yass Plains, and that to Menero Downs will eventually converge. At Limestone therefore at no distant period, a fine town will exist.

Before Europeans

But what of the Canberra region before Europeans arrived? Josephine Flood, whose book, *The Moth Hunters. Aboriginal Prehistory of the Australian Alps*, tells an intriguing story about Aboriginal occupation of this region before the advent of Europeans, believes that:

> Both the quantity of Aboriginal artefacts found in Canberra and the ethno-historical [historic] record testify to its equal importance as a meeting place in prehistoric times (Flood 1980:8).

Pleistocene dates in the region

Evidence published by Singh and colleagues (Singh et al. 1979) suggests that, in the Lake George area, there was a huge increase in fire activity during the last interglacial – about 120,000 years ago. This has been interpreted by them and others as the arrival of people there or in the vicinity who were firing the countryside. While this hypothesis has not yet received universal approval, it has provoked a great deal of discussion about the nature and intensity of Aboriginal impact upon the Australian environment and about the true date of their first arrival. A recent survey of Pleistocene dates derived from excavations in Australia (Sharp and Smith 1991), indicates that the Lake George date remains well outside the current range.

On present evidence it is impossible to establish with any certainty what the nature was of the fire regimes in the southern uplands prior to European settlement. Although it is clear from historical evidence that Aborigines did use fire in the Southern Uplands for regenerating grass, as a hunting aid, for clearing roads and so forth, as yet there is no evidence as to how frequent, intense or controlled such fires were.

The earliest known occupation in the southern tablelands comes from excavations carried out by Flood (1980:254-75) in Clogg's Cave. From the Buchan to Orbost road the spectacular, dark vertical cleft of this cave is clearly visible in the centre of a limestone cliff just below the crest of a small hill overlooking the Buchan River. Investigations revealed heavy smoke-blackening of the roof in the rock shelter at the entrance to the cave and some shells and chips of stone in the earth floor. A small abstract Aboriginal rock painting has survived on the overhang. In the dark inner cave, excavations indicated human occupation beginning at 21,000 and continuing until 8,000 years ago. In glacial times, fires were kindled and mammals cooked by being placed on heated stones and covered with hot ash – a cooking technique also recorded in historic times by Helms (1895:393).

Until Birrigai Rockshelter was excavated by Flood (1980), there was no evidence of human occupation of high altitude areas during the late Pleistocene. Analysis of the remains from this shelter, which is 730 metres above sea-level, has shown that the south-eastern highlands were occupied during the last 21,000 years.

Other archaeological sites

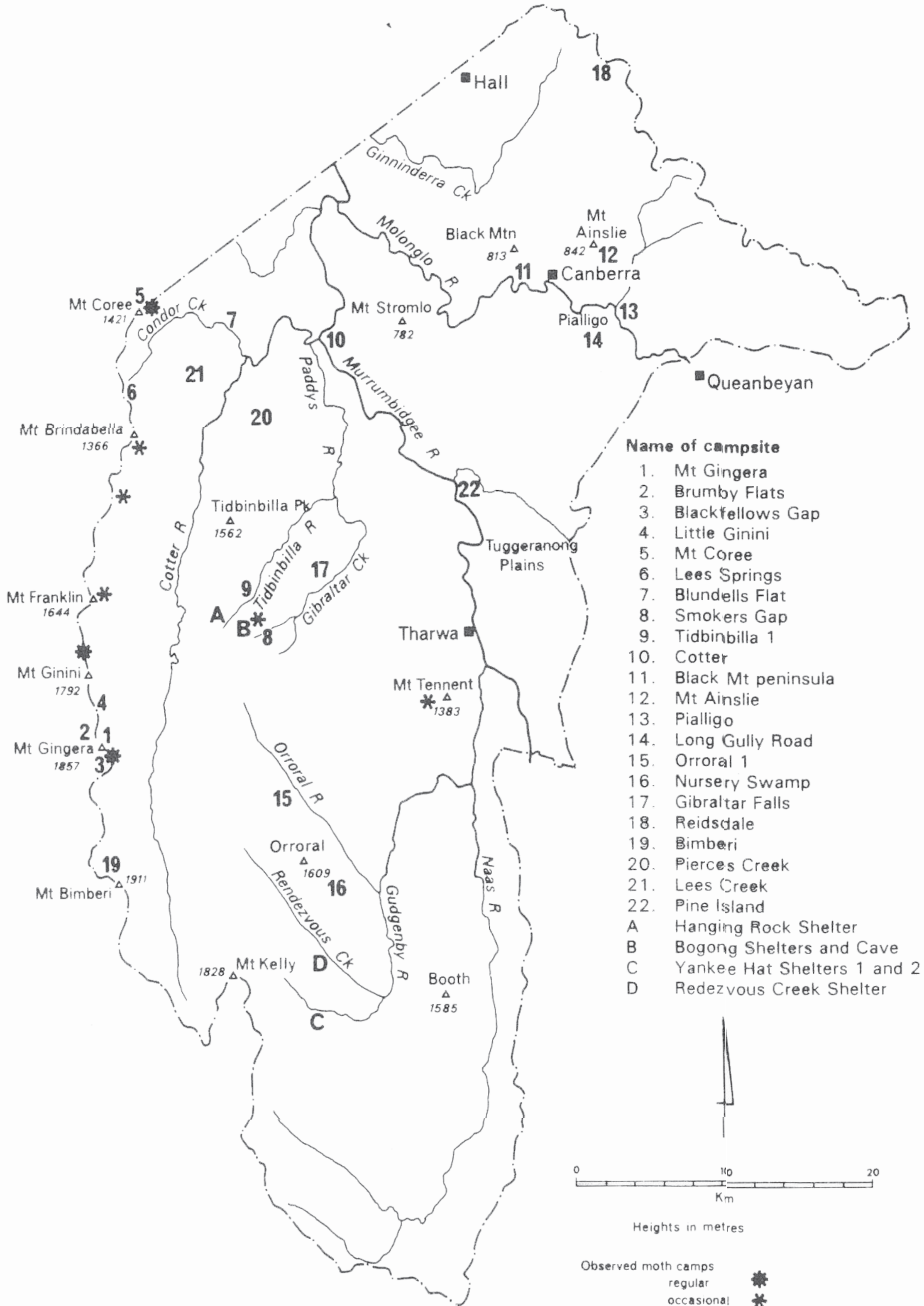
The climate of the Canberra region can be extremely beautiful but it can also be very harsh – cold, windy and wet. Aboriginal people living in this region in the past would have had to endure some very hard times during each annual cycle.

Flood has identified several kinds of archaeological sites in the Australian Capital Territory: large lowland bases; medium-sized lowland camps; mountain valley camps; high summer camps; and camps above the winter snowline.

Large lowland bases are large, open sites extending over two to three kilometres. Nardoo on Lake George and Pialligo on the banks of the Molonglo River are good examples of this type. Both are located on sandhills and both were, presumably, associated with

fishing and the catching of waterbirds. They were perhaps occupied for longish periods of time during social gatherings when ceremonies were held.

Medium-sized lowland camps occur along river banks and on lake shores. Like large lowland bases they consist of scatters of stone tools. Sites recorded along the Molonglo River are less than two hours walk from each other.



Location of some Aboriginal campsites and moth aestivation sites in the Australian Capital Territory (from Flood 1980: Figure 21, page 164).

Mountain valley camps are located between about 745 metres and 1160 metres above sea-level in mountain valleys associated with creeks or fast flowing mountain rivers. Some occupied rock shelters also occur in this zone. These sites have been interpreted as summer base camps from which tree-dwelling and other mammals, as well as plant foods, could be harvested. They could also have served as base camps for the summer 'hunting' of Bogong moths of which you will hear more later.

High summer camps are located between 1150 metres and 1400 metres above sea-level and were probably associated with the exploitation of Bogong moths in summer and the collection of food resources from the nearby wet eucalypt forest. Flood (1980: 169) has suggested that they may have been 'transit' camps for people on their way to the Bogong moth grounds.

Camps discovered by Flood (1980:169-70) above the winter snowline she has interpreted as seasonal simply because of climatic factors. Currently all are within 20 minutes walk of a good supply of Bogong moths and are surrounded by areas of the edible yam daisies.

The task of piecing together a comprehensive picture of Aboriginal subsistence in prehistoric times is a difficult one especially since most sites yield only stone tools. Flood's (1980:175 interpretation of the prehistoric evidence was along the following lines: occupation of the uplands was not intensive. The same tribe or band exploited three principal ecological zones during the year – the large rivers, the mountain valleys and moth localities. The first two zones were visited by the whole group, but high level moth hunting was an all male activity, although some of the spoils would be carried back to the women, children and old people in their camps below. The high-level camps must have been seasonal as they would be snow-covered in winter, but in mountain valleys, rich in mammal and vegetable food, the rock shelters and open camps might have been occupied in winter or summer. The best fishing occurs between October and April so the riverine camps would presumably be occupied during some of this period.

Historic times

While Aboriginal prehistory of the Canberra region is sketchy, information from the historic period is somewhat more enlightening. An analysis of this evidence suggests that there was a comparatively small population in this upland area. People moved in small groups participating in occasional gatherings for ceremonial purposes or moth hunting. The seasonal groupings appear to have comprised 200 to 300 people, occasionally 500. Flood (1980:41-4) has estimated, basing her calculations on good evidence for the numbers of people in the Omeo tribe, that the Ngunnawal tribe of the southern tablelands Canberra region, probably numbered about 350 people. They owned about 11,000 square kilometres of land and lived on this at about one person for every 36 square kilometres of land

Information contained in the historic records indicates that at least 53 different foods were eaten by Aboriginal people in the southern tablelands – about 37 coming from the land, the rest from riverine resources.

Land resources included possums, kangaroos, wallabies and wombats; snakes and lizards; emus, emu eggs, ducks, black swans, brolgas and wild turkeys.

Riverine resources included Murray cod, trout cod, silver perch, Macquarie perch, eels, Grayling River blackfish, various species of Galaxias, grayfish, platypus, crayfish, tortoise, large mussels and two species of freshwater crayfish – the large spiny crayfish found in major streams and small yabbies found in swamps and ponds.

Plant resources in the region were limited (it has been estimated that about 100 edible species would have been available) compared with those of inland riverine plains or the coastal zone of southeastern New South Wales. It would have been hard (if not impossible) to subsist entirely on plants although they would have made a valuable contribution to diets. Of the plant foods available, the most abundant would have been the tubers of yam daisies, orchids and lilies; the roots of ferns and bulrushes; the starchy pith of tree ferns; the young shoots of the grass tree; and some fruits in season. These foods would have been most plentiful in the mountain zone but in summer they would also have been available in the sub-alpine zone. Nardoo flour and the glutinous roots of bulrushes may have been an important food source on lower reaches of rivers and on the lakes of the tablelands.

The annual cycle

Along with all other people who gather and hunt food in order to live, the Aboriginal people in the Canberra region did this according to the season.

Winter was undoubtedly the leanest time of the year during which Aboriginal people were described as being in comparatively poor condition. Their main foods during this lean time were possums, kangaroos, wallabies, wombats and other land and tree dwelling animals. They also captured ducks, other birds and reptiles. Plant foods available included fern roots, the pith of fern trees, the leaves of grass trees and the tubers of Liliaceae.

In late winter to early spring some wattles begin to bloom and seeds from ripening pods could be picked

and eaten. The orchids (27 species) came first, in August. Their tubers were roasted before being eaten. The most important addition to diets at this time would have been fish. Bogong moths had begun to migrate to the mountain ranges and would become available for between two and three months.

Summer and autumn would have been the time of plenty. As well as normal resources, Bogong moths would be available until March, fruits would be plentiful, and abundant tubers of the yam daisy could have been located easily by their yellow flowers. On the tablelands there would be plenty of crayfish and fish, ripe grass seeds and bulrushes.

In the diets of upland people, moths and mammals were of primary importance. Possums, macropods, wombats, reptiles and birds, some plant foods (particularly daisy yams and ferns) were available all the year round. Other foods tended to be seasonal – fish and moths the most important of these.

Cooking

Unfortunately, the historic records contain little information about cooking methods used by Aboriginal people in this region. Helms (1895:58) states that cooking methods used in the southern uplands were either simple roasting over a fire or baking in a ground-oven filled with heated stones on which the game was placed, covered with bark and green bushes and then with hot ashes. Both of these methods remain common practice in Arnhem Land today.

Bogong Moths (*Agrotis infusa*)

The Aboriginal cultures of the southern uplands were similar in most ways to those of southeastern coastal New South Wales – not to those of the peoples occupying land to the west. The cultural feature unique to the southern tablelands was their exploitation of the Bogong moth.

Life cycle

The larvae of Bogong moths are found over a wide area of New South Wales. Southern migrations in spring and summer are towards the mountains in southern New South Wales and Victoria. Similar movements away in a northerly and north westerly direction take place in late summer and early autumn.

Nutrition

These moths are rich in fat but **not** in protein. The average fat content of dry weight of male moth abdomens is 61%, that of female abdomens is 51%. This high fat content probably explains why during the moth season Aboriginal people were observed to look sleek and be in good condition.

Collection and cooking

The only eye-witness account of moth hunting was observed in 1865 by Robert Vyner. Vyner climbed a peak called Numbananga Peak (an Aboriginal name) approached from the Tumut Valley. His observations were narrated a few years later by A.W. Scott (in Flood 1980:61-2):

> The moths were found in vast assemblages sheltered within the deep fissures and between the huge mass of rocks, which there form recesses, and might almost be considered as caves. On both sides of the chasms the face of the stone was literally covered with these insects, packed closely side by side, over head and under, presenting a dark surface of a scale-like pattern – each moth was resting firmly by its feet on the rock, and not on the back of others, as in a swarm of bees. So numerous were these moths that six bushels of them (0.29 cubic metres) could easily have been gathered by the party at this one peak; so abundant were the remains of the former occupants that a stick was thrust into the debris on the floor to a depth of four feet (1.2 metres).
>
> Mr Vyner tells me that on this occasion he ate, properly cooked by *Old Wellington*, about a quart of moths, and found them exceedingly nice and sweet, with a flavour of walnut, so much so that he desired to have 'another feed' ... The Bogong moths were collected and prepared for food by the aborigines in this wise: a blanket or sheet of bark is spread on the floor; the moths, on being disturbed with a stick fall down, are gathered up before they have time to crawl or fly away, and thrust into a bag. To cook them a hole is made in a sandy spot and a smart fire lit on it until the sand is thoroughly heated, when all portions left of the glowing coal are carefully picked out, for fear of scorching the bodies of the insects – as in such case a violent storm would inevitably arise, according to their superstitious notions. The moths are now poured out of the bag, stirred about in the hot ashes for a short time, and then placed on a sheet of bark until cold. The next process is to sift them carefully in a net, by which action the heads fall through, and thus the wings and legs having been previously singed off, the bodies are obtained properly prepared. In this state they are generally eaten, but sometimes they are ground into a paste by

the use of a smooth stone and hollow piece of bark, and made into cakes.

Apparently, thousands of crows (ravens) were always found about the rocks where the Bogong moths congregated. This congregation provided an excellent signal of the presence of moths for Aboriginal hunters.

Vyner (Scott, quoted in Flood 1980:61-2) mentioned the use of blankets or sheets of bark to catch the moths as they fell to earth. Helms describes in detail nets manufactured for collecting moths. These nets were finely made from Kurrajong fibre and attached to two poles which meant they could easily be withdrawn from crevices.

Preservation

There is some suggestion in the literature that Aboriginal people were able to preserve Bogong moth flesh. Bennett describes how after cooking the moths were sometimes pounded into 'cakes' resembling lumps of fat. These, he says, would not keep for more than a week but by smoking they were able to preserve them for a much longer period. Flood tried to do just this but each batch she prepared grew mould in less than a week; she comments that development of mould may have been due to her faulty preparation.

Sex of hunters/gatherers

Having sifted through the historical evidence, Flood concluded that moth hunting appeared to be primarily, if not exclusively, a male activity. The activity as a whole required ascending long distances through rugged country and the climbing of rocky tors – activities more suited to young male hunters than to women with young children or older people.

Participating tribes

The exploitation of Bogong moths appears to have been highly organised in main localities such as the Bogong Mountains, Tumut and the Kosciusko region. It seems that all the highland tribes, including the Ngunnawal of the Southern Tableland, participated and possibly even tribes from the east coast of New South Wales and from south of Gippsland took part despite the fact that all the highland tribes had sources of moths in their own territories.

Feasts

Information about ceremonies associated with moth feasts comes from the recollections of old settlers in the Jindabyne area. They were drawn together by Payton in 1949 (in Flood 1980:74-7). As the converging Aboriginal groups met on the mountain tops ceremonies were held. Further ceremonies were held as each new group was encountered. People stopped on these places at the foot of the main range where they exchanged greetings and performed more ceremonies. According to Payton, Aboriginal custom did not permit them to proceed to the top until certain rites had been performed. When these had been completed, signals of smoke were made and the assembled people broke into separate groups and proceeded independently to the mountain tops.

Having reached the top, some groups camped there, others constructed houses in more sheltered positions making daily excursions up the mountains to gather moths. Moth hunters did not wander aimlessly over the mountain tops. Each group appeared to have its own domain to which it returned each year.

The large quantities of moths and their ease of gathering make them the most reliable food source in the Australian highlands. As a favourite food of the upland Aboriginals, moths were most likely given a high priority in the annual scheduling of food and were preferred to other food that was available at that time. Thus, Bogong moths were an important part of summer diets and as means to support large seasonal gatherings of people to participate in shared ceremonial life, marriage and trade – as was and is the case in many other parts of Australia.

Today

I have described briefly the occupation of the Canberra region before Europeans arrived here, and about Aboriginal life as observed by the first white explorers and settlers. Unfortunately, European settlement in this area caused major disruption to the indigenous Aboriginal culture and the old ways soon became transformed. However, a community of Aboriginal people continue to live in this area and claim cultural links with the land and its resources. They are represented by the Ngunnawal Aboriginal Land Council which has its headquarters in Queanbeyan.

Summary

The main features of Aboriginal subsistence in the Canberra region were as follows:

1. There is some evidence to suggest that the Canberra region may have been occupied (or influenced by Aboriginal firing practices in adjacent areas) as long ago as 120,000 years.
2. Reliable dates round about 20,000 years ago have been obtained from several sites in the region such as Clogg's Cave and the Birrigai Rockshelter.
3. The Ngunnawal tribe of approximately 350 people was living in 11,000 square kilometres of the region at the time of European contact.
4. Several places in the Canberra region were Aboriginal meeting places in both prehistoric and historic times – for example, Pialligo.
5. Aboriginal people living in the region enjoyed of a

mixed diet of land and water animals and plant foods which they procured according to seasonal availability and abundance.

6. Bogong moths played an important part in these diets and formed the subsistence basis of large annual gatherings of several tribes in the area who came together in summer not only to collect moths but to socialise, carry out ceremonies and trade.
7. An Aboriginal community called Ngunnawal continues to base itself in the Canberra region. Its Land Council is located across the border in Queanbeyan.

Reflection

It seems to me that we Symposiasts, by participating in the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy, are maintaining a tradition of feasting which has a considerable antiquity in the Canberra region. In our case however, our own particular cultural roots, not those of the Aboriginal moth hunters, have determined the kind of feast we have enjoyed.

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GETTING TO THE MARROW OR THE GOODNESS OF MARROW

Myrna Tonkinson

According to archaeologists, humans and their ancestors have been eating bone marrow for hundreds of thousands of years. Ancient sites in Africa and in Europe contain bones that seem to have been broken with tools to extract the marrow. You may recall the vivid image at the beginning of the film, *2001, A Space Odyssey*, the scene symbolising the emergence of humans with the hominid smashing animal bones with a rock.

The evidence from the archaeological record is complex and involves some controversy about interpretation and I do not want to trivialise it. For our purposes here, it is enough to note that some scholars believe that an important hominid adaptation was achieved when our ancestors developed the ability to break open bones that would be left by the predatory carnivores (big cats) and take out marrow. Whether it was obtained by scavenging hominids or was a component of the meat eaten by hominids who hunted as well as scavenged, there is ample evidence that bone marrow was consumed by our earliest ancestors. Indeed, there is also evidence of chimpanzees breaking open bones of small animals and removing marrow with thin sticks.

Archaeological evidence from many places, including parts of Australia, indicates bone marrow consumption. For example, Rhys Jones has found that at Kutikina, a site on the Franklin River in southwest Tasmania dated between 13,000 and 20,000 years ago, there are masses of red-necked wallaby bones and all the long bones, particularly the tibia, are smashed in the middle. The only plausible inference from this is that marrow was being removed from those bones by humans – there were no non-human predators in that area.

Marrow is a nutritious food. High in fat, it contains protein, iron and other nutrients as well. It has a lower melting point than other fats, and is more easily digestible. It has been shown to have been a component of many human diets, not only in the archaeological record, but across a wide range of historical and contemporary societies. In hunter-gatherer societies it was an important source of fat since wild animals like the Australian red-necked wallaby are usually lean. Even in sedentary populations, such a source of fat and protein would be valuable. Indeed in the high fat, high protein diets of

Photograph Alex McKay

people such as the Inuit or Eskimo, bone marrow has also been an extremely important food.

In the 1970s, an American archaeologist, Lewis Binford, with a team of students did an exhaustive study of meat (caribou and sheep) preparation and consumption among a group of Alaskan Eskimos, the Nunamiut. The researchers observed behaviour, interviewed people, and carried out precise measurements. This study paid close attention to bone marrow which, traditionally, was of major importance in the diet of the Nunamiut and, despite changes to their diet, remains a valued food. The resulting book includes fascinating details about how marrow is prepared and eaten. When animals are butchered, the bones that are good sources of marrow are separated out while other bones are kept with cuts of meat to be boiled. Most desirable is the marrow from the long bones, (although other bones are used according to a hierarchy of need and return for effort expended – in hard times more effort is made to extract marrow). Marrow is not normally part of a Nunamiut meal, except to the extent that it exudes into the broth when bones are boiled with meat. Instead, long bones are heated briefly on the fire and their marrow eaten as a snack or as a supplement to meals that have low fat content. This is done by the individual eater, not the cook. Normally a woman of the household prepares meals for everyone; she does not prepare marrow.

Neville White during fieldwork in eastern Arnhem Land has observed the removal of marrow from bones

of kangaroos, wallabies, and emus. After the initial light cooking of the animal at or near the kill site, some bones may be broken with stones and the marrow removed and eaten by the hunter(s). The more desirable fat and meat are taken back to be shared at home. Long bones are considered to have the best marrow and are often saved to be given to selected kin. Hunters sometimes carry a few long bones with them as snack food while they are on long walks; this marrow is eaten cold. White also reports that, now that Yolgnu have cooking pots, they, like the Nunamiut, boil meat with bones to enhance the flavour while extracting the maximum amount of meat.

Although I have, so far, concentrated on large mammals (curiously, I could find no accounts in the literature, or from colleagues, of people extracting marrow from pigs' bones) as sources of marrow, birds are also important. Of course, large birds such as emus and cassowaries yield significant amounts of marrow, but chickens and smaller birds should not be overlooked. In many societies such as those in the insular Pacific, it is common and perfectly acceptable to chew and suck chicken and other bird bones. One occasionally observes this behaviour in our own society, but it is not considered polite. Indeed, I was inspired to write about bone marrow after listening to Stephanie Alexander's paper at the last symposium in which she advocated a 'more sensual food life'. Stephanie remarks about what she sees as unfortunate modern Anglo-Saxon prohibitions on such eating behaviours as licking and sucking and that started me thinking about bone marrow.

In some societies, bone marrow is considered to have medicinal or strengthening qualities. In the Philippines, for example, beef marrow is given to sick people, young children and pregnant women. In Kashmir, marrow is a children's delicacy and is usually given preferentially to a favoured child, a boy over a girl, for instance. I also have oral accounts of English children being fed marrow to build their own strong bones, and in my own childhood the soup bones were distributed among the children at the table. (Marrow is a simpler fat and easier to digest than fat from other parts of the body). It seems likely that in these and other societies, as some Aboriginal groups, marrow, and fat more generally, is thought to have beneficial properties that are spiritual and contribute to well-being as well as being nutritious.

By the way, it is fascinating to read the definitions listed under marrow in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*). I think its importance is indicated by the many variations on the spelling of the word and the many metaphorical meanings, particularly in reference to the essence or vital part of things. It indicates richness as in 'dripping with marrow'. The *OED* also notes that the phrase 'marrow and fatness' has often appeared in literary texts and has a Biblical origin (Psalms). The *OED* states that marrow is a delicacy and lists marrow pie, marrow pudding, and marrow spoon as words.

According to Coyle, in his *World Encyclopaedia of Food*, the Roman poet Horace wrote over two thousand years ago of dried liver and marrow as an aphrodisiac. This may also be the import of a quote from the 16th century cited in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: 'the bridegroom eateth to his supper a little marrow of camel bones'.

There is no doubt that bone marrow was a delicacy in French cooking and, via French influence, in English cooking, for centuries. Although we can be certain that the poor, with limited amounts of meat in their diets would eat marrow whenever it was available, it is easier to document the fact that among the rich, beef marrow was a favoured food. In her book *Fast and Feast: Food in Medieval Society*, Ann Henisch makes a number of references to marrow, including the following:

> connoisseurs would give up gladly their share of meat in return for one bone brimming with rich succulent marrow ready to be scooped out sucked and savoured.

She also quotes Rabelais as saying that a little marrow 'is more toothsome than large quantities of any other meat ... (and) is the most perfect food elaborated by nature' (pp.127-8). Chaucer refers to chickens cooked with marrow bones, and Henisch also notes that hare and goose were often cooked in broth with marrow bones.

The book *Two Fifteenth Century Cookbooks*, edited by Thomas Austin from manuscripts held in the British Museum, includes many recipes using bone marrow. The first book, from 1422, has the largest number and includes soups, sauces, stews and other savoury uses, but also several sweet dishes such as puddings and tarts containing raisins, dates, eggs and cream or almond milk with bone marrow. Marrow was commonly used as a shortening. There is a distinct French influence on the recipes in these books and the food described was clearly intended for royal and noble tables. Austin includes in his edition examples of menus and provisioning lists, one being a list of provisions for a banquet for Richard II which included 300 marrow bones along with such other ingredients as 140 sheep, 14 calves, thousands of eggs and gallons of cream.

Another English book, *The Compleat Housewife or Accomplished Gentlewoman's Companion*, published in London in 1753 includes recipes for marrow patties and marrow puddings, one made with sherry, sugar, eggs, nutmeg, orange-flower water and dried fruit and garnished with orange and lemon peel. Edward

Abbott, the Tasmanian Aristologist of whose cookbook I learned from Michael Symons's book, *One Continuous Picnic*, gives a similar pudding recipe. He also includes the following instructions for marrow:

> Let the bones be sawn even. Put paste at the ends and boil them until they are done which will require nearly two hours. Serve on toasted bread and send up a silver marrow spoon and napkin ... The dish must be sent up hot; cold marrow is decidedly objectionable (p.80).

This dictum is not observed by the people of Donyji with whom Neville White worked. Notice also that neither Australian Aborigines nor Alaskan Eskimos would cook marrow nearly as long. Two hours seems to have been standard cooking time in the English recipes I have found. Mrs Beeton's 1891 new edition has almost exactly the same instructions as Abbott's. Mrs Beeton also gives a recipe, which she identifies as German, for marrow dumplings to be served with roast meat, soups, salad, etc., and one for a marrow pudding. I am told by Elizabeth Minchin that Queen Victoria often ate bone marrow on toast for afternoon tea. Doubtless it was served in the genteel way described by Abbott, quoted above.

I have not checked many French cookbooks, but the most recent edition of the *Larousse Gastronomique* devotes almost half a page to recipes for bone marrow (*moelle*): poached marrow as a garnish for steaks, in sauces, pot-au-feu, for salpicons, canapes and vol-au-vents. I am assured by a colleague that Brillat-Savarin discusses marrow, though I have been unable to locate the reference. Escoffier also includes instructions for preparing marrow. Maxim's in Paris was famous for its bone marrow canapes. Marrow dumplings in soup are a feature of Alsatian cooking. Most of us are familiar with Italian *osso buco* and some recipes for *risotto*. Elisabeth Lambert Ortiz, includes a recipe for *tortillas* with marrow as shortening in her book *The Complete Book of Mexican Cooking*. Marrow satays can be obtained from street vendors in Malaysia, I am told. I would welcome additions to my list from other cuisines.

Despite its nutritional value and its delectable quality, bone marrow has been declining in importance, indeed, it has all but disappeared from recipe books and menus. Although there are exceptions, for example some fine restaurants still offer dishes featuring marrow, it is clear that in modern diets such as we have in Australia, bone marrow is a rarity. In some households it is still eaten, often with guilt as we have become so conscious of fat and cholesterol as unhealthy. It is rarely to be found in modern cookbooks. For example, Mrs Beeton's 1963 edition does not list marrow in the index, and as far as I could see it is mentioned only in a recipe for brown stock. None of my recent American or Australian cookbooks has it in their indices. As I mentioned earlier, the *Larousse Gastronomique* still contains many recipes for marrow, and it seems that in France such dishes are still featured on some restaurant menus.

There are probably several reasons for the radical change in the status of bone marrow in the diets of people of modern affluent societies like Australia. In addition to the concern about fat and cholesterol that I have already mentioned, there is also the fact that there has been a shift away from foods that are time-consuming to prepare. Braised and stewed dishes are nowhere as common, even in relatively poor households, as they were, say, a generation ago. Marrow bones are most commonly considered dog food, and few cuts of meat include bones nowadays. Marrow spoons are now antique collectibles, and in polite company sucking bones is unacceptable, so even when *osso buco* or oxtails are served, many people ignore the marrow. To me, this is a great pity. Delicious, nutritious and with a virtually unparalleled history as human food, bone marrow deserves to retain a place in our diets.

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GROSS EXPECTATIONS: THE MYTH OF THE FAMILY MEALTIME

Tina Muncaster

I'LL start with two familiar images; one from the media and one from literature.

1. Firstly, a scene central to innumerable television advertisements. It's dinnertime and the middle-class nuclear family is seated around the table, except for the woman of the house whom we glimpse briefly through the serving hatch.

It is six o'clock and the TV is off, everyone has returned home from school and work to nourish body and soul with a quick fix of commensal solidarity, before dispersing to follow various appropriate leisure pursuits.

Yet, something disturbs our family, something insidious seems to threaten their sense of total well-being. It is with an air of dire urgency that the camera quickly zooms in, closer to the table so that we can find out what the problem is.

Son, elbows on table and chin in hands is talking to dad, who winks in a pally, sympathetic way while teenage daughter stares somewhere over the heads of both of them and sighs.

Now, we find out what is upsetting everyone. The family is bored. They're bored with having to have the same old chicken or same old pork dishes all the time. And if they're bored with the food, how soon before they become bored with the family, with work and school, with life itself?

Tense moment until mother enters stage right, and, grinning mischievously, places steaming plates of a **new** recipe for chicken, a **new** way with pork in front of each member of the family. Another brief, anxious moment while they all sniff their plates, and then, wonder of wonders, everyone is delighted and they tuck in heartily, smiling and talking, united.

2. Next, a scene from Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, that most celebrated scene in which Mrs Ramsey serves her *boeuf en daube* to assembled family and guests. Initially, there is an air of uneasiness around the table, each individual privately assessing the others, but with the lighting of the candles and the serving of the exquisite beef dish, orchestrated by Mrs Ramsey, a sea change washes over the group, and they relax around the table, warm and comforted against the outside world.

Mr Bankes, in particular, is much moved by his especially tender piece of beef. 'It was tender. It was perfectly cooked ... She was a wonderful woman. All his love, all his reverence had returned and she knew it' (Woolf 1977).

In both cases the role of the woman as nurturer is central to the image of contented, stable, bourgeois family life. It is a Utopian image, the family safe from the disorder and uncertainty of the outside world, harboured in domesticity where mother presides, her womanly integrity never failing to satisfy the natural and cultural needs of her family.

These are scenes so central to our identification of family, food and mealtimes that we would call them ordinary; embodying enduring images that automatically spring to mind when we need to represent in anyway the family at the table.

Yet, I would argue that this perception so central to what we would call our everyday life, is in fact a major contributor to the false consciousness around which bourgeois 'reality' is constructed. It is a reality perpetually in danger of slipping into the undertow of tension and ambiguity that underpins our sensibilities, but always rescued by our ultimately conservative desire to cling to Utopian images and myths of 'everyday' life.

In advertising and other media presentations, tension or ambiguity where food, families and mealtimes are concerned is denied, transformed, or at least muted.

In one or two instances, which I will mention towards the conclusion of this paper, contemporary expectations regarding food and eating are very close to overtly challenging the image of the harmonious family unit, yet the transforming power of myth manages to gloss these expectations in such a way that they reinforce the connection of food, family and benign nurturing forces, rather than rejecting them.

Joanna Finklestein, in her book *Dining Out* (Finklestein 1989), has already presented a powerful critique of the social interaction individuals engage in within the public domain. The supposedly inordinate pleasure associated with food and public consumption, she argues, is in fact beset with psychological distress.

I suggest that prior to any anxieties when 'dining out', individuals are exposed to anxieties that stem from experiences associated with food and 'dining in', from the family meals redolent with primarily gender-based assumptions about status, dependency and appetite.

Conflicting emotions, drama and chaos commonly attend the family meal table, often because the relationship between those eating together is *not* egalitarian, and the table becomes the site for various power

struggles, with attempts to either maintain or usurp the hierarchy of the traditional bourgeois meal.

The more turbulent nature of appetite, eating and family mealtimes is often to be found in scenes from literature.

Don Anderson, in his article 'Christina Stead's Unforgettable Dinner Parties' (Anderson 1979), discusses the way in which this author uses food and mealtimes as a metaphorical representation of the relationships between her characters. He calls Stead a 'dramatist of the appetites', creating 'a demonic world characterised by images of cannibalism, cancer, disease and death ... imaginative analogues of the author's abiding concern with money, power and sex'.

Stead's demonic worlds occur as much on the domestic front as in lavish restaurants. Unhappy, bitter, restless Henny Pollit, in *The Man Who Loved Children* (Stead 1970), rejects her nurturing role towards her bizarre family and shows her contempt by refusing to eat with them. When Louie's teacher, Miss Adien, accepts an invitation to dinner, Henny is forced to sit at the table, and the meal progresses with an air of barely restrained menace between her and her husband. The rituals of dining are used to reinforce enmities rather than disperse them: 'Mr Pollit said in a queer tone, distantly paternal, with a condescending expression to his wife, " Have we salad, Henrietta?"'

Henny, refusing to rise to the demands placed upon an appearance as good wife and mother, sends a message via one of the younger children, 'Tell your father that the snails ate the lettuce, and I had no money to buy trimmings'.

Margaret Visser, in *The Rituals of Dining* (Visser 1992), remarks upon the latent violence accompanying Western communal eating, where appetites and teeth are bared and knives ready to hand. It comes as no surprise, in another scene in *The Man Who Loved Children*, when Sam narrowly escapes an early death dealt by an irate Henny and the bread knife.

In another of Stead's novels, *I'm Dying Laughing* (Stead 1989), the irrepressible, manipulative Emily Howard also rebels against the traditional behaviour expected of wife and mother. Unlike Henny Pollit, she does not refuse the domestic feast, rather she expects to dominate it by virtue of her position as chief breadwinner.

Over the table she browbeats her family with her opinions on everything from homosexuals to the pitiful state of various members of her husband's family. When she is not gorging ('my eating keeps the family together') and bullying Emily, is dieting (black coffee and amphetamines) and nobody is spared then either. Emily is not one to suffer in silence.

Emily subverts, but also maintains the hierarchy of her dinner table, and she is quite blatant about her desire to control those around her. In *Lilian's Story* by Kate Grenville (Grenville 1986), Albion is more sinister about his desires (he later rapes his daughter), and his status as head of the table helps him reinforce his power over his family.

Facts, father, congealed mutton and hints of violence coalesce with the image of Albion eating his meal: 'Father's knife sliced vigorously across his meat and his voice ricocheted across the walls' (Grenville 1986).

Outwardly obedient, Albion's family rebel in their various ways and his son, John, chooses a method that challenges all he perceives his father stands for. This, for John, finds expression in the food of family mealtimes: 'while we all became greasy from mutton, John crunched his way through entire heads of celery, bunches of lettuce, raw green beans, apples that sprayed juice, anything loud'.

The enduring image of the happy, feasting family is so much a part of what we believe is 'real-life' that we find characters, particularly women, in literature that are overcome by a sense of sadness, failure or guilt when domestic events don't turn out 'properly', or even when they do.

Anna, in Doris Lessing's *The Golden Notebook* (Till 1992), appears to fulfil gloriously her role as wife, mother and emotional and nutritional provider. She makes little suppers for her daughter, tells bedtime stories and prepares tasty, 'grown-up' meals for her husband.

Yet even her moments of happiness are marred by the feeling that it is a false happiness she is experiencing, a poignant reward to herself for so successfully appearing to be the perfect homemaker

> All the kitchen is full of good cooking smells; and all at once I am happy ... Then there is a cold feeling in my stomach, and I think: Being happy is a lie, it's a habit of happiness ... And the happiness vanishes and I am desperately tired. With the tiredness comes guilt.

No doubt most people have a good Christmas dinner story; this is poor Mrs Darcy's experience in *The Harp in the South* by Ruth Park (Park 1948).

> Somewhere, thought Mumma, there was the perfect Christmas day ... the dinner would be cooked just right, the pudding hot and rich, and yet not overheating, as it always was in Australia ... Hughie would be sober, and Grandma wouldn't choke on the solitary threepence in the duff ... This Christmas was worse than ever. Hughie spent all of Christmas morning snoring, with intervals of staggering out to the lavatory and being ear-wrenchingly sick.

It is not just wives and mothers who strive for this sense of ideal harmony and togetherness at the family

dining. In a short story by Suzanne Edgar, 'Arnie's Marathon' (Edgar 1988), Arnie becomes a promiscuous attender of evening meals. He eats a full roast beef dinner at his aunt's house, followed later by fish and salad, and still later by bangers and mash and onions at the house of two different friends.

Yet Arnie is not greedy, except for some involvement in home-life, which he craves and which is so easily and symbolically provided by sharing the meals of various households. When his father eventually offers Arnie an unappealing pizza for supper, Arnie speaks for more than just the gratification of his stomach when he states, 'I'm not hungry, that's all'.

There is an element of truth that we can all identify with to some degree in these scenarios, yet for Don Anderson, as for Margaret Visser, loss of communal eating means loss of communication, socialisation and humanitarianism. Visser insists that food remains our ritual relaxation and that eating with others is 'fun'. Even for Arnie, the physical commitment to almost four meals in an evening is anxious and stressful; worth it for the few idyllic moments when he 'belongs', but hard won 'fun' overall.

Visser adds that 'few of us eat willingly alone', but the central character in Marion Halligan's short story, 'Mrs Ambrose's Tuesdays' (Halligan 1989), would hardly agree. Sick and tired of her accident prone children and her hopeless husband she takes refuge for a few days in the built-in wardrobe in the spare room at the house where she cleans.

Mrs Ambrose quite happily pays the price of losing her own domestic rituals and finds bliss for the first time in the simple pleasures of sleeping all day and raiding the refrigerator. On her return home, her usual role in life is reinstated with the image of her husband, Ron, 'sitting in the pigsty of her kitchen, eating baked beans out of a tin'.

Why is it that we can so easily find so many scenes of domestic disharmony at the meal table in literature, scenes which stand in conflict with the Utopian picture set for us in the popular media? Apart from rare scenes, such as the dinner in *To the Lighthouse*, the family meal table in literature is more often than not the focus for disruption.

Don Anderson, in an article referred to earlier in this paper, discusses the use of the dinner table as an important structuring locus in fiction, a narrative device for assembling characters. Meals provide dramatic set-pieces that can be used at both a metaphorical and a practical level; to reveal appetites and desires as much as to get characters believably from one part of the plot to another.

Film and theatre similarly resort to such a device to reveal various qualities in characters feasting and talking together.

If we acknowledge the premise that no-one wants to read books or watch plays in which nothing goes wrong, then invariably, the dinner table with its significant structuring function, will be the site where many of these conflicts are played out. As Anderson remarks, 'not everything happens at balls'.

Having identified this artificial role of the dinner table to set the domestic scene in certain types of narrative, we are still left with the problem of where the real 'truth' is reflected when it comes to depicting our experiences of family mealtimes. Is it in art or in advertising? There are contrived images in both, but literature offers more challenging and complex viewpoints, especially when the roles women are expected to play in the domestic dining ritual are explored.

Food and mealtimes have become an anxious and complex issue for women; conditioned to spend their lives gratifying the needs of others, they are also expected to constantly monitor their own appetites in order to conform to the images demanded of them by the media.

In literature, familiar social material is transformed and the portrayal of women frequently transgresses the domestic boundaries that hold her separate from much of domestic culture, while at the same time expecting her to sustain 'naturally' the family unit upon which that culture relies.

If we were to analyse the evidence from literature only, we might begin to make a case for the 'death of the mother'. Half the time she manages to escape the family meal table, and when she's there she's not necessarily benevolent and nurturing because her family are a bunch of ratbags. Then, if we rely on the evidence from the majority of popular media, Mother is *always* there, a supportive texture like wallpaper, with little identity and an absorbent sensibility, providing the background for other people's lives.

And, in between both of these viewpoints run the facts. Joanna Finklestein draws upon evidence that suggests by the turn of the century two out of three meals will be consumed outside of the home. Many of these meals will not be consumed in restaurants, but alone, quickly, in transit and on demand.

Bani McSpeddan, of McSpeddan and Carey Advertising, spoke at a seminar in Sydney (Sydney Book Promotion Group 1988) on the need to cater for an increasingly non-interactive society where selfhood, ego and speed dominate. We want our food at any time of the day, we want it now and we don't want to share it. Already used to individual portions on our plates, advertising now persuades us that we should buy everything in tiny tins for one person, give the children tiny packets and tubs for school lunches so that they too get used to being separate and 'individual'.

One current idea in media critical theory is that texts

such as advertising on television 'delimit the production of meaning' – that is, they allow people to generate satisfying meanings and identifications within their culture, while at the same time disempowering them to actually create the meaning for themselves.

The demands of capitalism and television have effected the decline of family life; Visser might cling to the idyllic notion of individuals united against an indifferent universe across the meal table, but for large proportion of the population it is television, and family life on television, that actually bestows psychic order and a sense of belonging.

In 1990 an American survey showed that 25% of homelife is spent watching TV (Kubey et al.1990) and a study in Tasmania last year revealed that teenagers watching more than three hours of TV a day preferred, and ate, hot chips rather than a 'proper' meal (Darby 1992). So much for Mother's new ways with chicken.

We are an ageing population, and for the greater part of this population, advanced age means solitude. By the year 2005, Meals on Wheels expects to administer double the numbers it cares for now (Ripe 1991).

Very little of this move towards alienation and rigid individuality is reflected in either fiction or the popular media. When the right to be free and 'individual' is displayed it is cleverly packaged to still take advantage of society's need to be nurtured, to identify with some stable 'mothering' force.

The essence of McDonald's success, for example, is the selling of 'happiness', offering uniformity and puritanical values of order, cleanliness and service outside of the home environment. Just like the roast on Sundays and leftovers on Monday, you know exactly what to expect, and you're treated like one of the family, as long as you can pay for it.

If the ideal nurturing maternal force is elusive in literature and transparent in packaged food advertising-land, what alternative images can the outside world offer women? Watch morning or lunchtime TV, not prime-time evening TV when the rest of the family is there, and you'll find out. The ads for cake mixes have now been replaced by saturation advertising for diet campaigns.

Yes, you must still look good to earn the love and respect of your husband and children, but now the advertising world has decided it realises that women need nurturing too. This is the approach of Nutri-system, Jenny Craig and Lite and Easy: the latter company will deliver to your door diet cuisine for just $11.00 a day.

There are no classes to attend, (they understand the stress involved with socialising, particularly where women and food are concerned); you can successfully isolate yourself from the rest of the family with your 'own' food; the meals are 'restaurant quality', (you can eat better than your family, and furthermore free yourself from having to wait until your husband decides it's time for a special occasion), and most importantly, someone cares. They must care, because they are feeding you.

Joanna Finklestein argues that our sensibility and civility is negated by our growing dependence on the image, rather than the 'real'. I've shown that the 'real', depicted in any form of media is hard to pin down, particularly where the ever ambivalent and shifting role of women is concerned. But I do want to end with a quote that I, at least, can wholly identify with.

When the pressures of domestic dining weigh upon American writer, Maxine Hong Kingston (Till 1992), it's not necessarily the meal that gets to her, but the aftermath:

> After eating I look at the dishes in the sink and on the counters ... and think about suicide. Also what to write in the suicide note. The note is an act of kindness. The criminals who most upset us are the ones who refuse to give satisfying motives. 'I don't want to wash the dishes one more time'. A plain note, no hidden meanings.

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NATURAL VIRTUE: TWENTIETH-CENTURY ATTITUDES TOWARDS FOOD MANUFACTURING

Barbara Santich

IN fourth century BC Athens, a century or so after Socrates, Diogenes the Cynic took it upon himself to defend Nature against Culture. Believing that Prometheus was justly punished for stealing fire from the Gods and introducing to mankind the art of cookery, he shunned cooked food and dramatically displayed his preference for 'natural' foods: water, bread, salt, watercress and wild herbs from outside the city walls – together with raw flesh, raw octopus, blood and guts ...

His must surely be one of the most extreme manifestations of the Nature/Culture schism. Diogenes identified Nature with Virtue; to deface it, transform it, tamper with it, was immoral. In his eyes, Civilisation – as represented by technology and artifice – was intrinsically perversive and corrupting. So he refused to accept it, **incorporate** it. (There are analogies between his refusal to accept cooked food and the anorexic's refusal to accept any food.)

Twenty four centuries later in Australia, this same argument underlies the condemnation of manufactured foods as unworthy and unhealthy. In this paper, I will show how, from about the turn of the century, manufactured foods have been the subject of criticism and censure from individuals in a position to influence general opinion and attitudes; and how this same belief in the supposed virtue of Nature overtly nuances today's recommendations for 'healthy' eating. The denigration of Culture (as represented by Technology) appeared under many disguises, assumed different rationalisations – but at its base was, I suggest, an instinctive faith in the natural virtue, such that any tampering was seen as desecration.

The food manufacturing industry of the nineteenth century began more in response to agricultural surpluses than in anticipation of consumer desires, and its contribution to the average diet was relatively small. The upholders of 'natural virtue' at this time were the 'plain food' brigade, those who saw moral strength in simple, unembellished food – untainted, as far as possible, by the cook's art. At this time, 'tampering' was more likely to have occurred in the kitchen than in the factory. Dr Andrew Ross complained that:

> It is not the laws of health and wholesome food that now-a-days demand the greatest attention, but it is the philosophy of cookery and endless variety of sauces most suitable to please and whet the morbid taste that is recognised as the royal stamp to advancing civilisation (Ross 1871).

Photographer: Alex McKay

The link between 'plain food' and healthy moral virtue was made explicit. 'Too rich food causes a fevered body and a peevish mind' declared Alexander Sutherland (Sutherland 1882) in his set of rules for children's eating. 'The plainer the food, the more wholesome the fabric', added William Stewart in his guide, *Health in Australia; and How to Preserve It* (Stewart 1861). Louisa Lawson (Lawson 1990) joined the argument: women would be better tempered and husbands happier, she reasoned, if cold meals, plain bread, salads and fruit were eaten more often.

'Plain food' went with a plain and simple, somewhat austere, lifestyle – and with plain-spoken opinions. Frances Gillam Holden, one-time lady superintendent of the Hospital for Sick Children in Glebe, entitled her propaganda pamphlet 'Plain Words to Mothers and Temperance Reformers on Food and Health' (Holden 1983). In fact, her language was rather colourful – and her message unambiguous:

> From the clear, unvitiated, healthy stomach, with its natural powers and instincts unimpaired, habituated to simple, unstimulating diet, come the clear mind, the firm will,

> the cheerful temper, the pleasant tones of voice, the rich enjoyment of simple life.

From about the turn of the century, the food industry became more consumer-oriented. By 1895, refrigerated milk and cream from Picton and Camden, and mutton and beef from the Riverstone abattoirs, were delivered direct by rail to the Sydney cool rooms of the New South Wales Fresh Food and Ice Company. Factory foods became household staples. Sweetened condensed milk was being produced in Victoria in the 1880s (Farrer 1980). In 1882 Swallow and Ariell were offering over 50 different varieties of biscuits, as well as several kinds of cakes, and Arnott's launched what was probably the first 'health food' in Australia: Milk Arrowroot biscuits, promoted as the 'Best Food for Children ... noted for their purity and excellence' (Farrer 1980). Bottles of Rosella tomato sauce, another stayer in the popularity stakes, appeared on grocers' shelves at the end of the century, and margarine manufacture – or 'Butterine', as it was then called – began near Melbourne in 1885, and near Sydney two years later (Farrer 1980).

By the mid-1930s, factory foods formed a considerable proportion of the food supply. In 1937 Australians, at least those living in the cities, had a vast choice of biscuits, in addition to 130 or more different cakes and scones, buns and pies and pastries from the local cake shops. There were also 41 varieties of prepared breakfast cereals, and though approximately half of these were of the porridge-gruel type, the new favourites of Corn Flakes, Rice Bubbles and Weet-Bix were already vying for popularity. Jams and jellies came in nearly 30 varieties, including the unique 'Rasplum'; there were several different canned soups, about a dozen different canned vegetables, and a respectable array of canned fruit (including quinces). As for lollies, there were nearly 100 different sweets and chocolates, from the uniquely Australian Minties and Violet Crumble Bars to Butter Balls and Humbugs (Advisory Council on Nutrition 1938).

Meanwhile, in the early years of the twentieth century, chemists investigating the nutritional properties of foods were slowly realising that the old theories of food composition – that foods were composed of carbohydrate, protein and fat, plus water and residual ash – could not account for all their known properties. In 1912 the announcement of vitamins, and the demonstration of their role in the causation and cure of certain diseases, revolutionised such research – though it was another ten years before the medical profession in Australia accepted their significance. And if vitamins were the answer to certain known diseases – scurvy, beri-beri – then all the more reason to suspect their contributions to health; hence the value of vitamins in the diet.

From the 1920s to about the 1950s, 'vitamins' were seen as the passport to health – and their assumed absence from manufactured foods offered a justifiable excuse for branding these unwholesome and even declaring them the cause of that new scourge of mankind, cancer. This attitude was not only prevalent amongst those who could charitably be called 'food faddists' but permeated the medical profession and health authorities as well. 'Tinned foods are a poor substitute for fresh', reported the New South Wales Health Week booklet (1927). The Commonwealth Department of Health expressed a cautious condemnation:

> In the days before so much of the food was ultra-refined and factory-made, most foods in common use contained some vitamins, but nowadays this might not be the case (Commonwealth Department of Health 1939).

The Western Australia Department of Public Health recommended that foods be in '**as natural a state as possible**' (original emphasis) and, in answer to the question 'What is meant by the wrong kinds of food?' proposed 'White bread, white flour, polished rice, cornflour, sugar, syrups, sweets, tinned goods, preserved foods, lard, margarine – and then some, as the Americans say' (Department of Public Health, Western Australia 1927, 1931).

In 1936 the Advisory Council on Nutrition referred to the degeneration in health when the 'natural' foods of Aboriginals were replaced by 'devitalised' rations of flour, sugar and tea (Advisory Council on Nutrition 1936). 'White flour is so deficient that not even weevils can live in it' sneered Dr Noel Gutteridge in the *Medical Journal of Australia* (Gutteridge 1936). Additional medical reasons were proposed to support the condemnation of sugar: excessive sugar consumption irritated the stomach and provoked colds and chronic catarrh (*Courier Mail* 1936). According to Sir Truby King, founder of the Royal New Zealand Society for the Health of Women and Children, the habit of eating

> large quantities of cane sugar, and sweets in every form ... undermined digestion and impaired the blood ... [Women] suffered pain and lassitude, and became unfit for the high calling of motherhood (*Bulletin of the Health Association of Australasia* 1926).

Doctors even hinted at a relationship between cancer and 'civilised', or manufactured, foods (*Courier Mail* 1936).

But it was the fringe professionals whose voices were raised loudest in condemnation of manufactured foods. 'Physical culturists', teachers of 'medical gym-

nastics', and 'nature cure specialists' all shared a common belief in the intrinsic virtue of 'natural' foods. These were epitomised by wholemeal bread, but also included any unrefined food, such as fresh eggs, fresh fruit and vegetables and nuts, and unprocessed foods. According to the Religious Liberty Publishing Association (1946), modern (that is, processed or manufactured) foods:

> are prepared to appeal to the perverted tastes of the people and to bring gain to the manufacturers. They find ready sale under the guise of healthful foods.

These 'alternative' philosophies condemned manufactured foods in the belief that a natural diet was healthier and possibly disease-preventing, while a non-natural diet had the undesirable consequences of obesity, impurity of the blood, gout, constipation, rheumatism and, the biggest threat of all, cancer.

It was never explicitly stated that eating manufactured foods could cause cancer, but the implication was evident. George Philpots, in 1923, wrote that the increase in deaths from cancer 'follows the use of foods which have been more or less demineralised'; in 1925 his culprit was 'devitalised' foods. He suggested that the problem (of cancer) could be prevented by means of a natural diet, since its predisposing causes included chemical preservatives in the food and auto-intoxication in the intestines. Constipation was 'the mother of all disease', according to Philpots' *National Magazine of Health*:

> The nation must be ridded of deadly constipation by natural methods, which means the eating of wholemeal bread (75% of each meal), fresh vegetables properly cooked and ten pounds of fresh fruit per person per week (Philpots 1928).

J. Ellis Barker, in his book, *Cancer*, similarly advised:

> We should eat freely honest, natural food, such as fresh meat, pure whole milk and butter undefiled by chemicals, fresh eggs, cheese, salads, raw fruits, vegetables not overcooked and not cooked with soda, wholemeal bread, brown sugar, black treacle, all of which are very rich in vitamins (Stuckey 1925).

Now, there may well have been some validity in the claim that refining and processing destroyed the all-important vitamins, but no-one, to my knowledge, produced evidence to prove refined and manufactured foods less healthy. It was a useful smokescreen to hide the real argument. The logic of these doctors and dietitians simply assumed that the closer to Nature, the more wholesome the food; and that the corrupting influence of technology and industry debauched them.

Leaping ahead to the 1980s and 1990s, we see that today's national dietary advisers are less concerned with the presence of vitamins – of which they assume an adequacy – than with the absence of fats and sugars. It is worth looking at the origins of this concern, in particular the results of the enforced experimentation of World War II: a demonstrable improvement in health – fewer deaths from heart disease, less dental decay in children – in several European countries during the years of strict food rationing, and an increase in heart disease mortality in post-war years, when these controls were removed. In terms of foods, the most significant difference was that the wartime diets contained a lower proportion of animal products – meat, butter, cheese, eggs – and a higher proportion of vegetable products – especially cereals and vegetables. It thus contained little fat – and, since sugar was an imported luxury, little sugar either.

If the wartime diet had a nutritional advantage, it also had an ideological one. This austere regime was seen as closer to the pre-industrial diet, the diet of agrarian civilisations for untold millennia. Through its association with Nature and Tradition, it had a kind of nostalgic virtue. The post-war period, on the other hand, saw expansion of the food processing industry which, not content with supplying alternatives to fresh ingredients, began to offer factory-prepared mixes for cakes, pastries, soups, sauces, desserts and main-course dishes, for which it relied heavily on fat and sugar. In this way it moved further towards taking control of the actual diet.

Here, then, were two new justifications for censuring manufactured foods: science had proven them 'unhealthy' (at least, those products containing unnaturally high proportions of fat and sugar), and the industry that produced them was usurping the traditional authority of the health professions. Doctors and nutritionists may also have shared the public's distrust of industrially-prepared foods; not knowing how they are prepared, nor what goes into them, can lead to suspicion and reservations. A 1992 survey showed that 27% of Australians (specifically, of the sample group) were concerned about the freshness and purity of foods, and 21% concerned by chemical and artificial additives (Food Marketing Institute 1992). It should be added that this concern is not confined to Australia; according to a CREDOC survey in France in 1985, 36% of the population distrusted products with an industrial association (Lambert 1987). (Paradoxically, while some people might distrust processed foods because they fear relinquishing some control over their own diets – or, if health professionals, their power over other people's diets – and because they are

suspicious of the 'unknowns' that might be added, food manufacturers and, to some extent, primary producers, use these chemicals and additives to gain control over unknown pests, bugs, etc.)

In these circumstances it is hardly surprising that almost all the literature destined for mass circulation among the general public, encouraging everyone to eat a 'healthy' diet – indeed, nutrition promotion in general – illustrates the good/ bad, healthy/ unhealthy dichotomy as natural foods versus processed foods. Even in its revised version, the Five Food Groups refers almost exclusively to natural and near-natural foods – although the food supply has been increasingly composed of non-processed and manufactured foods (New South Wales Department of Health 1989). (It has been estimated that the proportion of processed foods in the British diet increased from 68% in 1960 to 72% in 1980 [Burns 1983]). The Heart Foundation's category of 'foods to favour' includes fresh, raw and minimally-processed foods, while its category of 'foods to avoid' contains almost exclusively industrial products, from processed meats to commercial custard, cakes and biscuits (National Heart Foundation 1988).

Similarly, the illustrations in booklets and pamphlets, whether produced by Commonwealth or State Departments of Health or by vested interests such as the Heart Foundation and the Nutrition Foundation, inevitably feature natural, or as near as possible to natural, ingredients – raw, whole, uncooked. Consider, for example, the covers of three of the *Food and Nutrition* booklets published by the Health Commission of New South Wales (later, the Department of Health). The 1977 cover depicted fresh and dried fruits, fresh vegetables and vegetable juice, dried beans, wholemeal bread, peanuts and peanut butter and some homemade biscuits. The 1982 edition included these same examples (save the homemade biscuits) amongst a greater range of foods, adding milk, butter, cheese, meat, poultry, fish, eggs, pasta and oil. The fish was fresh, neither scaled nor gutted; the vegetables, too, were fresh, whole and uncooked. Again in 1989, the cover featured fresh, natural products; even the least 'natural' foods, such as cheese, rolled oats, bread and pasta, were associated with rustic, homely settings and 'natural' props of wood and earthenware.

No doubt design aesthetics play a part, but the choice of fresh, raw, whole ingredients must be seen as indicating nutritionists' priorities and values. These foods are clearly emblematic of a 'healthy' diet – which, just as clearly, excludes many of the products of the food manufacturing industry. Nature and Culture are still opposed; tampering with Nature is seen as detrimental to health, and through the assimilation of health with virtue, ultimately corruptive of virtue. (The logical extension of this is the association of highly processed diets with criminal tendencies [Griggs 1988]).

I am not proposing that there are no solidly scientific grounds for advocating natural foods over processed ones, but I suggest that, consciously or unconsciously, the experts in matters of diet have, throughout the twentieth century, espoused the philosophy of Diogenes. According to this, Nature represents an ideal, a state of innocence and purity; to tamper with it is to debase it, defile it. Since Nature is synonymous with Virtue, from which derive moral and physical well-being, then the sleight-of-hand technology which produces manufactured foods from natural ingredients must be seen as perversive. The result? Processed foods must be 'unhealthy'.

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PUBLIC FORUM: MEDITERRANEAN AND TRADITIONAL DIETS

THE International Olive Oil Council (IOOC) sponsored a public forum as part of the Symposium. This, the only public event of the Symposium, was held in the Senate Chamber at Old Parliament House. As well as the IOOC, we must thank Michael Dowe and Alan Saunders. Marion Halligan advised the committee of Michael and Alan's idea for a forum, and Mary Brander followed it up. As a result, the IOOC placed advertisements in the *The Canberra Times* newspaper inviting the Canberra public to join the Symposiasts in this exciting event.

On Monday evening symposiasts joined the queue, boarded the articulated bus and were driven to Old Parliament House. Participants gathered in Kings Hall for refreshments supplied by Parliament House caters, Spotless Catering. People were offered:

Small cakes
made using olive oil

Tea or coffee

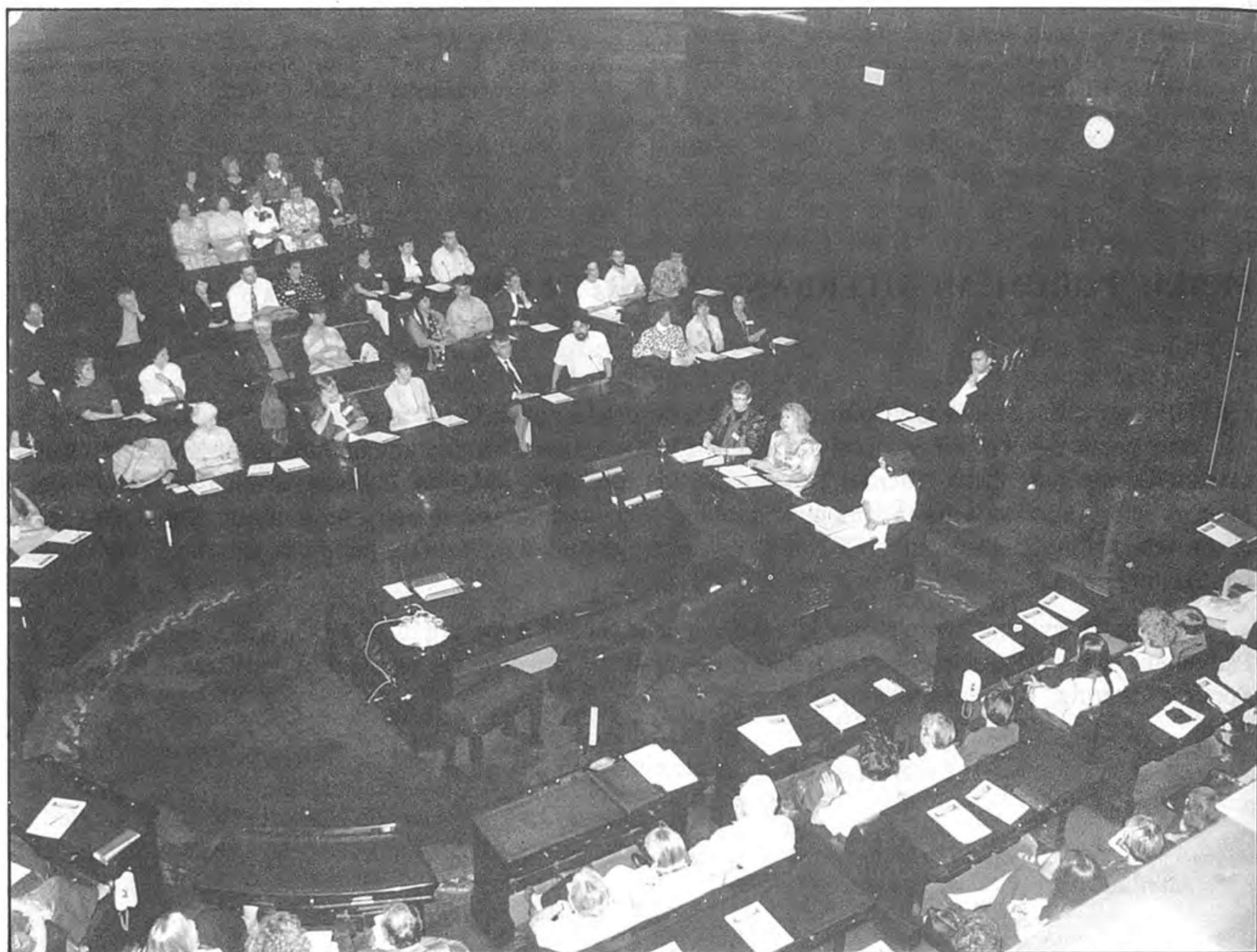
Following cake and coffee, approximately 200 people filed into the Senate chamber, filling it to capacity.

Chairperson, Alan Saunders introduced our speakers:

Diane Seed
International author and cook (sponsored by IOOC)
'Romance and traditions of Mediterranean cuisine'

Rosemary Stanton
Nutritionist and author
'Health aspects of Mediterranean eating traditions'

Gae Pincus
Chairperson of the National Food Authority
'Aspects of food regulation and diet'


Photographer: Richard Scotte

THE ROMANCE AND TRADITIONS OF MEDITERRANEAN CUISINE

Diane Seed

FIFTEEN countries and three continents encompass this shallow land-locked sea, and the Mediterranean was the navel of the civilised world until Christopher Columbus and other great sailors opened up the trade routes to the Americas.

The Greeks, Phoenicians and Romans had colonised the whole area centuries before Christ, establishing an agriculture based on wheat, olives and wine, and in later years cargo ships zigzagging across the sea produced a constant cross-culture, so that variations on the same culinary theme are found from the pillars of Hercules in the west to the cedars of Lebanon in the east.

All the area enjoyed the same hot dry summers and wet warm winters so that crops migrated quite happily, and marauding pirates, invaders and seamen played their part in spreading new ingredients and recipes. The rise of Islam added a touch of spice to the Mediterranean daily fare, and expanded the cooking techniques. There was a constant interchange of culinary culture, and today it is fascinating to discover the same dish appearing with slight variations all round the Mediterranean shore.

In the past the Mediterranean people have known great hardship, struggling with constant volcanic activity, adverse weather conditions and a capricious sea.

Foreign domination often caused crushing poverty, and hunger was a constant enemy. This made life itself seem a victory, and every meal became a cause for celebration. Today food is prepared with love and imagination, and every humble herb or vegetable is prized for its savour.

We all love Mediterranean cooking, and bask in the lazy pleasures of a cuisine dominated by the sun and the sea. The food appeals to the senses with its intense flavours, vibrant colours, and tantalising aromas. Mediterranean food is not artificial, contrived or affected; it depends for its effect on using one or two perfectly fresh, seasonal ingredients, chosen with care and prepared with love. It is family cooking at its best, and its appeal is universal.

Fresh herbs are used with flair and imagination to bring the simple ingredients to life, and oregano, basil, mint, parsley and dill are widely found. Fennel gives an inimitable tang to pork and fish, while rocket adds a pungent quality to many Italian and Turkish dishes. Every region has its favourite herb combination, ranging from the Provencal *bouquet garni* to the Ligurian *preboggion.*

Today when many people no longer have a kitchen garden, market stalls specialise in fresh herbs, and in Italy a small bunch of *odori* – onion, celery and carrot – are tucked free of charge in the shopping bag when you purchase any fruit or vegetables.

Many of the most aromatic herbs grow wild, and in summer a warm, oregano-scented breeze wafts down from the Greek hills. These wild herbs have more flavour than the cultivated variety, and even today in many countries you see the local women scouring the countryside for wild herbs and salad leaves. Indeed in Italy the thin wild asparagus, and bitter chicory leaves cost more on the marketplace than their opulent cultivated siblings. Saffron adds fragrance and colour to many dishes and the Arabic influence is seen in the recipes using cinnamon, cumin and coriander.

The Roman soldiers' love of garlic is legendary. *Ubi Roma ibi allium.* They carried it to the most farflung corners of the Empire, and today to many people garlic is synonymous with Mediterranean cooking. France and Spain have memorable garlic soups, and in Provence whole heads of garlic are stewed to make a creamy sauce.

Humble staples are transformed into a feast by a clove of garlic, and nobody who has eaten a slice of Italian *bruschetta* will forget how good a simple piece of coarse bread can taste when it is anointed with good olive oil, and rubbed vigorously with garlic.

In the same way some of the very best pasta sauces start with the masterly combination of *aglio, olio e peperoncino* – garlic, olive oil and chilli pepper, and pulses are transformed into irresistible dishes, like the lentil stew which, in the Old Testament, tempted Esau to give up his birthright.

During the Renaissance, Lorenzo the Magnificent's emissary to Naples described the people there as *mangiafoglie* or leaf eaters. This epithet could still be applied to most of the Mediterranean people. Fresh, seasonal vegetables are so important they are served as a dish in their own right, and frozen food manufacturers have a hard time competing with the street markets, where the produce has been freshly-picked, carefully washed, and lovingly arranged.

Tomatoes and sweet peppers seem intrinsically Mediterranean, yet they were unknown before the discovery of America. Today it is very difficult to imagine a Spanish or Italian menu without these popular ingredients. The Arabs introduced Europe to the eggplant and Turkey and Sicily have a seemingly endless repertoire of eggplant recipes, Italy and Provence rely heavily on zucchini, and the ubiquitous artichoke is one of my favourite vegetables.

Good, crusty, freshly-baked bread is an important ingredient and treated with due respect. If a piece of bread falls to the floor it will be carefully retrieved and set to one side so that it is never trodden into the ground.

Citrus fruits, melons, figs, pomegranates, quinces and prickly pears are the great Mediterranean fruits, while the vineyards and olive groves from time immemorial have dominated the landscape.

In the Mediterranean wine is an everyday accompaniment to meals, and one might even classify it as 'an essential ingredient'. The Persian poet, Omar Khayyam, considered life's necessities to be 'a jug of wine, a loaf of bread, and Thou'. If he had lived a little further north, his beloved would have undoubtedly have been further down the list, to make place for the olive.

The olive appears on its own at breakfast, lunch and dinner, and it is used in countless recipes combined with meat, fish, poultry, bread and rice. It would be difficult to find a Mediterranean home without several types of olives in the larder, and in the same way most families have several different quality olive oils on the go simultaneously, selecting the most appropriate oil for each occasion.

Fish and meat are not essential ingredients. They are cooked with skilful simplicity when they are available, but the real Mediterranean flavour comes from fresh herbs, seasonal vegetables and lambent olive oil. If these are not available there can be no taste of the Mediterranean.

HEALTH BENEFITS OF THE MEDITERRANEAN STYLE OF EATING

Rosemary Stanton

THE Mediterranean style of eating differs slightly between the different Mediterranean countries but there are some common features:

- Bread (or some other grain) is the dominant part of each meal (two or three times the Australian level),
- Vegetables are used as an integral part of meals, not served 'on the side',
- Little meat is consumed,
- Fruit is eaten by all sections of the population and is a perfectly acceptable dessert,
- The major fat is olive oil.

In some countries, seafoods and wine also play prominent parts. Taking time to enjoy a meal is also an important feature of the Mediterranean style of eating which is healthy and enjoyable.

Levels of heart disease are lower and cancers of the bowel and breast are much less common in Mediterranean countries than in Australia. The delight most Mediterranean people take in their meals also makes a mockery of the common Australian belief that healthy foods don't taste good.

Essential features of healthy Mediterranean eating

Each of the major components of the Mediterranean diet has important features. The foods that are missing – sources of saturated fats, high quantities of meat and large quantities of sugar – may also contribute to the healthy diet. These foods have simply never been a part of their diet.

Bread or grain foods dominate the diet and are important sources of starch and fibre. They have almost no saturated fats and Mediterranean people manage to eat twice as much bread as we do without any butter or margarine.

Lots of vegetables, especially leafy greens, and fruits are also important. These foods provide vitamins and dietary fibre and are sources of hundreds of anti-oxidants – substances which prevent damage to arteries and stop attack by some cancer-causing agents.

Olive oil, with its mono-unsaturated fats, may also play a vital role in the healthiness of the Mediterranean diet. Olive oils also contain 30-40 different types of anti-oxidants. Much of the olive oil used is poured over food just before it is eaten. Without being heated, the anti-oxidants in olive oil are well preserved and may play just as important a role in preventing heart disease as the type of fat the oil contains. When olive oil is used for cooking, the wide variety of anti-oxidants also act in a synergistic way to prevent the formation of harmful substances which can arise in other types of heated fats.

Why have we taken so long coming to olive oil?

Back in the 1950s and 1960s, the *Seven Countries Study* by Ancel Keys first awakened interest in the Mediterranean diet. This study led whole nations to change their dietary habits and switch from a diet high in saturated fats to one with more polyunsaturated fats.

The *Seven Countries Study* showed that those who ate the most saturated fat had the highest levels of blood cholesterol and the least coronary heart disease. It did not show that those who ate polyunsaturated fats had more or less heart disease because no human population at that time had ever eaten large quantities of polyunsaturated fats.

So why the move to polyunsaturated fats? Keys and others did not believe the populations of countries in the United States and Australia would accept olive oil. It was thought of as a medicine, not a food. Their trials of different fats also showed that polyunsaturated fats would reduce blood cholesterol – more effectively, it seemed at the time – than the mono-unsaturated fats in olive oil.

Later, researchers found that cholesterol existed in many forms and basically two classes: 'good' cholesterol and 'bad' cholesterol. Low levels of polyunsaturates reduce the bad type of cholesterol in the blood. High levels of polyunsaturates, however, reduce the good along with the bad. When only the total blood cholesterol was measured, the early research therefore reported better falls using polyunsaturated oils. The later research reversed the enthusiasm for these oils by showing that over-enthusiastically consuming polyunsaturated fats could lead to a loss of protective cholesterol as well as the hazardous type.

Olive oil, with its mono-unsaturated fats, reduced the 'bad' cholesterol very well and raised the 'good'. When they measured only the total, olive oil seemed to have a lesser benefit. The later research, measuring both good and bad types of cholesterol led health authorities to recommend olive oil.

The latest research suggests an even greater role for olive oil. The real problems with 'bad' cholesterol

occur when it becomes oxidised. To prevent this we need anti-oxidants. Olive oil has them, inbuilt, and in great variety. So do vegetables and fruits – also important features of the Mediterranean diet.

Those who increase their intake of polyunsaturated fats without increasing anti-oxidants may be adopting a risky diet. This has strengthened the case for olive oil and many mono-unsaturated oils although the latter do not have the same array of protective anti-oxidants.

We would also do well to learn about eating good breads, grains (such as pasts, rice and couscous) and legumes – all foods which are familiar and essential in Mediterranean cuisines but given a lowly status in Australia.

Not all Mediterranean countries consume alcohol. Those who drink wine, especially red wine, may have an advantage which we can learn from and enjoy. Red wine contains some valuable anti-oxidant substances and other chemicals which stop blood cells clumping together. This probably explains the French paradox – that is, why so many French eat so many 'wrong' foods, and still maintain a low level of coronary heart disease. For benefits of red wine, a regular intake of one to two glasses a day is recommended. Drinking only once or twice a week is not a good idea as the changes in the blood when the red wine stops can induce subtle, and sometimes fatal, changes in heart function. Large quantities of red wine are also not recommended, as too much of a good thing is no longer a good thing.

Which olive oil?

There are almost 800 million olive trees in Mediterranean countries – 98% of the world's total. However, we do have a fledgling olive oil industry in Australia, producing some good quality products.

Olive oils, like wines, come in many varieties depending on the type of olive grown, how ripe the fruit is when picked and the way it is prepared. The different flavours range from mild oils with delicate light flavours to the semi-fruity types to the strong flavour and aroma of the truly fruity oils. Just as you use different wines on different occasions and change them to suit your food, so you need to investigate the variety of olive oils.

Most olive oils are prepared by cold-pressing. The fruit is pressed and the juices (oil and water) are collected and separated by the simple process of centrifuging. The top quality oil, prepared from good fruit and with minimum levels of acidity and a good taste is extra virgin. Oils which do not quite make the grade are purified to form extra light oils – a name which refers to their flavour, not their kilojoule levels (all oils have the same kilojoule level). Olive oil (sometimes called 'pure' olive oil) is made by blending the light oil with some virgin or extra virgin oil to provide flavour.

Pomace olive oils are extracted with solvents from the pressed cake left after the cold-pressing process. They usually have some virgin oil added to provide flavour but will not have the same variety of anti-oxidants as other types of olive oil.

Olive oil keeps well but should be stored in a cool place (but not the fridge). When heated, its anti-oxidants and the types of fatty acids it contains do not produce the harmful hydroperoxides formed when polyunsaturated oils are heated more than once.

Olive oil used for frying also forms a fast seal around food so that less oil penetrates the food. In a country where so many people are overweight, it obviously makes sense to keep the total quantity of all kinds of fat down, so if you must have fried foods, olive oil is still the best oil to use. For those trying to use less oil, some of the strongly-flavoured oils are a boon. With such intense flavour, you can add wonderful interest to salads, vegetables or breads with just a small amount.

The Mediterranean style of eating is ideally suited to Australia. With a few Asian influences added, we have the potential to have one of the most enjoyable and healthy eating patterns in the world. For that, we can thank the recent immigrants to this country who were good enough to teach us so much about their delicious style of eating.

FROM MEDITERRANEAN FOODS TO STANDARD-SETTING IN THE NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY

Gae Pincus

> The taste of wild herbs, fresh greens and succulent seafood imparts a special frisson to the exciting food of the Mediterranean. Memories of Mediterranean food inevitably focus on carefree meals in the sun. One bite of garlicky octopus or fetta-topped scampi can bring back a sun-drenched Mediterranean waterfront, dill-laced artichokes call golden sandy beaches to mind, and spiced figs in a sweet wine sauce can take you back to any of a hundred cafes (*Australian Gourmet and Traveller*, 1988).

FOOD such as this translates perfectly to our southern climes of Australia and carries a little magic anywhere.

This quotation has come from one of the many gourmet magazines now available in this country, though I have taken a poetic license in extending a description of foods of the Greek Islands to foods of the Mediterranean region.

Such articles do whet the appetite of 'us Aussies' for what once was exotic and little known foods. Today with the migration to Australia of so many people from countries bordering the Mediterranean, and the focus of informed and discerning food writers and gourmets such as many of you, food patterns from this area have become more familiar to many of us.

This afternoon, I would like to explore some issues as they relate to the Mediterranean diet:

- What are the foods that characterise the diet?
- The National Food Authority's role in the setting of food standards in this country.
- The public health implications of the diet and the Authority's role.
- Other current issues for the Authority.

Foods in the Mediterranean diet

To return to the article 'The Grecian yearn and the magic food from the island of Corfu' (Australian Gourmet and Traveller, 1988), recipes are given for:

Casserole of octopus with little onions;
Prawns with tomato and fetta;
Lamb liver with lemon and thyme; and
Artichokes with broad beans.

All recipes contain generous quantities of olive oil 2/3 cup, 1/2 cup, 5 tablespoons and 1/2 cup respectively. Then other ingredients include tomato puree, fresh tomatoes, fresh green herbs, artichokes, lemon juice – important sources of what are known today as the anti-oxidant vitamins, namely vitamin C and carotene, the precursor of vitamin A.

These main meals will then be accompanied by fresh bread, a green salad with an olive oil dressing and washed down with a local wine. Of course, there are other characteristic Mediterranean foods, such as the local fish, eggplant, garlic, green and red peppers, olives and cheeses, to name just a few.

For many of us, these foods evoke pleasurable thoughts not only of superb food but also of picturesque Mediterranean, or Australian, waterfronts and enjoyable meals, relaxing with family and friends. It brings home to me those well-remembered words of nutritionist Dr John Greaves, from UNICEF, 'Foods are more than the sum total of their chemical components'.

Standard-setting in the National Food Authority (NFA)

I would now like to transport you from the sun-drenched shores of the Mediterranean on a summer's day to early autumn in Canberra, Australia. Within the time constraints I have, I'd like to tell you about the functions and work of the National Food Authority, located in Barton in the Australian Capital Territory – hopefully, relating it sufficiently to the Mediterranean diet to hold you interest!

The establishment of the Authority in August 1991 under the *National Food Authority Act*, was the result of an agreement of the Federal, State and Territory Governments to rationalise and make national, regulation in the vital area of food standards. I say vital because food is one of the essentials of life and all the foods you have eaten today, yesterday, last week or indeed at any time in this country should conform to the provisions of the Australian Food Standards Code. The Authority was established to implement a unified, open, transparent and publicly responsive process for the setting of national standards for food available in the Australian marketplace.

As prescribed in the Act, the functions of the NFA include:

- developing and reviewing national food standards;

- co-ordinating the surveillance of food available in Australia in consultation with the States and Territories;
- developing codes of practice for industry on matters that may be included in standards;
- developing food safety education initiatives in co-operation with the States and Territories;
- co-ordinating action to recall food in co-operation with the States, Territories and the Federal Bureau of Consumer Affairs; and
- developing assessment policies in relation to food imported into Australia.

Most, if not all, these functions affect the daily lives of all Australians who purchase food in the marketplace.

However, the Act importantly gave the Authority some basic objectives in discharging its function of developing and varying standards. In descending priority order, these are:

- the protection of public health and safety;
- the provision of adequate information relating to food to enable consumers to make informed choices and to prevent fraud and deception;
- the promotion of fair trading in food;
- the promotion of trade and commerce in the food industry; and
- the promotion of consistency between domestic and international food standards where these are at variance, providing it does not lower the Australian standard.

You should note that the primary objectives of the Authority's standard-setting function is the protection of public health and safety and the provision of adequate information, to enable consumers to make informed choices.

I will come back to these issues later.

To complete the process of developing or amending food standards, the final authorising body is the National Food Standards Council (NFSC), comprising Federal, State and Territory Health Ministers. Majority decisions of the Ministerial Council are adopted by reference into the law of all States and Territories, who are responsible for implementation and enforcement.

Public health, the Mediterranean foods and the Authority

With public health and safety the primary objective for the work of the Authority, we have followed with great interest not only the culinary interest in Mediterranean foods and their combination as the daily diet, but also the scientific and nutritional interest.

There is clear evidence that populations living in the Mediterranean countries enjoy a longer life expectancy than northern Europeans. This difference is largely explained by lower rates of coronary heart disease and some cancers in the Mediterranean countries. To explain these differences, the foods and the diet of these countries have been under the microscope with scientific reviews in a wide range of specialist journals. There is debate about the protective factors in the diet:

- Is it the fat level in the diet?
- Is it the mono-unsaturated form of fat, the main component of olive oil?
- Is it the high level of fresh vegetables and fruits in the diet, which are the major sources of the anti-oxidant vitamins?
- Is it the fish component of the diet, as it has been shown that even small amounts of fish eaten regularly may confer some protection against heart disease through the action of the omega-3 fatty acids? or
- Is it the higher intake of cereals and pulses compared to the intake of foods of animal origin?

Some of the most challenging issues the Authority has considered and is presently considering in developing and varying food standards are the shifting sands concerning nutrition associations as they relate to foods and diet, and health and disease. These associations embrace both the Authority's primary objectives of protecting public health and safety and informing consumers.

In a recent editorial in the prestigious *British Journal of Nutrition* (1992), David Southgate referred to the inconclusive data and evidence on which most prescriptions for the prudent diet recommended by national bodies, such as the National Heart Foundation of Australia and the United States (US) National Research Council are based. These prescriptions are received as dogma by a health and nutrition conscious public.

Diet and heart disease

Certainly some of the suggested and previously accepted links between diet and coronary heart disease have been questioned of late in the literature and in the media. The focus on diet to reduce sickness and deaths from heart disease is being questioned with evidence coming both from the traditional Australian diet and other food patterns, including the Mediterranean diet.

Evidence for the importance of dietary cholesterol seems weak, despite what has been described as cholesterol-mania, which is well established and a conversation point of consumers, whether they are at home, shopping, or dining at a five-star restaurant or the local rugby league club. There is growing scientific agreement that dietary cholesterol has a minimal effect on cholesterol blood levels in most people.

Still, the food industry is responding to this cholesterol-mania, marketing and labelling foods that never contained any cholesterol as 'cholesterol-free' or, more worryingly marketing high-fat foods as 'cholesterol-free'. These can be described as misleading and negative claims and would not be permitted under the Authority's Code of Practice for Nutrient Claims presently in draft format. This draft Code of Practice, is presently being discussed with industry, consumers, the States and others. Its recommendations cover claims for fat, sugar, salt, fibre and energy levels in foods.

Other dietary factors, such as wheat, oat and rice bran, may affect blood cholesterol levels favourably and industry is keen to make health claims for their foods in relation to risk reduction for diseases, mainly heart disease and some cancers. There is growing debate whether reduction of blood cholesterol will reduce the risk for coronary heart disease, especially for all population groups.

There is some evidence, mainly in middle-aged men with high levels of blood cholesterol, that lowering the levels will reduce heart disease, although not overall mortality. There are questions whether benefits identified in these men at highest risk can be extrapolated to the rest of the population – all women and children, younger and older men. Other concerns about linking the intake of a specific food to a reduction in disease risk include:

- the reduction in risk for disease is affected by the total diet and lifestyle pattern, not the use of an individual food;
- individual foods by themselves do not prevent or cause a disease;
- the role of diet for each individual cannot be predicted because of marked individual variability resulting mainly from hereditary and lifestyle factors, such as exercise, smoking and overeating; and
- the precise role of diet for many such diseases remains to be determined.

So, what clear health claim can the Authority approve on the label of a food in relation to reduction of risk for coronary heart disease? I would confirm the present Clause 19 in Standard A1 which prohibits prophylactic or therapeutic claims on labels or in advertising of foods.

One of the labelling issues presently concerning the Authority is the community's interpretation of the National Heart Foundation's endorsement of food products through the 'Tick' Program. What is the consumers' interpretation of the 'Tick' on a food label? Is the food good for your heart? Will it prevent heart disease? Is it better than the other shelf product without the 'Tick'? Is it misleading and confusing to consumers?

Diet and cancer

The benefits of Mediterranean foods and dietary patterns may not be confined to heart disease, since a number of studies on cancer show that the incidence of some cancers are low in the Mediterranean area compared to northern Europe or northern America. As noted earlier, the Mediterranean diet includes a high intake of vegetables and to a lesser extent fruit, which provide an abundant supply of β-carotene as well as vitamins E and C, nutrients with anti-oxidant properties. Their postulated role in reducing risk for both cancer and heart disease is the provision of scavengers for free radicals, thus reducing the oxidation processes associated with the carcinogenic process and modification of cholesterol in the low density lipoprotein form (LDL) to initiate the build-up of fibrous and other tissue in the arterial wall.

The above anti-oxidant theory is one that has been followed with great interest within the Authority. One of the most contentious initiatives undertaken to date within the Authority is the revision of the food standard that controls the addition of vitamins and minerals to foods, and claims that can be made for these nutrients – Standard A9 – vitamins and minerals.

In revising this standard, the Authority adopted international guidelines for the addition of nutrients to foods, developed by the Codex Alimentarius Commission, a joint activity of the World Health Organisation and the Food and Agricultural Organisation of the United Nations. These guidelines state that vitamins and minerals should only be added to foods on the basis of restoring these nutrients to the naturally occurring levels before the food was processed, except for:

a. substitute foods, so they have the same nutrient content as the foods which they replace (e.g. margarine as a substitute for butter has added vitamins A and D);
b. fortifying foods with higher levels of vitamins or minerals than in naturally occurring foods, because there is an identified and proven nutritional deficiency in a population group (e.g. iron deficiency in adolescent girls).

The Authority has received detailed submissions from the food industry, vitamin manufacturers and nutritionists, who see breakfast cereals in particular, as a food vehicle to increase the intake of the anti-oxidant vitamins – C, E, and carotenes (a precursor of vitamin A) – to reduce risk for coronary heart disease and some cancers. In the stirring and tense atmosphere of the Public Hearing on Vitamins and Minerals, held by the Authority in November 1992, researchers working in the field strongly supported widespread food fortification with the anti-oxidant vitamins to reduce disease risk.

What do authoritative bodies recommend? Basically, that there is clearly insufficient evidence to be embarking on a widespread fortification program to reduce the population's risk for these diseases. Concerning cancer prevention, the evidence for concentrating three or four anti-oxidant vitamins from foods and adding them to the diet in foods or as supplements is of a preliminary nature indeed. The most recent advice from the American Cancer Society's *Guidelines on Diet, Nutrition and Cancer* only recommends that a variety of both vegetables and fruits should be included in the daily diet.

This brings to mind the Mediterranean diet with its abundant supply of vegetables and fruit. It would be a sad day for the cuisine and indeed for the nutritional health of the population, if the Mediterranean people departed from their traditional foods and relied on fortified breakfast cereals and other such foods for their intake of vitamins and minerals.

This last point raises a public health and safety issue relating to fortifying foods that is of concern to the Authority.

How safe is mixing up a cocktail of a few anti-oxidant vitamins and adding these to foods or taking them as supplements, even if the association between anti-oxidants in foods and prevention of cancer and heart disease is accepted in the future by expert bodies?

The concern of the Authority would be that some 200 compounds with anti-oxidant properties have been identified in foods and that the vitamins chosen for fortification may not be the effective or most effective anti-oxidants responsible for the demonstrated associations. The US Department of Agriculture has recently reported that fruits and vegetables normally consumed by humans contain more than 40 different forms of carotenes. Yet the submission before the Authority is to add only β-carotene to breakfast cereals and other foods.

As a regulator with an objective of public health and safety, I firmly endorse the reliance on traditional diets such as the Mediterranean diet and on naturally occurring basic foods, to provide the nutrients and other factors to maintain health and prevent disease. The National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) has clearly stated that Australians should obtain the Recommended Dietary Intakes (RDIs) of nutrients from basic foods.

This is the important public health context in which RDIs should be used in practice and for regulation, because when a diet is designed to contain the nutrients included in these recommendations (only 19 in number), it is then likely to contain all the other essential nutrients for life (estimated to be more than 30 in number) and for which recommendations have not been developed.

The submissions from the Australian Breakfast Cereal Industry, Roche Products Pty Ltd, and some nutritionists, to fortify foods with 50 per cent of the RDI for some 12 nutrients are inconsistent with the public health philosophy behind the development of RDIs.

The NHMRC's statement and similar recommendations from other national bodies such as the US National Research Council endorse the nutritional importance of traditional diets.

Other issues for the Authority

Finally, I would like to briefly discuss a few of the many applications and proposals under consideration in the Authority.

Standardised names for olive oils

It is appropriate that I include a mention of an application presently before the Authority, relating to what could be called the staple Mediterranean food – olive oil. The International Olive Oil Council has applied to establish in the Australian Food Standards Code, common or usual names for four kinds of olive oil. These are 'extra virgin olive oil', 'virgin olive oil', 'olive oil' and 'pomace olive oil'.

The applicant contends that establishing standardised names for olive oil products, by means of definitive chemical and organoleptic tests, will create certainty in the increasing trade of these products. It will allow consumers to be confident about what they are buying. At the moment, the Code only refers to very general chemical characteristics of olive oil.

There's probably no better way of explaining the Council's view other than to quote from its submission:

> While the great majority of olive oil sold in Australia is packed and distributed by reputable firms that do not misrepresent their products, the International Olive Oil Council's sampling of this product has indicated infractions when olive oil products have been misrepresented as being of higher quality than they actually were, e.g. when 'olive pomace oil' has been marketed as 'olive oil'. This misrepresentation works to the detriment of both consumers and reputable industry members.

In progressing this application, the Authority should be satisfied that, should the need ever arise, a sample olive oil can be subjected to an appropriate analytical test or battery of tests that will enable a precise determination as to which of the proposed categories of olive oil it belongs so that such a standard could be enforced. No doubt consumers would benefit from more accurate labelling on olive oil

products. However, the Authority needs to decide whether it is appropriate in food law to include what may be considered by many to be quality issues.

Game meat

The National Food Authority has recently completed a draft standard for game meat, although it is yet to go to the National Food Standards Council for approval.

In the draft Standard, game meat includes buffalo, camel, deer, donkey, goat, hare, horse, kangaroo, rabbit, pig, possum, wallaby or bird that has been slaughtered in the wild state. Let me assure all those concerned Australians, some of whom have made submissions on the issue, that a food standard for game meat is certainly not a license for hunting animals.

While wild game, such as pig, goat and rabbit, may appear on a Mediterranean menu, I am sure that kangaroo, possum and wallaby would be strange fare. While Europeans freely eat game meat, some Australians feel quite uneasy at the thought of eating steaks from the game that is depicted in their national emblem – i.e. the kangaroo and the emu. (However, the French do enjoy eating their culinary emblem, the rooster!)

Some of the issues the Authority took into consideration when looking into this draft Standard were the list of species covered, including game birds and horses; whether products should be permitted to contain game meat mixed with other meat; and the requirement for post mortem inspection.

Genetically modified organisms

One particularly contentious issue currently before the Authority is the use of genetically modified organisms in the production and processing of food. These products are a subset of the much larger category of novel foods. However because of the unique issues they raise it is generally expected that they should be subject to specific regulation or approval.

Already research and development in this field has produced new strains of tomatoes and potatoes which are currently undergoing controlled field trials in Australia. For example, the technology at last offers the potential of a tomato with all the old home grown flavour to be produced by modern farming techniques. Such a tomato, a popular Mediterranean food, can only add to the flavour of recipes we prepare from this region.

Before such products are made available to the markets, the Authority will be expected to assess their suitability for food use.

In this regard, the Authority is currently involved in discussions with State and Territory agencies to obtain a consensus for the inclusion of genetically modified organisms which may be consumed as whole foods in the Food Standards Code.

Functional foods and the food/drug interface

Another issue which is even further away from the traditional Mediterranean diet is the food/drug interface – when is a potato a pill, or should I say, when is a pill a potato?

Nutraceuticals, foodaceuticals, food pharmaceuticals, probiotic foods, designer foods are just some of the terms used to describe a proposed new class of foods and their ingredients, now mainly referred to as functional foods.

The common factor in such products is that they have alleged associations with health beyond their recognised nutritional properties. They have been described as foods designed to be medically beneficial, regulating bodily functions in a way that helps to protect against infection and diseases such as hypertension, diabetes, cancer, osteoporosis and heart disease. In Japan, 12 groups of functional food ingredients have been defined and these include dietary fibre, polyunsaturated fatty acids, minerals, vitamins and lactic acid bacteria.

Claims include that such foods:

- aid digestion;
- help slow ageing;
- prevent or control disease; and
- assist the body's immune function.

Developments in relation to functional foods are under review by the Authority and some segments of the food industry are undertaking research into possible products and their markets.

Foods of tomorrow with specialised functions and proposed claims highlight a regulatory problem of today – identifying products as foods or therapeutic goods. This is another initiative of the Authority, working in close co-operation with another statutory authority within the Health Portfolio – The Therapeutic Goods Administration. A current issue highlights the problems being considered in categorising products to fall under food or therapeutic goods regulation which are very different in their approaches. What is a food and what is a therapeutic good?

Deer antler – in powdered form; in capsule form; in slices; in capsule form with therapeutic claims; or garlic – in powdered form; in capsule form; in tablet form; in deodorised tablet form.

One interesting Japanese product is called Chlostonin Maternity. This is marketed as a triangular tablet with the claim to be a well-balanced patented food supplement for expectant and nursing mothers. It contains various substances including:

- algal extract,
- oyster shell or cow-bone powder,
- natural lemon juice powder,

- wheatgerm powder,
- and mushroom extract.

Conclusion

In concluding I hope I have served you a series of menu items from the Authority's work program. When completed they should promote public health and safety and informed consumer choice, as well as fair trade in the Australian community – but **alas** may not have the universal appeal of Mediterranean foods and traditional diets.

I hope that all of you will take an interest in our work and contribute your ideas, concerns and enthusiasm for the benefit of important food regulation in this country.

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LOCAL CHEFS' DINNER

So much work went into organising this event. We began by inviting a number of local restaurateurs/chefs to be involved in a joint dinner using the best local produce. Then the Committee met with those who wished to be part of this venture. This was the beginning of many meetings and tastings until a menu was established.

Meantime, at each Committee meeting we tasted a selection of the best Canberra wines, drawing up a short list, and finally matching them with the menu.

Set on the edge of the Parliamentary rose gardens, The Lobby Restaurant seemed the ideal venue for such an event, and owner/chef Fiona Wright was supportive and enthusiastic about the whole concept from the beginning. It was fortunate that Daniel Collard, owner/chef from Chez Daniel, and Meg Lillis, chef from Fringe Benefits Brasserie, were agreeable about the prospect of working together in someone else's kitchen.

Photographer: Mary Brander

THE DINNER

Symposiasts and the public parted company after the Forum. Symposiasts, and some invited guests including Diane Seed and Philippa Goodrick (from the IOOC), and President of the Australian Olive Oil Association, Ed Garing, walked across the road to The Lobby Restaurant for the Local Chefs' Dinner.

As we arrived we were offered a glass of Doonkuna Sauvignon Blanc 1992. We were entertained by 'The Singing Waiters' – a local male tenor comic trio, all dressed as waiters. And a fireworks display, not organised by the Committee, was in progress on the shores of Lake Burley Griffin!

Apart from the 'official' table which was organised by the Committee, consisting of the IOOC group including other contributors to the Public Forum debate, all other tables were set randomly by The Lobby staff.

As for the dinner, one or two dishes did not turn out quite as expected; and some people felt that there was too long an interval between courses; and that there were far too many courses. Regardless, the general atmosphere

was of warmth and fun. The majority of diners thoroughly enjoyed this unique event, and the generosity of the local chefs' who gave their time free of charge.

There was considerable interest shown in the local wines served and many people commented that they would like to purchase some to take home. We had not allowed for that. In fact, many of the wines we drank that night were the last stocks available.

Photograph Richard Scotte

MENU and WINES

Freshly shucked Wagonga Inlet Oysters served with a dressing
of shallots and red wine vinegar
Doonkuna Sauvignon Blanc 1992
Kyeema Semillon 1991

This was served in the garden before entering the restaurant.

Poachers Pantry smoked duck,
ginger-pickled pear, raspberry vinegar and local mesclun
dressed with hazelnut oil and raspberry vinegar

Lark Hill Chardonnay 1991

Double clear consomme of kangaroo with an infusion of Asian herbs,
shitaki mushrooms and a Chinese ravioli purse of kangaroo

Chargrilled southcoast (New South Wales) kingfish fillet
with tatsoi, salted lemon and parsley oil

Madew Rhine Riesling 1992

Saddle of hare roasted pink with a duo of wild mushroom glaze
and Dijon mustard sauce, onion marmalade,
confit of beetroot and celeriac timbale

Lake George Pinot Noir 1988

Clonakilla Shiraz 1990

Milawa ewes' washed rind and
Mt Buffalo blue goat cheese

Pistachio bread

Brindabella Hills Hilltops Cabernet Merlot 1990

Helms Cabernet Merlot 1990

Baked Pialligo Bramley apple
filled with aromatic shards of apple, lemon zest and
cinnamon on its own sauce

Jeir Creek Botrytis Semillon Sauvignon Blanc 1991

Coffee and chocolate spoons

Lake George Muscat

After dinner, Symposiasts were taken back to the Priory by the articulated bus.

Tuesday

9 March

BREAKFAST

MENU

Juice
supplied by Blackfriars Priory

Coffee
blend prepared by Grinders, Melbourne, Victoria

Penelope Sach Petal tea, and Australian (Madura) tea

Assorted jams and jellies
made and contributed by Symposiasts

Breads and pastries
from Cornucopia Bakery, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Butter, unsalted
from The Bega Co-operative Society Ltd, Bega, New South Wales

Raspberries, blackberries, peaches and nectarines
from Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Smoked salmon and smoked tuna
donated by Aquatas and Tassal, Hobart, Tasmania.
(organised and delivered by symposiast, Barbra Blomberg)

Photographer: Mary Brander

CULTURE CONFLICT: APPLES, EVE AND EDUCATION

Linda McGuckin

AS the major school subject whereby many students learn about food and eating, home economics has been heavily criticised by various groups in our society for many years. Although the subject has changed (often in response to criticisms) and there are variations in the approaches used among home economics teachers, a recent survey revealed that home economics foods classes are still seen as being about cooking with some minor links to the hospitality industry. Perceptions from parents, students and career educators about home economics foods classes included the following: provide 'survival skills' such as simple cookery; an outdated concept of domestic skills for girls; classes are for future housewives who are not particularly academic; needs to be up-to-date so students aren't turned off; girls learn to cook in order to feed their future families; and boys only learn to cook in order to 'batch' or become a chef. These criticisms are probably familiar to most home economics teachers; we've heard them before and tried to counter them in various ways such as improving our image, learning better communication skills, updating our curricula, using the latest technology and so on. In previous papers I have suggested that applying the semiotic model of communication to home economics could lead to relevant avenues of analysis. In this paper I will demonstrate how applying the semiotic model of communication to the topic of food and eating can offer teachers a different perspective of how home economics interacts with other subjects.

For instance, although many teachers see cooking as the most important meaning of foods classes, others have a wider range of meanings including; cooking, tasting new foods, source and seasonability of food, social, cultural and technological aspects of food, catering and widening the students' food repertoire. However, if these wider meanings about food are limited to rhetoric, while in their classroom **practice** teachers still see cooking skills, nutrition, economy and/or catering as the core meanings about food, students will continue to make limited skills-based meanings about food and not question wider social issues.

In researching the ways adolescents are taught about food and eating I have used communication and cultural theory to explore the different meanings people make about food. Since this symposium is about food, I decided not to bore you with theoretical jargon, instead I've used one food, apples, to illustrate the theory. In this paper I'll talk about the many different meanings people make about apples, discuss how these meanings are used by different groups in our society and question the consequences of conflict between various social and cultural groups and their meanings.

When I asked people what apples meant to them they looked at me in disbelief, because everybody knows about apples. People like apples, they eat apples and they eat them raw. They even prefer apples over other fruits. But for many people apples are common, tasteless, too soft and a bit boring; they're a taken-for-granted fruit. Apples are something mum buys in bulk, in large plastic bags, to keep handy for the kids to snack upon. Granny Smiths are preferred by children for their flavour and by mum because they're cheap and keep well. Also, people do not trust apples, particularly red ones. They don't like biting into a good looking apple (red delicious are the worst) and finding out it's soft ('squishy' is the term used by my daughter) or worse, finding out it's brown and bruised. They are also suspicious about the dangers to their health of chemicals on apples. People often make very negative meanings about the apples available today; meanings about impurity and scientific and technological control over their food, producing apples which may look attractive but have no taste and are not crisp because of controlled atmosphere storage, and may even be a danger to their health. The dislike and fear people have of technology is superbly illustrated by the way the wicked witch in the movie *Snow White* manufactured the ideal apple. Walt Disney's dream apple was red, shiny, smooth, attractive – it was perfect, desirable, sensual, luscious, irresistible – Snow White couldn't resist taking a bite but we all know what happened to her, because the apple was poisoned.

So if people see apples today in negative terms, what do they want them to be? They want apples to live up to the memories they have of the apples of their youth. From these memories people make another group of meanings around apples, those of crispness, crunchiness, juiciness, freshness, taste and rawness. These sorts of meanings are about nostalgia, the physical vitality of youth, family values, purity, the pleasures of eating and the variety and delights of natural food unspoiled by technology. In addition, to

some middle-class and educated consumers who are aware of and can afford the newer varieties of apples (Pink Lady, Sundowner), these fruits mean elitism, the 'exotic' and the sensual pleasures of eating.

Myths, religions and folklore

The meanings we make about apples have their origins in early religions, myths and folklore. In the Christian story of The Fall, the serpent tempted Eve to taste the forbidden fruit from the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and she, having tasted that it was good offered it to Adam and he tasted it too, whereupon God expelled them from paradise to a life of misery. Although the Bible only refers to the forbidden fruit, it is the apple that has gained meaning as that fruit. Within Christianity, various meanings have been made surrounding this event. It has been used to justify women's submission to men and that men's failings are due to their temptation by women (Fishbone 1987). It has also been seen as an allegory for the disastrous consequences of lust. The fatal source of all human misery was inordinate desire; this desire is sensual, it is aesthetic, it is the desire for a deeper, more varied, more exciting experience of life. In these meanings, Adam (man) is seen as the mind or the rational intellect while Eve (woman) is seen as sensibility or emotion. In other words, the mind is led astray by sensibility to seek pleasure in things of the senses (food) instead of pure wisdom (Bennett 1908). If you cast your minds back to the memorable meal in the movie *Tom Jones*, you'll recall scenes showing the delights of being led astray while eating. Perhaps this symposium should be just talking about food and not eating it; I'm sure the oversighting committee for the National Food and Nutrition Policy didn't indulge in sensual and aesthetic experiences about food when they wrote such a rational intellectual policy.

In myths and folklore there are many meanings about apples; perpetual youth, immortality, healing, fertility, love and desire, divination and also discord, deceitfulness and death (Cooper 1978; Leach 1972). For instance, in Greek and Teutonic myths the golden apples of the Hesperides and the apples guarded by Idhunn ensured immortality. In Celtic myths, King Arthur was taken to Avalon, an island of apple trees, to be healed of his wounds (Radford and Radford 1961). In other stories from Greek mythology the suitor of Atlanta, compelled to race with her, threw down golden apples he obtained from Aphrodite to distract her and so won the race and his bride; Paris awarded the apple of discord to Aphrodite and received Helen as his reward, the result being the Trojan War; and the eleventh labour of Hercules was to fetch the golden apples of the Hesperides (Robinson and Wilson 1962). Apples have also been regarded as magical; they appear in many folktales, customs and superstitions. For instance, while an apple tree was a source of youth and power it could also be dangerous; a 'ymp-tree' that is, a grafted apple, was under fairy influence, and if you slept under it you could be carried away by fairies (Briggs 1976).

In the commercial world, manufacturers utilise these mythical meanings in their choice of business names. For example, in choosing the name 'The Magic Apple', a health food manufacturer and restaurant, is playing on the meanings of magic, health, healing and immortality. While the apple logo for Apple Computer has been described as:

> the symbol of lust and knowledge, bitten into, all crossed with the colours of the rainbow in the wrong order. You couldn't dream of a more appropriate logo: lust, knowledge, hope and anarchy (Sculley with Byrne 1982).

While these meanings help explain the differences between Apple and IBM computers, of more importance is the fact that they illustrate how meanings are not fixed; instead they change over time and may be transferred from one thing to another thereby expanding the range of meanings available.

In these examples, we can see both negative and positive meanings are made about apples. Many of the old phrases about apples also reflect these oppositions between good and evil, health and disease, order and disorder, purity and impurity. For instance from phrases such as; 'apple-pie order', 'an apple a day keeps the doctor away', 'she'll be apples', 'an apple for the teacher' and 'apple of my eye', we can make meanings about order, purity, health and goodness. Whereas from the following phrases we can make meanings about disorder, impurity, disease and evil; 'rotten to the core', 'one rotten apple spoils the whole barrel', 'there's small choice in rotten apples', 'upset the applecart', 'give me the pip', 'apple-pie bed', 'apple of discord' and 'apple polishing' (Smith 1970; Simpson 1982).

Science and technology

The ambivalence of meanings about apples can also be traced through the sources of new varieties of fruit. Although apples had been cultivated since the time of the Greeks and Romans, much of the fruit came from trees raised from seed. Since apples do not breed true from seed, apples with desirable eating or cooking qualities were propagated by grafting. Henry VIII's importation of new apple varieties from France, especially pippins, was an attempt to deliberately improve the quality of English apples (Bultitude 1983). With the coming of the scientific age, breeders

began to make deliberate crosses between known varieties to produce new apples. From the scientific breeding of apples we again find people making negative meanings about science and technology; in particular, meanings about control over the supply of apples available which they believe results in a lack of genetic diversity, lack of taste and an over-emphasis on appearance and keeping qualities to meet commercial demands. A West Australian Department of Agriculture bulletin to apple growers lists the desirable qualities required for successful new varieties of apples. Of the seven attributes listed, eating is only mentioned once and even then it is combined with appearance as follows, 'visual and eating qualities to stimulate consumer demand and be easily identified in the market place'. Two of the remaining qualities listed relate to appearance while the other four qualities relate to characteristics desired by growers, exporters and retailers (i.e. tree shape, annual cropping, size of apples, disease resistance, storage and retail shelf life characteristics) (Cripps et al. 1990, p.3). In describing new apple varieties (Lady Williams, Pink Lady, Sundowner) breeders make meanings similar to those made about wines. For example, the Pink Lady is described as 'sweet but with a refreshing acid balance' while the Sundowner 'when harvested the fruit is high in sugar ... and flavour improves with storage' (Cripps et al. 1990, p.5). However, describing apples in the same way as wines does not provide much comfort to those consumers who believe that these newer apples are replacing 'real' apples, such as Rome Beauty, Sturmer, Cox's Orange Pippin or Jonathans (Apple and Pear Growers Association of South Australia 1992). Jane Grigson asserts in her *Fruit Book*, that 'Every time I come across an apple worth eating that is new to us, it turns out to be an older variety' (Grigson 1982).

Apples and nature

Opposed to the scientifically bred fruit are the apples grown by granny (Granny Smith and Bramley's Seedling) whose fruit came from a chance seedling. Folklore has it that granny carefully tended her plant, harvested her crop, recognised the exceptional cooking qualities and so shared her apples with friends and customers (Oliver 1963; Fearn-Wannan 1970). The meanings of this folklore are those of mother nature providing bountifully through her agents on earth, the real-live mothers and grannies, who dispensed satisfaction, contentment, family values, health, well-being and folk medicine through the humble apple, either raw or cooked, in dishes such as baked apples, stewed apples, or best of all, apple pie. Today many people still make these meanings about home-cooked apple pies and they are being deliberately played upon in the advertising slogan 'Grannies always cook better than their relatives', placed in women's magazines by the Australian Horticultural Corporation. In these meanings about women and nature, women are rendered symbols. As symbols their characteristics are decided by others' fantasies and projections, not by anything the women might offer of themselves. What is presupposed in this symbolism is a normal female body, fertile and ready for reproduction accompanied by the normal caring, mothering emotions. For individual women, what becomes overwhelmingly important is their identity with a group; deviation from the symbolic role becomes a problem (Coward 1989, pp.175-6). The advertising and health promotion industries and the medical profession all reinforce this symbolism in their messages about women's responsibility to 'properly' feed their menfolk and families.

The old meanings of health and youth reappear in this folklore in which apples are seen as a safe, gentle, natural cure for stomach upsets such as dyspepsia, dysentery and enteritis; they also cure hangovers, relieve constipation, prevent obesity and as 'Nature's Toothbrush', they prevent tooth decay and promote healthy gums. Advertising slogans such as, 'Pick a natural snack if you have a taste for life' and 'A snack food so healthy, you can eat the packaging' are playing on these meanings about apples being natural and healthy. These meanings about apples centre on them being eaten raw, so we find raw, natural foods opposed to technologically produced, cooked or processed foods. Here natural foods are seen as good (healthy) and processed foods as bad (unhealthy). This view defines nature as having only life-giving properties and ignores the aspects of death and decay (Coward 1989, pp.140-1). The natural, health meanings which treat apples as life-giving pay no attention to the risks of contamination from chemicals used by growers; consumers, however, are concerned about these risks. With the widespread acceptance of current principles of healthy eating, these meanings about the benefits of natural, healthy foods like apples, are possibly becoming more dominant than views about the risks from technologically produced, cooked or processed foods.

Gastronomy

This opposition between raw and cooked foods leads to a discussion of the meanings gourmands make about food. These include meanings about; creative cooking, elitism, exotic, luxury, wines and spirits, and indulgence in sensuous pleasures. Since apples have always been such a common fruit, they've never had that elitist appeal of other more exotic fruits; even pears are considered more of a gourmet food than apples (Sprague pers. comm.). For instance, in two

Australian Horticultural Corporation (AHC) *Epicurean* Promotion Features (Australian Horticultural Corporation 1991) the apple recipes were titled 'Apples. Nature's Snack Pack' and 'She'll Be Apples' while those on pears were titled 'Pears. The Food of Kings' and 'Perfection in Pears'. The apple recipes presented, still revolved around sweets and cakes and included: Baked Apples, Apple Tarts, Apple Sauce, Apple Slice, Apple Fritters, Danish Apple Pudding (there was even a High Fibre Apple Slice!) with several savoury recipes such as Apple Stuffed Duckling, Red Cabbage and Apple Salad and Apple and Chicken Liver Saute and an Apple Sorbet. Within this selection of recipes there is still considerable evidence of healthy, homely meanings about apples. The very notion of a High Fibre Apple Slice as a gourmet dish is a contradiction in terms. Somehow it is difficult to imagine plain apples shifting to the ethereal and elite among fruits as the breeders hope will happen to the newer varieties. The pear recipes in the *Epicurean* feature, on the other hand, showed more evidence of the meanings surrounding gourmet food. Some examples are: Stilton Crepes with Port Glazed Pears, Lamb Fillet with Mustard Pear Sauce, Pear Puree and Creamed Spinach Ring, Pear and Avocado Salad, Chilled Pear and Plum Soup, Pears Poached in Red Wine, Mocha Pears, Fruity Ricotta Pears with Apricot Sauce, Frangipani Pear Tart, Pear Clafoutis and Pears in Orange Sauce.

Since gourmands are interested in cooking food, this automatically places them, in the minds of those health professionals promoting the current healthy discourse about the virtues of raw, natural food, onto the side of the bad and unhealthy. Furthermore, because of their interest in the sensuous pleasures of eating, gourmands are also distrusted by those people promoting the Christian meanings that pure wisdom is to be found in the mind not in the senses. A sense of superiority, even a morality, seems to be at stake in these meanings about healthy eating as illustrated by Phillip Adams, in a recent article in *The Weekend Review,* where he criticised gastronomy as 'the new porn'. He said:

> In an age where sex has had the dick, one form of stuffing replaces another. The menu of the trendy restaurant is the culinary counterpart to the Karma Sutra, while what the gourmet does with mouth and tongue is so close to oral sex that it's a miracle they haven't passed a law against it (Adams 1993).

It is easy to see the world split into the virtuous and the naughty in the oppositions which are set up between healthy and unhealthy food.

> In this infantile splitting of the world, most foods associated with pure satisfaction of taste (that is most of the sugary or sweet foods) fall onto the side of the wicked (Coward 1989, p.135).

The satisfaction felt by those involved in 'healthy eating' feed on these meanings of difference and by implication moral superiority. Yet the only thing that is criticised is the way the individual body is treated. Neither discourse, that of healthy eating or the gourmet discourse, makes any critique of social class, ethnic or gender issues about food and eating or issues of food production or marketing.

The Stomp apple commercial

Although women have been and still are symbolically seen as the providers of food in our society, recent surveys show it is no longer necessarily the case that women are the principal household shoppers (McKay 1992). The Australian Horticultural Corporation believes that today it is necessary to aim a television apple commercial to a wider group of people. They briefed their advertising agency to present apples as more vital, fun and a modem product appealing to younger people. The AHC believes the Stomp apple TV commercial communicates the crisp desirability of apples with impact and excitement. There is no doubt that the commercial appeals to younger people; they particularly like the ending. But whether they make the same meanings about apples as those desired by the AHC and growers is another matter. The meanings that can be made about the TV apple commercial include, youth, vitality, virility and rebellion. The youth are male, who have physical vitality, energy, power, strength, skill and sexuality. They are also working-class, anti-establishment musicians, treating the warehouse and fruit as props for a display of masculine prowess. These meanings linking a masculine and technological sexuality and power to apples directly oppose the religious meanings from Eve's temptation of Adam, which link apples to a feminine, sensual, emotional and emasculating sexuality.

Advertisers are very clever at working out the meanings people make about food. It is clear that there is no room in this TV commercial for meanings about apples being scientifically nutritious and healthy. And yet people know they ought to be eating healthy, nutritious food. So I'd now like to take a further look at the way meanings of nutrition, science and a healthy diet fit into the discourses on food.

Science and nutrition

The medical meanings about fruit have changed over centuries from the early Greek beliefs put forward by Galen who regarded fruits with suspicion

because they might cause illness. By the sixteenth century this belief was still strong although it was considered that fruits eaten in moderation could be useful in treating fevers (Drummon and Wilbraham 1991, p.68). By the eighteenth century the medical profession came round to the view that fruits were necessary for health and 'contrary to vulgar prejudice, tend to prevent rather than to induce bowel complaints' (Drummon and Wilbraham 1991, p.235). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, developments in scientific thought produced a growing professional class of doctors who assumed power over the health of the community. Part of this power held by the medical profession was the power to decide what was the 'truth' about food and health and what were 'old wives' tales'. In the late nineteenth century, doctors conducted experiments to determine the energy needs of humans. In the early twentieth century, vitamins were discovered and since that time the science of nutrition has developed under the umbrella of medicine. In this 'newer' science the folklore meanings that 'apples are good for you' are replaced by scientific meanings such as, diet, nutrition, nutrients, kilojoules, vitamins, minerals, dietary fibre and cholesterol-free. The general population only has direct access to these scientific meanings through the various 'experts' in nutrition, which include (on a scale of decreasing status); general practitioners, dietitians, nutritionists, home economists and home economics teachers. The organisation of this strict hierarchy, with its regulations about training and practices is an attempt by the 'experts' to maintain control over these scientific and nutritional meanings about food. A very clear example of this is the recent National Food and Nutrition Policy where only one minor acknowledgement of the social and sensual aspects of eating is presented, and then, rather as an after-thought (Australian Government Publishing Service 1992). But the fact is that many people ignore or ridicule the 'experts' (for example, the food groups were ridiculed in the TV program, *Fast Forward*) and eat what they like, or if they're interested in health they may visit alternative natural therapists such as naturopaths or homeopaths, attend commercial diet clinics or follow magazine diets. This raises questions about the relevance of scientific and nutritional meanings of food for many people and also questions the oppressive nature of the 'experts' behaviour towards people.

In pamphlets and books produced by dietitians and nutritionists to teach people how to eat a healthy, nutritious diet, food is divided into categories, and so apples disappear and we are told instead how much fruit and vegetables we should be eating each day (2 fruit'n 5 veg) and the reasons why we should do this. From this viewpoint it appears irrelevant whether people eat apples or some other fruit, except that yellow-orange coloured fruit is thought to help prevent cancers. The reasons, according to this literature, why people should eat fruit and vegetables include: they provide good 'nutrients' (vitamins, minerals, fibre), fruit does not contain bad substances (cholesterol, too many calories), and eating fruit does good things for your body. We can see that this language can be compared to that of car maintenance, i.e. if you use the right fuel and oil (fruit and vegetables) the car (human body) will function (live) perfectly. For instance, we are told to 'eat more fruit'n veg because they are a great source of natural fibre, keeping your digestive system in top working order'. Of six reasons listed, only one mentioned the sensual aspect of eating and even that was qualified; i.e. '...eat more fruit'n veg because they taste great and don't weigh you down' (National Heart Foundation of Australia). I suggest, therefore, that the meanings about fruit and vegetables made by dietitians and nutritionists are not only scientific and nutritional, but they are also technological and anti-human, treating the body as a machine which can be separated from the rest of the person (i.e. their senses, emotions, beliefs, etc.).

The training of dietitians and nutritionists is theoretical and does not include any practical experience in selecting, cooking or eating food, so we should not be surprised that they do not make any meanings about the sensual and aesthetic experience of eating apples, nor about the ways in which apples can be cooked, whether homely or gourmet. Furthermore, they are trained in the rational sciences, not the humanities, so it is also not surprising they do not make many meanings about eating as a social activity, nor about symbolic meanings of food. The exceptions are probably religious taboos and selected ethnic beliefs about food and eating which are seen by these professionals as being more legitimate than other beliefs, such as working-class, gendered, political or commercial meanings of food and eating.

Home economics

Many home economics teachers see the meaning of the subject as mainly about teaching cooking skills, so apples are used quite a lot, especially Granny Smiths because of their cooking qualities (easy for students to handle, perform well in a class situation), cheapness, year round availability and their keeping qualities (any fruit left over keeps well for the next class). Apples are also used in foods classes because they are a nutritional food, 'they fit into the base of the healthy diet pyramid and are in the eat most category'. Some examples of how apples are used in home economics classes are as follows: Baked Apples or Apple

Crumble in the microwave oven in introductory lessons; stewed apples to demonstrate stewing as a method of cooking; apple slices to demonstrate the process of food deterioration; whole apples as snacks in a packed lunch; to 'pad out' dishes like fruit salads; in a Waldorf Salad as an example of an international food; Apple Shortcake as an example of a dessert; and in a nutrition lesson, whole apples as a healthy alternative to 'junk foods' (Grainger and Byfield pers. comm.).

As home economics moves into the area of technology education, there are changes in the way foods is taught. The technology approach to education is to design, make and appraise a product. Through such projects students have the opportunity to compare different food products; for example, the wide range of apple products available in the market due to technology. In one class project on apple pies students carried out the following processes: analysed the labels on commercial apple pies; conducted taste tests on them; noted whether the labelling reflected the product; and finally, cooked apple pies in class, packaged, labelled and sold them to school staff. Needless to say the apple pies were popular with the school staff. Although the technology approach shifts the focus away from the domestic to the vocational, its meanings are still skill-based only in a vocational setting.

One important critique of home economics comes from feminists who believe that the subject maintains women's disadvantaged status and therefore is a 'waste of girls' time'. Even one home economics teacher was heard to say that she wouldn't want her daughters taking the subject. Part of the reason for this critique may lie in the fact that home economics had its origins in the late nineteenth century middle-class reform movements which aimed to improve the eating habits of the poor. Much of this movement was aimed at teaching women and girls how to cook so they could properly feed their menfolk and families with nutritious food within the money they had available. This movement aimed at teaching the poor about nutrition, how to purchase food wisely, to store it safely, to plan nutritious menus and how to cook cheap foods correctly. There was little attention directed at social, political or economic structures which maintain these groups disadvantaged position. Although home economics has changed over the last century it still makes similar meanings about food and eating; meanings about nutrition, economy, cooking skills, food storage, hygiene and safety and women's role as food provider, and the subject is still mainly selected by lower ability girls. Within the subject, 'there is an implied message that it is the poor who need to be changed rather than the world they live in' (Attar 1990, p.144).

One researcher has questioned students' feelings about the home economics approach and discovered that many former students feel anger and dislike towards the subject, feelings which arise partly out of a sense that:

> it has tried to regulate their lives: criticising them if they are mothers, discounting them if they are not, and suggesting that a set of happy faces around the tea table could be theirs if only they applied the right know-how (Attar 1990, p.147).

This regulatory approach with its moralistic implications is the underlying basis of the home economics meanings about food and eating.

Conclusion

I have taken one food, apples, to illustrate that people make meanings about things. In the process of exploring the various meanings people make about apples it was clear that there are certain ways of organising these meanings. According to communication theories, meanings are conveyed by signs (words, photographs, images, language, music, gestures, etc) which are organised into systems called codes, the rules of which are agreed to by the community using that code. Since Australian society is composed of many social and cultural groups, it thus follows that these different groups understand different codes and therefore make different meanings about food and eating. It was clear that dietitians and nutritionists made different meanings about apples from those made by gourmands, scientists, apple breeders, home economics teachers, commercial people and consumers. Even consumers were not a homogeneous group in the meanings they made about apples. Each of these groups had its own traditional ways of making sense of the world around them which determined what meanings they preferred, i.e. each group selected the meanings about food and eating that were relevant to its ways of conceptualising the world.

Education, in its many forms, is seen by middle-class teachers, bureaucrats and health professionals as the means of changing people's bad (unhealthy) eating habits into good (healthy) eating habits. These various forms of education may be informal, such as, radio and TV food programs, diet classes, hobby cooking classes, in-store promotions, health department pamphlets, magazine editorials and advertising or formal, mainly through high school home economics classes. However, the one thing common to most of these forms of education is their oppressive nature. The nature of this oppressive form of education is that certain groups of 'experts' try to impose

their restricted meanings (of science, nutrition and health) about food and eating onto the rest of the community which is usually viewed as homogeneous; often seen as ungendered or at least with very paternalistic notions of 'them' (the poor). The response of various groups to this oppression is either passive apathy or active revolt. The resulting social and cultural conflict is neither ethical, socially desirable nor does it encourage people to eat healthy food.

Some of the 'experts' are aware that, at some level things are not working out as they'd like them to be; that people are not listening to nor are they following their advice on healthy eating. The usual response to this though, is to bring in the advertisers to improve the message. To make it more snappy, more jazzy, more appealing. Some health professionals are even aware they should no longer use words such as 'good' and 'bad' when referring to foods. But still, the 'experts" underlying belief is that they know the correct meanings about food and eating and that it is only a matter of finding the right way of communicating to make people understand why they should be eating healthy food. With this point of view, it is difficult for most 'experts' to acknowledge that people have a legitimate right to their own beliefs about food and eating.

Communication rather than coercion is likely to provide more desirable outcomes for both 'experts' and the community. However, there are various models of communication and clearly, to achieve these outcomes, people need to be aware of these models, their benefits and appropriate places where they can be used effectively.

The process model of communication has real benefits for health professionals and educators who are aware of needing to improve their communication skills. The focus in this model is on a sender sending a message to a receiver and via feedback adjusting the message to achieve efficient and accurate communication. However this model does not address the issue that people make different meanings and that they have a right to their meanings. The semiotic model of communication emphasises that both producers and readers of texts make their own meanings of messages. This model takes into account that the readers' prior experiences influence how they read messages. It also encourages dialogue between people communicating to enable negotiation of meanings – an essential step in the communication and education processes. From the previous discussion of the oppressive practices of health professionals and educators it appears that knowledge of this model of communication is needed to bring about the necessary changes in their approach to food and education.

I would like to finish with a reflection on my own experience as I have attempted to move away from being an 'expert'. It has been a very difficult, frustrating, challenging and sometimes painful journey as I have tried to open my mind from its imprisonment within the rigid, narrow, rule-based confines of my original scientific, technical and professional training as a home economics teacher, to develop a world-view of food and eating that includes concepts such as, the social, experiential, sensual, unconscious, spiritual, philosophical and the literary. The support of my supervisor, Dr Alan Mansfield, whose sheer love of food and eating still amazes me, and other members of this symposium who have generously shared their ideas, has been instrumental in opening up my mind. I may not always agree with you but at least I now hear you! Thank you

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SHORT CIRCUITS TO THE TABLE: SHARED PLEASURES

Max Lake

SHARING at table is the most social activity. It is also one of the great pleasures of living. Kitchen and garden are foundations of the story which builds to the delights of flavour, paradigm of smell and taste. These appear to be paramount, but in the total table experience one wonders which of the senses are actually in play. The governor of the wedding feast at Cana (John 2:3) directed the sequence with great subtlety, and for maximum effect. Literature and especially modern films like 'Tampopo' and 'The cook, the thief, his wife and her lover', abound with banquets that straddle the senses.

And yet both novice and professional, despite best efforts, continue to be bemused by unexpected flavour. Experience reveals more of the secrets behind the highs and lows of table pleasures, but enigmas persist. By exploring individual senses further, this paper starts to address their role in the puzzle. There is already a book in the press of bridging the troubled waters of flavour impact elements, largely the products of synergism and masking when foods and wines are taken together. Then there is individual variation in perception, like 'blindnesses' to tastes and smells, and of the ability to determine key components in a complex mix. It is rare to find someone who is able to pick up more than five. So much for the long lists in some recipes.

Believing that a clearer understanding of the senses will enhance gastronomy, we are going to consider synesthesia and similar sensory responses as they relate to the art of the table.

What is real?

> I was recommended for psychological counselling at school because I told the assistant principal that when I kissed my boyfriend, I saw orange sherbet foam.
>
> D.S. in *Synesthesia* 1989

It is very easy to become confused. Some definitions will define the borders of sensory mixes and interpretations. An illusion is an incorrect or false impression of an external stimulus. Everyone has experienced them, and they are generally easily corrected, often simply by the receiver. A hallucination is a different kettle of fish. This is the perception of a sensation without an external stimulus, e.g. a voice that no one else hears. It can be produced by massive sensory overload, as with bright flashing lights and loud music, but the effect is quite different to the modular relationship of synesthesia. Still different again is imagery, something arising out of the imagination, a term that might be applied to an association of ideas. As Richard Cytowic puts it in his book *Synesthesia* 'I'm hearing this piece of music, and I see a beautiful landscape'. That is easily confused with synesthesia, by anyone hearing the comment. Synesthesia is a conscious mixing of the senses, as in colour/hearing and will be discussed in more detail. And finally there is sensory capture, which infers one sense dominating, even to the exclusion of one sense by another. So, to summarise, an illusion is a mistaken perception, a hallucination is a perception in the absence of objective stimulus, synesthesia is the cross perception of one sense as another, and sensory capture is just that. Without due care, the edges can get very blurred.

Sensory capture

Because it is the most potent wild card at the dining table, sensory capture will be looked at first. It has its own fascination. The readiness to perceive is a pre-

requisite to the registration of most sensation. In repose, the freewheeling brain perks up fractions of a second before a sensory input is relayed, and it is at that instant that all the modules of perception are up for grabs. R.D. Wright's classic example is the pilot at the controls making ready for the landing approach. The stewardess who in ordinary circumstances preempts his attention with several of her own sensory messages, is completely unnoticed, as is her proffered cup of coffee. The pilot has caught a whiff of cigarette smoke from the passenger compartment behind them, and readied by the problems of the imminent landing, is experiencing total sensory capture.

The key to this reaction lies in evolution, the time when sight got the upper hand, if you will permit. In the unending territorial appraisal of the possibilities for food, danger, and sex, once animals got their snouts up off the ground, sight became increasingly important, smell in some respects less so. In humans it has diminished to average about a fifth of the brain's incoming sensory messages. The total input from the physical world is integrated with the body's internal feedback, to come up with ideas, creative concepts, on top of primitive and powerful drives.

Early in the development of life forms, primary tastes like sour and sweet relay to a taste centre in the brainstem of which the worm's might be said to be representative. In later developed animals general body sensations acquire special values in the mouth, e.g. pain becomes pungent. The two streams end in the thalamus and thence to a cortical relay to be expressed as our idea of 'taste'. In a newer type brain, the hypothalamus leads a sequence that concludes in the frontal cortex with the integration of all the senses. This is the point of time to learn and train.

Meanwhile another sequence has been evolving. Three distinct smell brains, now justifiably nicknamed reptilian/sexual, koala, and chef/perfumer's, are discussed at length elsewhere. Once the limbic link has tuned the body's automatic control, reception, recognition and reaction fire up in those around the shared table.

Three coins in the freezer

Linda Bartoshuk and Inglis Miller describe a pecking order in the primary taste nerves, a fairly common event throughout the nervous system. Try this experiment. Freeze two similar coins, and while this is happening, hold a third one in you fist. Place all three on the table, the warm one in the middle. Place index, middle and ring finger tips on each coin. All three feel cold. Of the many tongue taste tests, the weirdest occurred in a woman who could perceive a salty taste on one side of her tongue, although she happened to be anaesthetic on that side. The 'saltiness' was found to be due to simple warmth.

One of my favourite demos, perhaps because I was taken in by my initial experience of it (an international wine judge??), is done with glasses of coloured sweetened water, with a touch of a food acid. One is red, the other green, or light red and orange. Many a naive palate will find the flavours different, especially if separate glasses of true fruit flavours are introduced into the line up. A very great wine in a tin mug, on a back country road at midnight tasted like water. There are many such stories. These are another face of the ease with which anyone can become a 'label drinker'.

Before proceeding to the colour/hearing and suchlike of synesthesia, note the common association of colour and flavour. In the real world, taste and smell are often mixtures rather than singletons. Similarly with colour, primary red, green and yellow permit the idea of innumerable shades, and the fundamental tone primaries likewise with hearing. In the *Evolution of Flavour*, it was pointed out how critical colour had become to our idea of flavour, and not everyone would agree with Miriam Rothschild's denial of coloured flavour. One speaks of a 'greenish' taste or odour note, different from that of unripeness. So also with 'brown', e.g. crust or sauce. Similar crossovers are inferred by words like light, bright, sharp, dull, heavy, applied to the fragrance take-offs from a complex perfume. This is not synesthesia, but it hints of something the brain is attempting, perhaps shorthand, or recall of an ancient crossover.

Synesthesia

> Kiwi fruit tastes green, but green grapes don't taste green.
> Why was the point white when it smelt blue?
> Quotes from known synesthetes

> Synesthesia is what we all do without knowing that we do it, whereas synesthetes do it and know that they do it.
> Prof. A.K. Ommaya

Aristotle described sensory capture, but the first medical reference to synesthesia seems to have been about 1710, a description of colour visions induced by sound in a blind man. It has with some justification been called a sixth sense. Geographically it resides in the left hemisphere of the brain recently recognised as the seat of pleasurable experience. It is becoming increasingly clear that the 'person' who speaks is not the same one who perceives or is creative. They reside in separate hemispheres, usually united by the cerebral commissures. 'The neuron is a storyteller that accentuates some features and completely ignores others.' What is more they are grouped in functional units that embrace surprisingly broad areas that cross all manner of functional borders. Order does, on occasion, pre-

vail. It does with taste nerves, and there is a layered map of sound frequencies in the temporal lobe, lowest lateral, highest medial. But crossovers keep intruding. VE, who has coloured hearing, sees high tones as pink and low tones as blue. 'Blues in the night'.

Parallel senses can be mnemonic devices, all the more useful on that account. Furthermore there are favourite sounds, foods, colours etc. of which synesthetes never tire. All the crosslinked brain circuitry that results in synesthesia is correlated in the hippocampus in the depths of the temporal lobe. The net result is real all right, an enriched perception, and all those who possess it would not be without it. The chemistry is even more fascinating, catecholamine-based from limbic associations.

'Tell me Mr Debussy, what rules do you follow in composing?'

'Mon plaisir' was the reply.

Evolution demonstrates that there is a considerable overlap of the various functional units of the brain in marsupials, and in mammals, e.g. cats, even some primates. It may well be how they perceive the world. It has been a surprise to learn that in some animals a supposedly visual neuron may also respond to sound or touch. I was irresistibly reminded that, at about the age of four, it seemed that I had the ability to 'see' things that could be touched with the fingertips, that I must have some kind of 'finger-eye'. Whatever the reality, it is a lost talent, except that I did become a hand surgeon. What of the Asian symbol with the eye in the palm of the hand?

The intersensory experience seems certain to have preceded language. It is worth pondering how many metaphors there are in so many languages which may be coloured by intersensory perception. Blue mood, bright top note in a perfume, make up your own list. John Steele points out there are synesthetic cultures where 'smell ranks high on the sensory totem pole.' Some ethnic groups are said to dwell 'in a seamless multisensory domain of simultaneous layering of visual, acoustic, and olfactory impressions'. Shades of the festive table?

The child

The infant's self-identity and location begin with oral and olfactory exploration. Late in the first year, touching begins to correlate with visual information. Clearer outlines of smell and taste usually appear later in the second year. This is when the preferences and aversions of the close family group become influential. The name Pavlov rings a bell. This may be the time to start learning the applications and ramifications of synesthesia if it is present.

There may be a parallel with hearing and smell, suggested by a study of deaf children. Those born without a sense of hearing, or who become deaf before they learn to speak, have no conception of sounds. Without the most extraordinary efforts of parents and child they may become 'feral' or wild in their isolation from those around them. Is there a similarity to those with Kallman's syndrome? This was described by him in 1944, linking social withdrawal with anosmia and sexual problems. It would not come a great surprise to see confirmed the link between odour and emotion in certain people whose behaviour and attitude appear so odd to others.

There is a good case to be made for exposing the child to as much flavour and fragrance as they can cope with. The vivid curiosity and quest for knowledge of a healthy child is prodigious. How often do these wither for lack of cultivation? TLC and its touching and talking foster the best development of the young. Is there any problem in expanding this to smelling and tasting, before and after weaning? Some mothers already know the answer.

Richard Cytowic considers the intersensory associations of children tend to become suppressed by the development of thought and language. To avoid ridicule and disbelief children with a talent for synesthesia keep mum, unless some hint inadvertently escapes. They may well have been tormented by classmates or disbelieved by parents. Sophistication begins to obscure that which is crystal clear to the naive.

One of the oldest criticisms of synesthesia is that it is subjective. This is not convincing. What are the carefully documented symptoms in the history that lead up to a precise diagnosis, if not subjective? Synesthetes tend to be of normal or high intelligence, but their cognitive skills are uneven. They may perform poorly in maths, have difficulty with direction, or with certain abstractions like poetry or philosophy.

Conclusion

Although many of the ideas in this paper do not immediately translate to the table, increasing perception will enhance enjoyment. The great gastronomic experiences combine and grow from an integration of the senses. People, table furnishings, presentation of the food and wine, conversation, music, even save the mark, flavours, all unite to enhance each sense. Intersensory phenomena could well possess guests, chefs and hosts.

Synesthesia, a short circuit in the brain wiring, may after all be an evolutionary vestige. There are many such, e.g. those who clearly retain at least a functional sexual odour system pace Dr Jacobson. It could be a riveting evening debate, whether it, or synesthesia, might be the more important to foster.

And finally never underestimate the importance of

presentation. Seeing is really deceiving. It's eating that's believing.

Postscript

Food on the Plate, Wine in the Glass released in September 1994 is a complete re-think of the principles of food and wine flavour.

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LET THEM EAT CAKE

Courtney P.H. Clark

WHAT was actually said was, 'Let them eat brioche!'

In this the Year for the World's Indigenous People, it does well to note that the first arrivals in the Land Down Under, the Australian Aboriginals, did produce some cake, breads and sweet things. For example, they:

1. Ground lily seed pods between stones, then baked them into cakes which were filling and satisfying.
2. Pounded several species of grass on sandstone slabs to produce a rough flour that was made into a damper-like cake (which was often laxative).
3. Cracked cycad nuts between stones, then soaked the kernel in running water for three to five days to leach out the poison; the pulp was then wrapped in bark, buried in hot sand and a fire lit above it. This produced a flat cooked, rather coarse cake weighing up to seven kilograms. It smelt like faeces, but was the stuff of legends. It was purported to have first been eaten by spirit ancestors who then instructed their daughters how to prepare the nut for baking.
4. Quandong fruit was gathered, stoned, pounded and pressed into cakes that kept their good eating quality for years. A plum (about the size of an olive) and native figs were also dried and pressed. All methods were attempts at simple processing by what basically was a hunter/gatherer society.
5. Sweet foods were popular also. Wild fruit, (bitter sweet) honey ants, sap and extrusions of trees.

Convict settlement

The new settlers who arrived in 1788 were led by Captain Arthur Phillip who bought with him his French chef and so menus for official dinners were duly written in French. Cooking the meal as it was prepared in France, however, would have presented quite a challenge. Equipment was in short supply in the early days of the colony, and most cooking done by common folk was over an open fire using either a flat rock, coals or a spit.

In an attempt at containment, workers were paid in provisions that included 10 lbs of flour. This was converted into pastry, dumplings, damper or Johnny Cakes. At its most basic, the process involved dropping small balls of dough into boiling water to cook. It was 'stick to the ribs' cuisine which was a crude basis for the cake-making years that followed.

In Australia in the first 170 years of white settlement there was little in the way of a formalised cuisine; but to be fair, with few utensils and summer temperatures in excess of 45°C for weeks on end, culinary excellence was hard to achieve.

With such British stodge, it's not surprising to learn that damper is an English word meaning 'snack between meals'. First recorded in 1827 in Australia, damper was either baked in the coals or ashes or perhaps in a camp oven. The camp oven would be placed in a hole dug alongside the campfire with hot coals placed above and below. After 40 minutes the lid was removed and a thin stick used to test for the required result.

Damper should be served cut into cake-like wedges and is best eaten on the day it is made. When sugar and dried fruits are added it becomes a Johnny Cake. Many bush cooks made the most excellent dampers, and with Cocky's Joy it became very much a treat. Despite damper being referred to as unleavened bread, most bushies carried homemade baking powder to

lighten the loaf. Eno's Fruit Salts were reputed to give the best rising result and although fermented potatoes were used to produce yeast, this method was less popular. Bush cooking was hot, hard work with only the most basic of cast iron implements, yet bush cooks produced vast batches of bread, scones, plain cakes and steamed puddings daily to satisfy the workers.

The golden age of cake making had begun

In a society of few treasures, found items were prized additions. During the gold rush, dinner guests were invited to keep the tiny gold nuggets secreted in the Plum Duff. Emu eggs (equivalent to 12 hen eggs) were also found objects and considered a rich delicacy with country cooks declaring they made the lightest sponges.

Despite the endless hardships and temperamental, demanding wood stoves without temperature gauges to cook on, cake making became a highly prized bush craft. A creative and often competitive pastime which brought sweet rewards for the family and even sweeter rewards for the clever cook at the country shows. Prize winners achieved instant status in their community and cake displays at agricultural shows were in the 'must see' category – and still are! Look at the Easter Show in Sydney. People who have rarely eaten a homemade cake line up for hours to see what they've been missing.

When I moved from Melbourne to the bush in 1960 as a young bride, I was astonished at how much time was spent talking about the weather and exchanging recipes, although very few real recipes were exchanged. Recipes were jealously guarded and those given out reluctantly often had an ingredient missing. It took me years to get my mother-in-law's Peanut Biscuit recipe. In the end it was a case of trial and error that achieved the first successful batch. These women often took their secrets to the grave, often not even recording for the family the recipes they had enjoyed over the years. What revenge!

Baking the lightest sponge was a most highly regarded form of cake making with endless discussions and quiet experimentation taking place. After all, the results would be on public display when you brought 'a plate' to every community event. That was a real eye-opener for a girl from the city; particularly on my first social sortie when I bemusedly took 'the plate' and only 'the plate'. I must say they were extremely gracious about my lack of social nous. After some years of never going out socially without carrying food I began to identify with the unknown (to me) country woman who had carved on her headstone 'she always brought a plate'.

The other great showcase of cake-making was 'afternoon tea'. In 1966, I had my fourth child and made friends in hospital with a farmer's wife who'd just had her eighth baby. On leaving hospital she invited us to afternoon tea the following Sunday. On arrival at the farm we were given a quick tour, then led to a large dining room table covered with a lace cloth that was almost hidden by numerous plates carrying an astonishing variety of tempting baked products.

Twelve active children, two healthy men and two nursing mothers could not finish the display, despite gentle urging on the part of its creator. The capacity of lone rural women to produce such fare was legendary and for some, their only creative outlet. With water supplies often low or non-existent a garden could perish before one's eyes; but with a milking cow, some hens, supplies of sugar and flour, a tradition arose of Australian women as enterprising bakers.

Recipes and cookbooks

There is a long history, in Australian terms, of printed recipes for cakes and other items. These have been available in the bush from about 1849, although the trend to reproduce British baking classics was reinforced continuously. Only a few dared break the mould.

In 1864, Edward Abbot produced the *English and Australian Cookery Book*. In 1889, the first cookery classes began at Fort Street Public School, and in 1891, classes were held at the working men's college in Sydney, although no men enrolled. The late 1890s could be called the era of the good plain cook who knew something of the craft of cooking, but little of the art of cooking. All this activity was stimulated because, around the turn of the century, gas, electricity and locally produced home appliances reduced the burden on home-makers. In the country, cooking utensils were ordered from mail catalogues but the wood stove reigned supreme with only the lucky few installing a combustion stove. With more time for creative cooking, recipes were handed out by gas companies to sell the virtues of their stoves, and recipe books were produced by home economists still reinforcing that British tradition.

Women's magazines focused on cakes, afternoon teas and happily promoted manufacturers' recipes. In a constant search for novelty, the *Women's Weekly* encouraged reader participation to launch its first recipe competition in the 1930s. In the cake section, one reader sent in these instructions for a Lovers' Wedding Cake:

> Take four pounds of love, half a pound of buttered youth, half a pound of sweet temper

and half a pound of sweet forgetfulness. For the best result add a little spice of the unexpected and blend with patience.

Even if it didn't win, the cake deserved its honourable mention.

In 1958, just prior to my marriage, a recipe I created won first prize in the *Women's Weekly* National Bake-Off. Later, when I was Consumer Relations Manager at Kraft Foods in the 1980s, the same recipe (my creation) was entered by a man in a Kraft Recipe Competition. It was like being re-united with an old friend and I recalled the phrase 'success has many fathers'!

The magazines were also there in the not-so-good times. During drought, depression and the strictures of war, magazines produced recipes such as Half Pay Pudding, Currant Tea Loaf (without butter) and Chocolate Cake and Beer Cake without eggs. *Smith's Weekly* offered the Murrumbidgee Sandwich – which was a slice of bread dipped in cold tea and sprinkled with sugar. For me the food rationing period of the Second World War brings memories of wonderful sweet and savoury pies with a pale biscuit coloured pastry that was made with dripping. Puftaloons with Golden Syrup, nut-loaf and light as air scones including the (very) occasional piece of date. Good cooks soldiered on in their own fashion.

My father was a grocer and as a child I helped him weigh up staples (I hated packaging the sticky brown sugar) but I liked to collate and paste up the ration books of food coupons. I remember vividly my mother saving up coupons for a special purpose like a birthday cake. Birthdays were always special occasions when I could choose any cake I liked; marble cake with its swirls of chocolate, pink and vanilla was a perennial favourite.

Cakes have always been part of celebrations in Australia and often unintentionally tracked our history, interests and concerns over the years. A partial list culled from the Bundaberg branch of the Country Women's Association Cookery Book (fifth edition, updated) gives us Hinkler Cake, Three Minute Cake, Brunswick Cake, Chessboard Cake, Daisy Hill Cake, Economical Festivity Cake, Fail Me Never Cake, Feather Cake, Jazz Cake, Jenny Lind Cake, Jew Cake, Judge Cake, Marble Cake, Prune Cake, Rainbow Cake, Sand Cake, Simnel Cake, Yankee Cake, Bachelors' Buttons, Date Cuddles, and Digger's Nuts. The CWA has been a proud custodian of the cake making tradition in Australia.

Better times and celebrations produced three truly Australian recipes

1. The Lamington created in Victoria, but named after Baron Lamington, Governor of Queensland from 1895-1901.
2. The Anzac Biscuit first created in 1925.
3. 1935: Bert Sache's Pavlova. Bert Sache had been a goldminer, wheat farmer, shearers' cook and assistant chef at the Esplanade Hotel in Perth. Based on the Meringue Cake, the secret ingredient of Bert Sache's Pavlova was the soft marshmallow centre achieved with a dash of vinegar. But it wasn't without controversy; New Zealand claimed, and still does claim, to have created it first.

There's not enough time to discuss how cake making is being forever changed by science and technology, including fake fats and the trend in the western world towards global food – that is a paper in its own right – but a brief glance at a selection of cookbooks will illustrate the rise and fall in popularity of cake making in Australia.

Whilst a book written about 330 BC may have been the world's first cookbook, Australians have not been slow to appreciate their appeal. My mother did not resort to cookbooks, or write down her recipes, so apart from a drawer full of dreams (recipe cuttings from magazines) my first real cookbook was purchased in 1954, when, as a 16 year old, I went to the Domestic Arts Teacher Training College in Melbourne, Victoria. Of 106 small pages, only five were devoted to cake making – Rock Cakes, Raspberry Buns, Queen Cakes, Plain Cakes, Seed Cake, Orange Cake, Cherry and Walnut Cakes, Sultana Cake, Lamington Cake, Date Nutties, Gingerbread, Egg Sponge with variations, Patty Cake, Swiss Roll and Fruit Short Cake.

In 1968, Margaret Fulton published her cookbook which was a sellout, and still is, in its 19th edition with over one million copies sold. This record breaking tome had 242 pages with 50 pages allocated to desserts, cakes and biscuits. Food photography was of a high standard and headings such as 'There's more than one way to make a cake' reflected Margaret's journalistic training. It was a good selection of traditional cake making in Australia at that time. At the end were just four 'Continental Cakes' including 'Bistro Cheesecake', a recipe which was still being requested when I was Consumer Relations Manager for Kraft Foods almost 20 years later.

In 1970, the *Australian and New Zealand Complete Book of Cookery* was published. There were about 50 cake recipes in it, including one from New Zealand entitled 'The Horse's Nose'. But if one includes gateaux, scones and tea breads, biscuits, pastries and icings, then 100 pages of the book's 511 pages were devoted to cakes and sweet treats – a continuation of the practice of one fifth of cookbooks being devoted to cake and/or cake-related recipes.

Soon afterwards, Australians became one of the largest purchasers of cookbooks in the world.

The beginning of the end

Nineteen-seventy was somewhat of a pivotal year – McDonald's and Pizza Hut opened in Australia; food manufacturers began the trend to trivialise freshness, cooking and nutrition and TV cooks and a plethora of magazines expanded our culinary horizons. Eating out in a variety of ethnic restaurants accelerated and continued over the decade. The women's movement burst onto the scene and life was too exciting to stay home and bake cakes – if one needed an excuse, the belated release of the dietary guidelines in 1979 was enough reason to deny all that sugar and fat.

The decline of the cake as a force in Australian cookery was re-enforced with the publication in 1983 of Margaret Fulton's *Encyclopedia of Food and Cookery*. At a rough count this has about 1500 recipes while the recipe index lists about 140 individual entries under cakes and biscuits – there is also a very small gateaux section (three recipes) – to demonstrate how even the concept of cakes has changed.

In 1991, Stephanie Alexander's *Travelling and Tasting* featured Geranium Sponge, Bran Loaf, Neal's Best Madeira Cake, Marieke's Breakfast Nut Biscuits, Chocolate Cake with Gold Leaf, Plum Cake from a sweet dough, Bill's Damper and High Hills Farm Paw Paw Scones – a mix of traditional with the exotic; a touch of health and a sprinkle of fantasy. Two hundred and fifty pages, 68 recipes: eight cake or cake-like, with savoury recipes showing the way we now aspire to eat.

What is the future of cake-making in Australia? In a word – dismal. There will continue to be European and Lebanese takeaways with commercial pavlova outlets to cater for special occasions. A few high fantasy expensive cakes (Sweet Art), lots of pre-mix baker goods and endless supermarket fresh and frozen offerings from Sarah Lee. Nothing in this list excites or tantalises the homemade cake lover. I can remember as a child in a small country town in inland Australia, sitting at the kitchen table watching my mother create the most superb food with the minimum of equipment; a wood stove, an ice-box and a Coolgardie safe. She had married during the depression and her husband went off to War, so life could not have been easy. But every Saturday she baked the most perfect patty cakes, a banana cake – light and spicy with lemon icing – treacle tarts and a mangy tangy tart, that does not seem to exist in written form anywhere. We don't realise that a great Australian tradition is disappearing, hijacked by international food companies who wouldn't know a Johnny Cake from a donut. Even the use of the word 'homemade' is fast becoming a farce.

Re-cap

Finally, to re-cap some reasons for the disappearing homemade cake:

- Decline of 'Afternoon Tea' as a social event,
- Women working,
- Cessation of cooking in schools and cooking skills generally,
- Health foods and dietary guidelines,
- Fewer 'family occasions',
- Less dining in,
- Single serves and microwaves (I've yet to taste a good microwave cake),
- Trend in Australia towards Italian (Mediterranean) and Asian foods (no real cake culture).

And so, another great Australian tradition dies.

WINES OF THE CANBERRA REGION

Michael Chin

This paper described the wines, winemakers, varieties, and climate of the Canberra region and indicated how winemakers are overcoming problems by the use, development and application of wine technology.

BREAKING NEW GROUND. THE SYDNEY INTERNATIONAL'S THREE STEPS TO JUDGING WINES FOR USE WITH FOOD

Warren Mason

I'M sometimes asked 'What's your favourite wine?' I choke back a strong desire to rejoin with 'What a stupid question!' and instead smilingly respond with 'That depends on what I'm about to eat.'

For a beer drinker, that would seem like a perfectly reasonable question to ask of a fellow beer drinker. The mentality of the question comes from a long tradition of beer drinking, of using alcohol merely as a beverage, a sort of LCD social lubricant.

The same mentality is benignly revealed in the amiable host's welcoming question 'Do you prefer a red or the white?' or again, later, as he circles his guests at the dining table, bottle in each hand, and asks the 'Semillon or Chardonnay?' question. I think to myself 'You know the food you are about to serve; unless I happen to know the wines in question, the grape variety alone tells me so very little about the wines you offer; what an ignorant question!'

As a nation, we are not noted for our fine sensibilities at the table. And yet, our table can be highly symbolic of who we are. If a handshake is a simple ancient sign that you bear no weapon, that you are a person of amity, the table and breaking bread together can easily become an expression of a far deeper goodwill, of sincerity and fellow-feeling.

A good table doesn't depend on over-generous quantity; on the contrary: nor on evidence of slavish preparation, nor lavish presentation, although these sometimes have a place.

A good table is a demonstration of the host's thoughtfulness, an expression of her/his finer sensibilities in the good balance of the meal he/she presents, in the harmony of its combinations of textures and flavours. In its broader context, it is most certainly an opportunity for parents to influence for the good their children's attitude towards life. Whether shared with family, business associates, friends, even enemies, a good table is a civilising element, a considered display of moderation, a mark of refinement.

Fine wine has a place in that. In this country, fine wine is within reach of all. Using fine wine intelligently at the table greatly increases the pleasures the dining experience can bring. But using wine to complement food in this way presumes some foreknowledge of the wines to be offered. In the Old World, centuries of tradition have defined the style of the wines of each vignoble. For the gastronome, predictable expectations of a wine's style take much of the guesswork out of choosing for the successful marriage of wine and food.

New World wines have little such tradition. From any given district, the technically well trained New World viticulturalist and winemaker can manoeuvre the style of their wine to just about anything the Marketing Department demands. Most wines are created merely as beverages to satisfy some market fashion.

Largely supported by New World Wineries, for the information of the winemaker and the consumer alike, the Sydney International Wine Competition and its companion Exhibitions and Degustation Dinners, not only singles out and identifies wines of excellence, it also helps you to think of wine as a complement to the better enjoyment of the dining experience, an important element in the overall pleasure of the table.

The first step

Here is how it is done. For the Sydney International, judging takes place in three phases. One of the Competition's canons is that every wine, given it is acceptably fault-free, has a best use at the table with food. The first phase judging eliminates faulty wines and rewards the technical achievements of the viticulturalist and her/his partner, the oenologist.

In the first phase, we follow normal show judging procedures. A panel of three judges, one of whom is panel leader, is assigned to a class. We use just twelve classes for the first phase judging, as follows:

1. All Sparkling
2. All Aromatic
3. Sauvignon Blancs and Blends
4. Semillons and Blends
5. Chardonnays and Blends
6. Other White Wines (grouped varietally)
7. Pinot Noirs
8. Cabernet Sauvignons and Blends
9. Shiraz and Blends
10. Other Red Wines (grouped varietally)
11. All Semi Sweet and Sweet Wines
12. All Fortified Wines

In this first phase judging, the wines are arranged oldest to youngest by vintage and the panel is advised of vintage break points. In each class, after the straight varietal wines, the blended wines appear,

arranged in ascending vintage, grouped by secondary variety where known.

Independently, each of the three judges assesses each wine. Grape variety, development in relationship to age, the wine's typicity, that whole range of technical factors is addressed, points allocated, decisions made. The judges then come together to compare their marks, discuss wines where there are significant discrepancies between their marks, retaste wines in some cases, in an effort to reach a consensus result. For the farm shows, that is just about where the judging process ends.

Chemical analysis can tell you a lot about a wine. But it can't really tell you how good it is or how it tastes. That's a sensory thing. The final questions on quality can only be answered by experienced judges who have assimilated quality standards over years of practice, assessing thousands of wines, in the company of experienced fellow judges. Even then, there is subjectivity and differences of approach, particularly when you mix judges from different countries. Judging wine is an inexact science.

This year, for example, we had a Chardonnay Class with 225 wines in it, judged by the same panel in three sessions over two days. In most major shows, a Chardonnay Class of this size is not unusual these days. It is surprising how consistently the outstanding wines are singled out. But even given the high calibre and experience of the Sydney International's judging panel, there are human factors to take into account. Concentration may not waver but is the judge's mouth chemistry the same for the 99th or the 250th wine as it was for the first?

To give every wine its absolute best chance, the Sydney International uses the first phase judging as a screening process. In Australasia's major wine shows, 51 points and above translates to Silver or Gold medal quality. Fifty-one points from a panel out of a possible 60 points first of all ensures a wine is fault free and of high quality but also, in the Sydney International, that score ensures the wine will be reconsidered in the second phase judging.

The second step

But before that, for most of the wines, there is an intermediate step. Here, we progress the first phase results a stage. The highest pointed wines from the first phase judging are tasted, divided and grouped according to palate feel and flavour impact into categories that are described in lay terms, to make the nature of the wines within given categories more comprehensible to consumers. This progression is fundamental to the concept of the competition.

We retain the five self descriptive categories:

1. Sparkling,
2. Aromatics,
5. Pinot Noirs,
9. Sweet Table Wines,
10. Fortifieds

but the judges now separate, purely on flavour impact, palate feel and weight perceptions, the balance of the wines into five, varietally amorphous new categories:

3. Light to Medium Bodied Dry Whites,
4. Medium to Full Bodied Dry Whites,
6. Light to Medium Bodied Dry Reds,
7. Medium to Fuller Bodied Dry Reds,
8. Full Bodied Dry Reds.

The division of the numbers of wines in each category varies from year to year but this year, these five classes which house the many styles of Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon for example, included 78% of the 'Top 100' wines.

There were about 150 wines in the ten categories for the second phase judging this year. In the second phase judging, with food, the judges reassess these wines that have emerged from the technical, first phase judging, now grouped together into categories by palate weight and style. Quite obviously, even with the original entry whittled down to 150 wines, because of time constraints, it will never be possible to present each wine with a food dish perfectly suited to its own special individual characteristics; rather, a dish representative of the flavour weights this wine can be expected to be asked to partner is offered.

In this way, judges have an opportunity to reconsider the best technically correct wines again, in small groups this time, with a completely new but totally relevant factor involved: the judge's palate is complexed by the influences of food of a style a wine/food literate consumer might expect the wine to partner. Colour and appearance have been judged in the technical phase. These wines are known to meet these tests. Bouquet also is of lesser importance than before – most consumers buy these wines to drink with food, not to sniff – but to the extent bouquet is to be assessed, it will of need be assessed in the company of food.

The third step

In the second phase judging, all judges participate. Thus in 1993, with one judge exiting because of an unexpected business commitment, eight judges reappraised the selected wines. For this phase, only the category name gave any information about the wine, much the same as for any consumer lacking intimate knowledge of a grape variety or of winemaker, district and vintages.

Whether the first phase judges marked it as technically perfect as a beverage, whether it is made from a blend of five grape varieties or just one, whether it is a

prematurely aged two year old or a youthful five year old, now, in this context, matters not at all. The preliminaries are over. All these wines are starting again from scratch. 'How does the wine in that glass taste in these circumstances?' 'How do I rate this wine for potential use *at my table* to better enjoy the dining experience?' This is the judgement that each judge has now to make. In this new environment and without discussion, they mark the wines and then, based on those marks and their notes, they tape recorded their comments for The Guide to the 'Top 100' Wines of the 1993 Competition.

Eight judges instead of three, marking small groups of superior wines of similar weight and style in the company of appropriate food, without knowledge of grape variety or age, and without the influence of another judge's opinion. Thus you can see that the results of the second phase judging have very little to do with the conventional first phase judging scores. And so we commonly witness wines that barely scraped into the second phase judging with minimum Silver Medal points getting up to win their category and special awards, when judged in the context of the table. On the flip side, we witness technically exemplary wines, meeting the most meticulous peer, sniff and taste tests, slipping out of the 'Top 100', for it is only the one hundred highest pointed wines of the second phase judging that make it into the 'Top 100'.

Gastronomical advantage

For the consumer, interested in the better enjoyment of food with wine, The GUIDE to the Top 100 Wines of the *Sydney International* Wine Competition becomes an invaluable aid.

Each year, The GUIDE offers a currently-on-sale list of one hundred wines of established high quality, judged in the company of appropriate food, divided by style and weight, at a range of prices, from which to select to better complement the food you prepare for your family and friends.

Some will carry the unique Blue-gold and red-Silver bottle medallions which attest the wine's distinction. We believe the results of the *Sydney International* Wine Competition have more useable relevance for the consumer than the results of any other wine show.

DIFFERENT FARMING SYSTEMS – BETTER TASTING FOOD?

David Dumaresq

WE all appreciate that wines which come from different environments or have been made using different methods have different tastes. We are not so ready perhaps to ascribe the same subtleties to the production of fruits and vegetables. After a fascinating visit to a Californian Food Fair several years ago I became more aware of differences in tastes of fruits and vegetables. In my paper I will discuss why fruits and vegetables have such different tastes and how these differences are related to where and how they are grown.

BOOK LAUNCH

ON Tuesday morning, *Goodbye Culinary Cringe* by Cherry Ripe was to be launched in the courtyard, sponsored by Allen and Unwin. Due to uncertain weather (again) the launching was re-convened in the (converted) dining room. Julie Gibbs of Allen and Unwin introduced Margaret Whitlam who launched Cherry's book. The launch was followed by a special morning tea, organised by Mary Brander for Allen and Unwin.

MORNING TEA

Sticky Gingerbread, buttered

Wild Blackberry Muffins

Tropical Banana Teacake

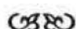
supplied by a Canberra caterer

Nerida's Shortbread

supplied by A Little Piece of Scotland, Sutton Forest, New South Wales

Penelope Sach Petal tea, Australian tea, coffee

supplied by Grinders, Carlton, Victoria



GENERAL ISSUES MEETING

A wide ranging discussion took place at this meeting but three major issues emerged:

1. Incorporation of the symposium

Consistent with similar discussions at previous symposiums, the symposiasts at the Canberra meeting made it clear that, at this stage, they did not wish the symposium to become an incorporated body.

2. Acknowledgement of suppliers of quality products

A long, and quite emotional, discussion took place about the Seventh Symposium's apparent failure to adequately acknowledge the contribution to the success of the symposium made by the suppliers of quality local foods. The Committee apologised for this perceived lack of appreciation explaining that such an omission was due solely to the workload associated with the organisation of the symposium – almost all of which was done on a voluntary basis. The Committee emphasized that it was acutely aware of the significant contribution made by local suppliers of quality foods to the success of the Canberra symposium. All such suppliers are acknowledged in this volume (see inside back cover).

3. Next symposium

The meeting decided that the next symposium would be held in Adelaide in late September 1994.

Photographer: Richard Scotte

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Photographer: Alex McKay

LUNCH

We had organised a Turkish feast in the courtyard, but due to the poor weather, we had to have it, like the Poets' Supper and Cherry's book launch, in the re-converted dining room. The feast was prepared by Serif and Gulbahar Kaya from Ottoman Cuisine restaurant, Manuka, Canberra.

MENU

Kiz Guzeli (beetroot dip)

Fasulye (beans)

Antipasto – Pastirma, Sucuk

Imam Bayaldi (eggplant)

Ashtopot (grilled octopus)

Suboregi (egg pastry)

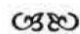
Enginar (stuffed artichoke – shallots, baby carrots, snowpeas, dill)

Sis Mantas (skewered mushrooms)

Kebab Dolmasi (zucchini stuffed with lamb mince)

Turkish bread, Rice.

Turkish coffee and Turkish delight.



CONVIVIAL GREEN SPACE

Susan Parham

CAN we really care less about convivial green space in the context of the dire food consequences of Chernobyl, or war-related starvation in Africa, Armenia, Kurdistan or Bosnia-Herznegovnia? Against that backdrop the enquiry of this paper might seem simply a frivolous waste of time.

In answer to that I'd say that war is the antithesis of conviviality – and perhaps an indication of its failure. Gastronomers more than anyone should be aware of the consequences of alienation from a direct productive relationship to the land – and the sharing of its benefits – engendered by the fight for economic resources, territory and power that is devastating cities and their rural regions in many places. Food is one of the resources at the heart of the exploitative relations between the first and third worlds, and the north and south.

I think too that we can make connections by looking at food and city form. I'd like to believe that we are considering nature and culture at this symposium with that world context in our minds – and with a desire to help find some of the answers through gastronomy.

At past symposia I have concentrated on various design attributes for conviviality – from the scale of the table to that of the whole city. Within this schema I have developed some notions about green spaces in and around cities and how they can contribute to convivial urban design. It is some of these ideas that I want to explore today.

In looking at cities I have tended to concentrate on the aspects of built form that most resemble rooms, especially kitchens, which are the – often paradoxical – sites for our daily re-creation of ourselves.

Today I want to extend this notion of rooms as (potentially) convivial sites to suggest that this re-creation is also dependent on a series of exterior spaces, not only the outdoor room of the street, but green spaces from domestic gardens through public parks to the rural fringes of our towns. It is in these places that we make our connections to the natural order, which is always somehow beyond our conscious understanding but crucial to our consciousness of well-being. Growing things to eat is necessary for both physical and psychic health – the cliche of body and soul is hard to go past – and the best urban design strikes a balance, a harmony, between elements for both in daily life.

So, while food production, exchange and consumption in and around the city are central to its physical design, it is also part of a wider context; that of a basic human desire for proximity to green things, trees and water that is deeply felt across cultures, and times, and is part of the magic of cities.

Everyone knows that some cities work better than others in these ways even if you can't see clearly why that should be. The elements that are required are not a mystery. They can be defined.

First, cities need to reflect their setting, their regional context. It used to be that urban development perforce reflected the opportunities and constraints of location – people were place-bound – their cities a response to the limitations of agricultural and building technology, materials, climate, soils and established traditions. Cities evolved from necessity – and their built forms – what we now describe as vernacular – seemed to fit seamlessly into their context. These vernacular cities are invested with great regional identity and 'sense of place'. They were also often the product of a hard grinding poverty – the determination of a community to survive despite harsh surrounds – and that is something we perhaps do not see as enchanted tourists whose mobility (and alienation) is the product of escape from those conditions.

In recent times many of us feel that cities have lost a sense of regional connection and we tend to blame that on industrialisation. To paraphrase Michael Hough, failing to achieve a close-knit physical, social and economic relationship to the land – can we then create a distinctive regionalism where inherent natural character is shaped into a cultural landscape by human activity? Or increasingly will we all live in 'no place', the 'conurbations' or 'edge cities' we see strung out as endless suburbia over once productive land?

A recent report from the Resource Assessment Commission on Australia's Coastal Zone confirmed this trend to low density expansion – the largest growth area on our east coast is likely to spread urbanisation almost continuously from Brisbane to Wollongong.

In the face of such massive-scale blurring of the distinction between rural and urban, and the threat it can pose to regional identity (and therefore to a good gastronomic base) what response is possible?

How too can we get away from an energy system we seem to be locked into where we take resources from the country (through an agriculture occurring at huge environmental cost), exploit those resources for city needs and then expel what we don't want as waste – the country used as a 'sink' for our polluting excesses?

It is clear in design terms that the protection of a region and the marking of a city's boundaries underpin its health. But how do you reconcile the widespread desire for living in the country **and** being part of the city? Experience would suggest that when so many want both, the rural landscape tends to be undermined and the city fails to be urban.

Designers have proposed many solutions to this difficulty; grids with urban frontages and rural backs, a continuum of zones from big farms at the urban periphery, through small cash crop acreages closer in, to backyard 'mini farms' at the centre.

In reality we are finding that farm economics and housing preferences are determining the nature of our urban/rural fringes more than any design theory. Urban hobby farmers with their city-derived disposable incomes and environmentalist attitudes may be doing more good than ill in maintaining and improving fringe farming areas. Put these newer farmers together with 'right to farm' proponents and the increasing trend to high 'value added' food production located at city edges and you may have some strong if unholy alliances for fringe rural protection against the incursions of suburbia identified by the Resource Assessment Commission.

The idea, it seems, is to maintain urbanity and at the same time give people the access they need to the countryside – both its wild and productive aspects – without continuously sprawling into and thereby destroying the rural region. One city form which designers have proposed is of fingers into rural areas and a rural form of country fingers extending right to the city's heart. You might imagine this in the form of interlocking hands with fertile valleys the rural fingers and hill-tops the urban hand.

This interplay between city and country that the finger-pattern expresses is something we've lost or rejected in modern city design. The organisation of food production today relies less and less upon scattered small-scale plots close to markets that gave a strong open space element to medieval town forms. City market gardens are disappearing under the weight of suburban development and the technologies and large-scale production and processing arrangements of agribusiness.

Elsewhere I've described the way that the food market was the organising space around which the medieval (and earlier) city grew up – its square the heart of city life, connecting secular and religious government – with social organisation around the exchange of foodstuffs. Gradually, with urbanisation, productive open spaces were filled in, eventually swamped by the over-crowded slums without green lungs that helped spawn the immigrant waves to the space of the cities of the New World.

To some extent city planning in the Americas and Australia was a conscious rejection of the fingers pattern. For health and freedom we developed a kind of personalised country park in each suburban house block – creating what many now feel to be the worst of both worlds.

What we have achieved **does** provide us with many good things, for example, poorer families benefiting from more room, but it doesn't allow for much of what designers call 'positive outdoor space' – the human-scale gardens, streets, and squares I have discussed in earlier papers.

In Adelaide vestigial green 'fingers' remain. We could protect, and in some cases rediscover these, to form linked pathways of both productive and more wild open space. Built over market gardens, concreted creek systems and stranded suburban parks could make an alternative – and food related – framework of positive outdoor space to our street system, if revitalised and linked together.

But are these kinds of spaces or pathways, with which we are very under-endowed, the flipside of the public, engaged street? Or are they different again from the quiet back, still waters, cool greens that we turn to when the pace and connection of the street is too much and threatens to overwhelm our sense of self? It is certainly true that just as we need promenades, to which the cafe is the proper adjunct, we also require quiet places where 'the mood is slow and reflective', where we can hear only natural sounds and be near pools and streams but walk protected by a comforting wall at our side (*A Pattern Language*).

In design terms, these paths need to be strung between accessible greens – never more than 3 minutes walk away or 'the distance overwhelms the need' (*A Pattern Language*).

In this design lexicon the quiet back and the accessible green aren't the only open space needed. Other necessary spaces include smaller-scale common ground between groups of houses, small public squares, green streets, grave-sites, high places, market places, holy ground, still water, adventure playgrounds and pedestrian streets (*A Pattern Language*). All these have a place, a role to play, in defining the community or town – and all can be in some way more or less connected to production, exchange and consumption of food – something I'll come back to later.

In the City of Adelaide we do have a number of these public space design elements in place. It was in the 19th century, when Adelaide was a very young city, that the provision of public pleasure grounds – often with elaborate provision for dining – reached their zenith. Ironically this was in a context of a social order marked by inordinate repression and inequality between classes and between men and women. So getting the **spaces** right doesn't necessarily imply sorting out relations of class, race and gender. In fact now we don't even attempt to match provision to human need – and have set open space requirements at an arbitrary 12.5% of any new urban development. In South Australia that figure represented one political party's desire for 15% and the other's for 10%.

So where does the private garden fit into all this? In an idealised city form where much of human expression would be catered for in the good design of public outdoor space, the essential character of a garden can perhaps more truly emerge than it does in practice. I've argued elsewhere that in the absence of these civic elements our public and private gardens are loaded up with enormous expectations and asked to fulfil other contradictory and even impossible roles in our lives. Growing vegetables or keeping animals are certainly not their central organising principle or purpose.

This begs the question to what degree in a city should, or can, food production take precedence over other meanings and uses of a garden? What open space arrangements are possible or desirable for conviviality at a domestic or civic scale? These are not new questions. And, historically, there has often been a kind of moral judgement made upon those who choose to use open space for pleasure rather than production.

Princely gardens of Hellenistic times expressed the ruler's political power through the symbolism of control over nature. Critics among the early Romans disapproved of the decadence of the expression but not its intent. The Romans managed to have it both ways. While they were expert in the use of open space for emphasising power they celebrated the simplicity and frugality of vegetable gardening. They were thus able to moralise about an activity they enjoyed, while maintaining the apparent austerity of their philosophical convictions on plain living.

The attitudes of the Romans expressed a series of tensions, similar to our own, as to the proper place and role for the garden. On the one hand frugality, simplicity and production were highly valued. Cato dwelt on the moral value of growing cabbage, noting that flowers should only be grown for religious rites. With increasing wealth and leisure Roman garden tastes changed. The elaborate gardens of Pompeii are one example – the garden was no longer 'The poor man's farm' but the site of seductive luxury.

There was a distinct nostalgia for a lost, productive simplicity somewhat idealised like our own. Designers then as now were striving for a kind of balance between the needs of the body and the soul to be achieved through the garden.

Now, even more than in Roman times, gardens are one of few places where we can actually use our sensual apparatus however impaired by our isolation in an increasingly hostile, unnatural environment (Adams p.19).

We know quite a lot about middle-class resort gardens from Pompeii and about Pliny the Younger's various aristocratic gardens from his letters. These describe in considerable detail what could be achieved when sensibility and a lot of money was applied to the garden landscape. These Roman examples are important because there's a fairly direct intellectual tradition in design up to now through the humanists of the renaissance and into the modern city.

The Roman middle and upper classes organised their outdoor private space primarily for pleasure and conviviality. They liked to have a pool, statuary carrying oil lamps, vine covered pergolas, wall fountains, and dining tables sometimes constructed with concave centres to hold water which cooled wine and fruit. Plates shaped like little boats might float about keeping the food cool as well.

As today, these private worlds could be overdone. Cato's digs at the pretentious villa gardens of the Roman bourgeoisie have their echoes in our criticisms of the vulgar gardens of Wattle Park and Skye – or, more topically for those from the eastern states, Sylvania Waters.

The Romans balanced things up somewhat by growing a profusion of fruit trees, vegetables, flowers and herbs. Many of our gardens have almost completely banished anything but ornamental planting despite some strong past vegetable growing traditions. I've suggested that post war generations wanted to distance themselves from productive gardens because these implied a necessity born of poverty. Gardens, like houses, are strong symbols of status. The conspicuous consumption of leisure is expressed by the extent of the recreational space of the garden. It may only be the new poor, the environmentalists and a few gastronomers who dissent from this dominant garden culture.

You can see this move away from production in the history of the Australian house. In the early 19th century fruit trees and vegetables were proudly displayed in the front entrance to the cottage. By later in the century vegetables had been banished to the backyard of the villa, eventually disappearing

altogether from the triple fronted suburban houses of the post war years. Settlers outside the Anglo-Saxon tradition brought other cultural values to bear which gave vegetables an important place in the domestic economy. But those remaining productive Italian and Greek gardens of the inner Adelaide suburbs are losing out against the tide of gentrification that is encroaching upon the more central suburbs, and also to the changing values and priorities of younger generations of Italian and Greek Australians.

In the light of all this I still think it is possible to define some fundamental design requirements for private and public gardens and other green spaces in and around cities.

We should plant orchards of fruit trees on common land and in parks and gardens everywhere because the orchard has a magical quality and cities with Mediterranean climates are lucky to have them. It would, for example, be most satisfactory to see the ubiquitous Queensland Box replaced by orange, lemon, mandarin, fig, mulberry, quince, pear, apple, or plum trees in our streets. In Adelaide we already have extensive olive groves in our park lands (although our wild groves are under threat as an environmental 'evil'). We can also make other special 'tree places', avenues, allies and groves. From a gastronomic perspective, orchards and groves also let people who are out of touch remind themselves of the seasons and harvest, and provides a source of fresh food.

Gardens should be a little bit wild – not overly domesticated, manicured and trimmed but reminding us of the natural world and its processes. The horticulturalists must give way to landscape ecology in this. Gardens need to be protected and partly enclosed by walls with trellised walks to give positive shape to outdoor space and contribute their particular beauty. They should help connect inside and outside space, assisting houses to be part of the earth around them. Greenhouses should trap solar energy for growing vegies and flowers. A quiet garden seat should be placed where one or two people can have a private version of the experience 'quiet backs' allow in the public realm (*A Pattern Language*).

The vegetable garden is a further essential – not just a hobby but fundamental to life. For four people it has been calculated a tenth of an acre is needed for an adequate year round supply. Like the orchard, it gives us real connections to the earth, the seasons and our food.

Finally, in this series, there's the unromantic compost. We generally think deep drainage is a good thing but our current system of waste disposal is a bit of an environmental disaster. We should also use grey water from sinks and drains for watering and we could, if we got a bit more radical, use effluent nutrients by investing in small scale local composting plants and eventually refitting sewage treatment plants that now pump waste out to sea.

Basic requirements then are:

- a house well-connected to the earth around it;
- an 'outdoor room' 6 feet wide;
- planting orchards in private and public space;
- a degree of wildness in the garden;
- a vegetable garden of a tenth of an acre for four people;
- compost (*A Pattern Language*).

All this sounds fine but how achievable is it? Our bigger house blocks are about an eighth of an acre with about 35% covered by house and 65% garden. We're in the process of reducing block sizes down as low as 150 to 300 m^2 to conserve land and avoid too rapid incursion into the rural hinterland I discussed at the beginning of the paper. We might not be able to achieve vegetable gardens for each house. On the other hand there is a lot of poorly utilised street and park space we could begin to alter. (Plant fruit trees in your own median strip for a start.)

It doesn't just have to happen at a personal level. In South Australia, the State Government is looking at more environmentally conscious approaches to waste water and sewerage – ponding and woodlotting, retaining grey and stormwater on site to water public gardens and parks is quite likely to become ubiquitous. There are plans afoot to dig up the concrete around our creeks and create corridors for wildlife out of ugly drains within a metropolitan open space system based on natural water course catchment areas. We may see our underground aquifers used for stormwater storage. Some local governments are building wetlands.

At the urban fringe, the organisation of residential expansion is now making use of land capability analysis – with techniques that promise to be much more sensitive to existing farm, viticultural and horticultural production in the rural region. The Barossa Valley, for example, is well ahead in dealing with residential and other development incursions.

Governments and the private sector are also catching on to the tourism potential that a gastronomically rich region allows. And so on and so forth.

These developments, to me at any rate, promise more enlightened approaches to food production, exchange and consumption too. Or at least a willingness to think about such things. We, as gastronomers, should use our opportunities to get these ideas into public debate.

The point I want to make in ending is that urban green spaces can be conceived as various kinds of outdoor rooms with a multitude of roles and meanings for conviviality. While these spaces are often somewhat underdeveloped for gastronomic advantage in

current city form, while trends in urban growth have some worrying aspects, and while events in many parts of the world are destroying whole cities and their rural bases, it's clear too that much can be done – through thoughtful design – to make our cities and their regions places of great gastronomic richness and harmony.

FOOD AND ART: A RELATIONSHIP BEYOND THE IDYLLIC

Colin Sheringham and Hilary Wright

WHEN most people first think of food and art together maybe they think of those famous paintings of food or people eating:

Bruegel's, *The Harvester's Meal*
Bigg's, *Girl Shelling Peas*
Campi's, *The Fruit Seller*

All fine paintings and all with a genteel view of the relationship between food and art.

But this idyllic relationship is not the one that will be explored.

Art has other functions and one of these functions is to challenge the way we construct our view of the world.

Food and art together have the power to shock, amuse, taunt or disgust. To illustrate this power we would like to present three perspectives; those found in:

1. popular art;
2. the work of Spanish surrealist, Salvador Dali, and;
3. the Italian Futurist artist, Marinetti.

In 1978, the photographer David Thorpe released his book *Rude Food.* The introduction states that:

> The association between food and sex has been firmly established ever since that old business with Adam, Eve and the apple.

This book is merely a reminder of the added pleasures that can be derived from simple food when it is imaginatively chosen, presented and eaten.

All you need are the ingredients and a dirty mind.

The book features a variety of food eaten in a provocative manner, asparagus for example or food displayed on naked women's bodies, artichokes used as bra cups or food that has been styled to resemble genitalia, both male and female.

This book began a small flood of interest in *Rude Food.* The April 1978 edition of Cleo magazine ran a three page article on 'The Erotic Baker', a New York store that specialises in food that is designed to shock, 'like horny gingerbread men, licorice whips with plaited wool handles, marzipan penises' and 'a range of Portuguese-style bread baked to look like boobs, vaginas and penises' (Cleo 1978).

Thorpe launched, in 1980, a second book: this time *Vin Rude*, an erotic look at wine and drinking. By now Sydney even had its own rude food restaurant in Anzac Parade Kensington. This restaurant featured many of the dishes from Thorpe's books plus a range of more traditional dishes but provocatively renamed.

Salt and pepper shakers were shaped like breasts or penises. The wine carafe, a penis complete with testicles. Mercifully this restaurant was a passing fad and its doors are long closed. But the relationship between foods and sex lives on in Sydney with a new crop of restaurants that provide waitresses clad in lingerie serving businessman lunches. And, while this form of eating has a very long history, it does not challenge our thinking in the same way that some recent films have used one particular type of eating to create a sense of shock and abhorrence.

Cannibalism! In his film, *The Cook the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover*, a film rich with food imagery and symbolism, Peter Greenway uses not only the concept, but also the word to illustrate the abhorrence the practice arouses. The kitchen hand is forced to eat, not only the buttons cut from his clothes, but also his own 'belly button'.

The final scene of the film has Mr Albert Speaker (the thief) being served, at his wife's insistence, the cooked body of her lover. The body is served with all the theatre a grand restaurant can muster; he is even reminded about his manners. Manners are important, but as he finally eats some flesh, he is shot by his brutalised wife; speaking, she focuses all the accumulated disgust of her husband into a single word. Cannibal!

Other popular movies have also used the cannibal theme.

The Silence of the Lambs has as a central character, the monstrous criminal Dr Hannibal Lector. His crime – the repugnant act – cannibalism.

Salvador Dali, the Spanish surrealist artist, also displayed a fascination with cannibalism: as a topic for his writing, mentioned in his *Secret Life* (1990), is a two or three volume (unpublished) study of cannibalism; and as a theme in his paintings, e.g. *Autumn Cannibalism*. He even expressed a desire to consume his wife Gala on her death.

But Dali's obsession with food runs deeper than just cannibalism. His autobiography opens with 'At the age of six I wanted to be a cook'.

Words such as spinach, shellfish, sturgeon, bones and caviar are frequently used to describe paintings (Maddox, 1979).

Models have been draped with food. Gala had one portrait painted with two lamb chops on her shoulders. Dali, whilst thinking about a film, *The Flesh Wheelbarrow*, had intended to have an old woman, dressed as a torero, balancing an omelette aux fine herbs on her shaven head whilst standing shivering in waist deep cold water and each time the omelette slipped off it would be replaced by a fresh one.

Food has also featured in live presentations by Dali who once arrived to lecture at the Sorbonne in a Rolls Royce stuffed full of cauliflowers. During the course of the ensuing lecture, Dali addressed his famous painting of the soft watches. Watches, whose forms were inspired by observing camembert cheese melt.

But it is in Dali's fantasies that the relationship between art and food became most bizarre. In his published diary, *The Diary of a Genius*, Dali explains his idea for a dinner:

> In place of the violin she has brought me a china goose which we shall put in the centre of the table. The goose opens up by means of a lid in its back. I tell the princess divine things about the goose game that only Dali knows, but at the same moment a sudden phantasy takes possession of me. I imagine that I shall have the neck of this goose sawn off by the same sculptor that I employed to add genitals to the torso of Phidias. At dinner-time I shall then enclose a living goose in the china one. Only the head and neck of the living goose inside will be visible. If it makes a noise we could make a gold hook to close its beak. Then, I think of an orifice that resembles the anus of the goose. During the most melancholy *petits fours* a Japanese type in a kimono will enter the room with a Chinese violin and a vibratory appendage which he will insert into the anus of the goose. By playing after-dinner music he will provoke the swooning of the goose, which will take place amid the conversation of the dinner guests ...
>
> The scene will be illuminated by very special candlesticks. Live sandwich monkeys will be locked into halves of silver monkeys, in such a way that the only real and living part of the candelabra monkeys will be their faces, gasping and contorted by the sculpted torture. I shall also take an infinite delight in seeing the exasperated movement of their tails as a result of the same constraint. They will strike the table convulsively while my sandwich monkeys, greater fools than any other species of monkey, will be forced to bear with dignity the utterly tranquil candles. At that very moment I am illumined by a Jovian flash of lightning: a mockery two trillion times greater than the mockery of the monkeys would be to make a fool of the king of beasts, the lion. Yes, of course - I'll take a lion and cover him with beautiful straps of polished leather from Hermès in Paris. These straps will be used to keep in place around his body some ten cages filled with ortolans and other delicious titbits, but in such a way that the lion can never succeed in catching any of the sybaritic delicacies with which he is so profusely decorated. With the aid of a set of mirrors he will observe the food, which will make him languish, languish till death ensures. Edifying agony, really, which could be of incomparable subversive and moral value to all those who have followed each moment of such as exemplary death.
>
> The feast of the lion starved to death should be celebrated every lustrum by the councils of all small villages, five days after Epiphany, to serve as a cybernetic programming for the great modern, industrial cities (Dali 1990, p147-8).

In 1932 the Italian futurist, Marinetti, proposed a revolution in food: **Italians give up Spaghetti!** Marinetti proposed in his gastronomic manifesto used later as a basis for his *The Futurist Cookbook* that to revitalise Italian culture, Italians must change the way they eat. Give up the pastoral food, give up the romantic notion of food gathered from the countryside and prepared with loving care. What was now needed was food suited to life in the fast-moving city, a low calorie, high-tech cuisine.

To fulfil this need he wrote a cookbook, but not a

traditional cookbook. Marinetti's book pokes fun at tradition. Food is no longer about nourishment but becomes an artistic game.

The book was meant to confront and expand our notion of what a cookbook's role was. This it does with typical Marinetti style - subtle one moment, blunt and crude the next, and not out of place with the movement. Indeed, the Futurist movement itself was devoted to novelty and shock and was characterised by a racist, violent and misogynist view of the world. A view that is now unpopular but at the time also represented the Fascist ideals of Mussolini's Italy.

The cookbook encapsulates these ideals seeking even to replace foreign words such as menu, sandwich and consomme with new Futurist words. But the cookbook does not serve the Fascist cause. Marinetti, the anarchist, takes too much pleasure sending up society and its rules.

Food becomes a raw material for art, ingredients become colours - building blocks. They are put together not with regard to taste but form.

The following dishes illustrate the visual nature of these recipes:

Digestive Landing

Out of a sweet *poltiglia* of chestnuts boiled in water and vanilla sticks, form a landscape of mountains and plains.

Above it, with blue ice cream, form atmospheric layers and streak them with aeroplanes of pastry coming down at an angle towards the ground.

Cubist Vegetable Patch

1. Little cubes of celery from Verona fried and sprinkled with paprika.
2. Little cubes of fried carrot sprinkled with grated horseradish.
3. Boiled peas.
4. Little pickled onions from Ivrea sprinkled with chopped parsley.
5. Little bars of Fontina cheese.

NB: The cubes must not be large than 1 cubic centimetre.

Tennis Chop

Veal cutlets cooked in butter and cut in the form of tennis rackets. Before serving, spread them with a thick layer of a paste (made of mascarpone and chopped nuts); trace lines on the paste with tomato sauce mixed with rum. To make the racket handle, an anchovy with a slice of banana on top.

Then some perfectly round balls made from cherries soaked in liqueur (without stones), rolled in a paste of ricotta, egg, cheese and nutmeg. Cook rapidly to prevent the alcohol from losing strength.

Strawberry Breasts

A pink plate with two erect feminine breasts made of ricotta dyed pink with Campari with nipples of candied strawberry. More fresh strawberries under the covering of ricotta making it possible to bite into an ideal multiplication of imaginary breasts.

And while Dali let his mind host fantastic dinners, Marinetti and his fellow artists opened a restaurant. On the 8th of March 1931 *The Holy Plate* hosted its first Futurist dinner. The restaurant was to be in the vanguard of changing the eating habits of Italy. Bring to the public the dishes and sculptured food featured in the cookbook.

A combination of art gallery and eating house, the attempt was to satisfy all five senses within the bounds of the movements gastronomic manifesto. That of optimism at the table – a harmony between man's palate and his life, today and tomorrow.

Marinetti was a man who understood the power of food in society. Food has a role beyond nutrition. At the last Symposium we had the pleasure of Margaret Visser's company. Margaret's book, *The Rituals of Dinner*, illustrates the structural role food has in our society, manners, etiquette and conventions are all part of this structure, part of the norm.

But some artists as have been illustrated, and artists across a broad spectrum, have used food and eating as a vehicle to challenge or shock our view of society out of its everyday complacency.

The private nature of sex is confronted by Thorpe's *Rude Food.* Cannibalism is perhaps the most, at least in our minds, abhorrent of all eating practices.

Dali used foods outside the normal context, as adornments or inspiration for the bizarre.

And finally Marinetti, a man who saw eating as being central to the definition of a nation's culture.

Could we imagine Italy with no pasta?

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CONSUMING ART

Margaret Brandl

A talk plus illustrative slides showing a tour of the National Collection of those works which directly relate to gastronomy.

A VISIT TO THE SURREALISM EXHIBITION, NATIONAL GALLERY OF AUSTRALIA

Dorothy Davis

THE hour-long private viewing of the *Surrealist Exhibition: Revolution by Night* at the National Gallery of Australia was, in retrospect, the perfect (but strong) 'apéritif' for Gay Bilson's Banquet in the same venue.

The Exhibition confronted, surprised, challenged, and at times amused us. It presented a thousand images of the human body – and its internal and external workings – and prepared us for the theme of the Banquet. Surrealism, it is said, 'distorts, rearranges and dismembers the body' and the Banquet literally spread before the diners the corporeal images of the Exhibition.

Surrealism was founded in Paris and had by 1924 emerged as the leading avant-garde art movement in Europe. The Surrealists aimed to liberate the unconscious and release the world of dreams and fantasy. The Exhibition brought together major works from the Tate Gallery in London, the Museum of Modern Art and the Guggenheim Museum in New York, the Picasso Museum in Paris and dozens of private collections. The work of the Australian painters who were influenced by this important European art movement was also exhibited.

Our guided tour focused on works illustrating the surrealist body: Magritte's *The Lovers* and *The Rape*; Picassos's *Seated Woman*; Delvaux's *Hands*; and Max Ernst's *Pieta*. James Gleeson's violent painting *Citadel* seemed, on reflection, particularly relevant with its scenario in which flesh becomes solid and metamorphoses into rock and internal organs and viscera become external membrane. There were also art works which reflected a gastronomic theme: Salvador Dali's *Aphrodisiac Telephone* or *Lobster Telephone*, an irresistibly playful lobster perched on top of a phone; Hans Arp's *Shirtfront and Fork*, rounded organic shapes in painted wood of a shirtfront and fork which could also be viewed as a face or tooth or an arm; and de Chirico's *Uncertainty of the Poet* depicting a torso and ripening bananas – fruit considered exotic in Europe in 1913. This painting was used on the printed menu for the Local Chefs' Dinner at the Lobby Restaurant.

We were privileged to see this marvellous exhibition before it was open to the general public and appreciated the efforts of the Director and staff of the National Gallery of Australia who made this possible.

Photographer: Richard Scotte

Photographer: Alex McKay

THE BANQUET

THERE were many telephone calls to Mary Brander prior to the Symposium – people asked whether they could 'please come to the banquet'. As the room chosen by Gay could take no more than 80 people, there was no hope, but we took names and telephone numbers just in case. By the day before the Symposium was due to start, we had our 80 people.

There was so much excitement about the Banquet. In hindsight it seems people had many different reasons for feeling excited. Some were expecting a sumptous dinner. Others did not know what to expect, except that it was going to be incredible. That it was. Some loved it. Others were repelled by it – but those who were could still be heard talking about 'the occasion' many months later!

Later on in this volume we reproduce some newspaper articles about the banquet. Remember when you read these articles, we did not see a menu in advance. This added to the excitement as we tried to guess what might come next – and to work out what it all meant.

MENU

Oysters baked with spinach, tarragon and pernod
Beef 'tartare'
Beef consomme with marrow bones
Salad with crisp fish skins
Blood sausage with apples and calvados
Roasted pigeon breast, seared pigeon and duck hearts,
caramelized red cabbage and
pigeon and beetroot broth
Fresh goat's cheese in puff pastry
Figs, Muscatels, Damson plum jelly, Grape bread and Cream
Coffee and biscuits (Virgins' breasts and Dead men's bones)

WINES

Kir Royale
Morey St-Denis (Domaine Dujac) 1990
Seppelt Sparkling Burgundy 1983
Chateau Lafleur Petrus (Pomerol) 1985
Chambers Special Liqueur Muscat

'A dinner by Berowra Waters Out for the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy at the Australian National Gallery, Canberra, 9 March 1993. This dinner was prepared and cooked by Janni Kyritsis, with the help of Christopher Whitehead, Ben Macintosh, Troy Davey and Laif Sutherland. The wines were chosen by Murray Smith.'

Gay Bilson

Photographer: Alex McKay

Body parts: a question of taste

By SHERIDAN ROGERS

MARGARET Whitlam licking gold-leaf off her fingers, a table-cloth of tripe, a menu of bodily parts, a mummified body which rose up off the table – and through it all, a brigade of bandaged waiters.

The aftermath of last night's election results? A Bunuel film set? No. This was the scene of a banquet held last week at the National Gallery in Canberra.

A banquet, conceived by Australia's high-priestess of food, Gay Bilson, and executed by Janni Kryitsis and the team from Berowra Waters Inn. A banquet which coincided with the opening of the Surrealist Exhibition at the gallery, and which was itself surreal in more ways than one.

Whether you're celebrating or mourning last night's results, this banquet should take your weary mind off all that for a few minutes. Bear in mind that many of the actors in this drama influence the way you and I eat each day, even if not overtly.

Seated at a long narrow table in the downstairs gallery adjacent to the Rodin sculpture garden were 80 diners (or victims), all of whom had been attending the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy.

They included many leading chefs, caterers, food writers and authors, poets, nutritionists and good cooks.

Some – like Middle Eastern cookery book author, Claudia Roden, author Sri Owen and celebrator of Italian food, Diane Seed – had travelled from Europe to attend. Others – like Melbourne restaurateur Stephanie Alexander and South Australian chef Maggie Beer had travelled interstate.

Alan Saunders (ABC Food Program), wine buff Dr Max Lake, restaurateur Sarah Adey, nutritionist Rosemary Stanton, chefs Chris Mansfield, Cath Kerry and Marieke Brugman, food critic Michael Dowe, magazine cookery editor Belinda Jeffery, food writers Cherry Ripe, Barbara Santich and Diane Holuigue and National Food Authority spokeswoman Gae Pincus were just some of the others.

Barry Humphries (who'd introduced the exhibition to the press the previous day), surrealist painters Salvador Dali, Paul Delvaux, James Gleeson and Magritte were also there, albeit in ghostly form.

As each course was presented, we slowly became aware of the symbolism behind this meal: the gradual dismemberment of the body.

The menu itself was confronting: Stomach, Egg, Flesh, Bone, Skin, Blood, Heart, Milk, Fruit, Virgins' Breasts, Dead Men's Bones. There were oysters baked with spinach, tarragon and pernod, beef tartare, beef consomme with marrow bones adorned with gold-leaf paper, a salad with crisp fish skins, blood sausage with apples and calvados and roasted pigeon breast, seared pigeon and duck hearts with caramelised red cabbage.

If your stomach had withstood this, there were afters of fresh goat's cheese in puff pastry, a grape bread with figs and damson plum jelly, coffee and biscuits.

Prior to the meal, we'd been given a preview of the exhibition upstairs. Once in the long narrow gallery with the bright red wall, we could not leave by the way we had entered. Security guards roamed everywhere, carrying torches and mobile phones. Outside, the moon threw silvery shadows among the black sculptures and gum trees.

"It looks like a painting of the inland of Australia," commented Margaret Whitlam, as the vanilla-sprayed untreated tripe was rolled up in black plastic and taken away.

"It's very dramatic," ventured Stephanie Alexander.

"There was a stench to it," said one. "Before a meal, I find that very offensive."

"I think it's a bit contrived," said another. "It's very confronting – an assault on all our senses."

Actually, it was just Gay Bilson being Gay Bilson – original, dramatic and challenging. But there were some who couldn't take it. One woman was sick, others complained of claustrophobia, a few managed to escape. "What is the point?" queried one. "Surely it has to work as a meal as well as a statement."

As we sat in the Senate Chambers of the old Parliament House on Monday evening, listening to different speakers espousing the virtues of the Mediterranean and other traditional diets, it seemed the Symposium's sympathies lay in acknowledging the cultural and social aspects of eating and in informed freedom of choice.

After all, whether we voted Liberal or Labor, we live in a democracy. These days our choice of food is magnificent and beyond the wildest dreams of our forebears.

Sun Herald 14 March 1993

GASTRONOMY

A surrealist banquet

BARBARA SANTICH

THE SURREALIST artists of the 1930s seemed to take delight in paradox, in the juxtaposition of the unexpected with the unconventional — whether deliberately to shock and to challenge bourgeois sensibilities, or ingenuously to experiment, to push back the boundaries of perception and representation.

In parallel fashion, the banquet presented by Gay Bilson, Yanni Kyritsis and the whole team of Berowra Waters Out, for the Seventh Symposium of Australian Gastronomy in Canberra last month, confronted dedicated diners with a series of images demanding intellectual as well as physiological digestion.

'Confronted' and 'demanding': I choose the words deliberately, for this banquet was not for the faint-hearted. It was not one of those easy-going dinners which invite gluttony but rather a 'spectacle', in the Rousseau-ist sense, and as much theatre as gastronomy. And if its intent was to reflect the spirit of the surrealist creations which hung in the gallery above us as we ate, then its interpretation must be sought at the deeper level of symbolic association.

The exhibition now on display at the National Gallery offers, as an apéritif, two cases of Barry Humphries' dada art, including his Cakescape: squashed lamingtons and slices of jam roll which, unexpectedly, seem more at home within a frame than on the tea table. It presents interesting variations of texture and colour, and the effect is quite entrancing — childish, innocuous and superficially appealing.

Not so Gay Bilson's introduction to the banquet, which also made use of edible materials. Beneath the harsh glare of surgical lights, we were faced with a long narrow table draped with the stomachs of several large beasts, turned inside out to display surfaces of fine-textured honeycomb and warty protrusions, in colours of dirty beige, muddy brown and brindled black: the guts, in all their glory, as if to say 'This is where the processes of transformation and incorporation take place; this is the beginning'.

Imprévu? Undoubtedly; and for some, also obscene. But once the connection with animal insides is ignored, the visual effects can be appreciated: the contrast of textures, surfaces which invite a cautious caress, secret orifices. The result is fascination more than revulsion, a fascination that is not merely scientific curiosity but includes more than a hint of empathy: we, too, are mortal.

The spectre of mortality underlay this banquet. Not that we were constantly faced with a vision of intestines — after the necessary time for seating all the guests, these were neatly rolled up in undertaker's plastic and removed to another place. The table was then set with the conventional implements: glass, knife-fork-spoon laid on a microscope slide, carafe of water. For this act, and for the rest of the evening, the waiters discarded their customary white shirts and, with them, their customary role. Bound with a bandage over the right shoulder and around the diaphragm, they became the walking wounded, the battle-scarred, those who have brushed with death and glimpsed the nether world.

No menus were provided to tell us what we should be eating, or drinking. We were left with our senses. Paradoxically, the visual sense came to dominate, recognition leading to trust, and trust to tasting. Reliance on sight was such that some dishes were practically untouched — as though the eyes had direct connections to the consciousness, which could easily be

persuaded that what looked like bull's pizzles actually were . . .

In fact, the banquet began in a fairly conventional fashion with a dish most of us recognised: a nest of raw beef, in short strips, in which sat a raw egg yolk, topped with anchovy fillets, capers and finely chopped onion. We each doused it with warmly golden olive oil, and crackled thin crisp wafers of bread in accompaniment. The succeeding consommé, ladled from tall white jugs, appeared equally orthodox — until we remarked the gelatin-richness as it slipped from the ladle, and at the same time admired the jumbled mass of marrow bones, some gilded with gold leaf, whose core could either be spread over the slice of toasted brioche or added to the broth, making glistening circles of fat on its limpid surface.

By the time we received the next dish crisply fried sheets of fish skin atop token shreds of vegetable, a pattern was emerging. We had eaten flesh, bones, marrow, skin — what next? Almost inevitably, it was blood, in the form of a crisp-coated boudin — a very rich and impeccably seasoned boudin — accompanied by crisp-tender wedges of apple.

The change to sparkling burgundy at this point remains a puzzle to me. That all the wines were red is understandable — in hindsight, one can even see a reason for the blood-tinged kir royale which preceded the banquet (the waiters had been given orders not to serve the champagne solo, but only with the cassis) — but sparkling burgundy? Perhaps the element of cultural sophistication associated with bubbles in the booze was meant to accentuate the crudeness of consuming blood, the very essence of the body, and the paradox of offering this most primitive of foods as part of a formal banquet.

Yet there was more to come: a dish of rare pigeon breast, served on caramel-sweet red cabbage, the whole surrounded by the pinkish-brown cones (skewered hearts of duck and pigeon) which looked so like miniature pizzles. And a cheese course: a wedge of almost unnaturally fresh cheese, lightly seasoned with pesto, inside puff pastry of buttery ephemerality. One began to long for a salad, vegetables, anything to break the carnal sequence — for the whole meal, to that stage, had been centred on flesh: muscle, bones, skin, blood, milk. Instead, we were given a blindfold.

Certainly, the revelation deserved a blindfold; the element of surprise was all-important. But the blindfold also signified a turning point in the meal, as we moved to fruit and cereals, the domain of Demeter, goddess of fertility and mellow fruitfulness. It was Demeter's daughter and alter ego, Persephone who, after her enforced sojourn in Hades, returned annually to earth for the sowing and harvest. We, too, were condemned to a brief period of darkness before the re-awakening — to find before us purple figs and black grapes, dark damson jelly and firm white cream, glazed yeast cakes

STOMACH
EGG
FLESH
BONE
SKIN
BLOOD
HEART
MILK
FRUIT
VIRGINS' BREASTS
DEAD MENS' BONES

WINES

KIR ROYALE

1990 MOREY ST-DENIS (DOMAINE DUJAC)

1983 SEPPELT SPARKLING BURGUNDY

1985 CHATEAU LAFLEUR PETRUS (POMEROL)

CHAMBERS SPECIAL LIQUEUR MUSCAT

MENU

OYSTERS BAKED WITH SPINACH, TARRAGON & PERNOD

BEEF 'TARTARE'

BEEF CONSOMME WITH MARROW BONES

SALAD WITH CRISP FISH SKINS

BLOOD SAUSAGE WITH APPLES & CALVADOS

ROASTED PIGEON BREAST, SEARED PIGEON & DUCK HEARTS, CARAMELIZED RED CABBAGE AND PIGEON & BEETROOT BROTH

FRESH GOAT'S CHEESE IN PUFF PASTRY

FIGS/MUSCATELS/DAMSON PLUM JELLY/GRAPE BREAD/CREAM

COFFEE & BISCUITS (VIRGINS' BREASTS & DEAD MENS' BONES)

topped with juicy grapes and, on the centre of the table, a bandage-swathed young girl, covered in figs and grapes . . .

This was no nubile Lolita leaping out of a chocolate heart. As she stiffly raised her head and shoulders from the table, I saw her as the Life which succeeds Death — that same Death which had attracted the funerary tributes heaped about her. On the eternal roundabout, she was both Life and Death, transformed from the dead to the living by the offerings of fruit and bread. This banquet, then, was a celebration of Life through Death, a reminder of our fate to be born, to die, to be recycled.

With coffee, too, came Life and Death, as if to affirm this natural sequence: Virgin's Breasts (moulded almond cakes with glazed nipples) and Dead Men's Bones (thin, crisp, pale brown biscuits). Eating these, we incorporated both future and past in our own present, absorbing them into our bodies which, metaphorically as well as physiologically, include these three dimensions.

Shocking as it was to some, this banquet could not have been designed simply to jolt us out of complacency. Nor could it have been merely a joke on us, gluttons all to some extent, and greedy for the next and newest taste sensation. Its significance must lie elsewhere — not only in surrealism, but also in the theme of the symposium, Nature and Culture.

Culture is often seen as corrupting of Nature, inherently innocent and virtuous — and cookery is an application of Culture. (This was the view of the cynic Diogenes, who shunned cooked food and, indeed, all forms of civilisation.) Physically, we were on the side of Culture — within a gallery of art, separated by plate glass from the garden and gums outside. The foods we were served represented the basest of Nature — viscera, bones, blood — transformed by culinary artists in a demonstration of the triumph of Culture. And this transformation was necessary; in their natural form, few of us could have stomached such ingredients. This banquet, then, was an affirmation of the relevance of Culture to our lives.

But I also see it as a form of sacrament, as much a sacrament as the supper of bread and wine. It contained all the elements of ancient worship and sacrifice to the Gods — though we were not witness to the ascent of the aromatic smoke. Its carnality (emphasised by the serving of red wine only) spoke also of primal rituals.

This affinity with ancient religion somehow underlined the transience of life and inexorability of Fate, and accentuated the theme of mortality which ran throughout the entire banquet. And, given that a banquet is a formalised occasion for eating and drinking, this is perhaps the ultimate paradox. ■

The Sydney Review April 1993

FOOD AND ART (CORPOREAL VERSUS SURREAL)

Cherry Ripe

'IT was like being in a Bunuel film,' said guest of honour Claudia Roden, 'with people in ball dress, and the entrails of 30 animals spread out all over the table.'

One word – a riddle – was said to sum it up.

You wouldn't have thought people could get so worked up about a dinner, but it was possibly the most controversial meal ever presented in Australia: people who weren't there were still talking about it weeks later. It inspired passionate argument, and polarised those that were there: you either loved it or hated it. (I loved it.) Many simply misunderstood it. Some even left – possibly affronted? – before its climax, only to miss the high point of the drama (for it was nothing if not dramatic). It forced people to confront the relationship between food and art.

This was no mere 'meal' – it was a banquet, for which different criteria apply. A banquet, by definition is a supra-ordinary event, a 'sumptuous entertainment of food and drink' according to the Shorter Oxford.

That it would be dramatic should have come as no surprise: the final banquets at the end of these symposia are usually memorable, but this one was even more extraordinary than most, even in comparison with Bilson's previous efforts, such as the AIDS fund-raising Opera Gastronomica in 1991.

It started ordinarily enough. We'd all been guided, in a private viewing, around the Surrealist exhibition – subtitled Revolution by Night – two floors up, and were finally led down a steep flight of stairs, to a long narrow room that usually houses the Gallery's coffee shop. As we turned the corner at the bottom, we were confronted by a forty metre long table literally covered in tripe – a table cloth of animal stomachs.

If the original intention of surrealism was to shock people out of their complacency, the 'confrontation' offered by this spectacle was entirely consistent with – and the perfect metaphor for – the initial reaction to the paintings upstairs: it made some feel nauseous. Bare-torsoed waiters, bandaged diagonally across their hearts, quickly dispatched the offending table cloth – rolling it up and whipping it away – leaving a bare white canvas on which the dinner would unfold.

As cutlery and glasses appeared, people began to ponder what word might sum up this obviously thematic and conceptual dinner. A sparkling red burgundy set the tone: only red wine was served throughout the meal.

First, out came a tartare – strips, rather than mince – of beef wound round a pullet's egg yolk, with capers and jugs of olive oil, and thin rye crispbread. Then followed a much reduced beef consommé, accompanied by marrow bones presented separately in a large oval dish – surmounted by one single gilded marrow-bone. (This, according to Bilson, was a reference to John Donne's line, 'a bracelet of bright hair about the bone'.)

Next appeared a dish of two pieces of crispy fish skin, from two different fish, one freshwater (brook trout), the other an ocean fish (King George Whiting) garnished with a cucumber and seaweed salad.

Then came individual black puddings – blood sausages – with apple, then yet another course, a rare-roasted pigeon breast, set on a bed of caramelised red cabbage, and garnished with skewered duck and pigeon hearts, resembling severed nipples.

A theme began to emerge. We'd eaten flesh, bone, skin, heart. Did it relate to the exhibition upstairs? If so was this 'corporeal' – rather than 'surreal'?

Next – perhaps appropriately since Dali's 'melting watches' were apparently inspired by ripe camemberts – came goats' cheese interleaved in puff pastry (representing milk?).

These were just the savoury courses: there was more to come. After a short interval, all eighty diners were blindfolded. The bandaged-torsoed waiters (all men) appeared with torn strips of white sheeting, and tied them around everyone's eyes – even Margaret Whitlam's.

A bandaged (mummified?) body was borne to the table, and laid down in the middle. This was Bilson's daughter, the diminutive Sido, who has played a central role in many of Bilson's banquets. In a flurry of activity, with all the kitchen staff called in to help, her supine body was buried – hidden – under a mound of black grapes, and the table strewn with yet more grapes, figs and fruit breads – a type of focaccia with sultanas and walnuts – glazed with plum jelly: this was dessert.

Then the blindfolds were removed. At this point Sido rose from under the mound of grapes like a corpse coming to life, to be borne away by the waiters, leaving dessert to be devoured.

In another break with convention, just as diners were preparing to rise and leave, the menus were presented. These were printed in as close to blood-coloured ink as Bilson could find. They read: 'Stomach, Egg, Flesh, Bone, Skin, Blood, Heart, Milk, Fruit, Virgins' Breasts, Dead Men's Bones'. (These two last were biscuits served with coffee.) Corporeal indeed. The rumour that Gay had wanted to use her own blood for the blood sausage only served to heighten the meal's more dramatic and confronting aspects. (Would that have made us cannibals?)

This was a meal that forced one to question the relationship between food and art. Food and art inspire contradictory emotional responses: art can be challenging, while food almost never is. Food by definition is designed to be welcoming, soothing, and comforting, yet this was confrontational food – in which there was an inherent paradox. Thus many who had anticipated food as 'nurture' – warm, succour-giving – not 'food as art' – dramatic, conceptual and provocative – were too challenged by it, and simply misunderstood it. This dinner assumed not only a level of artistic sensibility in the diner, but a level of gustatory sophistication: it was not for the inexperienced (a not unfair assumption given that it was the climax to a Gastronomy Symposium) nor the faint of heart, who might blanch at consuming marrow bones, or even blood sausage. A telling comment from one diner verged on hypocrisy, referring to the exhibition upstairs: 'I can cope with it behind glass but not on the table'.

Objections to it were that it did not work as a menu; that there were too many courses; that it was too rich; that the courses did not go together one after the other; that you would never have ordered such a succession of dishes – nor so many of them to follow each other – had you been choosing from a menu. But that was hardly the point: it was after all, a banquet.

Certainly you couldn't fault any of the individual dishes on their execution, despite the logistical nightmares involved. Turned out of a tiny tent in the gallery's courtyard by a team of six cooks and six waiters, each dish was superbly crafted. More interestingly, it was unlike any banquet at the end of a similar event anywhere in the world, not just in its execution, but in its conception.

Despite the controversy, Bilson claims she did not devise it to be deliberately confrontational. A past master in such conceptualisations, had she anticipated such a passionate response? 'Under the aegis of the Symposium,' says Bilson, 'one is allowed to take a meal further than one normally can. One presumes an intelligent and open audience. In an age of cholesterol consciousness and righteous vegetarianism, it was the last unashamed carnivorous meal.'

It will be difficult – if not impossible – to top it, in Adelaide next time around.

Photographer: Richard Scotte

Wednesday

10 March

MENU

Juice
supplied by Blackfriars Priory

Coffee
blend prepared by Grinders, Melbourne, Victoria

Penelope Sach Petal tea, and Australian (Madura) tea

Assorted jams and jellies
made and contributed by Symposiasts

Breads and pastries
from Cornucopia Bakery, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Butter, unsalted
from The Bega Co-operative Society Ltd, Bega, New South Wales

Raspberries, blackberries, peaches and nectarines
from Ross and Penman, Pialligo, Canberra, Australian Capital Territory

Smoked salmon and smoked tuna
donated by Aquatas and Tassal, Hobart, Tasmania.
(organised and delivered by symposiast, Barbra Blomberg)

TOUR OF THE ARTWORKS OF THE NEW PARLIAMENT HOUSE

Ann Cleary

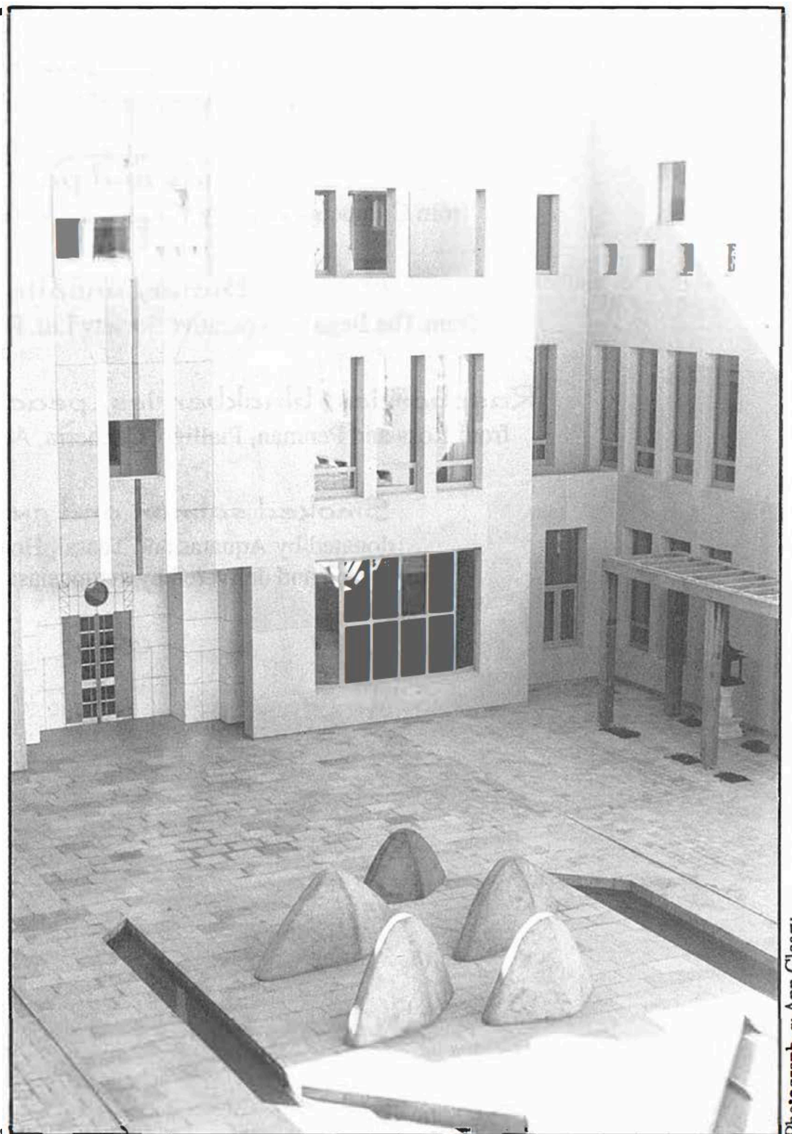
HAVING enjoyed three days of gastronomic fervour, a group of about thirty-five symposiasts embarked on a guided tour of the artworks commissioned for the new Parliament House. Not being too skilled in the culinary arts area (I prefer to leave such exploits to my better half), I was happy to be asked to impart some of the 'tastier morsels' from my experience as one of the architects involved with the art program over the years of the building of the Parliament. I was fortunate to work with artists and craftspeople from all parts of Australia – sleeping on their workshop floors – and to assist in incorporation of their work within the fabric of the architecture.

We began our foray out in the vastness of the forecourt to understand the nature of this land as portrayed in the stones of the Aboriginal mosaic pavement from a design by artist Michael Tjakamarra Nelson. Continuing into the interior along the spaces of the land axis, each work of art further told of the experience of settlement and the struggles and aspirations from that time through to our present.

Many of the artworks express the connectedness we hold with the land as conditioner of our values, of the effort given to an unrelenting character, but one which is also understood in the dappled light in the stands of eucalypts of Arthur Boyd's image for the great tapestry, or the rendering of petroglyph Red Gorge rock markings or even an 1859 line in a letter: 'likewise I want a root of rhubarb ...' captured in Kay Lawrence's design for the sixteen metre long embroidery.

I enjoyed conveying this sense of expression to a group of culinary 'artistes' who could appreciate the focus and fine detail inherent in each of the art works, which in their total calibrate a human scale and presence within an otherwise abstract architectural language.

And as we paused to look into the executive courtyard and the shadows of Marea Gazzard's 'Mingarri (the little Olgas)', a prime ministerial staffer, an ex-caterer we later learnt, took an interest in our roamings and offered to take us into the coffers of the Cabinet Suite. We easily sat, each of us in a ministerial chair, and mused on our place around the Cabinet table. We were looking to the blow-fly and the cicada, the 'bugs' inlaid in the marquetry ceiling over us by artists Tony Bishop and Michael Retter, to let us in on some of the whispers of the Silky Oak panelling around us. We learnt of various political anguishes hanging about the walls and lastly emerged for tea and scones, a little more envigoured perhaps in the stories of the 'hill'.



Photographer: Ann Cleary

Further Reading

Expressing Australia. Art in Parliament House 1988 Canberra: Parliament House Construction Company.

MORNING TEA

MENU

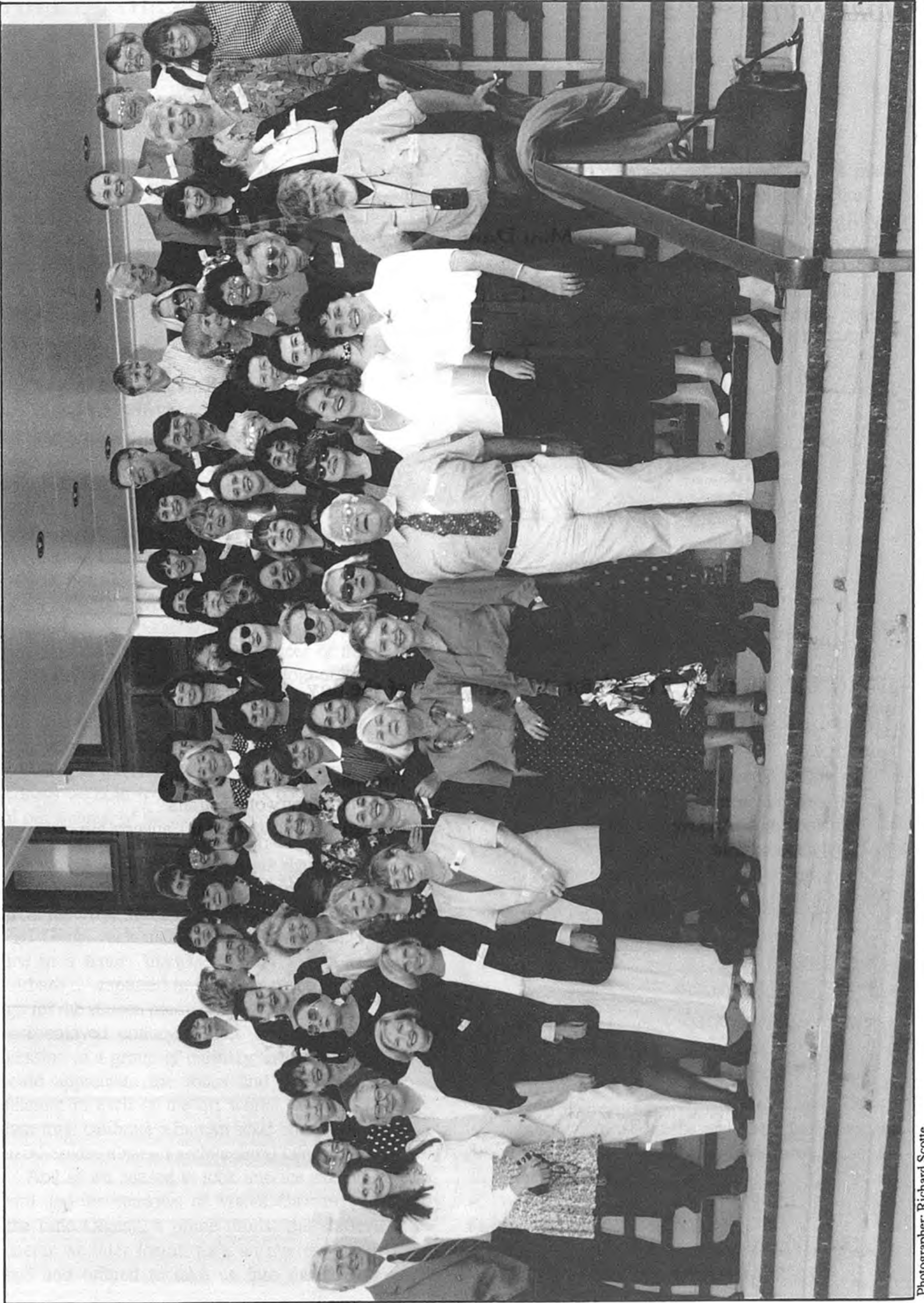
Mini Danish Pastries

Fruit Muffins

Tea or Coffee

OPTIONAL ATTRACTIONS for the remainder of the day

- Botanical Gardens
- Calthorpe's House
- Film and Sound Archive
- Lanyon Homestead
- National Museum of Australia
- National Library of Australia
- Pialligo farming area, near Canberra airport



Photographer: Richard Scotte

List of Participants

Adams, Jane, 31 Fitzgerald Street, Bondi Junction NSW 2022
Adey, Sara, Darling Mills Restaurant, 134 Glebe Point Road, Glebe NSW 2037
Alden, Lillian, 23 Forster Street, Williamstown VIC 3016
Alexander, Stephanie, Stephanie's Restaurant, 405 Tooronga Road, East Hawthorn VIC 3123
Arbib, Tricia, Bundanoon Village Nursery, 71 Penrose Road, Bundanoon NSW 2578
Ashurst, Keith, The Lobby Restaurant, King George Terrace, Parkes ACT 2600
Ball, Sally, 20 Norman Terrace, Forestville SA 5035
Beer, Maggie, PO Box 301, Nuriootpa SA 5355
Berman, Margaret, 91 Gouger Street, Torrens ACT 2607
Bilson, Gay, Berowra Waters Inn, Berowra Waters NSW 2022
Blomberg, Barbra, Department of Primary Industries and Fisheries, GPO Box 192B, Hobart TAS 7001
Brander, Mary, Taste Australia, 8 Campbell Street, Ainslie ACT 2601
Brissenden, Rosemary, 1 Solander Court, Yarralumla ACT 2600
Brugman, Marieke, Howqua Dale Gourmet Retreat, PO Box 373, Mansfield VIC 3722
Butt, Lois, 16 View Road, Vermont VIC 3133
Cahill, Robyn J., 1707/73 Victoria Street, Potts Point NSW 2011
Chambers, Elaine, Australian Dried Fruit Authority, Level 2, 409 St Kilda Road, Melbourne VIC 3000
Chin, Michael, 33 Woolner Circuit, Hawker ACT 2614
Churcher, Betty, National Gallery of Australia, Parkes ACT 2600
Clark, Courtney, 64 Cameron Street, Edgecliff NSW 2027
Collard, Daniel, Chez Daniel Restaurant, Style Arcade, Franklin Street, Manuka ACT 2603
Coventry, Robyn, 224 Station Street, North Carlton VIC 3053
Creber, Ann, 25 Clifton Street, Nunawading VIC 3131
Dara, Duré, Stephanie's Restaurant, 405 Tooronga Road, East Hawthorn VIC 3123
Davis, Dorothy, 22 Henderson Street, Garran ACT 2605
Dixon, Corinne, Eucalypt Ridge, 7 Kippax Court, Mt Waverley VIC 3149
Dowe, Michael, 5 Salisbury Road, Stanmore NSW 2048
Dumaresq, David, 53 Dumaresq Street, Dickson ACT 2602
Emery, Margaret, "Collingwood", Gunning NSW 2581
Findlay, Margaret, 3 Blairgowrie Court, Brighton VIC 3186
Fry, Jeanette, 40 Charlotte Street, Richmond VIC 3121
Garnaut, Michelle, 1st Floor, South Block, 2 Lower Albert Road, CENTRAL HONG KONG
Gibbs, Julie, Allen and Unwin Pty. Ltd., 292 Rathdowne Street, North Carlton VIC 3054
Gillespie, Pam, 24 Lea Avenue, Willoughby NSW 2068
Halligan, Marion, 6 Caldwell Street, Hackett ACT 2602
Haslem, Caryl, 18 Belmore Gardens, Barton ACT 2600
Hodge, Greg, 3/5 Henley Road, Thirroul NSW 2515
Holuigue, Di, 3 Avondale Road, Armadale VIC 3143
Hosking, Richard, 1-11-22 Ochiai-minami, Asakita-ku, Hiroshima 739-17, JAPAN
Howard, Nigel, c/- 7/18 Gillies Street, Wollstonecraft NSW 2065
Hughes, Helen, 17 Victoria Road, Bolwarra NSW 2320
Huskins, Andrew, c/- Australian National Gallery, P.O. Box 1150, Canberra ACT 2601
Jeffery, Belinda, 2/64 Avenue Road, Mosman NSW 2088
Jenkins, Gayl, 390 Edgecliff Road, Woollahra NSW 2025
Jenkins, Susan, 28 Middle Street, McMahons Point NSW 2060
Kelly, Maria and Ross, 74 Glenmore Road, Paddington NSW 2021
Kelly, Nola, 1 Day Road, Glen Osmond SA 5064
Kerry, Catherine, 31 Flora Terrace, Prospect SA 5082
King, Peter, 13 Longford Street, Lyons ACT 2602
King, Sarah, c/- 13 Longford Street, Lyons ACT 2606
Korn, Margit, 662 Toorak Road, Toorak VIC 3142

Lake, Max, 28/51 The Crescent, Manly NSW 2095
Lillis, Meg, Fringe Benefits Brasserie, 54 Marcus Clarke Street, Canberra ACT 2600
Manfield, Christine, 7C/20 Onslow Avenue, Elizabeth Bay NSW 2011
Mansfield, Alan, Humanities, Murdoch University WA 6150
Marsland, Diana, 24 Barkley Avenue, Armadale Vic 3143
Mason, Warren, c/- Sydney International Wine Competition, P.O. Box 801, Potts Point NSW 2011
Matto, Rosa, 10 Ballville Street, Prospect SA 5082
McGuckin, Linda, 5/3 Richardson Street, South Perth WA 6151
McLeod, Virginia, 19 Glenara Road, Kurrajong Heights NSW 2758
Meehan, Betty, RMB 148, via Bungendore NSW 2621
Miller, Ann, 18 Raftery Road, Kialla VIC 3631
Minchin, Elizabeth, 13 Duigan Place, Scullin ACT 2614
Muncaster, Tina, 28 South Crescent, Westgarth VIC 3181
Newell, Ray, c/- 7/18 Gillies Street, Wollstonecraft NSW 2065
Nicholson, Howard, Bundanoon Village Nursery, 71 Penrose Road, Bundanoon NSW 2578
Owen, Sri and Roger, High Street Mews, Wimbledon Village, London SW19 7RG
Parham, Susan, 54 High Street, Kensington SA 5068
Pincus, Gae, National Food Authority, Macquarie House, 55 Blackall Street, Barton ACT 2600
Regan, Kerry, 23 Hutchison Crescent, Kambah ACT 2902
Ripe, Cherry, 1 Tivoli Street, Paddington NSW 2021
Roden, Claudia, London
Rogers, Sheridan, 26 Reynolds Street, Cremorne NSW 2090
Santich, Barbara, 13 King Street, Brighton SA 5048
Saunders, Alan, ABC Science Unit, GPO Box 9994, Sydney NSW 2001
Seed, Diane, c/- IOOC, 12 Church Street, Ashfield NSW 2131
Sheringham, Colin, 331 Hawkesbury Road, Winmalee NSW 2777
Smith, Penny, 58 Millswyn Street, South Yarra VIC 3141
Sprague, Beverley, Ma Cuisine Cooking School, 17/12 Napoleon Street, Cottesloe WA 6011
Spurgeon, Betty, 25 Blamey Crescent, Campbell ACT 2601
Stanton, Rosemary, 59 Beecroft Street, Beecroft NSW 2119
Stegley, Sarah, Howqua Dale, PO Box 379, Mansfield VIC 3722
Stone, Bob and Jill, 22 Lochness Avenue, Torrens Park SA 5062
Sweeney, Barbara, P.O. Box 272, Balmain NSW 2041
Sweet, Judith, "Cotswold" RMB 722, Lachlan Road, New Norfolk TAS 7140
Tonkinson, Myrna, 56 Webster Street, Nedlands WA 6009
Whitlam, Margaret, Darling Point NSW 2027
Wright, Fiona, The Lobby Restaurant, King George Terrace, Parkes ACT 2600
Wright, Hilary, University of Western Sydney - Hawkesbury, c/- Bourke Street, Richmond NSW 2753
Zweep, Sue, 19 The Grove, Austinmer NSW 2515

Faces and Places

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p.42	Myrna Tonkinson
p.49	Barbara Santich
p.54	(in Speaker's chair) Alan Saunders, speakers (left to right): Gae Pincus, Diane Seed, Rosemary Stanton
p.64	(clockwise from top left) Fiona Wright, Elizabeth Minchin, Peter King, Michael Chin, Betty Meehan, Daniel Collard, Keith Ashurst

p.65 (top) Fiona Wright and apprentices from Chez Daniel (bottom) Catherine Kerry, Sally Ball, Hilary Wright, Ann Creber, Bob Stone, Jill Stone

p.69 Ready for breakfast, Priory dining room

p.88 (top) Serif and Gulbahar Kaya (bottom) Claudia Roden, Marion Halligan and Diane Holuigue

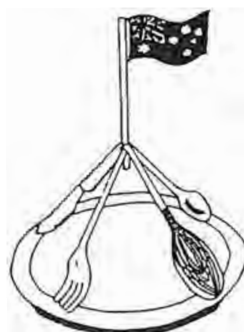
p.98 (top) At the Banquet (bottom left) Yani Kyritsis (right) Gay Bilson

p.100 (top) Mary Brander and Cherry Ripe (bottom left) Julie Gibbs and Maggie Beer (right) the waiters prepare dessert

p.104 Myrna Tonkinson and Claudia Roden

p.108 Looking into the Executive Courtyard towards the Prime Minister's entry with Marea Gazzard's 'Mingarri' (the little Olgas)

p.110 Symposium participants on the steps of old Parliament House



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Wineries of the Canberra region (see p.6)

THANK YOU!