

Slow Food Perth publishes redeveloped website



SLOW Food Perth has redeveloped its website – slowfoodperth.org.au – with the help of web designer and food blogger Matt O'Donohue and Slow Food Perth web-savvy member and musician Alex Millier.

The revised site contains a raft of information about Slow Food Perth, its projects and events, and offers members, friends and cyber-surfers the ability to post comments.

Members and friends can also use the site to check upcoming events and book participation from the web. Booking forms can be downloaded, filled out and emailed back to Slow Food Perth.

The convivium extends its gratitude to Matt and Alex for their assistance.

Slow Food Perth / next events



Sunday 08 July 2007: *The best cuts* – an Italian-sausage-making and pork-curing workshop with chef Vincenzo Velletri using Spencers Brook organic pork. Participants will also learn how to make lard, pancetta and prosciutto. Venue / Swan View. Limit / 25 participants

Sep 2007 [dating pending]: *The articulate artichoke* – a workshop with John Mariorana. Venue / Subiaco.

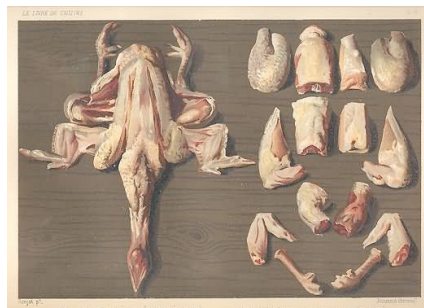
Sep 2007 [date pending]: *Kids on the loose* – a celebration of biodynamic gats, their milk and cheese, with Gabrielle Kervella and Alan Cockman. Venue / Gidgegannup

Saturday 03 Nov 2007:

Enogastronomia e rose – Fine wine, food and roses: a long table luncheon of Great Southern foods and wines in The Kodja Place rose maze, celebrating Kojonup's Italian heritage. Venue / Kojonup.

Booking forms in Word can be downloaded from slowfoodperth.org.au/category/events-and-bookings by clicking on the *booking form* link at the end of each entry.

Slow Food Perth project / *Slow food at the edge of the world*



SLOW Food Perth has launched a project to collect and collate from West Australians of diverse cultural backgrounds recipes at risk of loss so that these foods can be enjoyed by future generations of cooks and families.

Slow food at the edge of the world is the idea of Italian ex-patriate chef, Slow Food Perth committee member and Terra Madre 2006 participating chef Vincenzo Velletri.

'Hundreds of recipes and food preparation methods brought to Australia by generations of immigrants and the ways in which they adapted them using local ingredients are at risk of being lost to us,' says Vincenzo.

'The food knowledge held by our parents, grandparents and their parents and by our Aboriginal people is part of Western Australia's rich food heritage, but as we become a more homogeneous society those ideas and methods which our mothers and grandmothers used in their kitchens

and in the bush to feed their families tend to become diluted or vanish altogether.

'I hope that *Slow food at the edge of the world* will ensure that we preserve this knowledge for the future and enjoy its benefits.'

Slow Food Perth co-leader Pauline Tresise says that while versions of many original recipes are still used, others lie unnoticed in cookbooks put away in boxes or cupboards, or kept as part of an oral tradition.

'West Australians have come from 200 countries across the globe, from Russia, China, Japan, Greece, Italy, Sudan, Denmark, South Africa, Kenya, Indonesia, Vietnam, Chile, Argentina, Mexico, Iran, Lebanon, the United Kingdom, Ireland, France and many other places,' says Pauline.

'When they arrived here they had to adapt time-honoured family recipes by using often quite different ingredients in what was to them a new country at the edge of the world.

'We hope the project might deliver information, for example, about whether the Italian families who settled at Kojonup in the early 1900s learned from the local Noongar people about trapping kangaroo and curing the meat for use in traditional Italian-style sausages.

'The project seeks to capture this sort of knowledge, whether it has been written or is part of an oral tradition, so that as one generation raises another and we become more or less a seamless community, the cultural distinction of food knowledge from different countries and places is not weakened and potentially lost.'

Slow Food Perth has appealed to cultural groups to help in the search through the Ethnic Communities Council of Western Australia. Individuals are being asked to copy out or write recipes used by their forebears. Information about the source of a recipe or food preparation method is also being sought, and the ways in which original recipes have been adapted by later generations born and brought up in Western Australia.

'We would like to gather as much information as possible about whose recipe it was, how it was used in their country or place of origin and how it has been used here, and whether it is still used by that family,' Pauline says.

'We plan to publish a book about the project and place the stories of the recipes' origins and the recipes themselves on the web. The idea could also become a filmed documentary.'

Slow Food Perth co-leader Jamie Kronborg says *Slow food at the edge of the world* goes to the heart of Slow Food's philosophy.

'The project will preserve food knowledge for future generations, enhance awareness of food as the glue of community, and acknowledge and celebrate Western Australia's cultural diversity,' Jamie says.

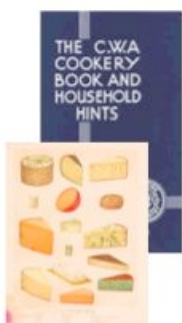
'West Australians speak 170 different languages and both of the parents of almost 650,000 of us – 35 per cent – were born overseas. This is one of the most culturally-diverse places on earth and *Slow Food at the edge of the world* will enhance recognition of food in this distinctive part of Australia and the way in which diverse food traditions have been shared and adapted across generations.'

Jamie says the Western Australian project could become the forerunner of a major Slow Food Australia venture once a national entity is formed.

More information

W slowfoodperth.org.au/projects
E info@slowfoodperth.org.au
T Pauline Tresise 08 9381 4519
T Vincenzo Velletri 0417 943 211
T Jamie Kronborg 08 9293 1845

Recipe collection forms are available by emailing info@slowfoodperth.org.au



Pork & Sons: master of a dying art



French chef and author Stephane Reynaud recently visited Australia and demonstrated his skills in a dying art at a workshop with members of Slow Food Central Victoria. Richard Cornish of The Age was there to witness it.

STEPHANE Reynaud is a big man. He could be a rugby player. He uses his size and strength to lift the 70-kilogram pig onto the rafters of the old barn. In front of a small ensemble of onlookers, the French chef opens his arms and gesticulates towards the carcass and says: "OK! Let's eat!" There is a silent pause before a relieved chorus of laughter. Reynaud also has a big sense of humour.

He has taken a day off from his busy schedule publicising his award-winning book *Pork & Sons* to take part in a Slow Food Central Victoria pig workshop. Over the course of the day an entire rare-breed Wessex Saddleback pig is to be broken down, cooked, made into pate, terrine, roasts, grills and sausages. Local farmer Nick Chambers helps Reynaud cut the pig in half.

'How does this compare with your French pigs,' asks Chambers.

'We let our pigs grow much larger to 18 months old and they weigh 200 kilograms, so about 120 kilograms dressed,' he says.

'How many men does it take to cut up a pig in France?' asks an onlooker, a well-known home butcher. 'Drunk men or sober men?' Reynaud asks cheekily in reply.

The owner of popular Paris restaurant Villa9trois, Reynaud spent childhood winters with his grandfather Francois Barbe, the butcher in the town of Saint-Agreve in Ardeche, 560 kilometres south-east of Paris. With him Reynaud learned the tradition and etiquette of the traditional French pig kill, taking part in his first slaughter at the age of seven on a day that was minus 12 degrees.

Despite a busy life in the city, Reynaud keeps his rural roots by attending the annual kill in Saint-Agreve and is even part owner of a pig. 'I still return to Ardeche to kill the pig with a friend. He is a machine salesman,' he explains. 'We do it for the good food and the tradition.'

'In a village where people still kill the pig for their own consumption, the animals don't have names. They do (however) have free-range lives and are eating the produce of the farm,' he insists.

'A friend's pigs will eat the milk from a nearby goat's milk dairy,' he says as he cuts off the head and splits it open, reserving the brain. He cuts off the cheeks and places these and the head into a stockpot with vegetables and seasonings to make a terrine.

He cuts the skin off the belly and some from the head and places this in a bowl with some fat and a little flesh. This will shortly be minced to make a saucisse de sabodet a lyonnaise sausage, similar to a small cotechino, flavoured with salt and pepper.

The head of Slow Food Central Victoria, Mary Ellis, is armed with a bag of potatoes and pounces on the offal. 'According to the book,' she says, 'it's traditional to make a fricassee with the heart, liver and kidneys and potatoes. See page 48!'

To this, another guest replies: 'In that case let's all be traditional and have a glass of wine like Stephane does on page 26!' There's a pop of a cork and a small cheer. It is still morning.

On the table in the centre of the old barn, Ballarat restaurateur Dean Smith bones a hind leg. 'This bloke's (Reynaud) a dying breed. Apart from some notable individuals there is virtually no whole-carcass butchery left in the Australian restaurant industry and it's getting that way in Europe. A lot of the apprentices don't even have knives. They buy their meat cut up in bags and give customers what they want - prime cuts.'

At the bench, the loin racks have been laid on a bed of celery and chorizo, lightly salted and oiled, and placed by the stove ready to go in the oven. A pile of meat and fat sits in a bowl and Reynaud asks everyone to make an offering of a flavour. 'Just like an offering plate in church everyone must drop something in,' he says.

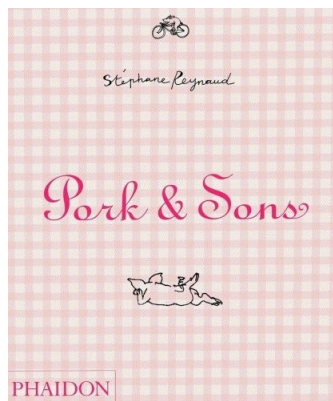
In goes fennel, orange, chestnuts,

rosemary, pepper and other spices. 'Good. This will be the *saucisse esprit de spontaneite*,' he says, translating it with a cheeky smile, 'That is, er, sausage of the day.'

Someone asks the question: 'Would you make a sausage like this at home?' Reynaud replies: 'Of course. Everyone puts something in. Back in France, when we cut up a pig, it is done by loving people, who love food. This way everyone eats something made by everyone.'

Another bowl comes out and pieces of pork and fat are mixed with shallots, cognac, salt and sage. Reynaud lines a terrine dish with slices of local prosciutto from Istra smallgoods, pressing the terrines into the dishes, decorating them with bay leaves and finally putting them into the oven in a bain-marie.

Sitting outside in the kitchen garden, basking in the late autumn sun, we wait for the racks of loin to rest and discuss the book *Pork & Sons* which won the 2005 French Gourmand Cookbook Award. The English translation is a beautiful production with a soft-pink, gingham cover and laced with humorous line drawing caricatures of pigs by artist Jose Reise de Matos.



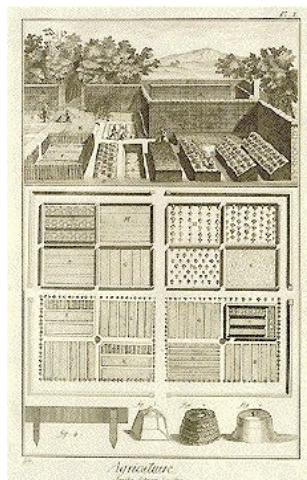
The 150 recipes are more a guide to day-to-day rustic cooking and entertaining than a bible for charcuterie, but at their heart they have a solid respect for good pork. The breakouts also pay respect to a way of life in rural France that is fast disappearing.

'The men I learned this (*sic*) recipes from are dying. These recipes are practices that are passed from grandfather to son to grandson.' Reynaud looks around at the people cooking, making sausages and terrines. 'Now there is less and less of this sort of thing even in France. I am 40 this year and I wanted to give my (three)

children something in black and white about their great-grandfather, about Saint-Agreve and the pig. Because in 10 years time this could all be gone. Hopefully not.'

Pork & Sons is published by Phaidon \$59.95

Slow Food Perth event / A taste of Italy / Terra Madre Western Australian sponsors' luncheon



Terra Madre chef Vincenzo Velletri and Slow Food Perth's committee organised a luncheon on 27 May 2007 at Mt Lawley's Third Avenue restaurant to recognise parliamentarians, government agencies and the media who helped to provide funds and publicity for Western Australia's participants attending Terra Madre; World Meeting of Food Communities in Turin, Italy, in October 2006. Anthony McLernon is Third Avenue's chef and helped Vincenzo to prepare the luncheon menu. Pauline Tresise reports.

IT was a delight to be introduced to Anthony McLernon by Vincenzo Velletri. Vincenzo was the Western Australian participating chef at Terra Madre last year and he had arranged the gathering of the food for our meal, highlighting as much as possible some of the products from the producers who attended Terra Madre, and through his friendship with Anthony had arranged for Anthony's restaurant to be the venue for our 'thank you' lunch to our sponsors.

Anthony and his business partner Rosslyn generously made their restaurant, Third Avenue, available for our Slow Food Perth lunch to show our appreciation to those who helped support and sponsor the 12 producers

and one chef who attended Terra Madre in Turin, Italy last October. While he was preparing the eight-course meal with Vincenzo, Anthony made time to explain to me about his philosophy on the preparation of food.

He believes in the simplicity of traditional food and that chefs should be encouraged during their training to work at a restaurant that serves traditional food as these recipes have been passed down the generation, not only survived but celebrated the test of time.

He is very interested in highlighting the natural flavours of the food and he uses whatever cooking methods needed to enhance the natural flavours in the food, often by long slow cooking. Anthony has worked at various restaurants in Perth; Maurizio; Savinis and the Margaret River Hotel. He has travelled to Europe, Asia and New Zealand.

Anthony's restaurant has a wood fired oven and the menu changes seasonally, apart from the delicious wood fired pizzas, some of the foods on their menu are, spiced salt and pepper calamari; fish of the day; roasted baby goat; double roasted duck with a leek and parmesan tart, asparagus, red onion jam and jus; roast pumpkin, rocket and hazelnut salad; assortment of pasta with fresh home made ravioli; their deserts are made on the premises by their chefs.

Our sincere thanks to Ros, Gerry and Anthony for helping to make our day so successful. Thirty guests gathered on to partake of a menu that took us from 1pm to 5pm of convivial eating to complete. Oh for the return of the Sunday lunch!!!!

Location

Third Avenue Restaurant
Corner Beaufort Street & Third Avenue,
Mount Lawley WA 6050
Open Tuesday-Saturday from 5pm to late
www.thirdave.com.au.
T 9271 6033

Menu

The menu for our Terra Madre lunch included:

- Herbed crostini of avocado & pistachio mousse
- Roasted organic pumpkin & blue veined cheese
- Crostini with organic black olive pate

- Organic silver beet & borlotti bean soup
- Black cabbage & pig trotter soup
- Polenta topped with Fondi style sausage sauce
- Ravioli filled with fresh goat cheese served with hazelnut & sage butter
- Wood fired oven braised lamb with rosemary
- Braised veal with sangiovese wine & dried porcini mushrooms
- Cheese platter of Kervella biodynamic goat cheese & Cambray sheep cheese
- Poached pears with fragola wine, cinnamon & cloves

Grazie, Vincenzo!

More information

Matt O'Donohue's blog

<http://abstractgourmet.com/2007/05/slow-food-and-long-lunches/>

Slow Food Perth event / descent from Araby: Fiori coffee



Slow Food Perth co-leader Pauline Tresise reports on a coffee tasting at Fiori in West Perth in April 2007:

'Suave molecules of Mocha stir up your blood, without causing excess heat; the organ of thought receives from it a feeling of sympathy; work becomes easier and you will sit down without distress to your principal repast which will restore your body and afford you a calm, delicious night.'
– Prince Talleyrand de Perigord

THE coffee we imbibed at the Slow Food Perth's Fiori tasting event has come to us by an interesting journey:

from the coffee tree in Ethiopia, to social gatherings and story-telling in coffee houses in Arabia, and then to the first coffee café houses in Europe in the middle of the seventeenth century.

Roasted beans were being brewed around 1000 AD and by the thirteenth century Muslims were drinking coffee religiously. Their brew drove their dervishes into frenzy and kept worshippers awake. At times throughout their history coffee houses were suppressed as they became places of political activity, dance, song and excitement. Wherever Islam went coffee followed: into North Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean and to India. It is said that the Arabian merchants made the bean infertile by parching it and no coffee seed sprouted outside Africa or Arabia until 1696 when the Dutch established the first European owned coffee estate in Ceylon.

Coffee is just like wine. It needs its *terroir*, its good season, a micro climate, good soil and an altitude of 1000 to 2000 metres. It likes neither extreme cold (no frost) nor extreme heat (no more than two hours direct sunshine a day). It grows best around the mountainous areas between the Tropic of Cancer and the Tropic of Capricorn. A coffee tree grows to a height of 4-7 metres and produces from 500g to 5kg a tree each year depending on conditions. If there is no existing overstorey of trees, a good coffee grower plants a canopy of trees that will shade them and provide a satisfactory micro climate.

The beans are imported green into countries and the coffee roaster selects his beans to make his own roasted blend; not an easy task as we heard. Even the most reliable roaster of good quality coffee is subject to the seasons, so just like wine there are seasonal variations and this is where the skill comes in with the roasting and blending.

And here we are in West Perth with Kamran Nowduschani and Louise Gordon of Fiori artisan coffee roasters sitting listening and tasting PNG Bunum WO & Kimel Estate; Indonesian Kalossi Grade 1 Sulotca Estate; Dry Process Mix and Honduran Marcala grown by Gerardo Barrios & family, an individual estate coffee.

Kamran is delightfully passionate when talking about his coffee, coffee history and his friendship with individual estate grower Gerardo Barrios from Honduras.

He explained to us about what benefits there are in having a direct buying relationship with Gerardo as it gives maximum financial benefit to Gerardo, his growers and the community.

Kamran trained in America and returned to Sydney where he had a coffee roasting business for seven years. A little more than a year ago he and Louise moved back to Perth where they opened their Fiori Roastery. They choose high quality coffee with ethical values, such as organic, fair trade and from individual growers. He described the vocabulary of coffee tasting and what to look for in a good coffee, the aromas, the taste and the feel in the mouth

It was a most informative and stimulating afternoon. Kept me wide awake and excited for hours! What an adventure to discover how complex the traditional world of coffee is. It is the second most valuable traded commodity after oil and is the important share of the export earnings of many developing countries.

Fiori Coffee is available at good grocers or contact Kamran or Louise on 9328 4988 or fioricoffee@bigpond.com. Fiori also arranges courses in barista training.

Slow Food Perth event / school gardens / Wembley Downs primary school garden open day



By Pauline Tresise

EARLY in 2006 Slow Food Perth convivium helped to establish an edible school garden at a primary school in Perth suburban Wembley Downs by

donating funds that its members had raised from events.

During the year the children grew a variety of vegetables, harvested them and parents came to the school and cooked a meal with the children using their produce.

They used permaculture techniques and enriched the soil with the worm casings from their worm farm. Children discovered a liking for vegetables that they normally never ate and the teacher Ann Evans who is responsible for the garden used the garden as a tool for teaching other subjects, highlighting the seasons and the environment. Although the garden still had plants growing in it at the start of the new school year in 2007, the long hot summer holiday had taken their toll.



Ann suggested that by having it reticulated might solve the problem. A fundraising event was organised to raise money for reticulation so the garden would continue to flourish for each new school year. With discussion between Ann Evans and Slow Food Perth it was agreed that we would arrange an event to raise money for the reticulation as well as incorporating and highlighting the produce that the children were growing. So a pizza day was suggested.

The whole school became involved from headmaster down to pre-primary kids. Even the Education Ministry's district superintendent was invited to partake of a pizza lunch in the teacher's common room, followed by a tour of the flourishing garden.

Slow Food Perth convivium committee member Vincenzo Velletri, who was also a participating chef at Terra Madre in October 2006, volunteered his time and on 17 May he took his mobile wood fired pizza oven to the school.

Classes from pre primary to Grade 7 watched Vince make the pizzas, throw the pizzas and skillfully place and remove them from the oven. Each class took their turn in lining up to watch the procedure. Murmurs and silence, amazement and wonder from so many children; this was the best they had ever eaten, 'better than anything they had ever had even much better than Dominoes' (a local pizza takeaway place).

All the classes ate pizzas made with fresh ingredients for their lunch that day. Pesto had been made from the basil that the children had grown; this was drizzled over the finished pizzas.

Fresh basil was laid out next to the pesto and children were encouraged to smell the plant. Most children had never experienced this taste or the smell before and many refused to try but the excitement of those who tried and came back for more was worthwhile.

Many students were shown the art of throwing a pizza and the touch and smell of the uncooked dough excited many, especially the boys.

The children made drawings of the event which are now posted on Slow Food Perth's website at slowfoodperth.org.au/projects

Slow Food Perth annual meeting elects new committee for 2007-08



SLOW Food Perth members expressed their gratitude to grocer Zoe Barratt-Hill for her two-year leadership of the convivium when she stepped down from the role at the annual meeting in May 2007.

Zoe decided not to seek re-election. Her time as leader will be remembered for the work Zoe co-ordinated to secure funds which enabled 12 Western

Australian producers and a chef to attend *Terra Madre 2006: World Meeting of Food Communities* in Turin, Italy, last October.

Pauline Tresise has continued as co-leader and has been joined in this role by former Slow Food Perth events co-ordinator Jamie Kronborg. Trudy Parker was re-elected treasurer, Philippa Baws as secretary and Linda Papa as membership officer.

New public officers, joining Vincenzo Velletri and Christine Tresise, include Nat D'Ignazio and Trish Wood. Nichol de Saxe is newsletter editor.

Contact points

E info@slowfoodperth.org.au
T Pauline Tresise 08 9381 4519
T Jamie Kronborg 08 9293 1845

The accidental farmer: a short history of Spencers Brook Farm



By Annie Kavanagh

THE other night, with the most intense orange full moon rising over the hill behind us, we sat quietly watching as a tiny calf came into the world. We waited until she had taken her first wobbly steps and worked out where to find milk then left her to check on one of our sows.

Coco, a duroc pig, had taken advantage of the full moon and produced nine gorgeous piglets. Fumbling around their mother and over each other in their quest to find food, we saw they all look like tiny leopards their spots coming from their berkshire dad, Jack.

Every now and again moments like these remind me why I love owning a farm so much but it never ceases to amaze me that I own a farm at all.

I certainly never remember ever writing pig farmer down on my list of 'jobs I

really want to do when I grow up' but bizarrely that it what I have become. Farming definitely found me by accident, rather than any grand plan or desire on my part to become a farmer it just happened, as all great things in life often do.

Nothing was further from my thoughts when I chanced upon a rather beautiful, if somewhat run down, former estate in the Avon Valley five years ago. The agent blurb promised the perfect property to keep the odd horse or for those looking for a hobby farm, his description - littered with artistic license - didn't quite match reality.

Roselyn was once a grand estate of 1500 acres stretching over rolling fertile hills snuggled up to the old railway line which used to run from Perth to Spencers Brook. Our farm had been home to prize-winning cattle and sheep which won at the Royal Show year after year. Thomas Wilding, a former convict, had bought Mokine, a nearby farm in the mid 1880s he then proceeded to gift parcels of land to his children. Roselyn was given to Alice Wilding and her new husband Herbert Hancock. They lived in the Spencers Brook Tavern whilst their new house was being built.

Legend has it the first winner of the Melbourne Cup from WA was bred on our farm - a fact that we are never going to check out in case it is not true. We definitely had a racecourse in the front paddock, before the larger one at Northam was built. Race goers from Perth would alight from the steam trains and walk up the driveway to watch the races from our shearing shed which still stands today. Alice and her family bred champion draught horses too and reared other livestock to feed themselves and sell to market. The house was surrounded by six acres of orchard, vineyards and vegetable plots and servants lived out the back.

Sadly over time much of Roselyn's physical history has been lost. Buildings torn down; the horses retired and replaced by machinery; much of the land sold off for development in the village or to other farmers; the gardens and orchards left to die. When we bought the property it was called Brookside Park. We christened it Spencers Brook Farm not then knowing the history of the place. We inherited 200 acres of bare earth which had been intensively farmed for years.

Our original plan was very simple. Lease or share farm the land to a local farmer and just pop up at the weekends to host grand house parties whilst redecorating the house and restoring the gardens. Five years on the house still needs redecorating and the garden has been partially restored and un-restored by various mobs of cattle and sheep which have found their way in - I have yet to find a plant that these animals won't eat!



Coco the duroc and her piglets.
Photograph by Annie Kavanagh.

Somehow we have become farmers, converting the whole farm to organic over the past few years has been exhausting, frustrating yet ultimately rewarding. Along the way I have learnt how to raise pigs, sheep, cattle, geese, chickens and sow and harvest a crop. I can drive a tractor, navigate a paddock with a header and have stacked numerous bales of hay. I have been present at the birth of hundreds of piglets. Helped a maiden heifer deliver her calf which on landing in my arms prompted its mother to take off at full gallop with me in pursuit - someone forgot to tell her it was her offspring, not mine. We have planted more than 18,000 trees along a creek line and won an environmental award from the Department for our efforts. We have hand fed lambs which quickly adopted us as their new parents and drove us crazy with their devotion to us (believe me a pet sheep will not leave you alone); regularly took our pet pig to and from Perth whilst she was too small to be left on her own (There can't be many mothers who have been stopped for a booze bus at the bottom of Greenmount Hill and sat there silently praying to God Mr. Plod did not decide to search the car too (at the time I had two dogs, two kittens, one parrot, four kids and the pig in the back-try explaining that to the boys in blue.)

Our farm has almost come full circle and gone back to its roots of a mixed farm. We are concentrating on older

and rarer breeds of livestock like our small but growing herd of dexter cattle - a small black Irish breed noted for its milking and meat quality but also their docile natures. We have also started breeding long horned wilshire sheep which do not require shearing and thankfully rarely get fly strike either.

But it is our pigs we are most 'famous' for - these truly wondrous creatures who are nothing like they are supposed to be in the farming books. In some publications pigs are to be treated with the utmost caution as they are aggressive with each other and humans. After nearly five years of pig keeping we need to rewrite the book. Our pigs are all free range living in family groups, we can honestly say with hands on hearts we have never had an aggressive pig on the farm. My children have all sat in with farrowing sows as they deliver their piglets, the sows lying there quietly grunting and the piglets curled up asleep on my kids laps, far from the image many would portray of pigs.

It, however, does not surprise us that conventionally farmed pigs are aggressive. Much has been written about battery hens but personally I think battery pigs are far worse. More than 98 per cent of all pork in this country is produced from a factory system one where large numbers of pigs are confined indoors. Worse are the sow stalls, concrete and steel cages where the sows are unable to turn around and cannot physically touch their piglets and where they are kept for weeks at a time. The pig industry is slowly lifting its standards and will eventually outlaw these stalls as Europe has already. And pleasingly there are a growing number of free range piggeries.

We are one of only five organic farmers raising pigs in WA at present and are committed to making our pigs the happiest pigs around. We began with large white pigs which are the industry standard because they produce large numbers of piglets. Our farm record is Holly who had 18 in one go and all but one survived! But over time we have come to realize these pigs have been specifically bred for indoor intensive systems and are changing the whole herd over to berkshire pigs. These pigs are mainly black all over with white points on their noses, feet and tail. They cope with the outdoor life in their stride but have fewer piglets which is another reason they fell out of favour with conventional pork producers. White

pigs have also been selectively bred to grow quicker and that plus growth hormones and antibiotics which are routinely fed to intensively reared pigs means they are ready for market in 24 weeks.

Berkshires are the kings of pork and reputedly the only pigs the Emperor of Japan will eat! Their meat is said to be superior to all other pork. As well as free ranging in their paddocks our pigs they organic grain – more than 50 per cent of which has to be grown on our property – and live as natural a life as possible being allowed to do all the things pigs love to do. Consequently they take much longer to mature – over 12 months on average – a long slow process but a labour of love.

We have just sent our very first purebred berkshire down to one of Perth's best chefs who described it as 'sensational'. We may be small but we believe small is beautiful and intend to stay that way.

More information

Annie Kavanagh is providing a pig for Slow Food Perth's 8 July 2007 sausage-making and pork-curing workshop with Vincenzo Velletri at Swan View. See *next events* information on page one of this newsletter.

Slow Food Perth event / prevention is better than cure

By Trudy Parker

IN March 2007 Slow Food Perth hosted a group of members and friends to hear naturopath and nutritionist Val Allen share he knowledge and philosophy of 'wellness'.

It is generally accepted that prevention is better than cure for all kinds of reasons, not the least of which is cost. This is particularly so in the case of health, a fact that has been recognised in some societies – to the extent that the medical fraternity is paid when people are healthy and penalised if they become ill, as well as having to cure them.

Val Allen is one of the gurus of complementary health in Western Australia. She told us many of the principles that she and her colleagues use with diet and particular foods to keep people well, or to improve their wellness if they are functioning below optimum.

This involves the inclusion of foods which bring benefit as well as exclusion of foods which are detrimental to health and well-being. It is also the case that while there are some general rules that apply to all people, many of the choices and options are specific to different groups – such as the A, B and O blood groups, so inclusions and exclusions need to be made carefully and possibly in consultation with an expert.

The basis of all this is knowledge and awareness about the food we eat, exactly what is in it and where it comes from, all of which are closely allied to basic Slow Food principles.

Val is passionate about her work and its role in health promotion. To assist her colleagues and clients in feeding themselves well and with delicious food, she wrote a book which has recently been revised and re-printed, entitled *Very Wellness*. It explains many of the principles of eating for health and includes many recipes.

Val was kind enough to donate a copy of the book to Slow Food Perth. This is available for members to borrow before they decide to buy a copy.

In season / winter 2007



- apples
- asian vegetables
- beetroot
- butternut pumpkin
- capsicum red
- carrot
- cauliflower
- cucumber
- fennel
- grapefruit red
- kiwifruit
- leeks
- limes

- mandarins
- onions brown
- passionfruit
- pears nashi
- potatoes
- potatoes sweet
- rockmelon
- shallots
- swedes
- tomatoes

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