

## Slow season

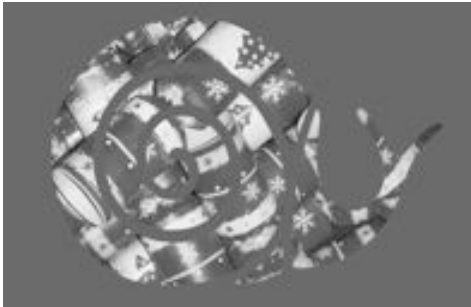


Image / Neil Hargreaves

Slow Food Perth wishes all convivium members, supporters and families a happily slow festive season 2008 and new year 2009.

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## Word picture



Image / waitrose.com

Pre-eminent twentieth century cook and writer Elizabeth David CBE [1913 – 1992]

*'Good food is always a trouble and its preparation should be regarded as a labour of love.'*

## Next events

Go to <http://slowfoodperth.org.au>

## What's new

Slow Food Australia's national website <http://slowfoodaustralia.com.au>

## A brimming bowl of 'small, slow food'

*Slow Food Perth convivium leader Pauline Tresise accompanied Western Australia's producer, chef and youth delegates to Terra Madre: world meeting of food communities, and Salone del Gusto – the concurrent world fair of artisan foods – in the Italian city of Turin in October.*

AMAZING, overpowering, immense, complex, brilliant, emotional, inspiring. Step into another world. Where to start? One is bowled over with the complexity of it all, hard to grasp and difficult to imagine the size of this biennial Salone del Gusto and this year combined with Terra Madre.

Every two years it never ceases to amaze: what a piece of brilliance and organisation. The gathering of so much of interest, so much of the world of food and farming – Slow Food Foundation for Biodiversity praesidia, film, lectures, workshops with the powerful voices of people such as India's Vandana Shiva, food workshops, seasonal information, children's educational and tasting areas, Cittaslow [Slow Cities], the Enoteca with wines from every corner of the world, the Italian regional food exhibitions, Italian national park organisations, lanes of olive oil, lanes of meat, lanes of cheese, sweet lanes, world food, local, seasonal food, all displayed in the market areas, all and more under the umbrella of Slow Food.

Also present this year were recycling firms showing unique seats made from rolled newspaper clamped together with metal bands to make stools, other companies with extraordinary lounge chairs created

from wine barrels and yet other purveyors of colourful shopping baskets made from recyclable cardboard.



Images / Pauline Trestise

Unless you saw someone resting on one of the newspaper stools *above* you were not so sure as to their purpose. The Saint Gobain glass company was also there with its strong message of glass preserving food's 'tastiness...because it is natural, safe, hygienic, elegant, reusable, recyclable, practical and unique'.

The gathering of all this under the Slow Food umbrella is inspiring; it is actually hard to visualise – perhaps five segments of a great umbrella. On entry, you are first confronted with the first food halls, three segments, each the size of football stadia, all lined with lanes and lanes of food producers. These three segmented halls lie side by side, linked only by an open entrance between each part. Then in the last hall there is a lined passage encompassed on both sides by a food market that leads us through and out into an open expanse where there in

front is the fourth segment of the umbrella: the Terra Madre and Presidia, the heart of it all.

It is here where all delegates from all corners of the globe gather; here lies the opportunity for the delegates to meet others, listen to speakers, communicate and network. It is here, too, that all the praesidia products are exhibited. This is, for me, one of the most fascinating segments of Slow Food's work – the saving of food products threatened with extinction.



One can talk to the farmers and producers and taste all their products: from the wonderfully-scented, sweet-tasting, late-harvest, yellow-coloured, red-striped *leonforte* peaches of Sicily *above* to the *bottarga* mullet-roe of the Mauritanian Imraguen nomadic fisherwomen; from the delicious *abjosh* raisin - a unique local variety of dried grape - from Afghanistan's Herat to the *formadi frant* cheese of Italy's Friuli Venezia Giulia, salvaged mountain cheese which was flawed and could not be aged and so sold into the market; from Madagascar's

*mananara* vanilla, where remoteness has helped to conserve its traditional style of production and has limited its sale only to local distributors to Spain's *Jiloca* saffron, said to be among the best in the world but threatened with substitution by low quality imitations.

In the Terra Madre and praesidia area an earth market is underway, where delegates from the developing world can bring their crafts, and we can talk and admire and be overwhelmed by our world becoming smaller. One is overcome by the unique opportunity to mingle, talk and meet people whose cultures are ancient and here we are sharing it all. The earth market means more to them than a farmers' market to us because for them a farmers' market is their daily commonly shared experience. It is how they exchange and buy their food; their earth market encompasses both their food and their craft. It is here where their culture is shared; where their stories are exchanged and where they proudly display a colourful array of traditional handicrafts, clothes, scarves, jewellery, shoes and artefacts *below*.



Retracing our steps back through the market lane – with many frequent stops to enjoy the flavours and smells of foods such as *freekeh*, a roasted green wheat, a speciality of many Arab countries that the Lebanese Farmers' Market stand was displaying, to truffled butter

along with its haunting smell that wafted in waves as the people flowed past the stand – we eventually find ourselves in the final smaller segment of the umbrella which is nestled close to, but separated from, the main areas. Here lies the food workshop area.



Halfway through the days spent at Salone del Gusto I sat and listened to one of the workshops, *Meeting with the makers* – Memory Workshops with Fabrizio Picci *above*, the founder of the famous Florentine restaurant Il Cibreo. I inwardly smiled as I listened to his story of food memories, the encouragement his parents showed for family meals, often dining out at restaurants. And his discovery in later life that being dropped at the restaurants was more a need of his parents having time alone while the children were comfortably and safely ensconced eating their favourite foods at local restaurants. When asked for a recipe to give to the audience – sudden excited movements, a rustle of bags all poised in readiness with pens and paper to record the details – he told us of how he knew of his mother's love: she would always take the butter out of the fridge an hour before he returned home from school, his bread was so beautifully prepared with the soft flavoursome

butter – that to him was the most powerful recipe, a loving act from his mother.

To arrive at Salone on the first day there are already small queues of people starting to appear well before the opening time of 11am, so a good idea is to buy your entrance ticket via the internet before arriving in Turin. One enters Salone del Gusto in the Lingotto Fiere complex from Via Nizza, a long straight street that runs for about four and half kilometres from the main central Porta Nuova train station to Lingotto, the former Fiat factory which now serves as a conference centre. It is easy to reach from the bus stop in front of the Porta Nuova railway station; one catches either one of the three trams or buses that travel in the Lingotto Fiere direction (numbers 1, 18 or 35). They stop just outside the Lingotto and the journey takes about 20 minutes. Tickets for buses can be bought at any tobacconist or newsagent. At the end of 2009 there will be an underground metro directly linking the centre of Turin to the Lingotto.

At the front of the central segment, inside the complex, not far after entering, is a circular information desk; here you can pick up information about the daily activities. There is also a large map with all the exhibitors listed on the reverse side. An informative booklet is also available that explains about all that can be done and seen during the five days of the event. As much as this map and information booklet is comprehensive, nothing can prepare you for the overwhelming amount of activities and things to see, taste, do and hear. The sensual overload will leave you excited and overwhelmed at the end of each day.

And what about time for seeing Turin? Well, that depends if you are into early rising and experiencing a quiet stroll around Turin while most of the city sleeps. It can all be done; the adrenalin will keep you moving,

along with the beauty of the historic part of Turin, the beautiful food shops, famous chocolatiers, piazzas on a grand and regal scale, arcaded streets, magnificent museums, pleasant helpful people and the original reason for your visit. All this will make October's visit to Turin for Slow Food's Salone del Gusto and Terra Madre an unforgettable experience

But be warned if venturing to this event. Do your research well, decide on what your main interests are and, even with five days, it is almost impossible to do it all.

The closing ceremony was a finale to beat all finales, a magical journey around the world of folk music and song, a presentation of divine magnificence, overpowering in its beauty and mesmerisingly captured by the haunting human spirit.

Thank you, Carlo Petrini *below*, for your powerful message and your warmth and passion in uniting so many of us. And thank you to all of you who worked so hard to bring this to us.



## Bellissimo! Vincenzo Velletri cooks for Terra Madre Australian delegation



AUSTRALIAN delegates at Terra Madre 2008 were hosted at a monastery on the outskirts of Turin. Each day a bus picked them up from the monastery, took them to Terra Madre and returned them early in the evening. No time for evening strolls or eating in the city. The evening meal would be shared together at the monastery. Their dedicated guide for the duration of their stay was Claudia, a local Piedmontese. In past years Australian delegates were housed at different venues and had the opportunity to mingle with others from different parts of the world. This year was the mingling was not so easy. So Western Australian chef delegate Vincenzo Velletri started planning.

As the time spent together neared its end Vincenzo wanted to arrange a meal for the delegates and Slow Food Australian members before the closing ceremony, using local food and cooking it along with the help of other chef delegates. Vincenzo approached guide Claudia and asked her if she could find a home or somewhere suitable for the feast. Claudia's father, who was representing the *riso della baraggia* DOP co-operative at Salone del Gusto, offered their stand, along with the use of their kitchen and utensils. Claudia's father even suggested that they might like to try some of their DOP *riso della baraggia* for preparing a risotto.



On Sunday lunchtime, the final day for most of the delegates, with risotto in mind, Vincenzo went to the local markets and spied fresh porcini and the idea gelled immediately. He also bought some *alpeggio* cheese from the Italian Alps, a natural blue, not injected with penicillin, which has a soft creamy taste. Sophie Zalokar, another Western Australian chef delegate, helped Vincenzo.

The largest saucepan possible, filled to the brim with the finished risotto, fed all those invited along with many passing Italians. It was a very special occasion as it gave us the opportunity to connect with some good

local food and wine before the final ceremony which was just moments away.

We appreciate and thank Vincenzo for his magnanimous gesture: the fresh porcini were exquisitely combined with the creamy texture of the risotto. Thank you also to Sophie and all who helped. It was certainly a highlight for many of us and a lasting memory of Terra Madre 2008.

## Of monks and swamps: a legacy

*DOP is an acronym for 'denominazione di origine protetta', or protected designation of origin, and all DOP products carry a symbol designed under European law to protect the names of regional foods. To qualify for DOP a product must comply with the European Union's standards in regards to the name and description of the production, the definition of the geographic area and the methods of preparation.*



Image / DOP Riso di Baraggia Biellese e Vercellese

THE Piedmont region's distinctive rice production is limited to a specific area in the Po river basin, where plains stretch between Cuneo and Ticino and expand across flat, green land rich in agricultural resources.

These plains are defined as ‘the great artificial marshes’. Water is present everywhere. Looking out from the towers of Vercelli, rice paddies extend as far as the eye can see. When the rice fields are completely covered in water the whole area becomes a huge lake.

In mediæval times Benedictine and Cistercian monks turned these large swamps to farming, creating rice paddies that took advantage of the swamps and artificial obstructions, or *barrages*, at the mouth of a tidal watercourse.

Rice cultivation adapted itself to the nature of the poor and infertile land of the Vercellese terrain and to the expanding of natural and artificial canals that were built over centuries.

*Riso della baraggia* has been recorded in documents since 1606 in the Salussola commune, one of the municipalities of the DOP. There are 28 municipalities that have DOP *riso della baraggia* status and this area covers 25,000 hectares. The varieties of rice grown are *arborio*, *baldo*, *baliella*, *carnaroli*, *s’andrea*, *loto* and *gladio*.

## More information

Find out more about *Protected Designation of Origin* at web food encyclopaedia <http://practicallyedible.com>

## Milk-on-tap: Italian lessons for Australian kids

AT Slow Food’s Salone del Gusto in the Italian city of Turin in 2008 a class of school children gathered around a refrigerated dispensing machine, illustrated with a large cow, drinking with gusto glasses of fresh milk.



This is a Coldiretti milk-on-tap machine, the brainchild of Italian dairy producers’ co-operative Coldiretti, Lucca chamber of commerce and the Castelnuovo and Galliciano communes.

Memories of farm visits to the Western Australian country dairying town of Harvey as a child, glasses of fresh milk for breakfast and lashings of cream on our fruit and cereals, made me try the milk direct from Coldiretti’s ‘cowshed’. Cool, so tasty and refreshing – what an experience.

This ‘milk-in-a-machine’ was introduced in October 2006 and now there are more than 250 throughout Italy in schools, offices, hospitals, city distribution points, on farms and in some supermarkets.

Some of the reasons that led to this development were to give an opportunity to all to taste fresh milk as soon as cows had been milked.

It is also to ensure that fresh milk is not wasted in the European Community’s quota system, where farmers are obliged to throw away excess milk, and to prevent milk from outside Italy being passed off as ‘made in Italy’.



Freshly expressed milk is produced from cows grazing non-genetically modified feed. The temperature of the machine keeps the milk at 0-4 degrees celsius.

It costs one euro per litre, or \$2.00, less than the supermarket price. Bring along your own glass bottle and fill it up. After 24 hours the milk remaining in the machine is used to make ricotta and other cheese. The milk keeps for two days in a refrigerator and for another two days if you boil it.

## More information

<http://www.coldiretti.it/Distributori%20latte%20Coldiretti.pdf>

[http://www.beppegrillo.it/eng/2006/01/milk\\_on\\_tap.html](http://www.beppegrillo.it/eng/2006/01/milk_on_tap.html)

## Golden oil: a taste of the olive's magic

*Slow Food Perth member Ian Crawford writes of his Mediterranean search to discover what makes olive oil so special.*



SEVERAL years ago I started what has become a fascinating journey discovering the wonders of olive oil.

My wife and I purchased some land in Nannup and decided the best way to utilise it was to grow something that was ecologically friendly, did not require a slaughtering process and would somehow manage to survive with a minimum of intrusive agricultural process. The only candidate which came close was olives and olive oil. Although the growth of our olive grove has required hard work and regular attention, the benefits have rewarded our toil handsomely.

Olive oil stretches back into antiquity like few other products. Back in 6000BC farmers in Asia Minor discovered that the wild olive shoots could be grafted, replanted and successfully domesticated. From this beginning history records how the olive has expanded to engulf all the countries bordering the Mediterranean including, interestingly, North Africa and Egypt.

It's almost certain that when the three wise men visited the Holy Land they carried with them cold pressed

extra virgin olive oil. In Hebrew there is an idiom for a 'good man' and it is 'pure olive oil'.

There are 800 million olive trees in the world and 90 per cent of them are found in the Mediterranean region. Spain has more olive trees than Italy, in spite of mafia-inspired Italian propaganda. The turnover worldwide of olive products is US\$10 billion and last year two million metric tonnes of olive oil was consumed.

Repeatedly through history we are told that moments and events of great significance are recorded by ceremonies that incorporate the use of olive oil or some part of the olive tree. It may take the form of anointing the central figure with olive oil or using the twig of an olive branch to symbolise a new beginning.

What is it then about olive oil which commands this deep respect – and yet it remains the staple of the Mediterranean diet?

Medically we know that this mono-unsaturated oil enhances the good HDL cholesterol and reduces the bad LDL cholesterol in our body. This is the type of basic fact that journals tell us about, but I felt sure there were other intrinsic factors which make this oil special.

To start the search my wife and I decided to visit Puglia – the heart of the olive growing region in Italy. We landed in Rome and spent three days soaking up the energy and vitality that make Rome such an extraordinary destination. Then we travelled by car south to Puglia, stopping in a little village called Orsara, which is high in the hills with the flat Puglian plain stretching below towards the Adriatic coastal cities of Bari and Brindisi, many miles to the east.

In Orsara we were the guests of Peppe Zullo, a wonderful Italian chef. After migrating and working in

America for many years, Peppe returned to his hometown of Orsara to invest his money in re-establishing this area of Puglia as a centre of excellence for the production and preparation of the natural food products of the region. First, he resurrected the old olive grove which had fallen into neglect and by careful pruning, discarding old trees too damaged to survive and planting new trees he enlarged and complemented the framework of the old grove. With much labour the grove has now grown enormously losing the old scars of neglect and becoming, once again, a productive contributor to his estate. In addition, Peppe has regenerated many of the long disappeared local species of native trees and bushes which had died out, in order to return the native vegetation to what it would originally have been. This has attracted many of the native creatures that previously inhabited the area to return.

Being a chef who insists on only using seasonal food grown from the surrounding region, Peppe then set about creating a eight-hectare kitchen garden in which to grow all the species of vegetables and herbs native to the area. In the field next door he is regenerating ancient fruit and berry trees no longer found in the area, all with the purpose of using the food produced in his cooking. Finally the ancient waterways which had been created centuries before have been re-dug and re-lined with new stonework and are now awaiting the winter rains to fill the natural storage areas on the property.

Peppe's mission has been to re-create the environment and the atmosphere that previously existed in the area. The olives were a special part of that plan as they stretched and surrounded his large property. He insisted on utilising all the available natural ingredients to produce an environment in which he lived and

worked harmoniously and reaped the benefits as the seasons delivered them to him.

His cooking is simple and delicious, providing taste sensations which change from the colour of the tomato to the simple combination of other seasonal vegetables and cheeses and he uses his olive oil to combine the whole into a mouth watering presentation. Here was a passionate man who truly lived what he believed.



Next we headed for Borgo San Marco which is close to the east coast in the heel of the boot of Italy. We travelled for several hours in a south-easterly direction and our constant companion was olive groves on either side as far as the eye could see. I came to the conclusion that where in Australia we have bush, in Puglia you have olive groves. Borgo San Marco is set in 90 hectares of ancient olive groves and the original historic fortified country manor has been transformed into a 15-suite luxury *masseria*.

The original fortifications were built in the fifteenth century to ward off the invading Saracens and were used by the Knights of Malta, by papal decree, to protect and secure this part of Puglia.

The sheer size and majesty of the olive grove was overwhelming. Some of the trees planted by the Greeks were 1000 years old and were still producing abundant crops of olives. It would take four people with outstretched arms to encircle the girth of one of these giants. To walk among these quiet historians was a humbling experience, because one realised they had actually witnessed time and are now in the present with us – if only they could speak of the past.

From our host, Alessandro Alamti, I learned of the ancient beginnings of the property which still contains the Greek ruins of buildings and implements used in working the grove to produce olive oil all those centuries ago. Once again the utilisation of the few natural resources of the region was explained by Alessandro and how he was gradually renovating these old structures to be used again. The careful pruning and training of trees, taking advantage of the gravitational movement of water and its storage and the need to live within the environment, which is sparse and dry somewhat like Australia, all combine to produce massive amounts of olive oil.

This is the great strength of olive oil – its international standing as a commodity to be traded across the world, to support vast families of people across a large number of countries, all with their own history, all with their own stories of the 'golden oil'. The process continues as it has for thousands of years, and here I was trying to unravel it. I realised I had only scraped its surface.

#### More information

Ian and Lauris Crawford own Laurian Olive Oil in Nannup. Their oil was recognised as the best boutique olive oil at the 2008 Perth Royal Show.

#### Rottnest honey all the buzz

At \$60 a kilogram, Western Australian honey producer Bees Neez Apiaries is marketing Western Australia's most expensive honey. Christina Ryan reports.



DAVID and Leilani Leyland, owners of Bees Neez Apiaries, first began production of the rare Rottnest Island honey late last year.

Only eighty 250gm jars of the rare honey were produced and have been sold only at Bees Neez Apiaries, in Beechina, and at Rottnest Island's General Store.

*Apis mellifera ligustica*, an Italian bee, is taken to Rottnest Island once a year and left to produce a honey free of any contamination. According to David, who is also the head of the beekeeper section at the Western Australian Farmers' Federation, the honey is perceived to be something special.

'Because there are no feral bees on Rottnest, we can get the sort of matings that we desire, the right characteristics,' David says. 'By taking the bees over to Rottnest, we are ensuring that we are producing a pure

type of honey free from contamination. This Rottnest Island honey in reality is not your typical Australian honey as the bees feed off a weed type of plant, giving the honey its sweet yet bitter taste.'

The process of deriving honey from its hive is normally undertaken using machinery, but the Rottnest Island honey is manually spun twice after it is extracted from the hives. This is known as the two-frame extractor process that David says aids in producing its delicate flavour.

Rottnest Island honey may see an increase in production in the future but David says that all depends on the honey's popularity.

'This year we are going to work with seven other bee keeper businesses to produce more of the Rottnest Island honey,' he says. 'If we can buy the honey off them we can produce a bit more but I'm not sure we will go that way yet, it all depends on the demand.'

It takes 125 bees one week to produce a single 250gm jar of Rottnest Island honey. The average bee produces two teaspoons of honey in its six-to-eight week lifespan.

The Western Australian Agriculture & Food Department began the process of taking bees from the mainland around 30 years ago. Daughter queen bees from the best were mated and assigned to drones at Rottnest Island to ensure quality production of Western Australian honey.

David describes the reason for breeding bees on Rottnest Island: 'In 1978, Western Australia's borders were closed for any bee imports or bee products. To make sure that we continued having good quality bees, they (the Agriculture Department) had to start breeding their own (bees). Obviously the department over at

Rottnest Island started breeding bees for the industry and that industry took over.'

Border closure resulted in Western Australia becoming the only state free of European foulbrood, a disease threatening to wipe out bees worldwide. Western Australia is also the only state that does not use any pesticides to extract bees from their hives. Today, 40 per cent of Western Australia's honey is exported.

#### More information

<http://www.beesneez.com.au>

### Reluctant gardeners out-googled by goddess Nigella



DAMN. *Nigella damascena* – not *sativa* the seed-spice plant, which is what we wanted – has flowered profusely in our kitchen garden. Gorgeous blue; cerulean, indeed, but it's not *sativa*, which yields the seeds for such exotica as the spice the Hindus call *kaloonji*.

Checked this out on the web last weekend by typing in 'nigella', and the opening page on Google gave me nothing but links to the lovingly-endowed English chef of

the same name, surname Lawson. Wonderful as that was, it took quite a few minutes to find a reference to the annual known as *N. damascena* and the spice called *sativa*.

That time of the year has come which brings plants to blowsiness; overgrown and, some might say, untidy. Our oakleaf lettuce has flowered prolifically, throwing up great stalks such that these look like dwarf Christmas trees. Leeks have thrust long prongs skyward, topped by heads of fluffy white florets on which sit elfin-like caps for a short while. Oregano has reached 60 centimetres tall and almost rivals the cornflowers that are hanging on between the roma tomatoes.

Into our plots have gone russian tarragon, caraway, pyrethrum daisy and dill. Dwarf beans yielded wonderful greens for christmas lunch and tomato yellow pear is racing ahead of its neighbours, the german heirloom sugar lump red tomato.

Summer also brings thornbills, silver-eyes and wrens in search of food, and the small softening tomatoes are perfect targets for their tiny beaks. But what is a kitchen garden if not for sharing?

We have now spent a total of \$210 on our vegetable-and-salad patch since April 2008, but we have bought not tomato, lettuce nor bean since then. And another bonus – the blue-banded native bee has just returned to pollinate the flower-heads.

– Paulls Valley  
December 2008

### Good news for western verge bandicoots

IT seems Perth's Cottesloe town council is about to overturn its proposed verge policy that would have

imposed a fee of up to \$600 on residents wanting to plant roadside kitchen gardens.

In December 2008 the council was to consider a policy change by which residents wanting verge vegetable gardens would have been forced to pay an inspection fee of \$100 and a \$500 bond. Slow Food Perth made a submission to the council and wrote to *The Post* newspaper about the proposed imposts.

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### Slow Food Perth website

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