



...and be merry

We're all potential TV chefs, so refine your skills at these popular events.

By RENEE BARNES

IF YOU'RE serving a chicken dish at your next dinner party, you probably know you should accompany it with a glass of crisp white wine. But did you know a creamy stout is the perfect partner for a rich chocolate dessert?

The Melbourne Food and Wine Festival, from March 4 to 14, is an opportunity to enjoy the city's many culinary delights, and is also jam-packed with educational activities that will give you the know-how to impress.

At the Beer and Cider House Rules event, chef Andrew Blake, beer writer Kirrily Waldhorn and micro-brewer Eric Walters (Grand Ridge Brewery) will pair eight beers and four ciders with 12 courses to leave you with a repertoire of matches for your next dinner date.

Blake, owner of Melbourne catering company Blake's Feast, says the event is the result of a growing trend in beer and cider appreciation. "I don't see any reason why people who enjoy beer, and increasingly now cider also, shouldn't be considering matching

it with fine food. I think people have traditionally only considered drinking beer that they like or know, and not what would work with their food — we are hoping to get people to think a little differently," he says.

Participants at the event will be given tasting notes for the beers and ciders, but Blake expects it will be "a conversation or discussion, really, on what people think of the tastes and flavours".

For those who prefer wine for their tippie, the Return to Terroir event will offer an opportunity to learn about biodynamic winemaking. Return to Terroir is a group of 176 biodynamic producers from Europe, Chile, California, South Africa and Australia who practise a form of organic farming that emphasises removing external inputs, believing it to be the best way to coax the most authentic and profound flavours from their precious terroir.

Beechworth winemaker Julian Castagna says participants will be able to develop an appreciation for the benefits of biodynamic

wine. "It is easy to manipulate the taste of wine by using yeast and additives, but when you make wine biodynamically you are trying to bring out the unique characteristics of the land on which the fruit is grown," he says.

Castagna will join Nicolas Joly, from historic Coulee de Serrant in the Loire Valley, Alsace's Olivier Humbrecht (Zind Humbrecht), Spaniards Telmo Rodriguez (Compania de Vinos Telmo Rodriguez) and Ricardo Palacios (Descendientes de J Palacios), and Victorian Ron Laughton (Jasper Hill, Heathcote) to introduce wines that most people would not ordinarily have an opportunity to taste.

"This is wine that comes into the country in very small quantities and only really for wine aficionados, so it really is an extraordinary opportunity," Castagna says.

Chef and author Jude Blereau is passionate about organic and whole foods and will share her expertise at the festival's edible garden event. "I really just want to show people that making delicious and simple meals with food in season is not only healthy, but also a cheaper and tasty option."

Blereau's cooking demonstration will take place at the festival's garden in City Square. She plans to pick produce grown in the garden and then use it in her recipes. The edible garden will also host vegetable growing and gardening demonstrations so visitors can begin to create their own sustainable kitchens.

"It's not about health food — it's about food that is nutritious but most importantly delicious," Blereau says. "It's a chance for people to be inspired to grow, prepare and even preserve their own food using the traditional ways."

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Left, sprayers work the vines at Julian Castegna's vineyards. Above, chef Andrew Blake



GET INTO IT

Beer and Cider House Rules

When: March 13, 10am-12.30pm
Where: Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
Cost: \$160

Return To Terroir

When: March 14, 12-3pm, and 4-7pm
Where: Zinc at Federation Square
Cost: \$65 per session.
Bookings: Online at melbournefoodandwinefestival.com.au or call Ticketmaster on 136 100.

Edible Garden

When: March 4- 13, 9am- 7pm
Where: City Square, Swanston Street, Melbourne
Cost: Free

OTHER EVENTS OF INTEREST

Moonlight Shines

Receive a lesson in oyster shucking, a guided oyster tasting, and enjoy refreshing beverages to match.
When: March 8-9, 6-8pm
Where: Cumulus Inc., 45 Flinders Lane, Melbourne
Cost: \$75
Bookings: 9650 1445

Tea Observations

Find out what makes a good brew with a tour of tea with matching food.
When: March 13, 2-5pm
Where: Old Melbourne Observatory, Eastern Transit Room, South Yarra
Cost: \$75
Bookings: 9821 0669, or online at: www.blakesfeast.com.au

Pizza-making

Learn how to make your own pizza base and topping that you can then enjoy with salad and a glass of wine.
When: March 9, 6.30-10pm
Where: Va Bene Pizzeria e pasta cucina, Shed 9, Central Pier, Docklands
Cost: \$185, includes lunch
Bookings: 8623 9690, or online at: vabenepizzeria.com, or email eat@vabenepizzeria.com



Herald Sun
Saturday 26/2/2011
Page: 113
Section: Confidential(HSM)
Region: Melbourne Circulation: 495,600
Type: Capital City Daily
Size: 88.04 sq.cms.
Frequency: MTWTFS-

Brief: CENPIER



Hair-raising

IT WAS like a beehive backstage at the Ozdare 2011 Collection Show at Peninsula Docklands as hairdressers buzzed around the 80 models.

Industry icons **Miguel Garcia**, **Kevin Murphy** and **Paul Wilson** revealed the latest in hair colours and cuts as the crowd watched the runway in awe, even giving a standing ovation at the end.

Blonde is definitely back with a vengeance, but it seems every colour of the rainbow is in when it comes to streaks.

It's so refreshing to see young people daring to be different with the hair.



MODELS AT THE 2011
OZDARE COLLECTION SHOW