



BITES

Strange bedfellows

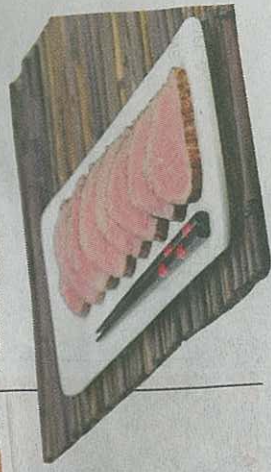
Fish and chocolate may seem unlikely bed partners, but we're not suggesting you pair them on your plate. Haighs Chocolates has just released a chocolate version of the Murray Cod, in a glittering gold wrapper. It's all for a good cause: the company has partnered with the not-for-profit Waterfind Environment Fund, to highlight the plight of endangered native fish and the Murray River. Part proceeds of the

The proof is in the marbling

Is this the ultimate 21st-century dinner party food? Let's count the ways: it's quick and easy to cook (seriously), locally sourced, oh-so-fashionable and makes a good conversation-starter — at least if your guests are food-mad types who like discussing the marble scores of red meat. A Sher wagyu black-label steak, from cattle raised in Ballan in central Victoria, has a marble score of 8-9, a level the family-owned company says is normally only available in Japan. Such is the meat's richness and flavour intensity that only small servings are necessary; a good thing considering its wicked price. While slightly less rich (and hence less expensive), the silver-label steak — marble score 6-7 — is still a very different beast from your standard scotch fillet. I recommend serving a small slice of both cuts, together.

NECIA WILDEN

Black label Sher wagyu \$135/kg; silver label \$115/kg. Stockists include Box Hill Central Meats; Len's Meats, Malvern Central; and J & L Meats, Prahran Market.



KERRIE O'BRIEN

The Murray Cod costs \$7.95 and is available at Haigh's Block Arcade, 282 Collins Street, city.

Home cooked and home-styled

Kevin Wheeler and Natalie Jefferson became well known for their breakfasts and brownies while at Replete Providence in Hawthorn. Now the talented pair has opened Our Kitchen Table a few suburbs away in East Malvern, a deliberately rustic and homely cafe with lots of timber and a cheerful, noisy vibe. Breakfasts (from ricotta hotcakes to the usual egg bits and bobs) and cafe-style lunches are the main focus, although they're also open for dinner — think rabbit stew or saffron risotto — twice a week. There's a well-considered and imaginative children's menu, too. Look out for the homemade range of homemade preserves, sauces, chutneys and jams.

DAVID SUTHERLAND

Our Kitchen Table, 134 Burke Road, East Malvern, 9886 0458.

DIARY

JULY 8-11

Bellini happy hour

Tough day at work? Head to either of Guy Grossi's two bars (the Cellar Bar at Grossi

JULY 11-13

Best on show in Milawa

The Milawa Gourmet Region of north-east Victoria shows its wines, gourmet produce and hospitality against a backdrop of

UNTIL JULY 31

Warm up with a bar hop

Visit five bars over four hours, two cocktails and tapas included. Check out the famous ice sculptures. \$35, Thursdays, 7 pm, departs

Editor's letter

Our cover story this week is timed to coincide with Bastille Day next Monday. As the French around the world celebrate the anniversary of the uprising of a modern nation, we pay homage to the Gallic old guard and new guns of our food arena and encourage you to liberate your inner bon vivant (page 4). For the gastronomic rebel in us, there's even a diary of special events

