

4 SHOWCASE

Botanical diversity for the win

Plums, tomatoes, seaweed and wattleseed...two Australian chefs introduce some of their country's finest produce to the city



JOANNA LOBO

In the storeroom at the Melbourne fine dine restaurant, Lûmé, is a vat full of a dark brown liquid. It doesn't have a strong aroma but its flavours are pronounced - a double umami hit from mushroom and miso, and a nuttiness of chestnuts. This liquid, a dressing, has been fermenting there for two years.

Last month, this dressing found its way to India where it was used at a masterclass conducted by chef and founder of the restaurant, Shaun Quade. There, it was paired with plum-size juicy and tart tomatoes from the Yarra Valley in a dish he called Tomatoes and Plums seasoned with Chestnut Miso. The dish, like the chef's masterclass, was meant to highlight Australian produce and it did a stellar job of representing just how much the country loves fresh food.

"There's so much good produce available. Everything comes straight from the farm or from the sea to the plate. It gives us chefs a lot of good stuff to experiment with. And people these days want to know where their food is coming from," says Quade. The chef, on his maiden visit to India, carried his own box of goodies to give Indians an idea of the variety of ingredients the country has

to offer. There were reddish-green tomatoes, the tart roe-like green finger lime, scampi roe in shades of blue, blood plums and seaweed. "Four hours before my flight, I was at the beach selecting the seaweed," says Quade, displaying little boxes filled to the brim with greens of different textures and shapes.

"The seaweed is a bit salty and tastes like arugula. It doesn't look too appealing, which is why they have names like old man's saltbush and dead man's finger. But, it makes for a good addition to some dishes," shares Quade.

Through the class, the chef spoke about the importance of using fresh food and eating seasonal, something he follows at the restaurant. "It's an exciting time to be a chef in Melbourne," he says. "People love eating out and have become more knowledgeable about their food. I will never be out of a job at this rate!"

It is not for nothing that Melbourne is considered the food epicentre of Australia.

Victoria becomes the food bowl, producing a quarter of Australia's food exports and home to over 50 farmers markets.

Over in the south west, Australia's capital Perth also is home to a thriving food scene. At Perth's Wildflower, a fine dining restaurant, execu-



From down under: (clockwise from left) Tomatoes and plums seasoned with chestnut Miso and mountain pepper; wildflower beetroot ash entree; chefs Shaun Quade; and Jed Gerrard •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT



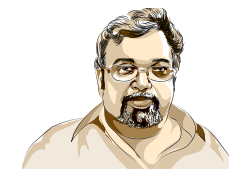
tive chef Jed Gerrard's cooking, too, focuses on ingredients native to that region. "Our food is contemporary but seeks inspiration from indigenous ingredients and the six seasons of the local Aboriginal tribe, the Nyoongar of south-western Australia," says Gerrard, who also visited India for the first time, last month, for a masterclass, and a dinner.

The formal five course meal, paired with wines (some Australian, chosen by All Things Nice) had many native ingredients, which Gerrard brought with him. There were tomatoes, finger lime, peppermint tree

leaf used in a dressing, salt bush, and Davidson plum. The star of the meal was wattleseed, that edible seed from the acacia plant and found in native Australian cooking. The chef used it in two ways, traditional - baked into bread, and experimental - as a cream to cut through the sweetness of the dessert.

Both Gerrard and Quade came with seasonal ingredients, proceeding to treat them differently in their dishes. But the focus was on respect for produce from the land. They were, in essence, showcasing Australia on a plate.

Sonic explorations into the unknown



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This is the story of one of my favourite jazz bossa nova tunes ever. More important, it's about how I discovered at least 25 versions of the same track in barely three hours. That's the power of the web.

The composition was 'Manha de Carnaval' (or 'Morning of Carnival'), composed by Brazilian genius Luiz Bonfá and written by Antonio Maria for the 1959 Portuguese film *Orfeu Negro* (*Black Orpheus*). I first heard it on a cassette of jazz saxophonist Stan Getz in 1991 and have regularly tripped on it thereafter.

What happened on Saturday night was incredible. For some unknown reason, the tune was spinning in my head. So I went online YouTube, heard it and proceeded to share it in a jazz group. Pure nostalgia.

Now, this was 11 p.m. and the journey had only begun. I realised saxophonist Dexter Gordon had done a version too, and checked it out. Equally beautiful.

In its original form, I had heard the jazz bossa nova version. But as I kept exploring, more magic was to follow, in a variety of genres. There was Frank Sinatra singing in his trademark evergreen style; Joan Baez doing a folk rendition; Luciano Pavarotti, Plácido Domingo and José Carreras giving it an operatic aria twist; Perry Como doing an English take; and José Feliciano leaving me in some melodic heaven.

The addiction kept growing. It went on to a multi-style guitar trio by John McLaughlin, Paco De Lucia and Al Di Meola, followed by a Bra-



On the road again: Jazz saxophonist Stan Getz at Copenhagen airport in 1958 •SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

lian-meets-classical guitar solo by Baden Powell. Dutch violinist André Rieu, Brazilian singer Astrud Gilberto, American flugelhorn player Chuck Mangione; and Singaporean pianist Jeremy Monteiro excelled in their respective interpretations.

Some two hours into my carnival voyage, I continued with my explorations. I discovered guitarists Susana Raya and Xuefei Yang. And after all this, was still a yearning for more. The best was yet to happen: A group called Momoama with Julia Samadhi on piano and vocals, Anton Presser on guitar, a singer who did the introduction and hand claps, a bassist, a per-

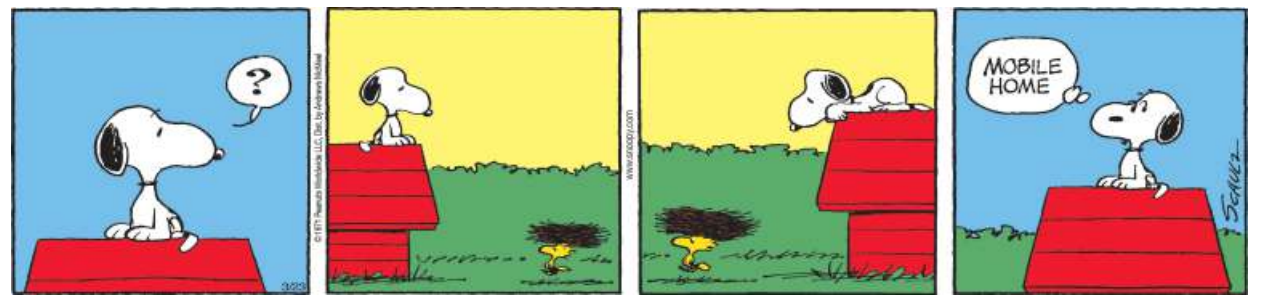
ussionist and a dancer whose footsteps provided the rhythm. Complete flamenco-jazz-bossa nova euphoria, all shot in a room with no audience at all.

That's what the Internet can do: endless exploration. This isn't the first time something like this happened to me. I have discovered various renditions of the Josef Korma-Jacques Prevert classic 'Autumn Leaves'; the George Gershwin-DuBose Heyward-Ira Gershwin standard 'Summertime'; and the Hoagy Carmichael-Ned Washington piece 'The Nearness Of You'. And this is only jazz. Imagine the possibilities of other genres.

POOCH CAFE



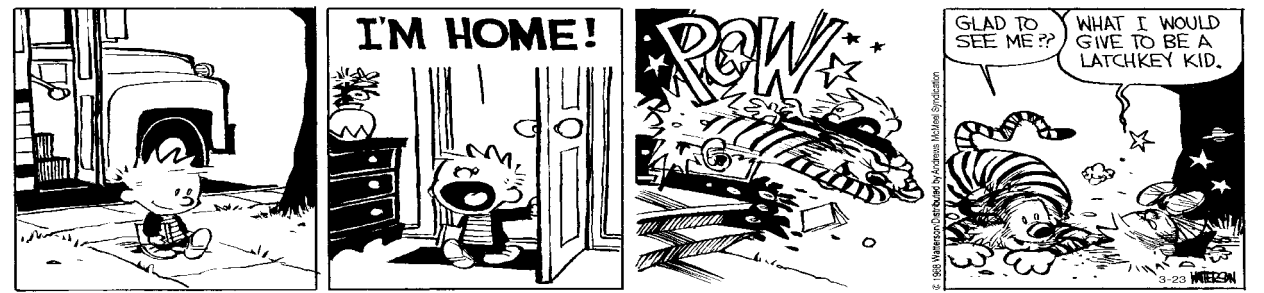
PEANUTS



HAGAR THE HORRIBLE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



TIGER



THE GUARDIAN QUICK CROSSWORD - 12716

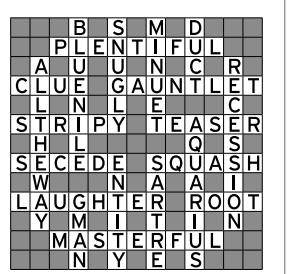
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- (informal) (5)
- 7 One committed to an uncompromising policy (9)
- 10 Fluctuate (4,3,2)
- 12 Long distance race (8)
- 15 Played with a fast beat (7)
- 16 13's grinding partner (6)
- 18 Have faith in (5)
- 20 White inner skin of an orange (4)
- 23 Owns (3)

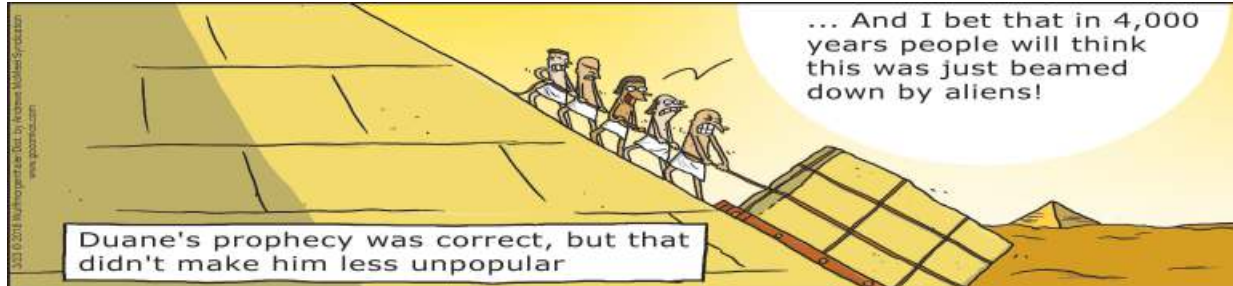
- Across
- 1 Cheapish white wine from the Rhine region (13)
- 8 Win through (7)
- 9 Escapade (5)
- 10 Feline mammals (4)
- 11 Treacherous divulgence (8)
- 13 16's grinding partner (6)
- 14 One after another (2,4)
- 17 Pangolin, for example (8)
- 19 Celebrity (4)
- 21 Money (slang) (5)
- 22 Achieve complete victory (7)
- 24 In suspense (2,11)
- Down
- 1 Chop (off) (3)
- 2 Mechanism for getting rid of empty shell cases after firing (7)
- 3 Defect (4)
- 4 Snoozing (6)
- 5 Pasta (8)
- 6 Cheeky - cosmetic

Solution will appear in Mumbai Local dated March 24, 2018.

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WUMO



PEARLS BEFORE SWINE

