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THE MONTHLY
FOOD MAGAZINE
FROM



Feast

**HOMEMADE
MOZZARELLA
AND SOURDOUGH**

with figs, spring greens
and a spiced balsamic
dressing... yum!



Why not
**MAKE
IT FROM
SCRATCH!**

The secrets
to making

Creamy mozzarella

Crispy bacon

Fizzy ginger beer

Spicy sriracha

Flavourful sourdough

Tasty haloumi

AND MORE!

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& MODERN, MEATY GREEK FROM THE GRILL
PACK A PICNIC FROM BRUNY ISLAND'S PRODUCERS


Help yourself to: Hawaiian pork ribs, Chinese lamb 'burgers', Dutch apple pies



~HOMEGROWN ~
**BRUNY
ISLAND**

THIS REMOTE OUTPOST OFF THE COAST OF TASMANIA HAS BECOME A VIBRANT GOURMET REGION. EDWINA DICK DISCOVERS THE DEDICATED FARMERS AND PRODUCERS WHO ARE CEMENTING THE ISLAND'S REPUTATION.

PHOTOGRAPHY DEREK SWALWELL



The island's old shacks have been replaced with modern versions that now attract weekend visitors. Opposite: Ross O'Meara encourages his son, Felix, to get up close and personal with the herd of heritage pigs he keeps with his wife, Emma.



A small, red hire-car is among the last to make its way up the ramp and load upon the *Mirambeena*, the Bruny Island car ferry, as it prepares for the 9.30am crossing.

"Where do you recommend on the island for lunch?" calls out the driver to the booth operator. "Lunch on Bruny? Anywhere... you just go for a drive, pick up some bits and stop wherever you like," is the affable reply. "So, a picnic?" she double-checks. "Nothing better," he confirms with a wave.

From the tranquil sailing village of Kettering, 30 kilometres south of Hobart, it's a short 15-minute trip across the D'Entrecasteaux Channel to Bruny Island. The ease of the journey, however, belies the unexpected sense on arrival of being far from the rest of the world. Despite its proximity to the "mainland" (less than two kilometres at some points), Bruny is long cherished by Tasmanians for offering this sense of solitude, as well as a profusely magnificent landscape.

At almost 100 kilometres long, the island consists of two, nearly separate, masses North Bruny and South Bruny, the latter featuring South Bruny National Park. These are joined by a spectacular and precariously narrow isthmus known as The Neck. Waters extending from the coast of south-eastern Tasmania form serene bays and inlets on one side of Bruny, while the imposing Southern Ocean laps at the shores and crashes into the cliffs on the other side.

"The magic of the island is partly in its position – under Tasmania, under Australia and looking out to the Southern Ocean and Antarctica. It really is at the edge of the world," says Jill Mure, who gazes upon Bruny every day from her home on the mainland, less than 1km away across the channel. English-born Jill has been a leading culinary figure in Tasmania since the 1970s, thanks to her family's much-acclaimed Hobart seafood business, Mures. She's also the author of the cookbook *Bruny Island: Food From The Edge Of The World*.

In Tasmania, fresh Bruny produce has been prized for generations, and now, thanks to the vision and perseverance of a band of local farmers and producers, the island is emerging as one of Australia's most vibrant new gourmet regions. Forming this group are born-

and-bred locals working symbiotically with newcomers who've found themselves irrevocably captivated by the place.

"We were visiting Tasmania in 2001, arrived on Bruny Island and were immediately entranced – we just wanted to be here permanently," says South Australian Nick Haddow as he recounts how he and his wife Leonie Struthers came to start the island's flagship specialty food business. The European-trained chef and cheesemaker has since established the Bruny Island Cheese Co, now renowned throughout the nation for its superb organic products, including Australia's only raw-milk cheese, Nick's much-adored C2.

"Look, pasteurisation is a great thing when it's needed, but when you have healthy animals eating healthy grass, you're going to get good cheeses," explains Nick. "We have an amazing team here, and where you make a cheese mind-blowingly beautiful is in the maturing room. That's where the dark art takes place.

"You couldn't have a conversation with that one," Nick continues, as he points to a 30-day old "young 'un" cheese. "But you certainly could with this aged fellow," he adds, referring to a disc of 'Tom', made in the tradition of hard French and Swiss Tomme cheeses.

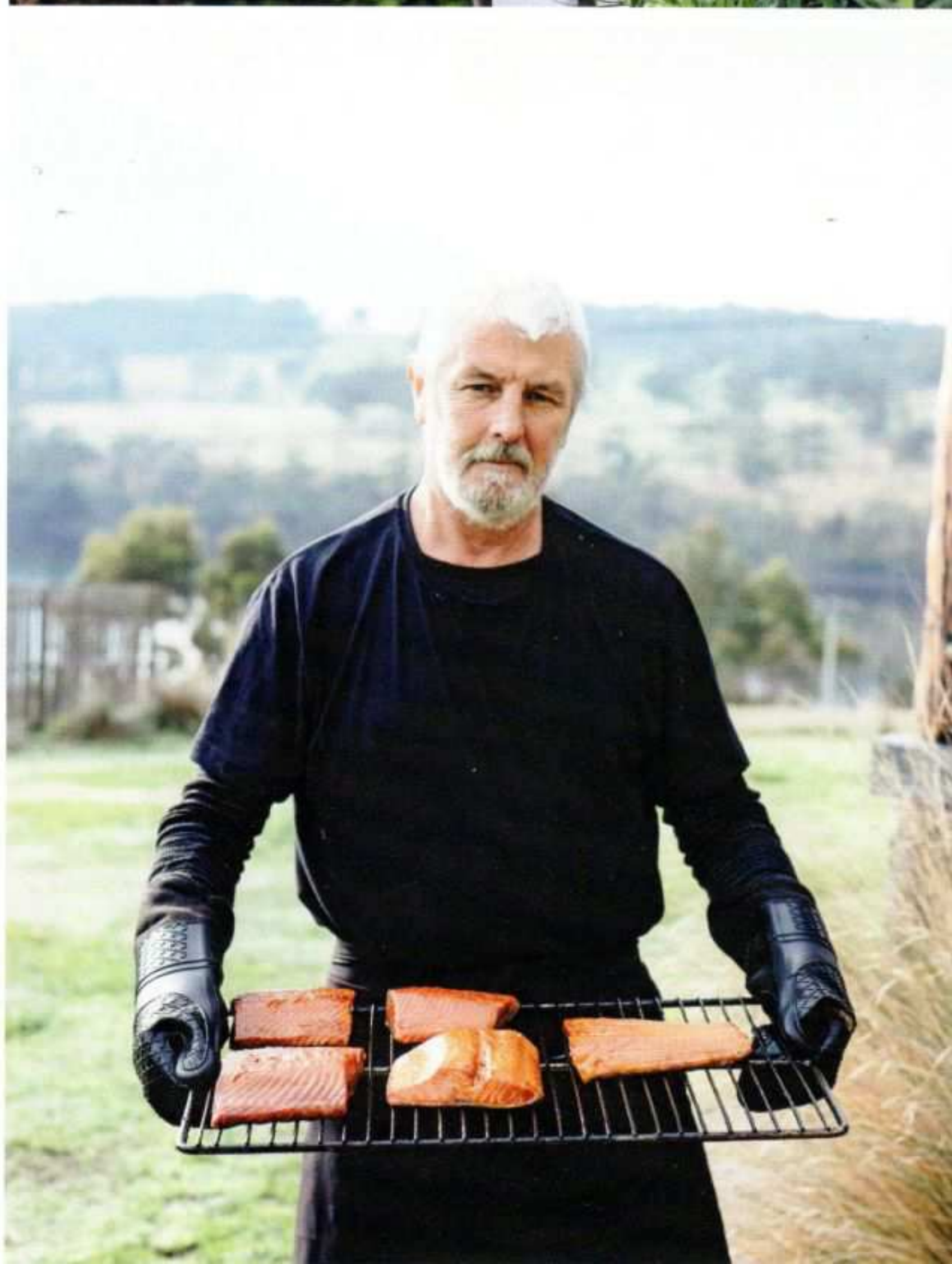
Nick and Leonie's crew also bakes fresh bread, makes and serves wood-fired pizza and sells a raft of local produce, including olives. "The manzanillo are fantastic," exclaims Nick. "Owen and Diane Carrington-Smith, our neighbours, grow them."

At the Bruny Island Cheese Co, lunch is served inside and on the deck, "but we also lend out cheese knives for the day – it's our own little public service," laughs Nick, referring to the Bruny Island picnic ritual. "They always get dropped in the letterbox on the way back."

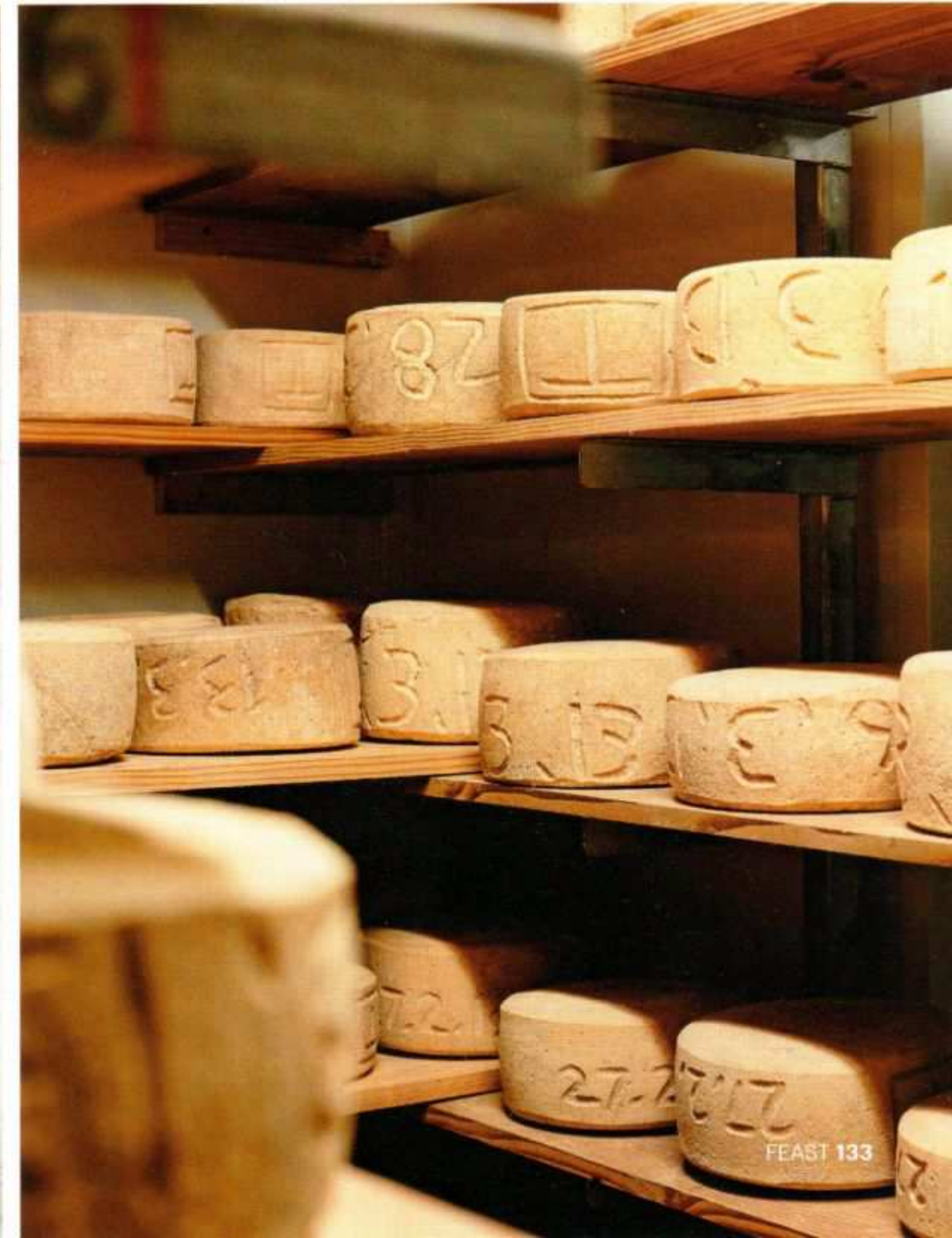
After tasting the company's cheese in Perth more than five years ago, chef Ross O'Meara was so impressed that he and his wife, Emma, embarked on a cross-state food pilgrimage from their home in Western Australia. "I was intrigued by this gorgeous cheese and just blown away that it was Australian. We travelled down to Bruny to check it out more closely and meet the maker, but we loved the place so much, we ended up moving here, too," says Ross, who appears regularly »



The near-separate masses of North and South Bruny Island are joined by a spectacular and precariously narrow isthmus known as The Neck.



Seasonal soup at Hotel Bruny. Clockwise from right: Ella Bennett, daughter of oyster farmers Joe and Nicole; the maturing room at Bruny Cheese Island Co; Hotel Bruny's Dave Gunton; Tony McLaine from Bruny Island Smokehouse; crystal clear reflections in tranquil waterways; staff at the Bruny Island Cheese Co; Jill Mure's cookbook celebrates the island's food.





Joe Bennett farms Pacific Oysters in Great Bay with his wife, Nicole. Above: Courts Island is visible from Cape Bruny Lighthouse. Right: The Alonnah General Store. Opposite: Ross and Emma O'Meara now own a thriving butchery operation. A fresh haul of oysters.





with Nick on the SBS television show *Gourmet Farmer*, about fellow Tasmanian resident and food critic-turned-food grower Matthew Evans. “I took on a job as cheesemaker with Nick and, after a while, I started my rare meat business, Bruny Island Food.” Inspired by previous stints working alongside expert charcutiers in London, the south of France and Perth, Ross started running a small herd of heritage pigs (Berkshire, Wessex Saddleback and Tamworth), as well as rare lamb and goat breeds on his property.

Ross’s meat cuts and charcuterie products, including sausages, terrines and rillettes, were an immediate success and he proceeded to launch his now-thriving farming and butchery operation. Ross sells his products most Sundays at the Farm Gate Market in Hobart. “The breeds I’m farming are great, but I’ve also always fed them on Bruny-grown grain from Murrayfield Station, which certainly adds a particular richness to their quality,” he says.

No matter how succulent Ross’s meat is or how crisp the pork crackling, one person who’s not tempted to grab a bite is Nick’s vegetarian wife, Leonie. “However, oysters are considered non-sentient beings and that’s where my wife, Emma, draws the line – which is lucky, living on Bruny,” Ross laughs. “And it also means that when Joe and Nicole come over for dinner, it’s on the menu!”

Ross is referring to Joe and Nicole Bennett, the entrepreneurial oyster farmers from the cheekily titled Bruny operation Get Shucked Oysters. Their farm, set on the pure waters of Great Bay, cultivates Pacific oysters, which were first introduced to Tasmania in the 1940s. Nicole is from a generations-old island family, but Joe’s family is a blow-in – the Bennetts moved here from the mainland about 30 years ago, when he was a small boy. The couple serves oysters from a quaint little caravan, a mainstay since the business opened and a favourite

stop for picnickers, but it’s too small to keep up with demand and will soon be retired with the opening of a new, purpose-built oyster bar.

A more recent blow-in is Raven Vass, owner of the Bruny Island Smokehouse, located just minutes from the ferry terminal at Roberts Point. “I was living on the outskirts of Hobart and, from my first visit, my whole week would be spent thinking about getting back to Bruny,” muses the New Zealander, who has lived here for seven years now. At the smokehouse, Raven operates a licensed bistro and a cellar-door-style shop selling meat and seafood such as salmon, trout, quail and duck, smoked by Tony McLaine, an islander and former butcher. “It’s the smoked wallaby with house-made relish that’s the true revelation for lots of visitors,” says Raven. “We source it from another local, Richard Clarke, who specialises in the supply of native meats.”



Bruny Island was named after the French admiral Bruni D’Entrecasteaux, but its Aboriginal name is Lunawanna-Alonnah. Truganini, the woman thought to have been the last full-blood Tasmanian Aboriginal, was born on the island in approximately 1812, a time when there was a natural bounty of shellfish, meat and bush food. By the early 19th century, the island was occupied by Europeans as a whaling hub, and later industries included apple growing and sawmilling. As each industry collapsed, so too did the island’s permanent population, which now sits at around 620. “It was mainly shacks here...” reminisces one long-time local. “And although we don’t want it to go too crazy, it feels good for the island to be making its own way again, and to be able to share all of this,” he adds, gesturing to the white sands of Adventure Bay. With the food on Bruny making a name for itself, it makes sense that the incredible beaches will be next.



A shack on the water at Alonnah. Right: Nick Haddow of Bruny Island Cheese Co.



~The hit list~

STAY 43 DEGREES

The stylish, self-contained, two-bedroom apartments have decks overlooking the spectacular Adventure Bay. Studios are also available. Opposite Main Jetty, it's handy for Bruny Island Cruises. **948 Adventure Bay Rd, (03) 6293 1018, 43degrees.com.au.**

EXPLORERS COTTAGES

Each of these family-style, self-contained cottages at Lunawanna on South Bruny sleeps four and features a cosy wood heater. **20 Lighthouse Rd, Lunawanna, (03) 6293 1271, brunyisland.com/accommodation.**

EAT BRUNY ISLAND CHEESE CO

At the cellar door, enjoy a cheese platter, superb coffee, or wood-fired pizza and sourdough.

Renowned for its cheeses made from cow, goat and buffalo milk, the Cheese Co also ships Australia-wide. **1807 Main Rd, Great Bay, (03) 6260 6353, brunyislandcheese.com.**

BRUNY ISLAND SMOKEHOUSE & WINE BAR

Enjoy the outlook from this rustic venue or take home smoked D'Entrecasteaux Channel salmon, Bruny Island wallaby, leatherwood honey, duck and more. **360 Lennon Rd, (03) 6260 6344, brunyislandsmokehouse.com.au.**

GET SHUCKED OYSTERS

Roll up to the Get Shucked van at the farm and grab a box of freshly shucked oysters cultivated in some of the world's cleanest waters. **1650 Bruny Island Main Rd, Great Bay, 0428 606 250, getshucked.com.au.**

HOTEL BRUNY

David and Rachel Gunton's unassuming-looking pub serves fantastic counter meals made from almost exclusively local produce (even the chicken parma is topped with Bruny Island cheese). **3959 Main Rd, Alonnah, (03) 6293 1148, hotelbruny.com.**

BRUNY ISLAND PREMIUM WINES

Visit Australia's southernmost vineyard for a tasting or a meal, and pick up a few bottles along with some of Ross O'Meara's superb charcuterie. **Wayaree Estate, 4391 Main Rd, Lunawanna, (03) 6293 1088, brunyislandwine.com.**

BRUNY ISLAND BERRY FARM

This berry farm grows eight varieties of strawberries alone, as well as raspberries, blackberries

and blueberries, and offers a pick-your-own experience and cafe. Open Sept–April. **550 Adventure Bay Rd, (03) 6293 1055, brunyislandberryfarm.com.au.**

DO BRUNY ISLAND CRUISES

Get up close to seals, dolphins, migrating whales, seabirds and birds of prey, as well as incredible natural cliff formations. **(03) 6293 1465, brunycrusies.com.au.**

TOUR BRUNY ISLAND LONG WEEKEND

A three-day guided food, wine and walking tour of the island, with accommodation in deluxe tents. Runs Nov–April. **brunyislandlongweekend.com.au.** *The writer travelled with the assistance of Tourism Tasmania, tourismtasmania.com.au.* 📍