

Tackling the big 'S' word at Taste



Sustainability is a big word.

Many people struggle to get their heads around what it actually means and yet plenty try to claim fame to it – some more successfully than others.

That's where 'Sustainable Table' comes in – a not-for-profit organisation devoted to restoring a natural environment and ensuring food security, which publishes a book using its namesake to celebrate chefs, producers, farmers and others who are genuinely addressing their eco-footprint.

At this year's Taste of Melbourne event at the iconic Albert Park – Sustainable Table grouped some of these passionate food producers, which it showcases in its book, to demonstrate how easy it can be to tackle the big 'S' word in the food sector.

For Kylie Himmerman of Verde Provedores, who hand-makes dips using fresh, seasonal ingredients from organic farms near her home in the Daylesford region – it's about treading as lightly as she can on the earth.

"We make our dips according to the slow food philosophy and ensure low food miles by sourcing our ingredients from local farms"

She says the result is a quality product, which tastes better and meets a deep need, as a former chef, to try and only use the best produce she can and in doing so, do the best thing for the consumer and the environment.

Her dips are certainly anything but conventional, including combinations such as wild fennel, white bean and feta; cucumber, borage flowers and yoghurt; organic carrot, mint and chilli, and roasted cauliflower, parsley and parmesan – to name just a few.

Information

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Yarra Valley Caviar, a boutique aquaculture farm which produces caviar from Atlantic Salmon, which live in ponds fed by fresh water from the Rubicon River, say the way they rear their fish means there's no need to pump antibiotics and hormones into them, or impact on the river ways.

“We keep it simple, low density of stock in each pond, considered feeding and we only hand-milk them under a completely natural anaesthetic and then return them to their ponds” says National Business Development Manager Nick Gorman.

“All the water which comes into the farm goes back to the river the same way it came in, passing through two settlement ponds, which prevent any fish food waste from re-entering the river.”

Naomi Ingleton who owns and operates The Butter Factory in Myrtleford, says it's important to her that her children know where their food comes from.

“We buy cream from local Victorian dairies we know, and they are all grass fed cows. The cream is tested for any antibiotics and not accepted if there are traces – it hasn't happened yet.”

The butter production takes place in a converted space at the back of the building that once housed an art gallery – and is a family affair, with her mother (an executive chef) relocating to take over the kitchen.

While she wouldn't give anyway any secrets on how to make her highly sought after butter – she says by knowing where everything comes from ensures it's the best it can possibly be, and with a string of renowned chefs using her products – the proof is in the pudding – quite literally.

For more on tackling the big 'S' word see: <http://www.sustainabletable.org.au>

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