

Auckland

“WE’RE QUITE SPOILT with snapper in Auckland, it’s a luxury fish,” Masu restaurant executive chef Darren Johnson says. It’s definitely the most plentiful fish for local anglers; head out into the placid Waitemata and drop a line, invariably you’ll reel in a beautiful pink and silver snapper.

Without going out to get it yourself one of the best places to

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT Airborne Honey from Canterbury is paired with ginger in a loaf and served with manuka honey panna cotta and a clover honey snap; heading to the

Marlborough mussel farms; Masu restaurant executive chef Darren Johnson in action; chef Matt Boutery cooking by the Goulter River; porae fillets prepared with a fennel

and spanner crab salad and smoked kowiniwini potato at Auckland’s Harbourside Ocean Bar Grill; cooking at the base of Aoraki/Mt Cook.

source fresh snapper in the region is Leigh Fisheries based in the coastal community of Leigh, just north of Auckland.

“It’s an incredible place and product,” Darren says. “I take a lot of my sashimi chefs up there to see the quality and appreciate their passion for fresh seafood.”

At Leigh Fisheries their fishermen use predominantly long-lines to catch their fish, rather than nets, which always carry the risk of wasteful ‘by-catch’. They also use the Japanese iki-jime method, driving a spike into the brain of the fish, killing it instantly, and humanely.

Rex Dryland of Leigh Fisheries says you can tell the difference in the fillet when the fish is killed with the iki-jime method, with the flesh more transparent and tastier. The process prevents the fish from flapping itself to death, which releases sour-tasting lactic acid into its flesh. Darren uses the fillets in his recipe for



Leigh long-line snapper with jalapeno & ginger dressing on page XX.

Harbourside head chef Tu Fearn likes to work with the lesser known porae. The largest Maori-owned fisheries in New Zealand, Aotearoa Fisheries, catches them on long line in the Hauraki Gulf and lands them near the restaurant in Auckland's Viaduct Basin. Tu says they're a great eating fish and a close relative of the tarakihi - you can tell them apart by their big lips.

He serves the fillets with a fennel and spanner crab salad with smoked kowiniwini potato and pomegranate dressing. Porae are a fast-growing fish and make a great alternative to the more common snapper, kingfish and john dory. When buying the whole fish, Tu says to check the gills are a nice bright red, that the eyes are clear and prominent rather than cloudy and sunken, and the flesh should be nice and firm.

TAKING IT GLOBAL

A new TV series explores the regional cuisine of New Zealand and celebrates innovative businesses exporting their produce around the world. Taste picks a few favourites for a closer look



Nelson

At the 320 hectare Puketea Farm in Wakefield, John Levy farms some of the best grass-fed lamb in the country. It's finished on the mineral-rich perennial grazing herb tonic plantain before being processed by the farmer-owned Alliance group, which exports lamb under the Pure South banner to over 65 countries. Nelson chef and owner of Urban Oyster Bar and Eatery, serves the Pure South lamb loin char-grilled on the barbecue with a simple marinade of rosemary, lemon thyme and oil then serves it with roasted vegetables and a tzatziki dressing of plain yoghurt, diced onion, diced cucumber, lemon juice, lemon zest, ginger zest, oil and salt.

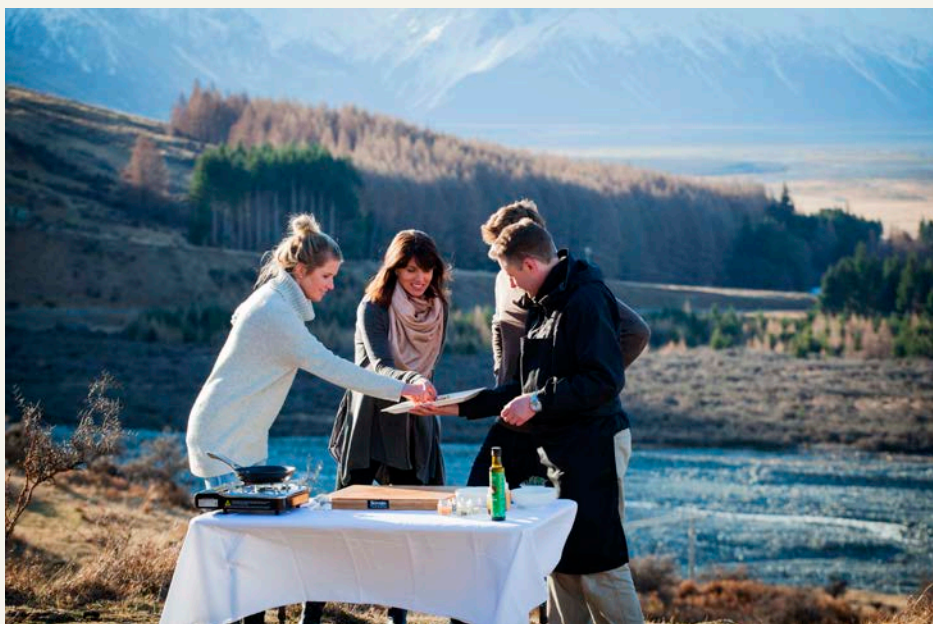
Nelson is one of the large fruit producers of New Zealand due to its long sunshine hours. Maree and Glen Holland of Tasman Bay Berries on the Waimea Plain take full advantage with 38 hectares dedicated to growing strawberries, boysenberries, black and red raspberries, cherries and blueberries. You can get the kids along and hand-pick when in season, order online, or pop into their farm shop and also pick up a real fruit ice cream or smoothie made with the freshest berries imaginable. Tasman Bay also supply Nelson frozen berry supplier and exporter Sujon. The company was started by Kiwis John and Sue Gibb (Su-Jon) who have been in the berry game for over 30 years. They send their frozen berries, berry powders and fruit concentrates to Asia, Australia and the Pacific, as well as for the domestic market.

The height of the tree matches the width of the row at Vailima Orchard, just outside Nelson. It's a simple technique to ensure all the apples on their trees get to work on their sun tan. Third generation orchardists Richard and Susan Hoddy have three properties stretching across the Waimea Plains and have extensive programs trialling interesting new varieties. Their most popular is the Eve eating apple, a firm white fleshed fruit with a delicate and refreshing flavour. Matt's Eton mess with berries & caramelised apples (recipe over the page) is a simple dessert to prepare and a decadent to enjoy the fruit bowl of Nelson.

Queenstown

Producing quality beef in the tough climatic conditions of the New Zealand South Island high country takes hardy farmers and cattle. On Braemar Station, next to Lake Pukaki, Hamish McKenzie runs cross-breed sheep, Angus cattle and red deer on 27,000 hectares. Their Meadowslea Angus bulls are selectively bred to thrive in the hash hill country environment and the beef that comes from the station is sold under the AngusPure label. Fine marbling and great flavour are the hallmarks of Angus beef and their ultra-premium product called AngusPure Special Reserve is the cream off the top.

At the luxury resort Blanket Bay, overlooking



Lake Wakatipu, head chef Corey Hume is passionate about showcasing local ingredients to an international audience and the reserve Angus goes into dishes like his sous-vide AngusPure Special Reserve tenderloin with braised AngusPure oxtail raviolo and Jerusalem artichoke purée and truffle Jerusalem artichoke chips.

The tenderloin is vac-packed with some Whitestone smoked butter and cooked at 52°C to infuse the buttery flavour. The dish is an example of adding nose-to-tail ingredients into a five-star dinner item with braised beef cheek pieces serve in a thick jus and oxtail filling in the ravioli.

As well as flavouring the tenderloin, Whitestone smoked butter is used to finish garnishes of baby leek, baby turnips, kale and baby beetroot. The butter comes from nearby Whitestone in Oamaru on the East Coast. The city is famous for its Victorian architecture made with Oamaru white limestone and the company name pays homage to the town's history while helping put it on the foodie map.

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT

Tasting chef Corey Hume's AngusPure beef carpaccio; all aborad at the Havelock Marina; Marlborough's mussel farms; chef Bradley Hornby with a green-lipped mussel; sous vide AngusPure tenderloin at Queenstown's Blanket Bay.



The deep waters and strong tidal currents are ideal for grit-free growing conditions



Marlborough

HAVELOCK, at the top of Pelorus Sound is the capital of New Zealand's green-lipped mussel industry. The deep waters and strong tidal currents are ideal for grit-free growing conditions. The mussel is a New Zealand native and a major aquaculture species. They're damn good eating and there is huge interest overseas. Local company Omega Seafood are a major ocean-to-table producer of mussels and export cooked, packaged green-lipped mussels overseas, pioneering a method to vac-pack and cook their seafood to the highest safety and hygiene standards. Owners Chris and Trish Redwood have been involved in the mussel farming industry for over 30 years, their mussels are grown on lines suspended beneath ocean buoys; they are seeded onto ropes as baby mussels or 'spat' and take 18-24 months to grow to full size. Whip out the beard and serve simply with a tasty dressing made of white miso, finely chopped shallots and chives, minced ginger, a touch of soy, and a squeeze of

lemon and lime juice before emulsifying in oil and finishing with a pinch of curry powder.

What's good for mussels also works wonders for our salmon farming industry. Over half of New Zealand's farmed king salmon is grown in the Marlborough Sounds and around 80 per cent of the world's king salmon comes from this country. Overseas they tend to farm Atlantic salmon but the king salmon we grow here is oilier with a soft texture and it's craking in healthy omega-3 fatty acids. The sheltered waterways allow major producers like Regal to farm world-class salmon. Local chef Bradley Hornby of the prestigious restaurant Arbour likes to give the king salmon an aromatic smoky flavour. He pan-fries it in oil, then creates a shallow bath with a decent-sized knob of smoked butter, some roughly chopped garlic and aromatic herbs like oregano, rosemary and thyme. After basting it constantly in the herb butter while it cooks he says it's important to rest the cooked fillet so the meat relaxes, making it be soft and nice to eat.



Canterbury

ONE OF THE STARS of New Zealand cuisine is undoubtedly our venison. One of New Zealand's first deer stations, Mt Hutt Station, started in 1978 when brothers Keith and Doug Hood bought the run down property with a mind to swap the sheep for deer. They purchased 35 deer to get started, but then decided to buy a helicopter and capture their own from the wild. Their now domesticated herd is selectively bred to improve body size, temperament and velvet genetics. On the lower slopes of Mt Hutt the deer live on diet of grass with a bit of grain in winter and spring. Doug and his family founded Mountain River in 1994 to combine his venison along with some neighboring farms into one a processing and marketing partnership, to supply the ever-growing export market.

When it comes to cooking venison the usual rules apply; you want it dry so the meat doesn't steam before caramelising when you are searing it off. For a cut like shortloin, acclaimed chef of Annandale Retreat, Paul Jobin, takes care to dry it off in a tea towel before cooking to get a nice sear. For a plate of venison

with a Kiwi-meets-South American vibe, he paints the meat with a mixture of oil and honey while it is grilling over charcoal. He rests and slices the venison and serves it on flatbread spread with avocado. For earthy, savoury notes he mixes sour cream and Marmite to make a sauce and tops the dish with pickled cabbage, celery leaves, and a dash of Tabasco chipotle sauce.

English traditions are celebrated at Peter Timbs Meats in central Christchurch. The classic blend of pig's blood, fat, onion, seasoning and cereal that makes up the infamous blood sausage has been growing in popularity in New Zealand for years and has moved beyond the big breakfast into restaurant menus. Peter Timbs' version involves lean lamb, pork cheeks, diced bacon ends, breadcrumbs, barley, their secret blend of herbs and spices, fresh eggs, caramelised onions and, of course, pig's blood. If you're looking for a way to incorporate more blood into your diet, the sausage pairs particularly well with pork belly and apple purée. To make a blood sausage crumb to garnish, you can fry off some slices and bake at 60°C for 1½ hours then crumble it up. Serve the lot with a julienne of apple mixed with a touch of horseradish.

PHOTOGRAPHS SUPPLIED

Leigh long-line snapper with jalapeño & ginger dressing

SERVES 6 RECIPE BY Darren Johnson GLUTEN FREE

- 1 green chilli, deseeded and finely chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, finely chopped
- 150ml teriyaki sauce*
- 40ml lemon juice, plus extra for finishing
- 6 x 180-190g fillets snapper

DRESSING

- 200g pickled jalapenos
- 50g peeled and sliced ginger
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 Tbsp soy sauce*
- 120ml rice wine vinegar
- 150ml peanut oil

GARNISH

- 100g carrot
- 100g daikon
- 50g snow peas
- 100g celery
- 1 Tbsp Olivado Extra Virgin Peanut Oil
- 1 Tbsp lemon juice
- 1 bunch coriander

- 1 Place chilli and garlic in a bowl and add the teriyaki sauce and lemon juice. Place fish fillets in marinade and leave for 30 minutes before cooking.
- 2 Drain jalapenos and put them into a blender with the ginger. Add the lemon juice, soy sauce and the rice wine vinegar.
- 3 Blend on high speed until you have a smooth consistency then slowly drizzle in the oil until you have an emulsified dressing.
- 4 Peel all the vegetables and cut them into thin julienne about the width of a matchstick, but twice as long.
- 5 Using an old jar shake together the peanut oil and lemon juice with a pinch of salt to form a simple dressing.
- 6 Mix all the vegetables together in a bowl but don't dress until you are about to serve. Pick and wash the coriander and also add to the salad last minute.
- 7 If you have them, use long metal skewers to skewer fish

and cook over a charcoal barbecue, or pan fry or oven bake until cooked through. Test the fish is cooked by inserting a skewer into the thickest part, if it slides in with no resistance than it is ready to serve.

- 8 Squeeze a splash of lemon juice over the fish then place on your serving dish. Shake the jalapeno dressing and spoon it over. Dress the salad and mix in the coriander then arrange on top of the snapper to finish the dish.

Wine match: Villa Maria Verdillo

Eton mess with berries & caramelised apples

SERVES 2-3 RECIPE BY Matt Bouterey GLUTEN FREE

MERINGUES

- 4 large organic egg whites, at room temperature
- 115g caster sugar
- 115g icing sugar
- Zest 1 lemon
- 1 Tbsp Sujon Blackcurrant Powder (optional)

CARAMELISED APPLES

- 150g sugar
- 100ml water
- 3 Heartland Eves apples, peeled and quartered

TO ASSEMBLE

- 1½ cups frozen Sujon Frozen Boysenberries, thawed
- 1 cup whipping cream (or use ½ cup plain Greek yoghurt and ½ cup cream)

- 1 Preheat the oven to fan 100°C. Line 2 baking sheets with baking paper.
- 2 Tip egg whites into a large clean metal or ceramic mixing bowl. Beat on medium speed with hand-held beaters until the mixture stands up in stiff peaks when the blades are lifted.
- 3 Turn speed up and start to add sugar 1 dessert spoonful at a time. Continue beating for 3-4 seconds between each addition (it's important to add the sugar slowly at this stage as it helps prevent the meringue from weeping later). When



- ready, the mixture should be thick and glossy.
- 4 Sift one-third of the icing sugar over the mixture, then gently fold it in with a big metal spoon or rubber spatula. Continue to sift and fold in the remaining icing sugar one-third at a time (don't over-mix).
 - 5 Place dessert spoon-sized dollops of meringue on baking trays and bake for 1½ hours until the meringues sound crisp when tapped underneath.
 - 6 Turn oven off and leave meringues to cool for at least 1 hour, but preferably overnight. They will keep in an airtight container for up to 2 weeks, or frozen for a month.
 - 7 For the roasted apples, combine sugar and water in a medium saucepan and bring to a simmer over medium heat, stirring occasionally until sugar dissolves. Continue to simmer, swirling the saucepan but not

- stirring, until mixture thickens and becomes a dark golden colour.
- 8 Line a baking tray with non-stick baking paper and add the apples. Pour over the caramel, mix to coat apples and roast for 1 hour. Give the apples a stir while cooking to re-coat in the caramel.
 - 9 To assemble Eton mess, whip the cream in a large bowl until soft ribbon stage. Roughly crumble in 4 of the meringues (you will need chunks for texture).
 - 10 Chop up a few of the caramelised apple pieces and add to the cream along with the berries and a drizzle of caramel from the baking tray. Fold mixture together gently and serve.

Wine match: Aronui 2014 Riesling

* Check label if eating gluten free

New Zealand on a Plate screens on TV One on Saturday 1pm until October 1. ●