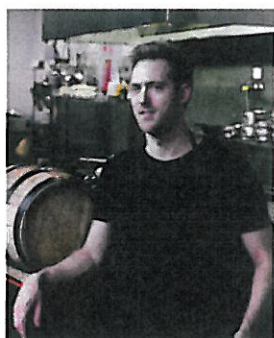
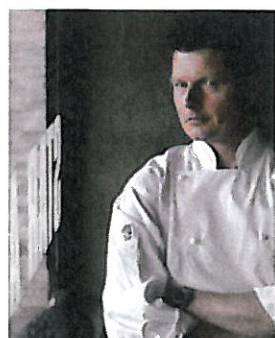
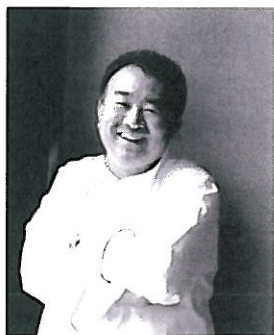




TOP CHEFS' TRAVEL TIPS

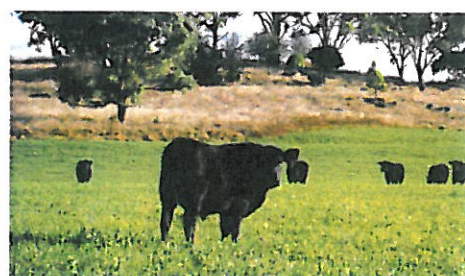
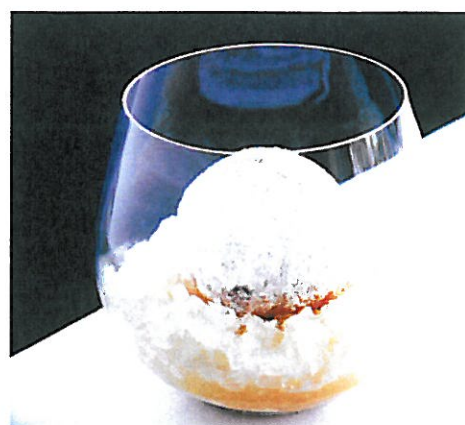
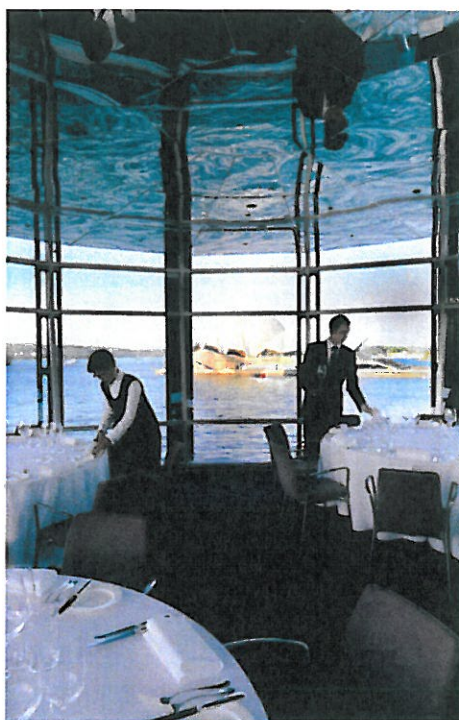
It will come as no surprise that Australia's best chefs love fresh, regional produce. They cook with it every day, and they don't mind travelling to find just the right ingredient. Here, 15 of our country's most acclaimed chefs reveal their favourite regional restaurants and gourmet getaways.

Interviews by Elisabeth Knowles





PETER GILMORE
QUAY RESTAURANT



Its location is magic – tucked in next to the Harbour Bridge, looking across Circular Quay to the Opera House – but somehow the drama of the dishes served at Quay manages to upstage the view. We defy any reader not to giggle when they crack open the famed “snow egg” dessert. Quay was the only Australian restaurant to make it onto this year’s San Pellegrino World’s 50 Best Restaurants list (it came in at 26, up one position from last year, and also won The Acqua Panna Best Restaurant in Australasia award). When we spoke to Peter he was just about to head off to Hamilton Island to conduct a master class for the Great Barrier Feast series at qualia.

MY FAVOURITE FOOD REGION...

I travel around Australia a bit with my family, but not as much as I’d like to. We recently went to Tasmania, which was fantastic. We started off in Launceston, hired a car and spent a week travelling to Hobart and the Huon Valley. It was in the middle of summer so all the beautiful stone fruit and cherries were being sold by the side of the road. There’s such beautiful produce there.

I stopped at a couple of places – there’s a great little apple museum that had more than 300 varieties. I also visited a couple of producers – there’s a lady who grows a lot of Tasmanian native plants so I visited her nursery, and I went to see Matthew Evans’ farm in the Huon Valley, which was great.

MY FAVOURITE REGIONAL RESTAURANT...

While I was in Tassie I went and saw my friend Hugh Whitehouse, who is currently head chef at Saffire Freycinet. I didn’t stay there but we

had a tour and a meal, and it was fantastic. He’s doing a great job down there, using great regional produce. It’s certainly one of my favourite regional restaurants. He’s trying to champion Tasmanian produce as much as he can. He had some beautiful Tasmanian ocean trout and fantastic greenlip abalone on the menu, and did a terrific Tasmanian lobster dish with wasabi butter. Hugh’s approach to food is all about the produce. He cooks really honestly, from the heart. It’s not “techno-emotional cuisine”, or whatever they call it – molecular gastronomy. He’s not into trickery with food, it’s pretty straightforward but really good flavours and great textures.

REGIONAL PRODUCE I LOVE COOKING WITH...

I try to use a lot of regional produce at Quay. We have farmers up in the Blue Mountains, Richard and Nina Kalina from Berridale Farm, who we’ve work very closely with over the past five or six years. They grow a lot of organic speciality vegetables and heirloom stuff that I source the seeds for. That’s pretty much as regional as it gets in Sydney. Each season I buy at least eight or nine varieties of vegetables from Richard, which is great.

I source from speciality suppliers all around Australia. Our Suffolk lambs are from South Australia – Richard Gunner’s the farmer (trading as Feast! Fine Foods). I buy lots of milk-fed lambs from him. We use Berkshire pigs from the Byron Bay area, and my beef comes from the Tamworth region – its Rangers Valley beef. They stock Black Angus and Wagyu cross (Holstein or Angus). All

our seafood is sourced through Sydney Seafood Markets. We use Western Australian marron.

I’d say that 95% of my produce would be from Australia and we obviously seek out the best of what’s available.

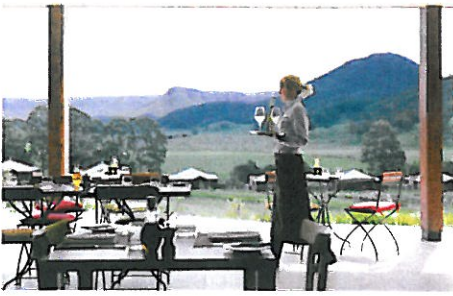
At the moment on the menu we’re using some native lilly pillies from South Australia. We also use native sea parsley or sea celery, which also comes from South Australia. It’s a native herb that tastes somewhere between parsley and celery, hence the two names. We can use it raw but we blanch it as part of a dish that features pig belly, abalone and pearl meat. The pig belly comes from the Byron area, the abalone comes from Tasmania, the pearl meat comes from the Northern Territory, the mushrooms come from Bowral in NSW and the turnips come from the Blue Mountains, so it’s a true national dish!

A lady on Kangaroo Island sends me samphire, which is fantastic, and another lady in South Australia sends me green almonds in the post when they’re in season. I source things from far and wide.

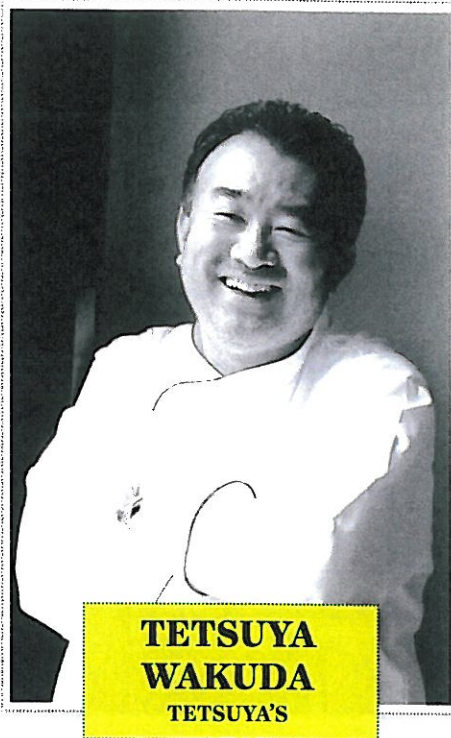
MY FAVOURITE AUSTRALIAN HOLIDAY DESTINATION...

I stayed at Wolgan Valley Resort and Spa recently and that was a real highlight. I loved it. It’s an amazing property in a unique valley. We did a nature-spotting 4WD tour and saw three albino wallabies, which are incredibly rare. Apparently they’re hard to find as there are only four on the property, but we got lucky. It was brilliant.

It was a beautiful, relaxing weekend. The staff were really welcoming, helpful and really enthusiastic about the resort. If you were an



FROM LEFT: Peter Gilmore, Quay, Snow egg, Rangers Valley, Wolgan Valley (l), Saffire Freycinet, Tetsuya and his ocean trout.



TETSUYA WAKUDA
TETSUYA'S



overseas visitor you'd get a really quintessential Aussie bush experience. And there's some great history – Charles Darwin stayed in the restored 1800s shack on the property.

The resort accommodation has really beautiful interiors and each villa has its own indoor-outdoor pool. The food was good – it wasn't complicated but it used good produce and was really well cooked. It's not cheap, but everything's included, such as wine with dinner and activities, so it's great for a couple who just want to get away and not worry about anything.

QUAY RESTAURANT // Overseas Passenger Terminal, The Rocks, Sydney; (02) 9251 5600; www.quay.com.au

PETER'S PICKS
BERRIDALE FARM Not open to the public.
FEAST! FINE FOODS Richard Gunner's Fine Meats has five retail outlets in South Australia, trading as Feast! You'll find suppliers, an online store and excellent recipe suggestions at feastfinefoods.com.au.
HUON VALLEY APPLE AND HERITAGE MUSEUM 2064 Huon Hwy, Gorve; www.applemuseum.huonvalley.biz
RANGERS VALLEY CATTLE STATION Located in Glenn Innes, NSW. For a list of stockists go to www.rvalley.com.au
SAFFIRE FREYCINET Coles Bay Rd, Freycinet, Tasmania; 1800 725 547; www.saffire-freycinet.com.au
WOLGAN VALLEY RESORT AND SPA 2600 Wolgan Rd, Wolgan Valley, NSW; (02) 6350 1800; www.wolganvalley.com

This may be a big call, but it's true: Tetsuya is Sydney's most-loved chef. This affable food artist came to Sydney in 1982 at the age of 22 with limited English, and began working as a kitchen hand at Fishwives in Surry Hills, before moving on to Kinselas to become its sushi chef. His creative style and combination of French and Japanese culinary techniques have made his degustation dinners the stuff of legend – as is his confit of ocean trout with konbu, apple, fennel and witlof. A member of distinguished international restaurant and hotel collection Relais & Chateaux, Tetsuya is also a major ambassador for regional cookery, and although he resides in NSW he has a special affinity with Tasmania.

MY FAVOURITE FOOD REGION...
 My fondness for Tasmania is no secret, and it is here that I find so many places, and so much regional produce, that attract and inspire me. I visit Tasmania often, and so am lucky to have the opportunity to discover and experience what this little island has to offer when it comes to food.

MY FAVOURITE REGIONAL RESTAURANTS...
 In Hobart, I would highly recommend a visit to Garagistes. While I might be a little biased, as Luke Burgess worked with me at Tetsuya's right back in the Rozelle days (the original location of Tetsuya's restaurant), the restaurant delivers an exceptional dining experience, combining the obvious talents of the staff with the best of local produce and a unique site. Me Wah in Sandy Bay is another dining destination for me when I visit, and is an absolute credit to Stephen Tso and his

staff. For a taste of authentic, home-style Italian cooking and atmosphere, there is no better place than Ristorante Da Angelo at Battery Point.

I usually stay at the Henry Jones Art Hotel when I visit Hobart. For me, it feels like home. I'm never disappointed when I eat at Henry's. Andre Kropp heads up a wonderful restaurant, and I have had the privilege of working with him on a number of occasions for charity functions in Hobart.

When I visit Launceston, I am always impressed by Stillwater and Black Cow. I have heard many good reviews of Saffire Freycinet at Coles Bay, and I am hoping to stay there soon.

REGIONAL PRODUCE I LOVE COOKING WITH...
 While I travel frequently and am always interested in local food and produce around the world, Tasmania remains my ultimate food region. Australia as a whole has so much to offer; we are so lucky here to have access to the produce that we do. But Tasmania holds a special place for me, starting from the great friends I made there who have helped me discover what the island has to offer. Even after so many visits, my friends and colleagues find new and interesting places to visit, produce to try, people to meet.

Tasmania's world-class and often unique produce is renowned. Leatherwood honey, for example, comes only from Tasmania. How exciting to be able to use a honey unique to our country, from a World Heritage rainforest, and with such a beautiful, distinctive flavour! I have sourced honey from R. Stephens and the