

bounty hunters

There's much to be said for a country life and these chefs from around regional Victoria are proof of the pudding. Matt Preston finds out what's putting a glint in their eyes – and what they're planning for their spring menus

PORTRAIT **Mark Roper** FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY **George Seper** FOOD STYLING **Sophia Young**
STYLING **Kristine Duran-Thiessen** WINE SUGGESTIONS **Greg Duncan Powell**



FROM LEFT Pietro Porcu, Ryan Sessions, Gary Cooper, Michael Ryan, Barry Davis and Annie Smithers

SALAD PAPER MAP (CUSTOM-MADE INTO PLATE), PAPER COUTURE: SMALL WHITE HANDMADE SQUARE DISHES, VICKI GRIMA; WHITE TRANSLUCENT PORCELAIN DINNER PLATE, KRIS COAD; PLEATED 'LOTUS' DUPIONE SILK IN BEIGE, TESSUTI FABRICS; STONeware SIDE PLATE IN LIGHT GREEN, VALERIE RESTARICK AT NORTH CARLTON CERAMICS; NEPALESE BRASS FORK (PART OF A 3-PIECE SET), TIBET GALLERY



Scallop, whiting and asparagus salad (recipe p 124)



Confit baby artichokes with mozzarella, polenta crumbs and tomato butter

MICHAEL RYAN Provenance Restaurant

Chef Michael Ryan declares spring his second favourite season: "Autumn is the most famous season up here, but I don't like it; there are too many 'leafies,'" he says, taking a playful swipe at the tourists who flood north east Victoria to watch the leaves turn brown. "I love winter."

It's the sort of cheeky thing you'd expect him to say now he's moved on from his Range restaurant in Myrtleford and those Alpine Valleys, where leafies bring a vital influx of tourism at an otherwise quiet time of year. The goldfields town of Beechworth, home to the 1856 bank building that houses his new restaurant with rooms, is a more salubrious location, thanks in part to the year-round tourism bustle.

Michael says he consoles himself in spring with the prospect of new-season lamb from Rutherglen and goat from around Nug Nug. There's also the chance of the first asparagus in the region for four years, after previous crops suffered drought and bushfires. Michael is partial to an artichoke stew around this time, too.

Here, he confits the artichokes instead and serves them with buffalo mozzarella and a dusting of crumbs made with hazelnuts from nearby Mt Buffalo.

86 Ford St, Beechworth, (03) 5728 1786.

CONFIT BABY ARTICHOKES WITH MOZZARELLA, POLENTA CRUMBS AND TOMATO BUTTER SERVES 4

160ml (⅔ cup) extra virgin olive oil
350ml vegetable oil
2 lemons, 1 sliced, 1 halved, plus grated zest of ½ lemon
2 bay leaves
1 teaspoon black peppercorns
12 baby artichokes
75g (½ cup) plain flour
85g (½ cup) stone-ground* polenta
150g (1 cup) roasted, peeled Mt Buffalo hazelnuts*
2 tablespoons ground almonds
80g butter, softened
4 balls buffalo mozzarella or fior di latte* (cow's-milk mozzarella)
Flaked parmesan, to serve

TOMATO BUTTER
120g butter, chopped
1 tablespoon olive oil
1 onion, finely chopped
1 sprig of thyme
1 clove garlic
150ml dry white wine
400g can Italian chopped tomatoes

Preheat oven to 130°C. For confit artichokes, combine oils, lemon slices, bay leaves, peppercorns and 1 teaspoon sea salt in a casserole. Warm to 80°C, using a thermometer to check, or until the oil begins to shimmer.

Snap off the tough outer leaves of the artichokes until you reach the pale inner leaves, then trim stems and 3cm from tops of artichokes. Cut in half, rub with lemon halves, then place in warm oil mixture so that artichokes are completely submerged; if not, add a little more of each oil. Cover surface with a round of baking paper, then a lid, and bake for 1 hour or until artichokes are tender but still hold their shape. Cool in the oil.

Increase oven to 150°C. Meanwhile, for polenta crumbs, process flour, polenta, hazelnuts, ground almonds, lemon zest and 1 teaspoon sea salt in a food processor until hazelnuts are finely ground. Transfer to a bowl, add butter and, using your fingertips, rub in until mixture resembles crumbs. Place on a baking paper-lined oven tray and bake for 40 minutes, then reduce oven to 80°C and bake for a further 40 minutes or until crumbs are lightly coloured and dry. Cool.

For tomato butter, heat 20g butter and oil in a pan over low heat. Add onion, thyme and ½ teaspoon sea salt, and cook for 5 minutes or until onion is soft. Add garlic, cook for 1 minute, then add wine and simmer until reduced by half. Add tomatoes and 430ml (1¾ cups) water and simmer for 30 minutes or until mixture is reduced by two-thirds.

Purée sauce in a food processor, then transfer to a small pan over medium heat. Once warm, whisk in remaining butter, piece by piece, until emulsified.

To serve, cut each mozzarella ball into 4 slices and divide among plates. Drain artichokes on paper towel, then place 6 halves on each plate. Drizzle tomato butter around mozzarella, then scatter with crumbs and parmesan.

* Fior di latte and stone-ground polenta are available from delicatessens. Stone-ground polenta has more flavour and a coarse texture. Mt Buffalo hazelnuts are available from The Essential Ingredient. See Stockists, last pages.

Wine suggestion 2008 Crittenden Estate Los Hermanos Albariño

ARTICHOKES: PAPER MAP (CUSTOM-MADE INTO SALT AND PEPPER SHAKERS), AS BEFORE; IRON CLAY FLAT ROUND DISH AND CHOCOLATE GLAZED PORCELAIN DISH; BOTH KRIS COAD; ALL HAND MADE SIDE PLATES; HELEN STEPHENS GALLERY AND ALL HAND MADE; BRASS CUTLERY; AS BEFORE; RAW SILK WEAVE IN 'TAUPE'; TESSUTI FABRICS LAMB 'MACCHIATO SKIN' COTTON VOILE FABRIC; 'AS BEFORE'; PAPER MAP (CUSTOM-MADE INTO SMALL BOWL), AS BEFORE; GREEN GLAZED PORCELAIN PLATE AND CHOCOLATE GLAZED PORCELAIN JUG; PARTIERRE; 'BESS' WINE GOBLET AND 'BRIBE INTERNATIONAL' TUMBLER; BOTH THE BAY TREE



Baharat-spiced lamb with warm mint, broad bean and pea salad, and tzatziki



Chicken en cocotte with cider tarragon jus and spring vegetables

CHICKEN: SMOKE WINE GLASSES: SHOP 46 BRETT WIGNALL AT SYDNEY ANTIQUE CENTRE; 'RAW' RAW SILK, AS BEFORE; WOODEN LID (PLATE NOT PICTURED), HUB FURNITURE; LE CREUSET CAST-IRON BRAISER IN CHESTNUT, GENEVIEVE LETHU; STERLING SILVER AND REDWOOD PEPPER GRINDER; MICHAEL GREENE ANTIQUES; CHOCOLATE BROWN STONEWARE MIXING BOWL, LITTLE WHITE DISH; TRANSLUCENT PORCELAIN SIDE PLATES, KRIS COAD

RYAN SESSIONS Merrijig Inn

Yes, there might be a ghost in his 160-year-old pub, once the haunt of whalers and sealers, but almost as spooky is the fact that, since taking over, chef Ryan has begun scouring the waters at Port Fairy for prey – albeit somewhat smaller.

"Come spring, Portland Bay bugs start coming in, the crayfish season begins," he says, "and coastal herbs like samphire, sea parsley and sea rocket start growing."

Influenced by the likes of René Redzepi, of Noma in Copenhagen, and Ben Shewry, of Melbourne's Attica, Ryan is increasingly on the hunt for edible maritime flora.

"I want to use more of these true local ingredients," he explains. "Lots grow wild here – seaweed, sea lettuce and Neptune's Necklace, which pops in your mouth like salmon roe, but tastes fresh rather than salty when it bursts."

It isn't just the shoreline where Ryan finds his produce. He's also a big fan of the lamb from butchers Quinlan & Co in Koroit, located between Warrnambool and Port Fairy. "I started exploring Middle Eastern and Mediterranean cuisines about six years ago," says Ryan. "This is one of the first lamb dishes I cooked."

1 Campbell St, Port Fairy, (03) 5568 2324.

BAHARAT-SPICED LAMB WITH WARM MINT, BROAD BEAN AND PEA SALAD, AND TZATZIKI SERVES 4

- 1½ teaspoons black peppercorns
- 1½ teaspoons cumin seeds
- 1 teaspoon coriander seeds
- 2 teaspoons paprika
- 1 teaspoon each ground cinnamon and ground nutmeg
- ¼ teaspoon each ground cloves and ground cardamom
- 2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 4 x 200g spring lamb backstraps

TZATZIKI

- 1 continental cucumber, peeled, seeded, coarsely grated
- 420g (1½ cups) Greek-style yoghurt
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 2 tablespoons finely chopped mint
- 1 clove garlic, crushed

SALAD

- 90ml extra virgin olive oil
- 2 slices sourdough bread, crusts removed, diced
- Juice of 2 lemons
- Finely grated zest of 1 lemon
- 1 clove garlic, crushed
- ¼ cup each small mint and flat-leaf parsley leaves
- 10 basil leaves, torn
- 100g podded peas (300g unpodded)
- 100g young podded broad beans (400g unpodded)

For tzatziki, using your hands, squeeze cucumber over a sieve to remove as much moisture as possible. Place in a bowl, combine with the remaining ingredients and season. Cover and refrigerate until needed.

For baharat, stir peppercorns, cumin and coriander seeds in a small frying pan over low heat for 1 minute or until fragrant. Cool, then grind in a spice grinder (or with a pestle and mortar) and combine with paprika, cinnamon, nutmeg, cloves and cardamom.

Preheat oven to 220°C. For lamb, combine 2 tablespoons each of baharat and oil in a bowl to make a paste, then rub all over lamb. Heat an ovenproof frying pan over medium heat and brown lamb for 1 minute each side, then transfer pan to the oven. Cook for 2 minutes, turn over and cook for a further 2 minutes. Remove from pan and set aside to rest, loosely covered with foil, for 5 minutes.

Meanwhile, for salad, make croûtons. Heat 1½ tablespoons oil in a small frying pan and cook bread, stirring, for 3 minutes or until golden. Cool.

Whisk together lemon juice and zest, remaining oil and garlic in a small bowl, then season. Combine mint, parsley, basil and croûtons in a large bowl.

Cook peas for 2 minutes in a pan of boiling water, then add beans and cook for a further 2 minutes until vegetables are tender. Drain, then combine with herb mixture and dressing.

Slice lamb, then divide among plates and lightly sprinkle with remaining baharat. Serve with salad and tzatziki.

Wine suggestion 2007 Giant Steps Sexton Vineyard Yarra Valley Merlot

BARRY DAVIS Montalto Restaurant

"Spring is all about new life to me," says chef Barry Davis, as he looks out from his kitchen over Montalto's sculpture-dotted vineyards. Just a stone's throw away, there will be artichokes, kale, stinging nettles, broad beans and peas, all blossoming in the herb and vegetable garden of this Mornington Peninsula property, where Barry has been running the kitchen for the past three years.

The season might be about new life, but it's also the prospect of Montalto's own olive oil, goat's cheese from up the road, wild rabbit and what Barry calls "jungle hens" – a small breed of chicken. "They're especially good roasted *en cocotte*," he says with relish. This French influence no doubt comes from Barry's 11-year stint with Philippe Mouchel in Melbourne. In his version of *poulet en cocotte*, Barry pours a rich, tarragon-infused veal jus over the free-range chook after it's been roasted. 33 Shoreham Rd, Red Hill South, (03) 5989 8412.

CHICKEN EN COCOTTE WITH CIDER TARRAGON JUS AND SPRING VEGETABLES SERVES 4

En cocotte is a French term for foods cooked in a casserole. It's a popular way of cooking chicken, as the meat remains succulent. Traditionally, the chicken is slow-cooked whole.

- 2 x 1kg free-range chickens or 1.8kg free-range chicken
- Vegetable oil, to cook
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 6 sprigs of thyme
- 12 Dutch (baby) carrots
- 12 baby turnips
- 12 baby asparagus spears
- 12 baby zucchini
- 6 baby (pencil) leeks, rinsed
- 100g young podded broad beans (400g unpodded)
- 100g podded peas (300g unpodded)
- Steamed chat potatoes, to serve

CIDER AND TARRAGON JUS

- 1 teaspoon vegetable oil
- 20g butter, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- 1 celery stalk, chopped
- 1 onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, crushed
- 750ml (3 cups) apple cider
- 6 sprigs of thyme
- 1 bunch French tarragon, leaves picked, chopped, stalks reserved
- 270ml jar Bowles Veal Glace*
- 200ml chicken stock
- 1 teaspoon tarragon mustard*
- 1 tablespoon sherry vinegar

To joint chickens, cut breasts away from the bone, then cut the legs and thighs in one piece. Separate the legs from the thighs at the joint and remove knuckles from the legs. Cut carcasses into small pieces.*

For cider and tarragon jus, heat oil in a heavy-based saucepan over medium heat, add chicken carcasses and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until well browned. Drain off excess fat. Add butter, carrot, celery, onion and garlic to pan and cook for 8 minutes or until lightly browned. Deglaze pan with cider and simmer until reduced by half. Add thyme, reserved tarragon stalks, veal glace, stock and 250ml (1 cup) water, simmer until reduced by half, then strain into a clean pan.

Preheat oven to 180°C. Season chicken pieces with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. Heat a cast-iron casserole with a little oil over medium heat. Cook chicken legs and thighs for 6–8 minutes until browned all over, then remove from casserole. Add chicken breasts,



Capretto and artichokes with fried snowpea shoots, and egg and broad beans

CAPRETTO AND ARTICHOKE WITH FRIED SNOWPEA SHOOTS, AND EGG AND BROAD BEANS

SERVES 6

Capretto is the Italian word for kid. The young goat, often milk-fed, has meat that is exceptionally tender, lean and low in cholesterol. Substitute with lamb, if preferred.

Juice of 2 lemons,
plus lemon cheeks, to serve
8 large artichokes
2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
3kg boneless capretto (kid) or
lamb shoulder, cut into 3cm pieces
3 cloves garlic, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped
flat-leaf parsley

FRIED SNOWPEA SHOOTS

50g (1/3 cup) cornflour
50g (1/3 cup) plain flour
150ml light beer
Olive oil, to deep-fry
20g (1 cup) snowpea shoots*

EGG AND BROAD BEANS

2 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
1 large onion, finely chopped
450g young podded broad beans
(1.5kg unpodded)*
2 tablespoons small mint leaves,
plus extra mint leaves, to serve
2 eggs, lightly beaten

Preheat oven to 150°C. Fill a large bowl with water and add the juice of 1 lemon. Snap off the tough outer leaves from an artichoke until you reach the pale inner ones, then peel the stem. Cut artichoke in half and, using a teaspoon, scoop out the hairy choke and discard, then place in the acidulated water. Repeat with the remaining artichokes.

Heat oil in a large casserole over medium-high heat. Working in 3 batches, brown capretto for 3–5 minutes. Return all meat to casserole, then add garlic and stir for 1 minute or until fragrant. Remove from the heat.

Finely chop 6 trimmed artichokes and add to casserole with 1 tablespoon parsley. Stir over medium heat for 3 minutes, then add 125ml (1/2 cup) warm water, bring just to a simmer, cover and transfer to oven. Cook for 2½ hours, checking occasionally and adding a little more warm water if mixture is too dry, or until meat is tender.

Cut remaining 2 artichokes into wedges, stir into capretto mixture and cook for a further 10 minutes in oven or until artichokes are tender.

Meanwhile, for fried snowpea shoots, sift both flours and a pinch of sea salt into a bowl, then whisk in beer to form a smooth, thin batter. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until ready to fry shoots.

PIETRO PORCU Tea Rooms at Yarck, and Da Noi

The lush greening of the surrounding bush at Yarck is especially welcome this year for Pietro Porcu, after his restaurant had to close for four months due to last autumn's bushfires. Despite the hazards of living in the country, the chef from Sardinia still loves the location of his rustic Italian haven, which was named Best New Country Restaurant in *The Age Good Food Guide 2009*. "I can get here at 2am, dead tired, but when I look around, I know why I do it. It's beautiful!"

This spring, Pietro's garden will be full of zucchini, eggplant, borage and stinging nettles, but the season is also about the grass on his property in the Strathbogies. "It'll be long, green and full of protein, so the mothers will produce good milk," he says with satisfaction. That's important when you have another 30 *capretti* (kids) and 50 lambs to arrive. Many of these end up on the spit at Pietro's restaurants, but sometimes, the capretto is put to the test with a nice slow braise such as this one. **6585 Maroondah Hwy, Yarck, (03) 5773 4233.**

skin-side down first, and cook for 5 minutes on both sides until browned. Return all chicken pieces to casserole with garlic and thyme, then transfer to the oven and cook for 8–10 minutes or until chicken is just cooked.

Meanwhile, for spring vegetables, trim carrots, turnips, asparagus, zucchini and leeks. Peel carrots and turnips, then halve leeks lengthwise. Cook all vegetables separately in a saucepan of boiling salted water until just tender, then stir into the chicken mixture.

Just before serving, bring jus to the boil, then whisk in mustard, vinegar and tarragon leaves until combined.

To serve, pour warm jus over cocotte of chicken and vegetables, and serve immediately with steamed potatoes.

* You can ask your butcher to joint the chicken if you prefer. Bowles Veal Glace is available from butchers and delicatessens. Tarragon mustard is available from delicatessens.

Wine suggestion 2007 Montalto Mornington Peninsula Pinot Noir

CAPRETTO: MATHIAS; TABLE RUNNER IN WHITE; GENEVIEVE; LETHU; PAPER MAP; AS BEFORE; IRON CLAY SAKE CUP; WHITE TRANSLUCENT PORCELAIN DISH AND GREEN GLAZED PORCELAIN BOWL; ALL KRIS COAD; BLOND HORN SPOON; THE BAY TREE; BRASS SPOON; AS BEFORE; GREEN STONEWARE 'RAMKIN'; HELEN STEPHENS GALLERY AND ALL-HAND MADE ZUCCHINI FLOWERS KAYE RICE SMALL DISH; HELEN STEPHENS GALLERY AND ALL-HAND MADE 'OAK LEAF' PLATE; PARTIERRE; WHITE TRANSLUCENT PORCELAIN SIDE PLATE; KRIS COAD; VINTAGE TERRACOTTA TEALIGHT; KOSKELA; BRASS SPOON; AS BEFORE STOCKIST DETAILS LAST PAGES



Zucchini flowers with salmon mousse, blood oranges and Otilia orange dressing

Meanwhile, for egg and broad beans, heat oil in a non-stick frying pan over medium heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 8 minutes or until caramelised. Add broad beans and cook for 5 minutes or until tender. Stir in mint, season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper and reduce heat to low. Stirring continuously, add eggs and cook for 2 minutes or until eggs thicken to a custard consistency, without allowing mixture to scramble. Remove pan from heat.

To fry snowpea shoots, heat a small saucepan filled one-third with oil to 180°C (or until a cube of bread turns golden in 10 seconds). Working in small batches, dip shoots in batter, then, using your hands, wipe off excess batter and fry for 15 seconds or until pale golden. Drain on paper towel and season.

To serve, stir remaining parsley and lemon juice into capretto, then season. Place on a platter and scatter with fried pea shoots. Serve with egg and broad beans scattered with extra mint and lemon cheeks to squeeze over.

* Snowpea shoots are available from Asian greengrocers. Substitute soft herbs such as flat-leaf parsley. At Tea Rooms at Yarck, Pietro uses borage leaves from his kitchen garden.

Wine suggestion 2008 Pizzini King Valley Sangiovese Shiraz

GARY COOPER *Bella Vedere Cucina*

For chef/owner Gary Cooper, spring in the Yarra Valley on Badger's Brook Estate is a season marked by the birds and the bees. "First, we see the bud burst in the vines that surround the restaurant and then the bees start returning to the garden," he explains. "Even the birds seem happier."

Everyone at Gary's five-year-old modern Australian restaurant takes turns working in the restaurant's vegetable plot, so they all get a real sense of the changing seasons. It's a sense that rises with excitement with the arrival of the first spring partridges. "They have fantastic plump breasts and only take 12 to 15 minutes to cook," he says.

Gary is also expecting another bumper crop of asparagus. He claims that it's been this way ever since he buried a dead horse under the asparagus plot. It's an old French tradition apparently!

Here, he makes the most of two other spring favourites: zucchini flowers and oranges. Inspired by the flavours of Seville, Gary has created an orange and almond dressing, which he has named after another welcome arrival, his baby daughter, Ottilia.

874 Maroondah Hwy, Coldstream, (03) 5962 6161.

ZUCCHINI FLOWERS WITH SALMON MOUSSE, BLOOD ORANGES AND OTTILIA ORANGE DRESSING **SERVES 4-6 AS AN ENTREE**

400g piece salmon fillet, pin-boned, skinned
1 teaspoon thyme leaves
250ml (1 cup) thickened cream
1½ tablespoons finely chopped chives
12 female zucchini blossoms, stem removed
4 blood oranges, skin and pith removed, thickly sliced

OTTILIA ORANGE DRESSING

Juice of 3 oranges
1 egg yolk
½ teaspoon fish sauce
1 teaspoon sugar
2 teaspoons sherry vinegar
60ml (¼ cup) walnut oil
45g (⅓ cup) slivered almonds, roasted

For salmon mousse, cut salmon into 2.5cm pieces, process in a food processor with thyme to a smooth paste, then season with sea salt and freshly ground black pepper. With the motor running, pour in cream and process for 1 minute to a thick creamy paste. Transfer to a bowl, stir in chives, then cover and refrigerate for 30 minutes to firm.

Meanwhile, for dressing, whisk together orange juice, egg yolk, fish sauce, sugar and vinegar, then slowly whisk in walnut oil. Season.

Fill a piping bag fitted with a 1cm piping nozzle with salmon mousse and fill the centre of each zucchini flower until plump and round. Don't worry if some of the mousse is exposed.

Place zucchini flowers in a large frying pan and add enough water to reach halfway up the side. Bring to a simmer over low heat, then cook for 5 minutes, turning halfway, or until the mousse feels firm to the touch. Carefully remove zucchini flowers with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.

To serve, divide orange slices among plates, top with zucchini flowers, then drizzle with dressing and scatter over slivered almonds.

Wine suggestion 2008 Lost Valley Cortese

ANNIE SMITHERS *Annie Smithers' Bistrot*

This spring will be especially important for Annie Smithers, because it will be the first since she ploughed up her garden in Malmesbury in the quest to become self-sufficient with her supply of vegetables by 2011.

"It's changed the way I cook," she says. "I value the product totally differently, having seen how much it takes to grow it."

In fact, in order to sustain the amount of produce she needs to cater for all her customers, Annie decided to reduce the seats in her restaurant from 50 to 35. "If all else fails, it's been a beautiful adventure," laughs the Central Victorian chef.

One thing she knows she can rely on is her chooks and ducks: "As the weather warms up, everything starts laying, so we're knee-deep in eggs," she says.

Her vegetable garden also produces a good crop of asparagus, which Annie will toss with a salad of scallops and King George Whiting, and, true to her French leanings, some luscious beurre blanc.
72 Piper St, Kyneton, (03) 5422 2039.

SCALLOP, WHITING AND ASPARAGUS SALAD **SERVES 4**

3 (350g) bunches asparagus
3 navel oranges
1 teaspoon finely chopped eschalot
60ml (¼ cup) dry white wine
125ml (½ cup) pouring cream
100g cold butter, diced
Juice of ½ lemon
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 x 200g King George whiting filets, cut into 3cm pieces
500g scallops, roe removed
1 cup loosely packed chervil sprigs
20g mâche or micro salad*

Snap ends from asparagus, then trim on the diagonal to 8cm long. Cook in a saucepan of boiling salted water for 2 minutes or until just tender, then drain and refresh under cold water.

Using a vegetable peeler, peel 3 thin strips of zest from 1 orange and reserve in a bowl for beurre blanc. Squeeze over juice from peeled orange; you will need 60ml (¼ cup) juice. Remove skin with pith from remaining 2 oranges and cut between membrane to release segments.

For beurre blanc, place eschalot, wine, orange juice and zest in a small saucepan and simmer over medium heat until reduced to 1 tablespoon liquid. Add cream and simmer until reduced by two-thirds. Remove pan from heat, then whisk in butter, piece by piece, ensuring each is incorporated before adding the next. Season and stir in lemon juice to taste. Discard zest.

Heat a large, non-stick frying pan over high heat until very hot. Add oil, then cook fish for 1 minute each side. Remove from pan. Cook scallops, in 2 batches, for 30 seconds each side until light golden.

To serve, spoon beurre blanc in the centre of plates, then top with seafood, asparagus, orange, chervil and mâche.

* Available from selected greengrocers.
Wine suggestion 2008 Oakridge Yarra Valley Chardonnay VE+T