

The West Australian

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FOOD NEWS BERLINDA CONTI

Green fingers grow greener fingers

Alf Edgecombe, part-owner of Edgecombe Brothers winery and cafe in Henley Brook, is a little uneasy with his moniker, "The King of Spears". But let's face it, he knows everything there is to know about asparagus and he loves nothing more than talking all things green and clean.

September marks the beginning of asparagus season and until December Mr Edgecombe will be hosting asparagus masterclasses at the family estate.

"It's the greenest, cleanest vegetable to grow," Mr Edgecombe says. "It requires no spraying and literally grows from organic mix like hay and farm compost. The alluvial soil here is so good that we hardly need to use any water at all — just supplementary water in the warmer months."

"Asparagus is incredibly good for you — full of fibre and antioxidants and it's a natural detoxifier."

The masterclass is sociable and particularly rewarding. After munching on homemade Anzac biscuits and a heart-starter coffee, participants are armed with IKEA steak-knives (perfect for asparagus hunting) and wellington boots before foraging through the many asparagus rows.

Once a decent batch is picked the group makes its way back to the cafe for a quick asparagus educational talk, a wine tasting and of course, a mountain load of freshly picked asparagus which is par-boiled, tossed in rosemary and garlic olive oil and topped with fresh parmesan. Homemade drunken figs marinated in Edgecombe muscat and dipped in dark chocolate complete the class.

Edgecombe Brothers is one of the few asparagus growers in the Perth region.

The asparagus masterclasses, which run from 10.30am-2pm are limited to 22 people. Cost per person is \$48.50 on weekdays and \$58.50 on weekends. Phone 9296 4307 or visit edgecombebros.com.au for more information. Edgecombe Brothers is at 1733 Ngarara Road, Henley Brook.

GOT SOME FOOD NEWS?
Send details to berlinda@berlindaconti.com



Alf Edgecombe with fresh asparagus. Picture: Gerard Moscarda



Straight from the source

Gin and tonic is taken to a whole new level with Capi tonic water (made with natural quinine extracted from Congolese cinchona bark) — just one of the products from the Capi range of sparkling mixers, fruit sodas and mineral waters. Australian-owned and sourced from quality Australian springs, the range is completely free from anything artificial. Try the ginger beer made with fresh ginger juice from Queensland. Available in 250ml (from \$2.99) and 750ml (from \$3.49) bottles from select Woolworths stores and quality WA cafes and restaurants. Visit capi.com.au for more information.



Carnarvon's fruit bowl

Carnarvon couple Jean and Doris Morel have been growing tropical fruit since the late 80s, and tourists and locals alike make a point of visiting their orchard to stock up on the legendary 100 per cent fruit ice-cream (flavours such as mango and black sapote walk out the door) and sugar-free fruit leathers. Made with fresh pureed fruit which is dehydrated and cut into strips, the fruit-strap of choice is dried strawberry and banana, \$8 per 60g pack. Order at urbanlocavore.com.au or visit Morel's Orchard at 486 Robinson Street, Carnarvon.



Sausages sizzle at show

Princi Butchers in Beaconsfield won the only gold medal awarded in the uncooked sausages category for its Princi Casalingo pork sausage at the 2013 Royal Melbourne Fine Food Awards recently. This is the third consecutive year the butcher has won gold in this category. "We use free-range pork from a respected farmer, and a special blend of herbs and spices," owner Joe Princi says. The coriander-flavoured sausage also took home a bronze medal. Visit Princi Butchers at 115 Lefroy Road, Beaconsfield, or phone 9314 2494.



Pair brewing up a storm

For Steph Cope and Steve Brockman, the brewing skills they honed in WA are the ticket to a working holiday that will leave any beer lover with pangs of envy. Travelling the US, their journey has taken them from San Diego, a world-renowned craft beer destination to San Francisco, Portland and then will see them head to the east coast.

Brockman, formerly a brewer at The Monk in Fremantle, says: "The innovation in the US is not a response to consumer demands. Brewers take risks to brew the beer they want, and consumers follow. We hope to see more innovation in Australia and think drinkers will follow."

Cope, previously a brewer for Gage Roads, explains that there are equal measures of work and education in their 12-month journey.

"We're learning how to diversify our brewing skills at Cascade Barrelworks, in Portland," Brockman, below with Cope, says. "They age beers on fresh fruit, dried fruit and nuts for up to three years. We've been fortunate enough to learn barrel-wrangling, fruit-management and blending techniques from Cascade that are foreign at home but can easily be introduced."

Check out twobrewersabroad.com.

Max Brearley



Beer barrel



Vic Crossland

Beer of the week

Samuel Smith's Imperial Stout (7 per cent)

The daddy of modern Russian imperial stouts is deservedly revered worldwide, setting the standard for the style originally brewed especially strong to suit the tastes of Russia's royal court. Though reliant on robust dark roasted barley, it's soft on the palate. Spicy, coffee and grainy aroma, fruit, chocolate and espresso flavours and dry, bitter finish make a delicious, comforting drink. Imported in 355ml bottles from Tadcaster in Yorkshire.



Eagle Bay Cacao Stout (5.7 per cent)

An imaginative mash of cacao bean husks from Margaret River chocolate makers Bahen & Co, roasted barley and six malts, plus two English hop varieties... this surely is special. Aromatic, with rich, smooth choc-coffee flavours and bitter-balance, it's on tap at Eagle Bay and Mane Liquor, Belmont.

O'Brien Black Lager (5.3 per cent)

Released from Victoria's gluten-free brewery is a German-style schwarzbier. Roasted sorghum and millet malts make a lager with stout-like qualities: "noble" hop and roast coffee aroma rises from the tan head and spicy hop notes back up rich chocolate tastes.

The Chancer via Tap King (4.5 per cent)

Cooled in the fridge — not chilled — the 3.2-litre special plastic bottle of James Squire golden ale pours from the Tap King draught server with a full, good-lacing head. Flavours: mandarin and stone fruit. Palate: long, eventually dry, medium bitter.

WIN one of 20 \$1,000 Maurice Meade packages!

In celebration of the Perth Fashion Festival, Maurice Meade, Channel Seven and *The West Australian* are giving you the chance to update your style and be your best this spring with a \$1000 Spring Style Package.

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Go to the Maurice Meade Facebook page to find the code word and register it at thewest.com.au to enter. Watch HOME AND AWAY on Channel Seven from Monday 9 September to Thursday 19 September to see if your name is announced. If it is, you have 30 minutes to call 9344 0777 to claim your prize. Two names will be announced every Monday — Wednesday and four names on Thursday. Entries close midnight Wednesday, 18 September 2013.

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