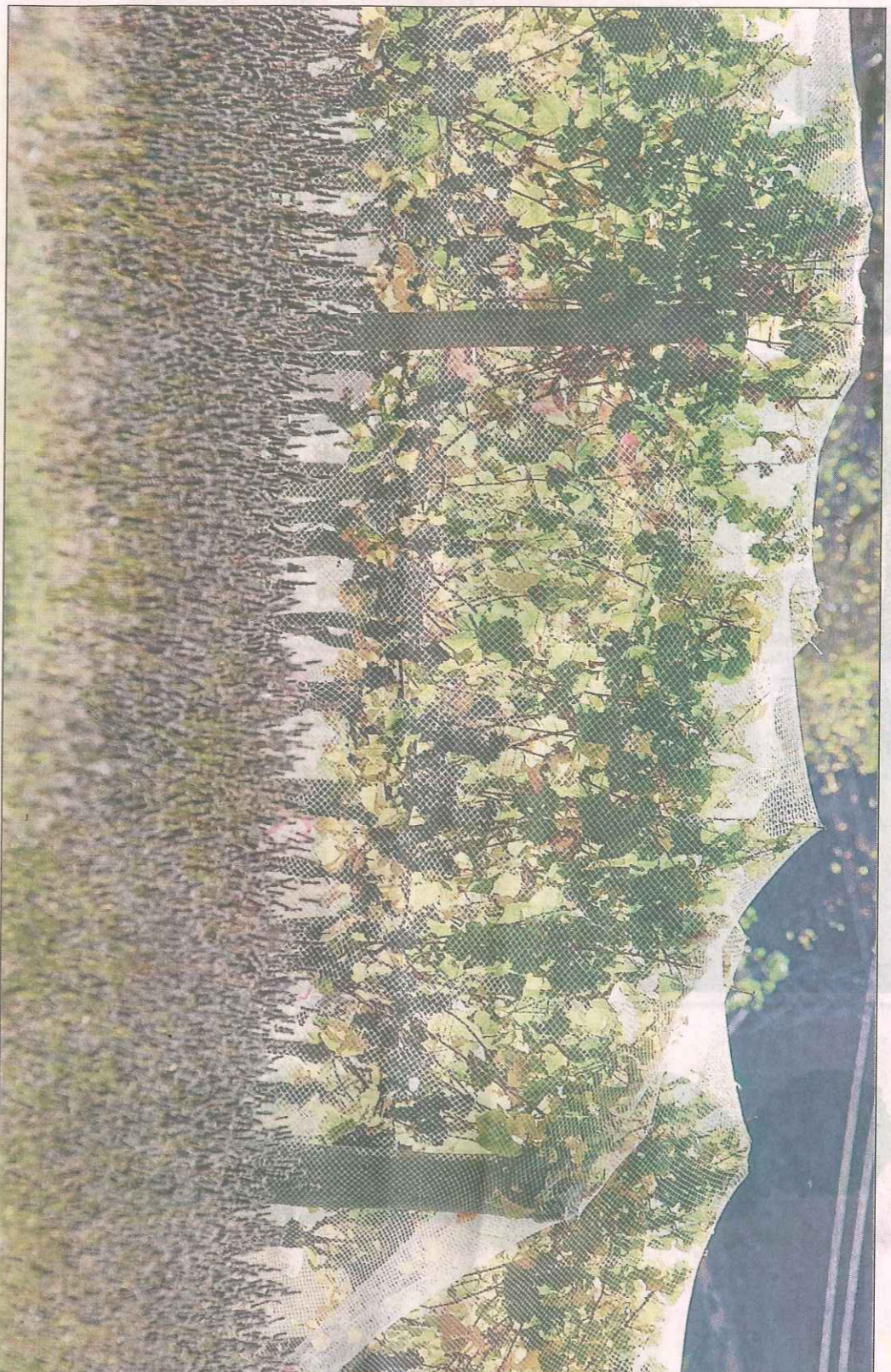


# A taste of the south



## Fact file

### Where to stay:

The Rees, 377 Frankton Rd, Queenstown, [www.theres.co.nz](http://www.theres.co.nz)

### Where and what to eat and drink:

● Amisfield Winery and Bistro, 10 Lake Hayes Rd. Bistro open Tuesday to Sunday, 11.30am to 8pm; tasting room open daily, 10am to 6pm. [www.amisfield.co.nz](http://www.amisfield.co.nz)

● Cardrona Merino Lamb, for information and supply details go to [www.cardronamerino.com](http://www.cardronamerino.com)

● Botswana Butchery, 17 Marine Parade, Queenstown. [www.goodbars.co.nz/botswana](http://www.goodbars.co.nz/botswana)

● Mount Edward, 34 Coalpit Rd, Gibbston Highway RD1. Open by appointment. ph (03) 442-6113. [www.mountedward.co.nz](http://www.mountedward.co.nz)

Away from the bungies and jetboats,

Queenstown offers some extremely fine foodie thrills, writes **Angela Walker.**



Duncan Forsyth, big cheese.

**DUNCAN FORSYTH'S** business card reads "Big Cheese". His T-shirt pronounces "Jesus drank riesling". His wines just speak for themselves. They are quite simply, the art of seduction in a bottle.

It's a clear blue summer's day at Gibbston in the Kawarau Valley about 20 minutes' drive north of Queenstown and Forsyth, the owner and winemaker of Mount Edward, is counting down to the Easter harvest.

"The two weeks after Easter are like magic," he says. "There's the full change of colours, super-settled weather and the vineyard's golden. And 100 tanks and barrels of wine all fermenting - everyone's happy. Making wine you have one chance a year to get it right and this is it."

And Forsyth gets it right. His acclaimed wines, made in this small pink building where home-cured hams hang from the rafters and barrels of sublime pinot noir rest in the cellar quietly working their magic, can be found in some of the world's top restaurants including Thomas Keller's French Laundry, Tetsuya's in Sydney and Gordon Ramsay's eponymous Michelin-starred London restaurant.

Mount Edward was established in 1997 by Alan Brady, one of the pioneers of the Central Otago wine industry. He'd released his first commercial vintage at Gibbston Valley in 1987 but after 10 years decided he wanted to head in a different direction, so started Mount Edward just down the road. Forsyth, originally from Wellington, arrived in the area in 1992 where his first job was working a few days for Brady at Mount Edward, then on to work at nearby Chand Farm and Peregrine. Then in 2004 he bought Mount

Edward off Brady, who still lives just up the hill and remains a director of the company.

The winery now produces about 7000 cases a year, mostly pinot noir and riesling, but you'll also find pinot gris and chardonnay, from vineyards around the region: Lowburn, Cromwell, Bannockburn, Cromwell, and Gibbston.

"Eighty to 90% of what appears in the bottle is in the vineyard," Forsyth explains. "And all our vineyards operate organically so that focuses everyone's minds a little bit more, everything we do is done slightly better."

Making a good wine in this part of the world, he says, is like cooking a lamb shank. "You can't cook it fast; it doesn't work. This is all about slow cooking - it's more about time than heat. What we hope for with each vintage is

**'This is possibly the most perfect-looking lamb roast one could hope to come across.'**

settled weather starting from spring, a little bit of rain, a little bit of wind and a long coolish autumn. That's the ideal for us."

**'T'S A Sunday evening at Botswana Butchery on Marine Parade on the Queenstown lakefront - look for the lovingly refurbished cottage with a meat cleaver for a door handle. And it's packed. It's like this every night, the matre d' says. The English couple next to me barely look at the menu before telling their waiter they've travelled 13,000km to sample Botswana's famous lamb. This is the whole slow-roasted shoulder of lamb for two (unless**



Top, harvest time in Gibbston. Above, Mount Edward: supplying wines to the world's top restaurants. Photos: Johanna Parsons

you're a true Southern Man and can eat one on your own - plenty do). My Botswana neighbours are on a bus trip of New Zealand and their driver told them this was one meal they couldn't leave the country without eating. When it's delivered to them I can see why. This is

possibly the most perfect-looking lamb roast one could hope to come across - and with a sweet and earthy aroma that's worlds apart from any lamb roast of my acquaintance. Meanwhile, I'm carving up the menu along geographical lines. On this trip I'm trying to eat only produce from south of the Waitaki River. So my entree is the zingy and delicious Spanish-style West Coast whitebait, and for my main, the little brother of the roast next door: the praised shoulder of Cardrona lamb.

This dish is the hills and mountains and blue skies and green fields and golden sun of this

beautiful area on a plate. It's as true a taste of the south as you'd hope to find.

**A** MISFIELD WINERY and Bistro sits on a charmed spot overlooking Lake Hayes, halfway between Queenstown and Arrowtown. In the five years since opening, the bistro has made a name as one of the country's top winery restaurants and remains a favourite lunch spot for locals.

We arrive to a one-off special lunch featuring Michelin-starred chef Josh Emmett, a former Hamilton boy who has gone on to be Gordon Ramsay's right-hand man, running Ramsay eateries in London, New York and now the newly opened Maze in Melbourne's Crown Metropol hotel.

The idea behind the Amisfield five-course degustation lunch today is, Emmett says, "good local food in a nice experience" and his menu - served to an adoring crowd of 250 - is a celebration of great southern produce: fruit, vegetables, cheeses, Florida lobster, salmon, rabbit and, hooray, Cardrona lamb.

Emmett left New Zealand in the mid-90s and is clearly delighted to

## [escape]

It reads like the dream supermarket shopping list and it's all, as it promises, the true South.'

Cardrona Valley, right. Below: The Rees, where you can relish the best produce the South Island has to offer.



Remarkables but also some of the best produce the South Island has to offer at its True South dining room.

The Rees is managed by Mark Rose, a Kiwi who was lured back from Scotland – where he managed a very high-end luxury hotel – to take up his new post last year. His passion for great food has led him to tables at some of the world's finest restaurants and to a tour of Tokyo's fish market with three Michelin-starred sushi chef Mizutani. It has also led him to

discover first-hand why eating foie gras for lunch and dinner five days in a row is a danger to your health.

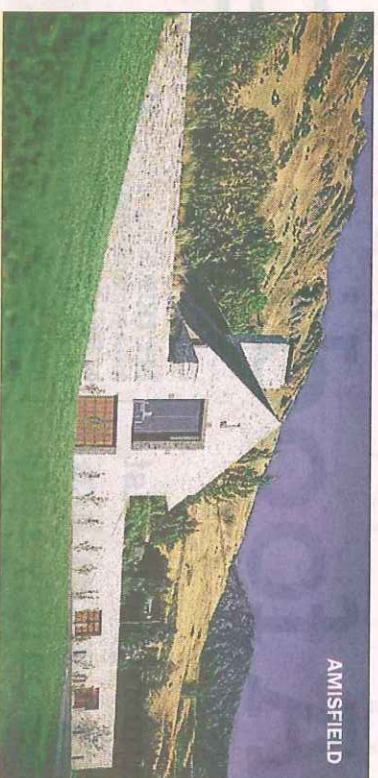
There's no foie gras on tonight's menu at True South. We're working our way through the

tasting menu – a series of taste sensations with a southern spin – a simply lovely beetroot, pear and blue cheese salad; Southland Hereford beef, more perfect lamb.

When the restaurant opened, Rose decided to list their produce suppliers at the back of the menu, as a way to encourage more people to use their great products at home.

It's one of those perfectly good ideas that you wonder why it seems so unusual. There are cheeses from the lower South Island, including several from Southland artisan cheesemakers Blue River, saffron grown here in Otago, honey from Ettreck, organic chickens from Southland, milk and cream from Tuatapere, free-range pork from Waimate... it reads like the dream supermarket shopping list and it's all, as it promises, the true South.

Angela Walker was hosted by Destination Queenstown.



## Amisfield's zucchini trifolati and goats cheese bruschetta

500g green zucchini, trimmed  
100ml extra virgin olive oil  
2 cloves of garlic  
Sea salt flakes and fresh ground pepper  
Smoky chilli flakes – dry fry whole chilli in pan till they become dark and smoky then remove the seeds and crumble  
Zest of one well washed lemon  
100g of French goat's cheese  
12 leaves of fresh basil  
1 loaf of sourdough

Grate the zucchini and squeeze out excess moisture using a kitchen towel. Pound the garlic in a mortar and pestle with some salt and set aside.

Put goat's cheese on a small baking tray and season with a little salt, pepper and chilli flakes and drizzle with olive oil. Bake at 170°C until soft and warmed through. About 10 mins.

You will need to do the next step in two batches.

Over a medium flame, heat the oil in a large fry pan, throw in the grated zucchini and crushed garlic, and increase the temperature to high. Season mix with big pinch of salt and continue frying for another five minutes, stirring frequently.

There should be enough oil to stop the mix from catching or colouring. Spread mix out on tray to cool.

While on tray, season mixture to



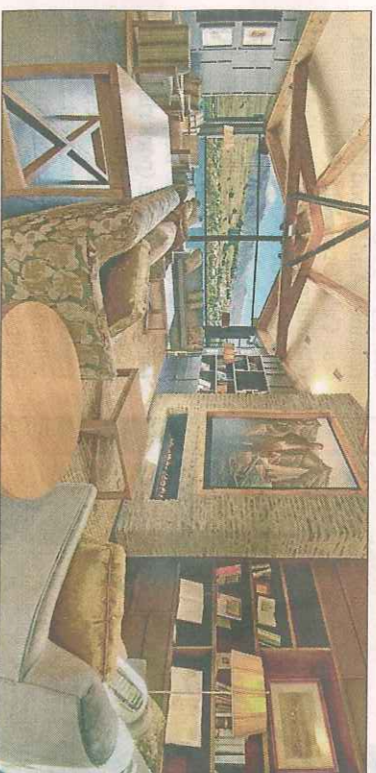
taste with pepper, chilli, and salt if needed and a small amount of grated lemon zest. Then transfer into a bowl.

Take loaf and slice pieces 1cm thick crossways on a slight angle. Grill the bread and rub with garlic and rosemary.

Put a basil leaf on the bread and then spoon on some of the zucchini mix and top with a small piece of softened goat's cheese.

This will make 12 pieces of bruschetta.

You can also prepare this well in advance, although it is better to grill the bread and construct just before eating.



be back, if just for this brief visit. When it comes to food, he says, "everything's changed. It's moved along so much. And it's such an easy sell now; there's just so many good products in New Zealand."

He's been working with Ramsay for 10 years and it's opened a lot of doors, he says. He's cooked for Posh and Becks, kings and queens, film stars and politicians. "There's huge opportunities. You can build your own name under the Gordon Ramsay empire. You develop your own style – there's no boundaries."

But what about that famous Ramsay temperament? "I've had a pretty free rein with Gordon and a lot of freedom in regard to managing the food and the business. And if he tried to interfere I'd just tell him 'f---ing no chance,'" he smiles.

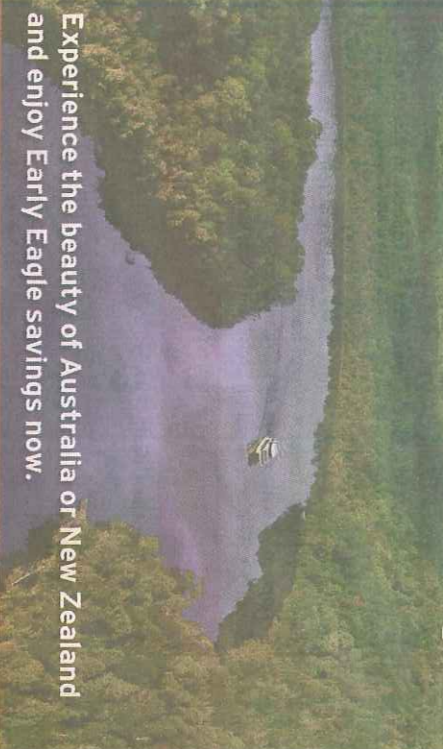
Sitting across the table from me are Ben Gordon and Rob Ottery of Cardrona Merino Lamb, the business set up by Gordon in 2007 from his family-owned station Avalon in the Cardrona Valley, near Wanaka. What's their secret, I

ask. "It's really very simple," marketing manager Ottery says. "Taste. This comes down to the breed. The lamb has a very fine grain and only enough fat to cook with. You don't get that fattiness on your lips when you eat it or the smell that can overpower your kitchen when you are cooking. Also, the native high country grasses the lamb eats have an impact on this. They're higher in fibre compared to green wet grass in some other areas of New Zealand."

"My family has been farming for generations and we have never tasted a lamb so good," Ottery says. "When Ben was a boy and special visitors were coming for dinner, his mother would tell him to kill a Cardrona Merino lamb for their dinner. It's really something special."

IF YOU stay at The Rees, a lovely new hotel about halfway between Frankton and Queenstown, you get the chance to not only relish its delectable views of The

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