



The Akaroa Cooking School

What's New or in the News

January 2011

Meeting our suppliers

In the third part of our series on meeting our suppliers, we head down the wharf and talk to Tania and Murray Kiely who supply us with fresh fish. We also wind our way up the Takamatua valley where we catch up with Graham and Mary Toner who supply us with fresh berries throughout the summer.

Murphy's Seafood



Murray talking to Lou on board the Marie Ann

Murray wanted to be a fisherman all his life and as soon as he left school that's exactly what he did. After an early stint in Timaru, Murray has been fishing in the waters around Akaroa harbour since the early 1980's. Back in the 50's and 60's you could count upwards of 60 commercial fishing boats in Akaroa. Declining fish stocks, the introduction of the quota system and regulations have seen this number reduced to two in Akaroa today.

Although Murray heads out fishing by himself on his boat Marie Ann, his wife Tania is very much part of the business and you can

find her down the wharf selling fresh fish that Murray passes up from the boat once filleted. It doesn't get fresher than that! Tania will also have the BBQ cranked up and makes fresh fish burgers that prove irresistible to many people wandering down the wharf.

Murray mainly targets flat fish including flounder, sole, brill and skate however he also catches plenty of red cod



and our favourite, gurnard. Occasionally Murray pulls up Conger Eel which “have to be dispatched quickly as they have very sharp teeth”, says Murray. He also pulls up paddle crabs whose sweet flesh makes for great eating.



Tania on the wharf with Murray filleting in the back ground

Murray and Tania are currently working on a project to allow them to dredge for oysters that are the same variety as the famous ‘Bluffie’ “and there’s no shortage” says Murray. This, we are most excited about!

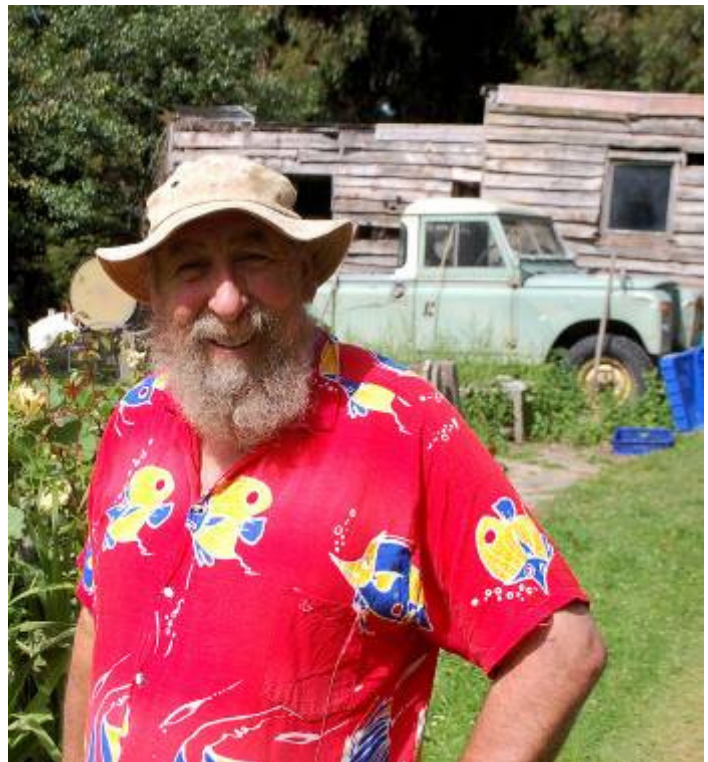
Murray says there are a lot of krill in the harbour which is great for fishing and is a good sign of a healthy fish stock. Murray mostly fishes around the heads and doesn’t need to venture too far out for the days catch.

You can find Murray and Tania down the main Akaroa wharf most days throughout summer from 9am however you are advised to head down early as the locals know where to go to get freshly caught fish. They are also on the wharf during winter but generally only in the weekends.

Folly Farm

On Monday morning Lou and I wound our way up the Takamatua valley where we caught up Graham Toner from Folly Farm. He has a beautiful 35 acre property up on the hill with much of it planted in summer berries and surrounded by enormous old walnut trees. The property has a unique microclimate and the morning was noticeably hotter than back in Akaroa township.

From November through to April Graham supplies the local restaurants, B&B’s and the cooking school with the most beautiful succulent berries you have ever tasted. Graham picks his berries daily and only when they are fully vine ripened to ensure maximum sweetness and texture. We often get



comments at the school how the taste of the berries takes people back to their childhood.

Graham grows raspberries, blackberries, boysenberries, cherries, strawberries, mulberries, gooseberries, black currants and blueberries. There are always a few experimental varieties growing as well. Graham and his wife Mary also have a commercial size vegetable garden however "this is only for home consumption", states Graham.

All of Graham's berries are grown under netting which not only keeps the birds out, but also the hail. It is also designed to withstand a heavy snow storm as the net will merely stretch and then rise once the snow has melted away.



Rows of raspberries under the netting

Additionally Mary and Graham produce a vast array of jams and chutneys, which along with the fresh berries, are sold at the local farmers market in Akaroa on Saturday mornings. Once again you need to get in quick as the berries sell out very quickly. Here you will find raspberry and boysenberry jam, marmalade, quince and apple jelly, plum and tomato sauce, raspberry vinegar and a green tomato chutney which is to die for!



Graham and Mary purchased their farm 15 years ago after moving from Cust. It was only the 3rd time since 1899 that the property has changed hands and "it has a colourful history" states Graham.

The property was first owned by Augustus Kotlowski from German, Polish descent. He, along with his wife and six children, arrived on one of the early settler's boats at Pigeon Bay in 1872. After a stint saw milling at Robinson's Bay, he purchased the property which back then was known as German Bay, which they farmed. He was reported to be the first person to own a motor vehicle on

the peninsula. During his time, locals used to travel by horse and cart to the top of his property for strawberries and cream on Sundays. Some older locals around town recall being picked up from school on the back of a flat deck truck and driven to the property to pick walnuts. The going rate was a half crown for a kerosene tin of walnuts. The walnut trees are still there and ring the property at this time of year with vibrant green foliage and plump green walnuts.

You can contact Graham on 03 304 7741 or email him at follyfarm@clear.net.nz

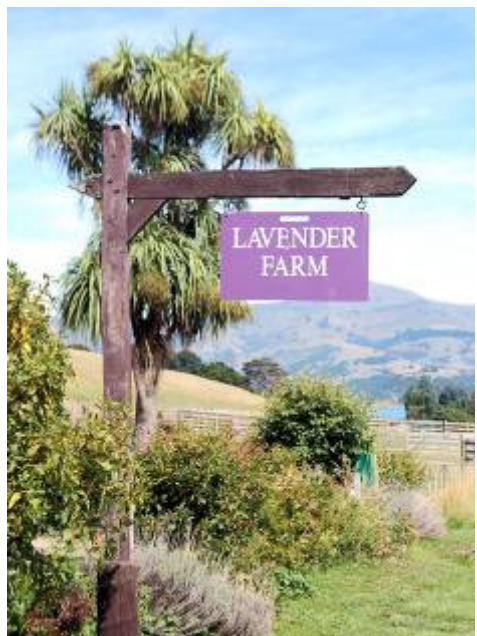
Lonely Planet

Crikey! The Akaroa Cooking School was recently mentioned in the Lonely Planet's top 10 places to learn to cook local cuisine worldwide (we are number 4). We were happy to see the Chiang Mai Thai Cookery School was there too as that was where we got the inspiration to set up our school.

Click here to see the article...

<http://www.lonelyplanet.com/laos/northern-laos/luang-prabang/travel-tips-and-articles/76299>

Kingfisher Smokehouses



Every now and then you come across something that takes your breath away. Tasting Neil and Rebecca Barnett's home smoked salmon for the first time was one of those moments. Originating from Herefordshire, England, Neil and his New Zealand born wife Rebecca moved to Akaroa in 2007 where they bought the Lavender Farm in the Takamatua valley. Here they cold smoke local Akaroa salmon using a recipe from a family friend, a 3rd generation Scot. It is a closely guarded recipe that you inherit rather than learn. The outcome regardless, is simply sublime.

Although the lavender is still there and beautiful at this time of year, it is not harvested and the focus is on the salmon smoking.

Lou and I were fortunate enough to spend a morning with Neil and Rebecca and watch the smoking and slicing process. In a converted shipping container, we watch as Rebecca hand slices each fillet after carefully extracting all bones and trimmings. Many businesses that produce cold smoked salmon these days use a

cutting machine and watching Rebecca makes you realise the great skill involved in getting that perfect slice each time.



The previous day Neil had stoked the fire with English oak, from trees planted by early settlers at Robinson's Bay. "This is a crucial difference in the taste", Neil explains. "The oak logs produce a much more in-depth flavour than sawdust which is the most commonly used method". The cold smoking takes approximately 24 hours and requires continuous monitoring to ensure there is enough smoke and that it is not too hot. Neil's smoker is 20 years old now, and when you lift the doors the accumulated smoky smell is heavenly.



They chose to use Akaroa salmon, which is farmed a few kilometers away in Lucas Bay, as they believe it is the best salmon in the country. It has a very good flesh to fat ratio and the way it is sea farmed means no antibiotics are required so it's a very natural fish. It also has a very dense texture and outstanding flavour.

Neil and Rebecca are no strangers to smoking fish. Back in the UK they ran a business, also called Kingfisher Smokehouses and cold smoked beautiful salmon from the Outer Hebrides along with Mackerel, Herring and luscious Madagascar prawns. Their business was near the river Wye in Herefordshire, famed for its good fishing.



Neil and Rebecca's smoked salmon is not yet available in Christchurch although you can purchase it through mail order. You'll find them at the Akaroa farmers market on Saturday mornings from 10am. It is also available for purchase at the new Peninsula General Store in Akaroa at 40 Rue Lavaud, and is often on the menu at the Akaroa Cooking School.

Rebecca slicing whilst Neil checks the core temperature

You can contact Neil on 03 304 8823
or 0210413080 or via email havenyachts@xtra.co.nz

The Gourmet Road Trip – Feb 7th to Feb 10th



On February 7th this year we kick off our very first Gourmet Road Trip. Teaming up with Steve Bradley from Vangionis restaurant, we will spend four days completely immersing ourselves in foodie heaven.

Taking cooking classes to a whole new level, we will take our guests out and about the Banks Peninsula to meet our suppliers, forage for wild food, hunt and gather local seafood, and see first hand where the produce originates. The Gourmet Road Trip will run over four days and is aimed at those foodies looking to completely immerse themselves in the whole paddock to plate experience. Not only do the guests meet our suppliers and see their produce, our guests can get as involved as they wish to in hunting for the abundance of produce the Peninsula has to offer. Each day

culminates in a cooking class at various locations around the Peninsula using the produce collected.

Each day will be uniquely different including land and sea based locations. The atmosphere will be relaxed and fun yet extremely informative. The guests will be watching two experienced chefs cooking numerous meals from scratch each day and will be able to participate in much of the preparation and cooking process.

The Gourmet Road Trip will be a completely unique experience unlike anything you would have done before.



If anyone would like an information pack about this please contact Ant at ant@akaroacooking.co.nz or call on ph 021 166 3724

Hats off Gala Dinner

On December 16th Lou and I were privileged enough to attend the inaugural Hats off Gala Dinner under the marquee at Riccarton House. The dinner was the postponed end of the Feast of Canterbury, which of course was severely disrupted by the September 4th earthquake in which many participating restaurants were damaged. Undeterred, Sam Marchant and Jamie Bennett, who organised the Feast of Canterbury, rescheduled and what a night it was!



We were welcomed with cocktails and some outstanding canapés on arrival. On the menu was a nine course degustation from some of New Zealand's finest chefs.

Chef Nik Mavromatis of Mediterranean Food Company and Chef Simo Abbari of Simo's Licensed Moroccan Restaurant created two canapé courses. The first entrée course was from chefs Jamie Bennett and Sam Marchant of Riccarton House Bistro. Tina Duncan of White Tie Catering showed off her culinary flair with a completely new take on the traditional English breakfast. The first of the main courses was an outstanding poached snapper dish created by Chef James Stapley of Whare Kea Lodge, who has all in culinary circles a gasp! The second main course was a trio of pork from Chef Jonny Schwass of Restaurant Schwass.

Chef Mike Dulin of Sweet Kitchen created a phenomenal dessert course. Chef Chris Fortune from Blenheim and chairman of Farmers' Market New Zealand constructed a fabulous cheese course. Chef Amanda McBeath and Bridget O'Sullivan of J'aime les Macaron completed the evening with a divine macaroon selection. All courses were paired with a matching wine. The very entertaining Joe Bennett was MC for the evening and kept guests in fits of laughter over the course of the night.

Cant' wait until next year!

To see the complete menu click on the link below...

<http://www.feastofcanterbury.co.nz/feast/64-hats-off-gala-dinner>

Upcoming classes

'The Ultimate BBQ' – Sunday 16th January



Learn how to create a stunning BBQ menu and lots of tips and techniques to take your next BBQ to the next level. We will cover everything from fantastic marinades, bbq basics, hot smoking, great salads, drinks, making bread and much more. All of your friends will be queuing up to be invited to your next BBQ.

Finally we will all sit around the dining table and eat a BBQ banquet with matching NZ wines and beers. If you received a cooking school gift voucher for Christmas, now is the time to use it!

\$185 including all food, beer, wine and recipes to take home. 10am until 4pm.

'Summer Bounty' – Saturday 22nd January

When the garden is full of ripe fresh produce we show you how to maximize the summer harvest. From beautiful summer salads to inspired main courses and delicate desserts, the day will include a four course menu that will make you want to head out into your garden, or local farmers market, pick your produce and get cooking with the summer bounty.

Then its time to tuck in to the mouth watering treats that have been demonstrated along with carefully selected matching NZ wines. The day will finish up around 4pm. \$185 including all food, wine and recipes.



'Fresh from the Wharf' – Saturday 05th February



Seafood, seafood and more seafood. We head down to the end of the wharf (weather permitting!) to see what the boat has brought in and head back to the school to learn how to create some fabulous dishes with the fresh bounty. We will create fabulous recipes with some lesser know fish so you can head home and impress your friends with lots of tasty

treats. Murray, the local fisherman, will give lots of great advice on local seafood and you will have the chance to ask any questions you have.

A must for those who love to fish or to cook fish! \$185 including all food, wine and recipes.

'Vegetarian Feast' – Saturday 05th March

Due to popular demand we are running our very first vegetarian class. Come along and learn an inspired range of interesting, satisfying and nutritious vegetarian recipes that will make even the avid meat eater jealous of.

We will show you a great range of vegetarian recipes that will make your next dinner party an occasion none of your friends are going to want to miss.

\$170 including all food, wine and recipes.

Click on the apron below (CTRL + click) to take you straight to our website

Happy Cooking and a very happy new year to you all!

Ant & Lou.

