



Capital Country

Truffle Festival

MEDIA UPDATE

A taste of mid-winter magic

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We're launched now let's have lunch.

What a great weekend! Here's a quick roundup of the events.



As the sun squeaked through the mist, the growers' stall at the Capital Region Farmers Market was selling truffle before they unfolded the legs on the table. They had sold out the two previous weekends and there were some determined customers who didn't want to miss out this time. The growers sold around a kilo of fresh truffle, including some to repeat customers. This will probably be *the* outlet in season for the independent growers in the region.

They'll be there every Saturday morning while there's truffles to sell (we're hoping that will be until early August since we had a late start.) We had a call from a Melbourne restaurateur who was ready to jump on a flight with his chef to buy truffles at the market, we put him in touch with a supplier in Melbourne but you can see the excitement that's been generated. [\(Our Growers Forum on Saturday 27 at 4.00pm is a great way to learn more about growing, buying and eating truffles. There's a fun sniff-off with a panel of expert noses.\)](#)



At the same time, there was an overflow crowd having a coffee and pastry at Senso waiting for the bus to take them truffle hunting. Overflow, because our bus wasn't big enough and we had to hire another. The local ABC TV sent a reporter and cameraman (they also started at the Farmers Market and WIN TV came to the hunt as well. There's a link to the video on our website.)

Then almost all of them came back to Senso to taste what they'd found, at a truffle lunch cooked by Jan Gundlach and his team.



While the dogs were sniffing out truffle in Sutton, the Native truffle talk and then field trip started at the National Botanic Gardens. Canberra has the pick of scientists who can talk about the most amazing subjects and this was one. The crowd of around forty heard Dr. Andrew Claridge and Prof. Jim Trappe uncover from the scientific leaf litter some amazing fungi. The field trip was at the Mulligans Flat sanctuary. Did you know we've probably around 1500 to 2500 varieties of Australian native truffle?



There were some demonstrations and wine tastings at Plonk! at the Fyshwick Market of local wineries. At the Natural Health Centre, the producers of Homeleigh Grove and Kailis olive oil along with Landtasia organic beef, all had tastings. There was lots of interest from out of town visitors, some from Sydney and Melbourne all eager to have a truffle experience which was a bit lacking at Fyshwick Market. We obviously need to do more especially on a Sunday but for our first event, the out of town response is really encouraging.

We'll add some more events this coming weekend based on that demand. A few places who said they'd be selling truffle don't seem to have got their act together yet. The Kitchen Cabinet at Cafe in the House is taking orders but if you miss the Farmers' Market you can definitely buy from Senso at Fyshwick all day Saturday 27 [\(and on Sunday 28 while we've got the Master Class. 3.00 - 5.00pm with Dominique Rizzo from Brisbane, Anthony Fullerton and Jan Gundlach doing cooking demo's and tastings\).](#)



On Saturday and Sunday Lerida Estate had a talk session by French chef Christophe Gregoire from Le Très Bon restaurant in Bungendore and local growers Sherry McArdle-English and Michael Gardiner. This led for many into a lunch with a truffle dish or two at the Lerida Café. There were capacity crowds both days, the barrel room was packed and Christophe's stories of truffling in France and his pride in now having high quality local Perigord truffles available to cook with was evident.



On Saturday night, in town Senso was serving up truffle at Jaan's Table Degustation Dinner. After four amazing truffle packed courses there were a number of diners who looked apprehensively at the Valrhona Gran Cuova Fondant with a red wine and truffle granita, but after one taste, all assumed blissful smiles. Out in Murrumbateman wine country, Yarrh Wines fired up a mid-winter bonfire and invited the Queen of Misrule to dinner with a long table truffle feast in their beautiful barrel room.

The deliveries of truffle were made to Anise, e.u café and Grazing just before the weekend and they're ramping up the truffle quota on their menus this week. Tom Moore at Grazing was talking about a dish using Allsun Farm's artichokes. Jeff Piper at Anise has his degustation menu on our website, and needed more truffles after the first nights. Janet Jeffs has a full degustation truffle menu at The Ginger Room. Chef Christian Hauberg at Pulp-Kitchen in Ainslie has a dinner on the next three or so Wednesdays (the first night was booked out) and the other bookings are filling fast. Now that's what we wanted to see happen! See the festival Website for all contact details.



Oh, last week there were a few lead-in events that we must mention. There was the RIRDC supported event by the Culinary Federation at Senso for local chefs, apprentices and proprietors. Growers Kate and Peter Marshall brought a full range of truffle from rotten to export quality, and laid them out so the professionals could see that there were variations in colour, aroma and texture and how to choose a good one. Jan again cooked various dishes to show their versatility. It started with a personal favourite of mine, individual serves in an eggshell cup with a

coddled yolk, truffle infused whipped cream and a sprinkle of sea salt and truffle shaving on top. Eat with a teaspoon. Simple. Bliss.



And we had a great morning at the Centennial Vineyards Highland Truffle Hunt at grower Frank Downes' *truffiere*. Then Centennial's Restaurant chef Robin Murray cooked a risotto of truffle infused rice and spit roast chicken with generous shavings of truffle. They've set up a great outdoor space at the Downes truffle farm and plan to do more hunts and lunches this season. See the Truffle Festival website or Centennial's site for dates.

If all that, and the next few weeks events don't make people think Capital Region in winter is Truffle time, we'll be most surprised. Are you planning a visit? See the website first for the latest updates.

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