

FOOD TEA TREE GULLY SA

Delicious poached egg, guanciale, asparagus and almond. **FACING PAGE** "At Topiary, our tasting menu focuses on foraged ingredients, interesting flavour combinations that we've developed, and unique ways of using the whole plant or animal," says Kane.



natural rhythm

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN CHEF KANE POLLARD SURRENDERS HIS MENU TO THE SEASONS, USING ONLY LOCAL PRODUCE FOR INSPIRATION.

WORDS RACHEL WHITE PHOTOGRAPHY ABBIE MELLÉ

Topiary's fresh, house-made loaves of bread. **FACING PAGE** "The stone that the house was built from came from the quarry across the road in Anstey Hill," says Kane. "A sandstone courtyard was added about 30 years ago. The ceiling of the main room had glass panels installed many years ago, and was used as a shade house to store camellias. The nursery has always been known as the home of high-quality camellias and topiary plants, hence the name Topiary."

"Our food philosophy at Topiary is based on the way people would have lived 100 years ago."

KANE POLLARD, chef and creative director at Topiary Dining, located in the foothills of Tea Tree Gully in South Australia, has a passion for harnessing local produce sustainably and plating it up in an artistic way. "We live in a super-unique microclimate in the foothills, so there's plenty to forage and be inspired by," says Kane. "Our food philosophy at Topiary is based on the way people would have lived 100 years ago – move with the seasons, work closely with those around you, make from scratch, waste nothing."

To that end, Topiary's à la carte menu is crafted around a weekly trip to the Adelaide Showgrounds Farmers' Market, meaning it evolves with the seasons and champions local produce, sustainable practices and waste reduction.

"A good example [of our food philosophy] is buying fresh Tommy Ruff, which is a super-sustainable local fish," explains Kane. "At the restaurant, we stuff it with fermented capsicum paste from summer and house-made butter before wrapping it in a fig leaf and cooking it on a high heat. The resulting dish uses sustainable seafood, a seasonal preserve and something hyper-seasonal, and it's served in a unique way."

An Adelaide Hills native, Kane grew up in a market gardening family and started working in kitchens in

his mid-teens. Now, with over 20 years' experience, he has found his true calling leading Topiary's innovative take on fine dining.

"I've been cooking in commercial kitchens since I was 15. I'm now 38, and wouldn't change it for the world," he says. "When the opportunity came up to take over this unique space, it solidified my way of cooking and living – both in the industry and at home."

Blurring the boundaries between work and home life, Kane and his wife, Adele, run Topiary as a team. "Working together means that we always feel like we're working but, for us, it's a really positive thing," says Kane. "Knowing Adele is delivering the food and chatting to the guests gives me peace of mind."

Housed within Newman's Nursery in a beautifully restored 140-year-old home, Topiary offers an enchanting setting for raising their two daughters. "Our family has grown up around the restaurant, which has been a beautiful thing to watch," says Kane. "Our eldest, Isla, was born three years after we took on Topiary, so she grew up with the team.

"Our youngest, Maisey, loves heading to the forest as a family to forage for some inspirational downtime. It's her happy place." *CS*

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POACHED EGG, GUANCIALE, ASPARAGUS, ALMOND

Serves 6

ALMOND AJO BLANCO

- 150g blanched almonds
- 100g stale sourdough bread, chopped into 1cm cubes
- 250ml soy milk
- 5 garlic cloves, minced
- Juice and zest of 1 lemon
- 1 tablespoon white vinegar
- 1 teaspoon Dijon mustard
- 100ml olive oil
- 1 pinch cayenne pepper
- Salt flakes, to taste

Place almonds, sourdough and soy milk in a container. Mix, then leave to soak overnight.

The next day, blitz the soaked mix along with the garlic, lemon juice, zest, vinegar and mustard until smooth. Slowly add the olive oil until the mix is glossy. Add a little hot water if required.

Season with cayenne and salt flakes, then set aside.

MAIN COMPONENTS

- 200ml white vinegar
- 1 tablespoon table salt
- 6 eggs
- 12 asparagus spears
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 50ml olive oil
- 200g guanciale, shaved thin (cured pork cheek)

In a medium pot, bring 3 litres of hot water, white vinegar and table salt to the boil.

Crack your eggs into a bowl. Using a slotted spoon, create a whirlpool in the pot. Slowly drop your eggs into the centre and reduce heat to low. Allow eggs to cook until soft but set, then lift from the pot with the slotted spoon and rest on a tray lined with paper towel.

For the asparagus salsa, finely slice the asparagus spears into small, thin discs and place into a mixing bowl.

Sprinkle with a pinch of flake salt, then add the lemon juice and olive oil to dress liberally.

To plate, place 2 large dollops of the Ajo Blanco in the centre of the bowl. Make a well in the centre and place a poached egg in it. Cover the egg in guanciale, then add asparagus salsa around the egg.

LIVER PÂTÉ, SPENT MOTHER CRACKER, WILDFLOWERS

Serves 20

PÂTÉ

- 40g butter, cubed for cooking
- 100g chicken liver
- 60g duck liver
- 35g shallots, chopped
- 15g celery, chopped
- 1 garlic clove, minced
- 1 stem of picked rosemary
- 5 stems of picked thyme
- 25ml red wine
- 10ml port
- 1.4g pink salt
- 100ml cream
- 60g butter to finish, chilled and cubed

Place 20g butter in a heavy-based pan over a medium-high heat and allow to foam. Add the livers and cook for about 2 minutes on each side, until caramelised on the outside but still soft in the centre. Set aside to rest.

In the same pan, dropped to a low heat, place another 20g butter along with the shallots, celery, garlic, rosemary and thyme. Cook until translucent.

Deglaze the pan with the red wine and port, then add the pink salt and allow the liquid to reduce.

Next, add the cream and allow to reduce by about half.

In a blender, add the pan contents (make sure you scrape out all the flavour stuck to the pan) and the livers.

Blend until smooth, then while blending, slowly add the

chilled, cubed butter one cube at a time.

If required, add a little hot water to keep the mixture moving and glossy.

Strain the mixture through a fine strainer, season with flake salt and cracked pepper, then set aside to chill in the fridge, covered loosely with a cloth to prevent the pâté forming a skin.

SPENT MOTHER CRACKER

- 500g sourdough yeast mother, left on the bench for 4 days
- 5g salt
- 15ml olive oil
- Edible flowers and leaves

Preheat oven to 170°C.

In a bowl, whisk together the spent yeast mother, salt and olive oil until a smooth, paint-like batter is formed.

Pour the batter onto baking paper-lined trays, spread thin, and bake until cooked through and crispy, like a cracker. Gently flip the cracker over once set to get an even bake.

Once cooled, break the cracker into pieces, pipe the pâté onto the cracker and cover in edible flowers and leaves.

FIG LEAF BAKED FISH

Serves 6

- 100g butter, chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, minced
- 10 stems of parsley, roughly chopped
- 1 lemon, juiced and zested
- 6 large fig leaves
- 25ml olive oil
- 12 butterflied Tommy Ruff or Coorong mullet fillets
- Salt and pepper, to taste

Preheat oven to 220°C.

In a blender, or mortar and pestle, add the butter, garlic, parsley, lemon juice and zest. Process until smooth.

Lay out your fig leaves on baking trays and brush the >



CLOCKWISE, FROM ABOVE Vibrant liver pâté, spent mother cracker and wildflowers; "We go to the Adelaide Showground Farmers' Market to pick up the majority of our fruits and vegetables to make up the week's menu, which gives us the opportunity to support growers and producers from across the state," says Kane; "The natural surrounds make for an inspirational day every day," says Kane of Topiary's leafy setting; gorgeously glossy fig leaf baked fish; preserved goods on display.





CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Abundant seasonal greens; enjoy the delicately balanced flavours in Topiary's whipped cheesecake, honey quince and crumble; "We only have a courtyard garden and grow wall on site for herbs and flowers," says Kane. "We leave the growing to those who know how to do it best, and forage within walking distance of Topiary."; edible weeds add colour to lamb in the weeds, roast garlic yoghurt; painting by Adelaide-based artist Lena Baumgartner.



leaves with olive oil. Place a butterflied fillet of fish on each leaf, season with salt and pepper, spread generously with the butter mix, then place the other butterflied fillets on top to cover.

Fold the fig leaves in to cover the fish starting from the left, then the right, then use the top to secure your leaf 'envelope' shut. Use a skewer or toothpick to keep shut.

Bake the fish for about 10 minutes, or until a skewer into the centre of the fish comes out hot.

Remove the toothpicks and serve leaves on a plate garnished with olive oil. Each diner can open the leaf at the table to enjoy the fragrance and sense of surprise.

LAMB IN THE WEEDS, ROAST GARLIC YOGHURT

Serves 6

2 litres chilled water
200g table salt
60g brown sugar
6 large pieces of lamb's neck, on the bone (3 whole necks cut lengthways)
1kg yoghurt
1 garlic bulb
1 teaspoon olive oil
2 litres animal fat (chicken, pork, lamb) or vegetable oil
4 stems of rosemary
10 stems of thyme
100g honey
Edible weeds – nasturtium, soursob, dandelion, chickweed

Preheat oven to 190°C.

The day before it is required, mix the chilled water, table salt and brown sugar in a bowl to form a brine.

Add the lamb necks to the brine and allow to steep in the fridge for 2 hours.

For the yoghurt, add muslin cloth to a strainer, place over a bowl and add the yoghurt,

allowing the whey to drain overnight in the fridge.

Wrap the bulb of garlic in foil, adding a teaspoon of olive oil, and roast in the oven for about 45 minutes, until soft and caramelised. Set aside in the fridge.

Drop the oven to 90°C or use a slow cooker on medium.

Remove the lamb's neck from the brine, pat dry and place in a deep baking tray. Add the animal fat or oil (make sure they're covered) and the rosemary and thyme. Cover the tray and place in the oven for 16 hours.

The next day, carefully remove the lamb's neck from the fat, and place them bone side up on a tray. Carefully remove the bones (they should slide out), turn the meat of the neck over and place on a lined baking tray in the fridge to set.

Turn oven up to 190°C.

Squeeze the garlic pulp from the bulb and place in a mixing bowl. Add the hung yoghurt, mix, then season with a little flake salt and cracked pepper.

In a small pot, place the garlic skin, honey, and a dash of the fat from the cooking process. Allow to cook on a low heat for 20 minutes.

Place the set lamb in the 190°C oven for 10 minutes to caramelise.

To finish, place the lamb on a plate, baste it with the honey mix and cover it in the edible weeds. Place a dollop of the garlic yoghurt on the side before serving.

WHIPPED CHEESECAKE, HONEY QUINCE, CRUMBLE

Serves 6

CHEESECAKE
400g cream cheese
100g icing sugar
20g lemon juice
Pinch of salt

Place all ingredients in a mixer and beat with a paddle until just combined.

Put the mixture into a piping bag and keep in the fridge until required.

HONEY QUINCE

2 quinces, peeled, cored and diced into ½cm cubes
½ cup honey
2 cups water
1 lemon, halved

Preheat oven to 160°C.

Place all ingredients in a pot. Cook on medium heat until the quince is tender.

Using a slotted spoon, remove the quince from the liquid and place on a lined roasting tray.

Add the quince skins and core to the pot and reduce the liquid back down to a honey-like consistency; strain and set aside.

Cook the poached, diced quince in the oven for about 30 minutes, until it turns dark ruby in colour. Add the quince to the reduced honey liquid and place in the fridge.

CRUMBLE

200g almonds, roughly chopped
60g brown sugar
45g butter, melted
3g cinnamon powder
1.5g nutmeg powder
1g salt

Preheat oven to 170°C.

Place all the crumble ingredients in a roasting tray and mix thoroughly.

Roast until golden and fragrant, about 30 minutes, stirring regularly.

To finish, pipe the cheesecake into the centre of a bowl, make a well in the centre and fill with the honey quince mix.

Add a scoop of warm crumble mix for texture, then serve.