

THE OTHER CHEF



It has been just over 12 months since we last caught up with Eric & Monica Robinson of The Other Chef, and they have some exciting new products to tell us about.



Hi Monica & Eric. You have been very busy lately and are going to be exhibiting at Fine Food Australia, which is a trade only event later next month. This is an exciting opportunity for you to showcase your products. Tell us about it.

Fine Food is Australia's leading food and hospitality industry event, with over 1,000 exhibitors taking part. We will be part of the 'Flavours of New South Wales' stand, sponsored by the NSW Department of State & Regional Development.

The event brings industry buyers and decision makers from around the world; exhibitors have the unique opportunity to interact with thousands of retail and foodservice buyers face to face. It's a proven way to generate new business, and we are thrilled to be involved for the first time this year.

For anyone in the industry wanting to attend, entry is free by registering online from 1 January to 1 September 2009. If you are not registered, the cost is \$30 at the door. The event runs from 7-10 September at the Sydney Convention & Exhibition Centre.

We are really excited about this event and are working hard to ensure we make the most of our time in Sydney to continue to grow our small business and get The Other Chef name out there. We will be on Stand D2 in Hall 1 – please come and say hello if you come along!

> What are the new products you have added to the range?

Toffee Apple Syrup is relatively new – it's decadently sweet, tastes just like toffee-apples and is perfect drizzled over pancakes, waffles or icecream. Our two little boys love it on warm porridge in the morning, and it's great stirred through natural yoghurt or fresh fruit salad. We call it the Aussie-alternative to Maple Syrup!

The very latest product was only released in the last fortnight, and we are seeing its popularity confirmed already. We had been asked time and time again at the local Farmers' Markets for Chilli Jam, so for all those people out there who have asked us for one ... it's here!

It's aromatic with warm flavours of star anise, ginger and lemongrass, with a medium chilli heat.

It's sticky and sweet and can be used with just about anything – wherever you want to add a bit of spice! It's great with tempura fish fillets, or use it to glaze seared pork cutlets – it's incredibly versatile.

Another product with some heat (about to hit the market) is one that we have just developed for Ricardoes – it's a Tomato Chilli Chutney. It is savoury, medium-hot (a little hotter than our Chilli Jam) and can be used as a chutney or salsa.

A new development is the use of a locally grown oil for the production of our Lemon Infused Extra Virgin Olive Oil, with a quality oil sourced from Hastings Valley Olives at Birdwood. We have had very positive customer feedback and the product is growing in popularity, particularly when partnered with our award-winning Balsamic Essence.

We had some great results in the 2008 Fine Food Shows, which are held in Spring each year. The new Toffee Apple Syrup won Bronze at the Mudjee Fine Food Show, where the Balsamic Essence also won Silver.

Our most exciting achievement was the Gold Medal won by the Quince Paste at the Royal Hobart Fine Food Show. The Quince Paste is a wonderful accompaniment to cheese, especially with our local Hastings Valley or Comboyne Culture cheeses!

The 2009 food competitions are fast approaching, so we are busy submitting products and hoping for another successful year!

> You have also teamed with other local producers for some of your products. Tell us about those.

Our partnerships with local producers has certainly been a significant development in our business over the last 18 months. We are proud to be making products for Ricardoes, The Company Farm, Cassegrain Gourmet and Sherwood Estate, and we are working on products for Near River Produce – all of whom provide us with ingredients grown on their own properties.

We offer a service that enables each producer to establish a range of gourmet food products under their own brand, ensuring valuable brand-building opportunities for them, and at the same time solving the problem of any excess crop. Some of these products have done well at national food competitions – Ricardoes Tomato & Passionfruit Jam took out a Bronze Medal at last year's Sydney Royal.

We also make a range for Bent on Food in Wingham, an award-winning café and gourmet food shop. Our contract brand service is available to anyone seeking to value-add their produce or simply reinforce their brand, no matter what business they are in. For anyone interested in this service, there is more information on our website.

> The Other Chef Fine foods are also Journey of Flavour accredited through the local program. Tell us about why you feel it is important that we highlight our local produce and producers.

Our region has so much to offer the food-lover, with fantastic fresh produce, wonderful wines – even local beer, and great restaurant and catering dining experiences.

The Journey of Flavour program is about making sure that locals as well as visitors can identify local products and services to enjoy. It's also about getting our region recognised nationally as a food

and wine destination.

There are so many good reasons to support local! Firstly, it means we can support other local business and the local economy; secondly, we can put the freshest ingredients possible on our tables; and thirdly, it allows us to minimise the fuel used to transport ingredients, thereby caring for our environment along the way.

A visit to the local Farmers' Markets (4th Saturday of every month in Wauchope and the 2nd Saturday of the month at the Maritime Museum in Port Macquarie) is a good way to experience the wonderful array of fresh, local products and ingredients available.

There is absolutely no need for us to add anything artificial to our products – the colour and flavour of locally grown ingredients such as strawberries and tomatoes are more than adequate!

> You have tried to ensure that your products are without the addition of artificial flavours, colours or preservatives. Why is this important to you?

With two young children, we are conscious of minimising additives in their diet and know we aren't alone in seeking products without artificial colours, flavours and preservatives.

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> There are many fantastic products in your range, but what would be your favourite and what kind of dish would you cook with it?

We are pretty rapt with the Chilli Jam right now, and are using it in our home kitchen a LOT. It gets used on sandwiches, pizzas and pasta. It's superb as a dipper for Thai fish cakes or on Indian samosas. We have glazed seared meats with it, and served it with barbecued steak and sausages. The list goes on ... This product is incredibly versatile and easy to use; we hope everyone enjoys our Chilli Jam as much as we do!

> The Other Chef Fine Foods are available locally at Growers' Market and other selected gourmet food outlets. Go to www.theotherchef.com.au for a full list of stockists.

