



Slow Food Brisbane Inc

A not for profit organisation

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Brisbane Convivium Slow Food Date Claimers for 2012

Mon 26 November: AGM at Christchurch Milton
7:00pm for 7:30pm

Sat 08 December: Christmas Party
See Attached

LEADER'S REPORT

Dear Members,

One of the many things I learnt from going to Terra Madre in Torino was that those who immerse themselves in Slow Food, its activities and philosophies are greatly energised and enjoy what they are doing. On the other hand, those who went along not fully understanding its potential and looked just for an exotic food to buy or an idea for their next dinner party or were just selling product quickly got bored and tired.

To help members get energised I am suggesting you might consider Australian products from the Ark of Taste to have at your Christmas dinner. Australia's list is very short because members, yes you included, have done very little to nominate foods in the past. If you google Ark of Taste you will see that other countries have vast lists. We have just 5 with a 6th recently to be added. The list includes Kangaroo Island Ligurian bee honey, Qld bunya nut, Tasmanian leatherwood honey, Vic goldfields bull-boar sausage, Wessex Saddleback pig. Why not have a party game after Christmas dinner nostalgically remembering foods that were around and that now are scarce. They are foods which if we stop eating them, will stop being produced, and therefore will disappear. There are foods that used to be common that are now only produced for fetes and local meetings. If you have an ethnic background you may find your family still enjoys a particular product or a particular recipe which is

now no longer found in your country of origin. Such a food could qualify. Wessex saddleback pig fits that category. So does the bull-boar sausage. It is only made by one butcher in Melbourne. There must be others. I expect our country members, especially, are a repository of much such information.

The 2012 committee wishes you and yours a very happy festive season.

Yvonne

UNCORKED AND CULTIVATED ITALIAN WINE AND WINE TOUR 2012

By Peter Scudamore-Smith tour leader writing from Florence, late September.

300 words + two markets pics (Sant Ambrogio entrance, Chianina T-bone)

The fun part of visiting Florence is the visual indulgence. From a Slow Food

standpoint, the raptures to come are a feast to the senses. And I am not thinking a noseful of rosebud aromas or beautiful fresh-cut chive flowers. Simply the sweet smell of the Arno from my breakfast window is a good start.



Sant Ambrogio is one Mercato Alimentare where Florentines gather six days a week. Sales of the seasonal basics for a Tuscan cucina are brisk and varied as is the quality of the produce-borlotti beans in shell, elongated tomatoes, greener than ripe, limpid rucola (rocket) because part is open air market where any sales conditions, part sun included, may prevail. The broccoli is not ice-covered nor is it your sterile Woolies store where everything tastes the same.

Butchery is basic while those famous chianina rib beef slices will top the scales over 2 kg. No gloves here and it's a fair bet the best beef stack will be perched on the counter top in breathing space of its potential customers. Despite the hygiene these steaks taste wonderful as our tour guests found at La Cantinetta di Rignana outside Greve in Chianti Classico.

Tuscan food styles are hearty and fortifying-bread (pane) reminds me of stale white crusts for that is what the bread is-uninspiring. But to eat as a Florentine is to use this to enjoy your oil (glistening, green, peppery and pear-like, slippery, intoxicating) or the remains of your pasta; so who needs flavoured bread. Our touring guests are learning to eat as the Tuscans eat, and that becomes an evolving skill.



Then there are the scattered tripe burger vans, and one “Trippaio “dispensary in the Ambrogio market proper. Trippa, the oldest fast food in this city, must be popular.

Slow Food Brisbane News:

- Threatened! The wild Macadamia Nut is under threat from land clearing and habitat fragmentation. The proposed Supper Quarry at Mt Cotton represents a real threat to our remaining few specimens of this naturally occurring listed species. Other threats include: change in community composition, habitat degradation, weed invasion, and potentially reduced gene flow through changes in pollination and dispersal vectors.

(Newsletter of Wildlife Preservation Society of Qld, Bayside Branch)

If that happens another local food source gene pool will have disappeared forever!

- Gold Star! Slow Food Hunter Valley with about 50 members raised \$20000 to enable a group to have a stall and presence at the Salone del Gusto in Torino. It enabled us all, Slow Food in Australia, to have a presence on the world stage. Very successful, although it had meant 17 hour days of planning and preparation for weeks.
- Congratulations to Amorelle Dempster, Leader of Slow Food Hunter Valley being elected as one of 31 international Councillors of Slow Food for the n 4 years
- The Terra Madre, Salone del Gusto and the Congress were a great success with over 100 countries represented. The delegates from Slow Food Brisbane to the Congress were Yvonne and Jack. Others who attended included our Treasurer, Elizabeth and some other members. All of the above paid their own fares and accommodation and other expenses and were not subsidised in any way either by SFB or Slow Food International.

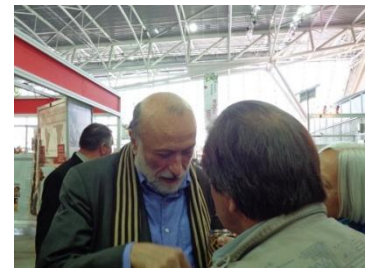


SFB sponsored our member, Rex Carruthers by paying his economy air fare and accommodation. His area of interest and expertise is bees.

Rex and his wife Naomi were so enthusiastic and worked so hard. It is amazing the number of invitations they accrued especially as they did not speak most of the languages there. Humans are wonderful communicators! We look forward to Rex’s report in February and the visit to his farm. We expect

that Rex will have gathered information for his own practice and for his profession and hopefully have input into the export of honey from Australia in the future.

- The common theme of the Congress from members speeches was Food Security. The problem seemed the same – whether Australia, Africa, South America or Asia. Contrary to people’s wishes elected governments are not representing the wishes of their people and instead partnering with large multinational businesses in selling off land, water, and resources and generally contributing to the death of the earth.



Carlo Petrini- President Slow Food

Snippets from the Congress:

- The inspirational speaker from Greece talked about how the people were coping with their dire circumstances. Those in the country and those who had a suburban plot of land coped best. They could grow their own food, and perhaps a bit extra to sell and to keep chickens and a cow. By using seed saving techniques, composting etc once established the garden was self funding. The desperate people were those living in the high rises of Athens without a balcony. They needed money for food and energy and were unable to become self sufficient. Prices were increasing as fuel prices increased with no solution in sight.

The speaker from Istanbul, Turkey, described the increasing chaos of her beloved city as war surrounds her country. Again, it was those with a little plot of land and a handful of viable seeds using the Slow Food philosophy that were the survivors and the helping hand to others.

From Albania there was the plea from the heart about the raping of the hillsides for the wild sage, which grows profusely and is said to be the best in the world. Large companies from the US have discovered it, paying very little for it and disregarding sustainable principles for gathering. About 40% of the sage on the US market is coming from Albania. Those making the large profit are the US companies. Meanwhile the Albanian government does nothing to address the citizens concerns.

At a workshop we tasted a sustenance diet of the herdsmen on the hills of Albania. It vividly demonstrated how little we really need to sustain ourselves, but of course there would also be little profit for the gargantuan food companies of the world. The most basic was a flour and water mixture flavoured with sheep cheese and the goat liver with nettles. I preferred the latter.

- The African Thousand garden project funded by Slow Food was presented as a great success. Instead of the old cycle of African famine when the rains fail and the donating of thousands of tons of food which is foreign to the recipients, the unemployed, women and schoolchildren are being taught to establish and tend food gardens. A whole such garden was exhibited at the Salone del Gusto international pavilion. This is seen as the model to overcome in the long term famines in Africa. It seems to be working where gardens are established. And success breeds success.

- The most common topic was Food Security and members speaking about either the inaction of their governments to secure the food, the seas and the land and water for their future or governments where Trade is God and small poor countries are pillaged for cheap food while they themselves value add and sell back for the greedy and wealthy few. Both result in the pernicious dying of the earth. While citizens care, it seems those elected to represent them somewhere lose the plot. Australia's proposed Food Plan received a mention. A bouquet was given for the government's raising the issue to the consciousness of the nation but brickbats for their proposed solution.
- What *wasn't* present was marbled beef, lot fed or grain finished meats. These are not Slow Food. But there was dried fish from Iceland and Norway and dried meats from South Africa.

In these turbulent times the sanctity of Mother cow was listed.

*She provides milk which sustains the future generations of many nations.
 She works the field helping the farmer to grow a healthy diet
 She produces dung, a cheap and efficient energy source
 She is sacrificed so that the rich of the world can eat her very nourishing meat
 And even after she is dead she continues to supply warmth and shelter with her leather.*

Think of this the next time you see Mother cow being mistreated by other humans.

Cannon Hill State School



Yvonne attended the school assembly at Cannon Hill State School on Friday September 5, at 9am to present our \$1000 donation for possum proofing the school kitchen garden. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet the children and staff, to hear the school orchestra play and to see children getting prizes for their endeavours. And, of course, I saw the garden at two levels -some parts getting towards the end of the year, lots of flowering vegetables and seed pods. The children told me how much they loved their garden.

One small girl, who listened to our member Christine Ling, the Principal, explain to the children that they had been given \$1000, gave a loud sigh of incredulity and later came up to me with the most innocent eyes and asked 'Are you rich?' I think that little person will remember the occasion for many years.

Attending the assembly of CHSS to present the cheque reinforced to me the importance of the school kitchen garden. In my chats with the children it quickly became apparent that it was one of the important reasons of why they came to school. The school is to be congratulated in now being part of the Stephanie Alexander system.

However, in the week previous to the visit their outdoor kitchen garden pizza oven was vandalised. The committee has resolved that we should try to raise the \$500 required to build another



ASAP and hope that members will be generous. The 2 are closely related as the pizzas often consist of the garden produce.

Some interaction has occurred with Corinda SHS with a view, to developing a Slow Food relationship since the school offers both agriculture and Home Economics subjects. They were still suffering from last year's floods when their chooks and cattle drowned and their gardens were destroyed. It was seen as a good opportunity for Slow Food to participate in sustainable agriculture and the Home Economics students would use the produce grown. And both Federal and State governments want more students to become interested in agriculture.

We have terminated the fledgling relationship because staff were not really interested. SFB had offered to restart their orchard with heritage and native fruit trees. But there has been no enthusiasm for that from the school.

Woolworths and Coles have been most successful in offering the schools their products including seedlings, chemicals for weed control etc. It also means schools don't have to plan to collect seed and just pull everything out before the holidays and start again next year. It is quite a task to convince them that that is not the best way – that sustainability is the only long term way.

We have another school to approach in the New Year.

SHAME! The community associated with an inner Brisbane primary school recently was successful in raising the \$40000 necessary to join the Stephanie Alexander school kitchen garden project. They were so pleased UNTIL the Principal rejected the money and the idea!

Genetically Modified Foods: What is in it for Consumers?



On the 16th October, Claus Jehne, formally of the School of Public Health, QUT gave a fascinating insight into Genetically Modified Foods. Genetic engineering enables scientists to arrange the marriage and combine the qualities of any two or more creatures into one offspring irrespective of the species involved.

Claus explained that one reason this is being done is to create organisms that can be patented and owned by corporations for profit purposes. Think canola, soybeans and maize, to mention just a few. Another reason is create plants that can protect themselves from insect attack or to incorporate extra or new nutrients. Think bananas and cotton. The final reason is to program animals and plants to produce pharmaceuticals.

He outlined that with these benefits came many risks. Some of these include unwanted fertilisation of GMO plants with weeds, causing environmental pollution. Also the unintended consequences and problems with GMO organisms: allergens, toxins and sterility.

Some countries, such as Japan and Europe have banned almost all GMO products and say that they will watch American children for the next 10 years. Australia has a case by case assessment of the risks by the Genetic Manipulation Advisory Committee, relying on overseas data, with no testing being done is Australia.



The main concerns for consumers are that there is no safe history of use and that we are relying on data produced by the creators and owners of the GM organisms. Claus added that there is little pre-market testing and little post-market monitoring. Another concern is that we may not be able to recognise all GM foods as there are no strict regulations on labelling.

This was indeed an evening which provided food for thought. Claus advised that we should look for food directly labelled 'NOT MADE FROM GM.' He left us with the thought:



*Let us hasten slowly,
Because we do not know
What we do not know.*

Newsletter Matters

This email newsletter will be sent every two months to provide updates on proposed events, dinners, meetings, excursions as well as offer articles of interest. If you are interested in contributing please contact Ross Claxton at rossclaxton@bigpond.com

The Newsletter will be sent electronically to all members with and email address and posted to those without one. It will also be posted on the website www.slowfoodbrisbane.com under newsletters.

Membership Matters

As your memberships become due you will receive a reminder letter or email from **Slow Food Brisbane**. To renew your subscription, you have two choices.

Firstly, you can go to www.slowfood.com and renew online.

At the top of the page, click on "Join Us"

On the next page, select "Australia"

Choose your type of membership, usually "Individual" or "couple" and click "join"

Complete your details and remember to choose "QLD- Brisbane" as the convivium.

If you can't find your membership number, leave it blank.

Click "Submit" and complete your payment on the secure page.

Secondly, for those who choose not to renew online, call **Yvonne Webb** our membership registrar on (07) 3849 3563 and she will complete the renewal for you.

Once the membership has been renewed your membership card will be sent out from Italy

WE ARE ON THE WEB AT

www.slowfoodbrisbane.com

It is in its early stages and will have more information as people contribute. All the old editions of the newsletter are available for download in .pdf form. Please feel free to tell anyone about them and encourage interested people to download them and maybe they will join us.

As events for the year are planned the details will be posted on the website so check it out regularly

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