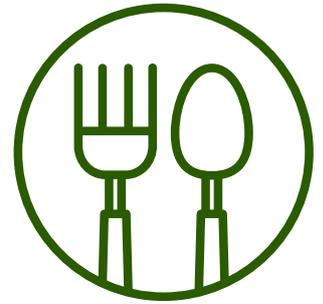


Local Food Innovators: Trent Webber



With a simple philosophy of delicious and honest dishes, chef **Trent Webber** and his coveted culinary vision has made his mark in notable kitchens throughout NSW. His impressive career encompasses two hatted restaurants; Finns Restaurant in Byron Bay and Rock Restaurant in Pokolbin (both were awarded Hats during Trent's time) plus he spent time at Zebu Bar & Grill in Port Macquarie, Locavore Dining, The Sebel Kirkton Park Hunter Valley, Emma's of Lovedale, Brownsugar and Wyndham Estate Wines.

Earlier this year, **Gosford RSL** welcomed Trent as its new Executive Chef. As the Central Coast culinary scene now calls for quality menus, Trent is weaving his exceptional skills and modest culinary philosophy throughout the menus of Gosford RSL's special events, Café Kindle and Luminous Brasserie.

With valuable experience, classic training and creative passion, we asked Trent about his culinary journey and what he has planned for the future of Gosford RSL.

How did you come to be in the food and hospitality industry?

Growing up I always had an interest in cooking. My mother was a chef and we cooked dinner each night and I found myself developing a passion for food. Every opportunity I had, I would go to the markets with my mother and select the fresh ingredients we intended to create into our dinner for the evening.

Naturally as I got older during my high school years, I started working casually as a kitchen hand at night and on weekends. Observing the chefs and kitchen operations only intensified my want to become a chef. When school finished, I eagerly gained an apprenticeship and the rest is history.

You bring extensive training and Hatted restaurant experience to Gosford RSL dining. How do diners and your kitchen colleagues experience this?

I train all my chefs one-on-one with every menu item, on every menu change; from product selection and preparation to execution and plating. I have carefully adapted my Hatted experience within the brasserie/café dining areas and showcase this across both menus.

A relatively simple update to a classic brasserie dish, the humble schnitzel, we now coat in Japanese panko breadcrumbs to give an even crisper coating and golden brown finish. I have also introduced one of my favourite modern Italian pasta dishes, King Prawn Mafaldine Pasta. Every portion is prepared and cooked to order (not in batches), so as to deliver a higher quality dish, balanced flavour and al dente pasta.

What's your take on the Central Coast culinary scene?

The Central Coast has a great selection of pubs and clubs, some of which are leading the way in culinary trends. The Coast Bar and Bon Pavilion are great dining experiences and offer a high standard of dining. I can see the Central Coast rapidly evolving into a new regional hospitality hub similar to Newcastle and Port Macquarie - with many local residents working in Sydney and being so close to the CBD the acceptance and need for on-trend, unique and higher quality dining venues is a must.

The food and produce industries on the Central Coast are growing. Do you work with any local suppliers for your menus?

Currently we source a variety of produce from local suppliers. Our oysters are sourced from Empire Bay, most of our cake offerings are from Kings Baked at Kincumber and Ludo's Gourmet Kitchen at Avoca Beach. I am currently working on our summer menu and have reached out to more local suppliers for items such as marinated cow's fetta from Little Creek Cheese at Wyong, avocados from Sciberras at Freemans Reach and citrus and juices from East Coast Juice at Kulnura.

Can you please expand on your philosophy of delicious and honest dishes, and how do you thread this philosophy through Gosford RSL's dining establishments?

The meals we create are both traditional and modern, and we don't over complicate our meals. They are prepared using the highest quality of fresh produce and home grown herbs.

What is your vision for the special events, Café Kindle and the Luminous Brasserie at the Gosford RSL?

My vision in all three areas is to continually develop, create and exceed our members and visitors' expectations in delivering excellent service and exceptional meal options. We are also building a new club starting approximately this time next year and I envisage larger, more open plan dining experiences for all food outlets.

Our functions and special events space will also grow with our new building and consist of a 300 seat function space that can be divided into five more intimate spaces, which will cater for all types of special events, corporate and leisure alike.

What advice would you give to anyone planning a career as a chef?

Having the skills to be a qualified chef is an achievement in its own right. With the industry trends forever changing and growing, you need to be open to new and past ideas, accepting to positive and negative criticism and think outside the box in terms of creativity (what was, isn't what is now). Don't forget to keep it simple and taste your food.

What is A) your favourite dish to make; and B) your favourite dish to eat?

A) King Prawn Mafaldine w/ garlic, chilli, basil, parsley, blistered cherry tomato, lemon infused extra virgin olive oil and pangritata. B) House made potato gnocchi w/ lolligo squid, heirloom cherry tomato, chorizo sausage with fresh dill, parsley and basil.



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