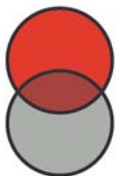


LIFE



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Photo: Dominic Loneragan

A fresh approach

Farmers' markets just keep growing, writes HARRIET ALEXANDER.

Mothers course between the stalls with babies in their arms and strollers stacked with lilies. Marshmallow cubes rippled with strawberry flavouring are piled on a table alongside nougat brownies, while at the next stall a customer inquires about recipes with persimmons.

It is Saturday morning at the Sydney Morning Herald Growers' Market at Pyrmont and the farmers have come to the city.

Growers' markets are now so firmly implanted in the Sydney psyche it is easy to forget they are a relatively recent phenomenon. Only 13 years ago, the options were Paddy's and Flemington – neither of which can be counted as farmers' markets in the true sense. Then the Herald tested the waters with a growers' market at Pyrmont and by 1999 it had become a fixture.

Soon other markets popped up, like the first drops of rain on dry concrete, at North Sydney, Fox Studios, Warwick Farm and further afield.

There are now more than 150 farmers' markets nationally, selling such delicacies as handmade confectionery, sourdough bread, kangaroo prosciutto, smoked mackerel and an impossibly broad array of vegetables, from Chinese broccoli and Dutch cream potatoes to figs, cherries and macadamia nuts.

Jane Adams, a farmers' market consultant and driving force behind the movement, says authentic farmers' markets are those where

Five of the best ...

- Eveleigh Farmers' Market, Darlington**
Every Saturday, 8am-1pm
- Sydney Morning Herald Growers' Market, Pyrmont**
First Saturday of each month, 7-11am (today)
- Northside Produce Market, North Sydney**
Third Saturday of each month, 8am-noon
- Warwick Farm Trackside Market, Warwick Farm**
Every Saturday, 8am-noon
- Bangalow Farmers' Market, Bangalow**
Every Saturday, 8-11am

the stalls are limited to growers selling their own produce – as opposed to middlemen flogging groceries at marked-up prices, or artists and their agents selling crafts and clothing.

"The growth in farmers' markets has been phenomenal and they really do provide an alternative link in the food chain, which is a very healthy, fun way to shop for food," Adams says.

Karen Borg and her husband, David, left their respective careers in surveying and architecture 12 years ago to make cheese at their two-hectare farm at Wilberforce.

They started with two goats and two books on cheese production

and won three silver medals at the Melbourne Royal in their first year. They now sell at the farmers' markets in Pyrmont, Eveleigh, Fox, Orange Grove Public School in Lilyfield, Frenchs Forest, Castle Hill, Glenorie, Blackheath and Avoca.

"We've brought on stronger cheeses as palates have been developing," Borg says.

"For Christmas we made a blue cheese just for something a little bit different and now people come to the markets and say, 'Where's that blue cheese?'"

Brett Guthrey sells his persimmons at Flemington and Pyrmont markets, fresh in the growing season from April to June and dried when the fresh are not available. He also sells the pulp, to be used in ice-cream and smoothies. The dried persimmons are a revelation to the uninitiated, sweeter than any mango or peach.

"We've had people who bought it and ate it all before they've got back to their car and came back for more," he says.

Leisa Colin's smoked trout, wasabi cream and ginger pickle have been a market fixture for the past 18 months. The former tennis pro started Brilliant Food six years ago, after somebody at a party said her chunky trout dip was so delicious she could sell it. Now she does.

"Dip is a really poor word for it," Colin says. "It's really like a farmhouse pate. It's quite rich and I always say it's quite silky and buttery on your taste buds."

My weekend



Gary Witton
Owner, Network Artworks Gallery

Living at Newport, my weekends mostly centre around the beachside lifestyle. I relish this time of year with daylight saving.

First thing Saturday morning, I catch the sunrise, followed by a solid four-lap walk of Newport Beach – time for contemplation, taking time to appreciate life and plan the weekend.

My son board-trains with the Newport Surf Life Saving Club and I like to watch him paddle well out past the breakers. After an exhilarating body surf, I head to Cocoa Bar at Newport for a double espresso and breakfast.

I like to check out other local art exhibitions in the area. On a cracker day, there is no better place for a casual lunch than The Boathouse Palm Beach. It is located on the waterside, right where the seaplane docks on Pittwater. The blackboard menu features seafood – the barbecued prawns are great – and it is the place to sit, enjoy the atmosphere and watch the Palm Beachites.

Another favourite is the Green Pearl Restaurant at Bayview. It's on the first floor of a marina, with uninterrupted views north up Pittwater to Lion Island, and it specialises in modern Thai cuisine. You can't go past the Moreton Bay bugs with Thai eggplant and red curry sauce. I always request a window table.

On the way back to Newport, we often stop off at Bilgola Beach and do the walk around the cliff edge to Newport Beach. As you come over the hill to Newport, you get a spectacular view south along the coast.

Newport Artworks Gallery has a stockroom exhibition featuring new artists until February 28.

FASHION



1. Road East dress, \$404, from Manning Cartell.
 2. Gloria dress, \$365, from Kate Sylvester.
 3. Erik the Red maxi dress, \$604, from Manning Cartell.
 4. Tuck-front lace dress, \$699, from Thurley.
 5. Laser-print stretch silk dress, \$989, from Lisa Ho.

STOCKISTS
 Kate Sylvester
 katesylvester.com
 Lisa Ho 8303 7888
 Manning Cartell 9368 7711
 Thurley 9368 7700



At arm's length

The hottest new frocks make bare shoulders a thing of the past, writes RACHEL WELLS.

I have a long-sleeved cocktail dress in my wardrobe. I like it a lot. It's a loose-fitting silk tunic with a pretty watercolour print and long, slim-fitting lace sleeves to the wrist. My boyfriend hates it.

He hasn't said as much but he screws up his nose every time I put it on and mumbles something about it looking "old-fashioned".

I'd like to say that despite my boyfriend's obvious distaste for my much-loved long-sleeved gown, I wear it all the time. The truth is, I don't. It's daunting stepping out in a garment your partner has just eyed with the same disdain he typically reserves for a cockroach crawling across the kitchen bench.

I have wondered whether the dress is one of those garments that women love and men loathe, because I often receive compliments from female friends when I wear it.

After watching the Golden Globe Awards, where Angelina Jolie (in emerald-green Versace), Anne Hathaway (in sequinned Armani Prive) and Leighton Meester (in nude Burberry) all sported gowns with sleeves to the wrist, I am pretty confident that long-sleeved gowns fall into "man-repellent" territory.

"Man-repelling" garments are those that women love and men, typically, hate, like jumpsuits, drop-crotch trousers and shapeless sack dresses. For more examples, visit manrepeller.blogspot.com - a blog by

self-confessed New York man-repeller Leandra Medine.)

While I thought the covered-up threesome were among the night's best dressed, a quick straw poll of some of my male friends revealed long-sleeved dresses don't exactly top the list of men's must-see red-carpet gowns.

"Give me skin," said one male friend. "While some women show off far too much, I think we blokes are now conditioned to expect a decent amount of cleavage, back, arms and legs."

"Long sleeves aren't exactly sexy," another said. "But I can live with them as long as there is some flesh on display, even if it's some leg or a low-cut back."

Admittedly, long-sleeved gowns were one of the more unexpected trends to emerge at the Golden Globes, especially considering the event was held on a balmy LA day. In other words, long sleeves were chosen to make a fashion statement rather than for comfort.

As we head towards autumn, local collections are littered with slim-fitting dresses with long sleeves, as opposed to the voluminous sleeves from a few seasons back.

Manning Cartell, Lisa Ho, Thurley, Kate Sylvester and Tristania Drive are among dozens of local labels who have put long, skinny sleeves on their autumn-winter dresses. But, just a hint: you might want to save them for a girls' night out.

Melissa Penfold



CUSTOM ROMAN BLINDS

For instant inspiration, head to No Chintz and get 15 per cent off made-to-measure window treatments (roman blinds to curtains) and lighting (pendants to drum shades) when you use its fab stock fabrics in plains, stripes, checks and florals. Or have three cushions custom-made and the store will throw in a fourth to match. 153 Edgecliff Road, Woollahra, 9386 4800; 509 Willoughby Road, Willoughby, 9958 0257. Until February 28.



Vividshop has up to 25 to 50 per cent off its pretty yet practical Indian hand-blocked throws and quilts, canvas striped deck chairs, beach umbrellas, kaftans, summer dresses and children's wooden toys. 558 Crown Street, Surry Hills, 8399 1210, vividshop.com.au. Until February 28.

MARCELLA QUILTS

Moss River's Italian Egyptian cotton sateen queen-king quilt covers in chocolate are now \$151 (\$955); cotton print pillowcases, \$19 (\$99); plus 60 per cent off its best-selling marcella bedcovers in chocolate; and Yves Delorme assorted queen flat and fitted sheets, \$77-\$79 (\$389). Also French Roger & Gallet discontinued unguents - water mists, bath and shower gels, creams and lotions, \$14-\$30. 12/198-222 Young Street, Waterloo, 9690 5208. Until sold.

FRENCH OVEN DISHES

Peter's of Kensington has one of its famous sales off its trend-resistant, big-brand favourites: Le Creuset red 26cm round French oven dishes, \$280 (\$499); Scanpan ergonomic 32cm woks, \$100 (\$339); Le Chasseur green square 25cm grills, \$75 (\$179); Scanpan three-piece Coppermox saucepan sets, \$146 (\$419); Mundial nine-piece knife sets, \$123 (\$495); KitchenAid Artisan blue KSM150 mixers, \$619; and more. 57 Anzac Parade, Kensington, 9662 1099, www.petersofkensington.com.au. Until next Saturday.

mpenfold@smh.com.au

Kellie Hush



Q I recently had a manicure at the Observatory Hotel and was shocked when I received a bill for \$105. Is this the most expensive in Sydney? Can any manicure be worth this? Incidentally, I took my own nail polish.

You mean you didn't book the \$195 La Prairie Caviar Pedicure? Oh, you really have been ripped off then, because for an extra \$90 you could have sat back and watched your favourite television episode and sipped pink champagne while your cracked heels were scrubbed and your corns shaved off. Your \$105 may have hurt but you have learnt a very valuable lesson about the beauty industry: the end result is just as important as the journey. It's why people will pay

\$400 for a haircut no one notices. I bet you were pretty chuffed when you stepped into that tranquil day spa. I'm guessing softly spoken words from the staff would have relaxed you, too. Was there free herbal tea? Those cold creams and scrubs would have been top shelf, unlike those two litre no-name bottles at the pedi spa next to your local Coles. Sure, if you went to your local you would have had enough change out of a \$100 for a bottle of wine and a slab of brie but you wouldn't truly understand the Latin term caveat emptor.

Send email questions to khush@fairfaxmedia.com.au

