

FARM GATE TRAIL Saturday 28 February 2009-02-27

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Today the last day and fourth Saturday of February so it must be market day

Yes the Rouse Hill Farmers and Fine Food Market is on and Alan Eagle has organised a very special cooking event as part of the market to demonstrate how easy it is to prepare and cook fresh local food.

In this day of fast food and ready prepared meals people have lost the ability to cook for themselves, family and friends.

Simon as you know, it's actually quite simple. It can also be very enjoyable. Its one of life's pleasures when you cook something that people really enjoy

Particularly your children who are the greatest critics! So tell us more of the cooking event.

Two Castle Hill sisters Natalie Cavelli and Sarah Attard will be using the produce of the stallholders at the market. They are going to demonstrate dishes that people will be able to taste particularly how to make unique products that provide the finishing touches to make a good meal a great meal.

Like?

How about MOUTH-watering marinated mushrooms, caramelized balsamic vinegar and Asian marmalade.

Yum!!

Sounds hard but really it is quite easy to prepare. Natalie and Sarah have always enjoyed cooking since they were kids. Natalie is a dedicated foodie who worked in HR before admitting she was ``a frustrated cook" and so she and Sarah, who is a chef decided to go into business. They have a Maltese/Italian heritage so good food is in their blood and they want to share their passion for fine, fresh food with as many people as they can. And the other thing they want to stress is how economical it all is.

Very appropriate in these tight economic times. More people are entertaining at home so here is a chance to get down to the market at Rouse Hill Town Centre and learn some new ideas. So what else is happening on the trail?

Just to recap on the apple season Simon. John Galbraith advises that after the recent scorching heat followed by the drenching rain when the daily maximum temperature dropping from 42C to 12C over 2 days, temperatures have returned to normal and there are still plenty of apples on the trees waiting to be picked up in the Bilpin area. The Royal Gala are fully ripe and at their best as are the Akane and the Jonathan are ready to start

with plenty of ripe ones on the more exposed parts of the trees. The Delicious and Golden Delicious are still a week or two off ripe. Also the last variety of peaches is ready and there are plenty of pears and nashi to pick.

An abundance of fresh local fruit around Sydney! What's the latest on the nut season?

It looks like the weekend of the 14th March is kick off date. Both Bev Carruthers and Ruth and Scrivner at Mt Irvine are keeping Alan Eagle informed of how things are going and we will report again on the situation next Saturday.

Ad lib about you and Alan going up to interview – Anything happening on other areas of the trail?

This Sunday is the 2009 Thirlmere Festival of Steam which is a great escape into our railway past – it's Australia's biggest rail heritage festival! Following the outstanding success of last year – the Festival, now its 20th year, will be bigger than ever this year. □ The Festival promises to be a fantastic day out for all the family, with all the fun of a country fair. Thirlmere village comes alive with a street parade, vintage steam machinery and historic vehicles, food, music, country crafts and displays. Over a hundred market stalls will offer their produce, craftwork and specialty foods for sale. □

The ever-popular gala parade will feature bands, floats, performers and displays from local groups, clubs and businesses, while historic vehicles and hot rods will line the streets. The parade starts at 1.30 pm. As well as the traditional activities, the Steam Festival has lots of attractions especially for children, including miniature train rides, amusement rides of all kinds, and model train layouts. □ □

Entertainment through the day will include 'Music in the Park' from 9.30 am. The music program includes jazz, folk, and country music, and features bands and singers from Picton High School, as well as the Moonshiners who were so popular last year. □ □

Many of the Sydney visitors to the Festival will be travelling on the steam-hauled Thirlmere Flyer from Sydney to Thirlmere.

People can make a real day of it down in that part of the world. They can visit olive farms, orchards, organic farms, market gardens, and if they want to they can stay overnight at B&Bs and farm stays.

To check out all we have spoken about today and more go to

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