

CAFE REPORTER

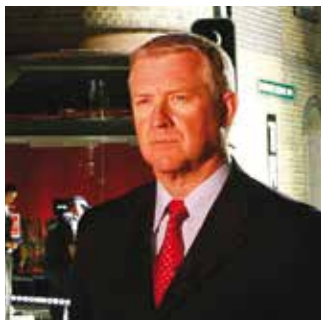
ISSUE 5 DECEMBER 2016
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SYDNEY'S POPULAR CAFES REVIEWED
COFFEE | FOOD | FASHION | PROPERTY | TRENDING



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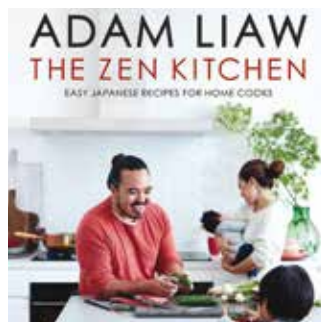
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Business Woman



Chef



Fruitologist



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INTERVIEW



SIMON BOUDA

By Howard Rich

"I was taught early on in my journalism profession as a newspaper reporter that trust is inherent and that you don't let people down. That has been my mantra ever since."

As a seasoned and highly-respected crime reporter, currently with the Nine Network, Simon Bouda is all for speaking out on behalf of the various homicide victims' families he has involved himself with over the years.

"Trying to fathom the devastating impact of grief and trauma inflicted on such families is something that constantly gnaws at you and so never really goes away," Simon says. "For me, when it comes to lending comfort to such families, it's all about trust and demonstrating compassion; being there for the long term, not just the short term."

"They appear to view me as a vehicle to relay their messages and concerns to the relevant audiences, and it is a role I am very happy to play. Being a shoulder to lean on for such families, away from the public eye, is also a great source of satisfaction to me, so much so that I am still friends today with many of those family members."

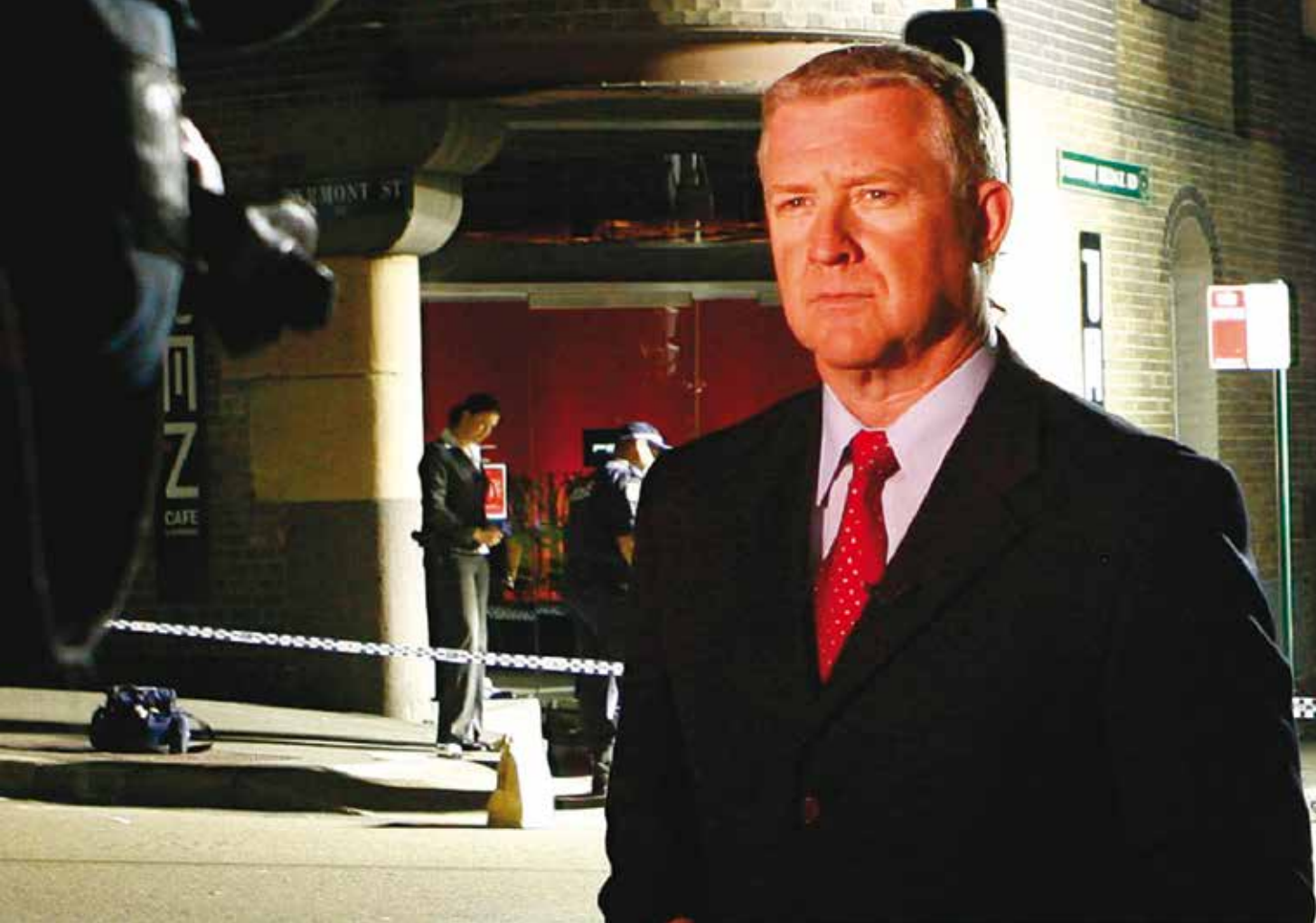
'Giving Back' and 'Making a Difference' are two of the central themes in Simon's latest book, *Deadline* (published by New Holland). It is an engaging read which showcases Simon's empathy and compassion plus his journalistic skills, with an ability to build trust and personal involvement in the stories he covers.

"The devastation experienced by the respective families prompted me to join the Homicide Victims' Support Group, formed by the parents' of murder victims Anita Cobby and Ebony Simpson."

In the early 1990s, there was a Ball held whereby families of murder victims came together to commemorate their lost loved ones, finding solace in each other's company. Simon was humbled when asked to be the Master of Ceremonies for the event. And he firmly believes the event impacted on him so much that it changed him as a person. "It made me realise that, as a reporter, you must genuinely

feel the emotions associated with the families in such harrowing circumstances and that only then can you earn the trust of the people you are dealing with," Simon explains.

After such a humbling and emotional experience at the Ball, Simon was able to instigate, through his love of motorbike riding, a *Ride for Justice* (of which there have now been three) to raise awareness for families of homicide victims. "Motorcycle riding has become my hobby, my passion. When I was just a boy, my father managed a motorcycle store in the CBD. I remember visiting him at the store and being in awe of these beautiful machines – the smell of the rubber tyre, the gleam of the chrome, the scent of engine oil and polish," he recalls. In addition, Simon has joined *The Black Dog Ride* across Australia and the US to raise awareness of depression and suicide, and he is also a White Ribbon Day Ambassador – a movement for the prevention of violence towards women.



“Trustworthiness is a natural human trait but sometimes we neglect it and that is something that disturbs me. I was taught early on in my journalism profession as a newspaper reporter that trust is inherent and that you don’t let people down. That has been my mantra ever since. You have to be honest and true to yourself in life, and that saying certainly applies to me in my current role as a crime reporter.”

Take for instance the family of slain Detective Inspector Bryson Anderson, whereby Simon has become good friends with his wife, children, brothers and also Anderson’s parents. “To see their strong resolve is something to behold amidst the devastation

they have all suffered. That is fairly typical of quite a few of the families I have conversed with.”

“And then there was the case of Stuart Diver, who was miraculously rescued from the ruins of the Thredbo tragedy – a truly amazing person and again someone whom I associate closely with today. But without the trust element, none of these relationships would have happened.”

The strength of the emotional bonds Simon has shared with the families of homicide victims has led him to be critical of some of the judicial decisions handed down to certain perpetrators. “I do get upset with some of the sentences delivered by judges – too lenient, too light, and often

the decisions do not take into account the enormous suffering endured by the victims’ families and other loved ones left behind.”

From newspaper copy boy to news reporter, to police rounds man and foreign correspondent before becoming a leading crime reporter, it has certainly been a fascinating career path; negotiating many a twist and turn in the process.

Noted for his never-stop-giving attitude in all of his life’s dealings, one feels there are many more worthy people and organisations out there that could benefit from Simon’s wisdom.

Images: New Holland.

BUSINESS WOMAN



CHRISTINE STAVROPOULOS BIRCH WATER QUEEN

By Kristina Foster

"When I first tried birch water I knew I wanted to bring it to Australia. I found the Holy Grail in a beverage, which plugged a huge hole in the beverage market and, more specifically, for kids."

Christine Stavropoulos, a blonde bombshell of a businesswoman, former Miss Australia contestant and mother of two, is the powerhouse behind the current birch water trend in Australia. Meeting Christine at an upmarket Eastern suburbs cafe, she is one of those timeless women with smooth skin and impeccable style.

As well as her looks, Christine's youthful outlook on life makes it impossible to guess her age. I find myself admiring her glowing complexion and hankering to know her secret. And here it is: Christine consumes four bottles of Sealand BIRK birch water a day.

Birch water comes from birch trees grown in Finland. The trees are tapped for their clear, syrupy liquid, via a small hole drilled in the trunk. The water can only be collected for a few weeks in Spring, when the tree sends nutrients from its roots up the trunk to new buds on the branches. The syrup contains naturally occurring anti-oxidants, electrolytes, trace minerals and vitamins. It is sweet due to the naturally occurring xylitol that is

produced in the tree's bark, making it ideal for dental health. Step aside coconut water, there's a new superfood in town.

"When I first tried birch water I knew I wanted to bring it to Australia. I found the Holy Grail in a beverage, which plugged a huge hole in the beverage market and, more specifically, for kids. Health and nutrition are important to me and I wanted everyone to be able to try it," Christine enthuses. Christine grew up in suburban Earlwood, Sydney. Her father migrated to Australia from Athens, Greece. "My dad instilled in me a strong sense of community. He was always helping migrants in our neighbourhood with food, clothing and advice. He was a champion for the people and I wanted to follow his ways," admits Christine.

Since the age of 19, Christine has been deeply involved in community charity projects. It started with her representing New South Wales in the Miss Australia contest, fundraising for cerebral palsy. Over the years Christine has raised more than \$1 million, working with charities such as Beyond Blue, MS Australia and the Red Cross Blood Bank. She has

also been heavily involved in youth sport, specifically football, which further flared her passion for health and nutrition for kids.

Christine is also a trained pathology technician with a personal passion for medical journals. "I love reading about science and health breakthroughs in clinical papers. It's my hobby," she confesses. "Launching birch water into the Australian market brings all my skills together. I feel like I am helping the community by introducing people to a non-sugary, healthy water alternative, unique in preserving dental health, and I believe in the nutritional benefits of the product."

As if on cue, Christine pulls out a sleek bottle of birch water from her handbag and takes an elegant sip. Her fresh face and energetic personality are the ultimate testimonial. As the waiter approaches to take our orders, I already know what I want: I'll have what she's having.

**www.sealandbirk.com.au
Images by: Emmanuel Angelicas**



ARTS



THE LEGEND OF BEN HALL

By D.R. Lennox

"I wanted to get people who looked as close to a carbon copy of the historical person as I could. The fact that they're all unknown and fresh faces helps the audience make that leap."

Matthew Holmes had always wanted to make an Australian western; a fascination with Australia's colonial and bushranger history since his early teens planting the seeds for a Ned Kelly film. But when someone else made that film (Gregor Jordan's 2003 feature starring Heath Ledger), a life-long dream seem quashed.

"Then someone told me 'there are a lot more bushrangers out there than Ned Kelly'. After doing some research, I learnt there are some pretty fascinating characters out there. And after discovering Ben Hall in 2007, I've had that [film] as my goal all along," Holmes says.

The Legend of Ben Hall, a mostly privately-funded, 140-minute film, is a retelling of the last nine months in the life of the bushranger who, despite his gang terrorising New South Wales in the 1860s, never actually took a life. "It could have been blind luck that he never killed anybody. But I believe he had a code, and had an aversion to taking lives," Holmes suggests.

And yes, he is prepared for the criticisms, should they come, about "glorifying" a criminal. "My goal was

to break down the romanticism of it. It's a fascinating story and that's why I'm telling it. I'm not trying to judge it, right or wrong, or put Ben Hall on a pedestal. Nor am I trying to tear him down. I'm just trying to study him and say, 'here is a fascinating man, let's look at him warts and all, and let the audience decide.'"

"With *Ben Hall*, I tried to make something very realistic, and we stuck very closely to the historical accuracy of the story. We played it exactly as I believe it was, not only to make it entertaining as a film but a faithful adaptation of history," Holmes explains. Helping to immerse audiences in the story is the lack of big name Australian actors. Relative newcomer Jack Martin, making his feature film debut, plays the title role; cast as much for his resemblance to the man as for his acting ability.

"I wanted to get people who looked as close to a carbon copy of the historical person as I could. The fact that they're all unknown and fresh faces helps the audience make that leap, that 'I'm watching Ben Hall and his gang now', because they have no other reference for these actors, which is good in that sense,"

Holmes says, though admitting it's a double-edged sword when it comes to marketing and sales. "It's harder to sell the film in the market place because we don't have Hugh Jackman on the poster. But as a person who goes to the movies, I really don't care who's in it, I just care that they're good."

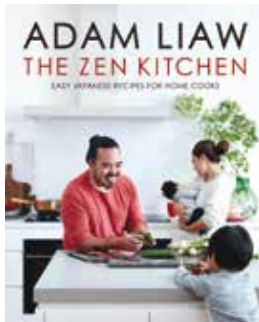
And Holmes can't wait for audiences to see his film; *The Legend of Ben Hall* set to premiere in Forbes, the town where Ben Hall is buried, just weeks after our chat. "I'm really looking forward to just showing people. I've been sitting on the film for so long, waiting to show people, this for me is the exciting time: I've done the hard work, now I finally get to show it to an audience. I'm actually really excited about it."

***The Legend of Ben Hall* is in cinemas now.**

Images: Pinnacle Films.



CELEBRITY CHEF



ADAM LIAW

By Kristina Foster

"My parents worked a lot and I learned cooking from my grandmother. When I was eight, she taught me my first complete dish. It was orange glazed chicken."

Adam Liaw, *Masterchef*'s second season winner, is officially a Twitterverse badass with over 55,000 followers and an official *Buzzfeed* list. His entertaining tweets (@adamliaw) range from acerbic jabs at American politics ("I think a lot of people in America want to fight inequality and moral decline by electing a billionaire sex pest as their king") to playful pokes at alternative diets ("I'd be less cynical of your detox if you could name a single scientifically identifiable toxin that can be removed from your body by juice").

Peppered between the wisecracks, he of course also tweets well-lit, full frontal food porn. Shots of mouth-watering noodle bowls whipped up for breakfast; his mid-week lunch of sushi sandwiches lined up like soldiers in nori uniforms, donning colourful medallions of prawn and avocado. Forget the Friday night footy franks, teriyaki pork and mushroom rolls are side snacks for Liaw while watching his team, the Adelaide Crows.

But is every meal Liaw eats so chicly styled and graphically interesting? Meeting the 'top-knot' cook in his

very own kitchen, my first interview question is: what did you really eat for breakfast today? A quizzical look crosses his face but his response comes across as methodical and measured as a Thermomix scale. "Today my son and I ate miso soup and chargrilled rice balls before I took him to day care," he chirps. Yes, Liaw does feed his family the kind of food that he photographs and serves up to his Twitter tribe.

Adam Liaw was known for his background as a lawyer before winning *Masterchef* in 2005. "I discovered Japanese food when I was working in Tokyo in 2003. I didn't have a lot of time and making local food was tasty and easy for the fast-paced life I led as a lawyer," he explains. "Japanese food is so easy and efficient with fresh, healthy ingredients and simple processes. There's so much variety. It's perfect for home cooking."

Born in Malaysia and growing up in Adelaide, his parents, a Singaporean-English mother and a Malaysian-Chinese father, were both doctors. "My parents worked a lot and I learned cooking from my grandmother. She made great

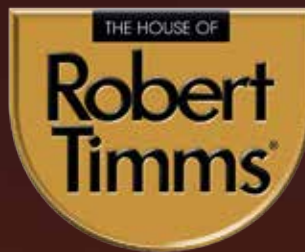
Malaysian food like chicken rice, as well as English meals. When I was eight, she taught me my first complete dish. It was orange glazed chicken," he laughs.

With his busy travel schedule, Liaw savours his time at home in Adelaide and spends as much of it as he can cooking for his family. "I still sometimes make special dishes for my grandmother, although she is more enamoured with the grandkids than my skills in the kitchen nowadays," he smiles.

And three-year old son Christopher Ren is fast becoming a foodie like his dad. "My son eats pretty much everything – grilled fish, green beans, spinach. But his favourite is my chicken and tofu meatballs. It's a recipe from my new cookbook; I make them all the time. Christopher loves them because they are never dry."

'Never dry' pretty much sums up Adam Liaw's Twitter feed as well as his food. Spruce up your feed – and your food – with a follow.

***The Zen Kitchen* is published by Hachette Australia.
Images: Hachette Australia.**



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PROVIDORE



SIDE SERVE

By Paula Towers

"Usually we build up a good rapport with the chef and they tend to take you with them; so as soon as the chef moves to another venue, you're picking up another customer."

Success in keeping happy some 200 customers on a continuing basis – including cafes, restaurants and some celebrities thrown into the mix – means Side Serve, supplier of quality fruit and vegetables, must be doing something very right.

Starting with a chain of large retail outlets offering a one-stop shop for fruit, vegetables and groceries in Sydney and Newcastle, this business had been established for 10 years before venturing into the wholesale side more than 20 years ago and moving into the markets here in Sydney.

And what continues to keep Side Serve successful? "Supplying quality produce at a reasonable price seems to be the main features people are looking for," says Side Serve (Premium Produce & Service) director, Michael Iacono.

Having been established for that length of time also anchors Side Serve's well-established reputation for reliable sourcing: around 50% of customers are long-standing, from the original retail business.

Another exciting and satisfying aspect of the business is seeing the end result. Michael has the opportunity of going to restaurants that the business supplies, which he very much enjoys. "Seeing the finished product that the chef puts out on a plate on the table, I find quite satisfying – when I have time to sit down for a nice dinner and they comment on the quality and presentation that I, at least, played a part in."

Although the chefs who the business is in contact with may move on, this can be a plus. "Generally a chef will stay four or five years in one place then they move. Usually we build up a good rapport with the chef and they tend to take you with them; so as soon as the chef moves to another venue, you're picking up another customer."

Side Serve clients include the well-heeled as well as well-known actors. "They have their own personal chef and we supply their fresh fruit and vegetables," he says.

Over the years, Michael's also observed the industry's movement. "I think the industry is evolving – there's a lot of cafes/restaurants opening and people are going into that type of business – probably trying their hand. I think the big push came after the Sydney Olympics," Michael suggests. "It seems to be a trend: people are happy to eat out a lot more than they have in the past."

And Side Serve is increasingly being called upon to provide this trend with the best produce.

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FRUITOLOGIST ROZELLE

By Kristina Foster



"My father and I have been working with produce our whole lives. I started in the fruit shop when I was just 12 years old. Dad still gets up at dawn every day to buy the best fruit and vegetables; Flemington is like his second home."

Danny Macri sits in a chic Rozelle industrial warehouse-style café tasting an algae, avocado and coconut water smoothie. With his tattoo sleeves, snapback cap and skinny jeans he could easily be mistaken for a laidback neighbourhood hipster – but this could not be further from the truth.

The café he sits in is part of his newly-opened inner west emporium, Fruitologist, an urban marketplace dedicated to top quality produce.

Danny Macri and his father, Alf, took over the granddaddy Fruitologist store on Bondi Road nine years ago. "My father and I have been working with produce our whole lives. I started in the fruit shop when I was just 12 years old. Dad still gets up at dawn every day to buy the best fruit and vegetables; Flemington is like his second home," Danny says.

"Dad will scour the sheds at Flemington everyday. He knows what to look for and he only buys the best. For example, if it's the start of the season and the stone fruits are not the best he just won't buy it. He prides himself on being the fussiest buyer. Alf really cares about the quality of the produce in our stores."

And at Fruitologist, the fruit and veg look spectacular. Crates of crisp, dewy broccoli boast an intense, deep green hue; high stacks of mandarins are bright, fat and look generously juicy; punnets of crimson-perfect strawberries beckon to passers-by.

The Macri family hail from the south of Italy and the stylishly breezy, open-plan design of the Rozelle store was inspired by the regional outdoor market places of Europe. Each section inside the store looks like a market stall dedicated to a particular type of fruit or vegetable: immaculate rows of tomatoes stretch from one side of the shop to the other in every variety you can imagine – Roma, cherry, grape, green, heirloom, Kumato, gold and truss; knobby root vegetables line up like uniformed soldiers in shades of yellow, orange, purple and cream; the cabbage patch begins with fluffy blooms of green kale, purple kale, Tuscan kale, then wombok and Brussel sprouts before graduating into mammoth cannonballs of red, green and Savoy.

"With this new Rozelle branch, my vision was to create a place where customers can enjoy a coffee and sandwich, browse the beautiful

produce and enjoy the experience," Danny proudly states.

A couple of businessmen stroll in for their morning lattes, and Macri greets them by name and asks about their kids. A mum and toddler settle into a sunny spot by the sidewalk, sharing a big bowl of succulent raspberries on muesli. Macri excitedly ducks over; he has finally tracked down her favourite brand of yoghurt and has ordered it in just for her.

He's a cool looking guy with a cool looking store, but Danny's friendly, welcoming service is a reminder that, however modern the trappings, he is an old-school, down-to-earth green grocer – just like his dad.

And just as they did in Bondi, the Rozelle locals have fallen for him.

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