

The simple joy of baking – French style

Bridie West makes magnificent macaroons as part of her Port Fairy bakery, and the story behind how she came to cook such French delicacies is inspirational...

Framlingham gears up for 150th anniversary



Much-loved musician Archie Roach, who was born at Framlingham, will be among the headline acts at this weekend's 150th anniversary event. Image: www.blackarmband.com.au

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] D
[/dropcap]espite being less than 30km from Warrnambool, the **Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve** has often seemed like a million miles away to many south-west Victorians who have never visited the area.

This week there is a significant opportunity to reverse that trend, when the reserve marks its 150th anniversary with an open invitation to visit the reserve and celebrate aboriginal culture as it exists today, and as it has done for the past 50,000 years.

The 150th anniversary will be celebrated with an all-day, free event on **Saturday (April 12) from 10am to 6pm** and include music by much-loved local musicians Archie Roach (who was born at Framlingham) and Shane Howard, plus performances by Kutcha Edwards, Lee Sonny Boy Morgan, Johnny Lovett and comedian Denise McGuinness among others.

The day will also feature historical talks and displays, plus a range of hands-on activities for kids and adults, including the tricky art of eel-trapping.



Aboriginal men and boys at the newly established Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve in 1867. This image has been reproduced from *A Distant Field of Murder*, written by historian Jan Critchett (1990).

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve has a long, rich and complex history, beginning with its early days as an Anglican mission set up to “protect” the local Aboriginal people from the devastating impact of white settlement in the area in the 1830s.

At that time, about 1800ha of land was set aside, but was never actually owned by the indigenous people in the European sense of land ownership.

It wasn't until the 1970s that the Framlingham community – by then living on a much smaller area of land than was originally designated – was granted control of 237ha via the Aboriginal

Lands Act. The community later campaigned to regain rights to the Framlingham Forest and, after a long and hard-fought battle, won control over a further 457ha in 1987.

Although the history of the Framlingham Aboriginal Reserve is one that is ultimately traced back to the devastating impact of white settlement on indigenous Australia, the anniversary celebrations are all about honouring a proud community that has, against all the odds, kept its culture alive.

[box] **The Framlingham Aboriginal Community is 20 mins north of Warrnambool. Gates will open at 10am on Sat April 12, with an opening ceremony at 11am. Free entry.**[/box]



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Having a year of your life

back

[box] This column is normally reserved for comment on local issues, but occasionally it will also be used for short thoughts about every day life. This is one of those occasions. [/box]



Prep class, March 17, 1970, East Warrnambool Primary School. Now where did those 44 years go??

SHORT THOUGHTS

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"] T
[/dropcap]he end of daylight saving caught me by surprise this year and when I learnt, after waking at 8am, that it was really only 7am, I realised that I had an hour of my life back.

And it felt delicious.

It was as if I had been given the most extraordinary gift, even though daylight saving is, of course, an entirely manufactured concept, as is the measuring of time itself.

While thinking about all of the ways I could spend my “extra” hour, I also thought about how ridiculously fast our lives have become. I did not meet one person this week, or last week, or even the week before that, who wasn’t “busy”, and that includes myself.

“How are you?”

“Ohhh, you know, so busy!”

All of the time-saving devices we now have that our parents (read: mothers) used to dream about have not freed up our lives at all: we just cram more in.

I can remember, and I laugh about it now, learning in first-year Sociology way back in 1983 how we would all have so much leisure time on our hands by the year 2000 that sociologists were worried about how we would keep ourselves busy.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #ABCCAB;"]W[/dropcap]ell here we are in 2014 – 14 years after we were all supposed to be sitting poolside – and there is not a minute, it seems, when we don't have anything to do. Worse, the arrival of mobile technology has given us a 24-hour "on" button, together with an expectation that we are always available.

It is absolutely exhausting and makes us all feel frazzled.

So I began to ponder what it would be like if we didn't just get an hour "back", but a whole year. Imagine that. Even better, imagine if you got to *choose* which year you could have all over again.

I would choose a year when my faithful old dog was still young instead of in her last days – as she is now – and when my father was still alive and my older brother too, because even though they have both been gone a long time, I still miss them like it was yesterday.

Yesterday. Today. Tomorrow.

They all seem to speed by. Except for today. Today the world, or at least our corner of it, slowed down by one exquisite hour.

How I wish I could make that happen every day.

A sculptor with the heart of a Lyon



Award-winning sculptor Jon Dixon has spent 20 years creating the Lyons Sculpture Park, near Heywood, in an organic and creative project that has no end.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] I
[/dropcap]f sculptor **Jon Dixon** had his way, this story would contain only a single sentence: "art is important".

"That's all you need to write," he says, as we start our tour of the 15-acre **Lyons Sculpture Park** that he and his wife, Chris, have created on their bush property 21km west of Heywood.

After walking just two or three minutes through what is a combination of sculpture, gardens, raw bush, and farmland it is patently clear, however, that one sentence is not going to cut it. Sorry Jon.

Indeed it is difficult to describe the park, because it refuses to slot into any simple category.

It is a “park”, but not a manicured one. It is a gallery, but without an entry fee or labels on any of the works. And it is full of stone, wood and metal sculptures, some of which are obvious to the eye, but also others that are tucked in nooks and crannies: up a tree, behind a bush, attached to a fallen log.



The natural bush on the 15 acre property is studded with gorgeous sculptures, including this one from pink dolomite.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he sculpture park – and the Dixon home – sits on what was once the township of Lyons and covers 30 individual titles: all half acre blocks that were once occupied by the small community built around the timber industry.

Jon and Chris bought the property 20 years ago, after Jon decided to quit his executive lifestyle and return to his

first love of art.

“I was running my own industrial door company (in Melbourne) and I watched all of the company executives I knew climbing up the corporate ladder, stepping on heads along the way, burning people off along the way...and they were all miserable,” he said.

Once Jon and Chris, who is a secondary school English teacher, found the Lyons property, they knew it was the perfect place to stretch out and exercise their creativity.

Born in England, but raised in working-class New Zealand, Jon was immersed in the artistic and cultural symbols of the Maori people and this influence is clear in his style today.



[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] M
[/dropcap]ost of Jon's sculptures are worked from local limestone and bluestone, sometimes paired with "found" objects such as a recycled milk vat or a cemetery headstone, or the remnants of industrial farm machinery, equipment or tools. He also creates large metal sculptures, the most striking of which is a life-size silhouette of a rearing horse placed among the tall, yellowing grass of the property.

[box] **Jon has generously donated a gorgeous sculpture valued at \$600 to be given away to one lucky paid subscriber. [Click here for details](#) on how to win this wonderful piece.**[/box]

One of the engaging things about the park is that there is no particular theme and it moves easily from the abstract – an overgrown field full of female torsos – to the spiritual, such

as the “Stonehenge” style installation in a perfectly mown circle of a grass, to the political. The lack of labels or interpretive notes lets the viewer see what they want to see.

The raw bush, which Jon clearly loves and is slowly restoring to its native state, also contains a range of works, including a simple stone disc punctured with numerous holes.

Jon tells the story of a visiting Asian family who were captivated by this piece after he invited them to find “the most beautiful leaf” from the many gum leaves on the ground and place it into a hole.

“This was a family that, at home, had to drive two hours to find open space and here we have beautiful, natural bush. They stood here for a long time, just picking up leaves – dead ones, green ones – and placing them into the holes,” he said.

You are right, Jon. Art is (so) important.



[box type="bio"] Jon Dixon has received numerous accolades for his work, including winning the prestigious [Montalto Sculpture](#)

[Prize](#) in 2003. You can see more of Jon's work at his [website here](#) and find him on [Facebook here](#). The Lyons Sculpture Park is at 4143 Princes Highway, Lyons. Ph: 0437 000 433. Open daily 9am – 5pm. Free. [/box]



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Five-star pedigree behind pantry door



Alice and Andy Hall, together with their children Daisy and George, have set down their roots in Killarney to run The Pantry Door at Basalt.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] P
[/dropcap]stry chef **Andy Hall** has the sort of five-star resume to be a cliched, arrogant chef that we have come to know via “reality” television, but instead he has gone 360 degrees in the other direction.

Despite having previously working in not one, but two, Michelin-starred restaurants in the UK (The Vineyard at Stockcross and Le Manoir Aux Quat’Saisons) and stints at Vue De Monde, in Melbourne, and the Royal Mail Hotel, in Dunkeld, Andy’s feet are planted firmly on the ground.

For starters, he lives and works at Killarney, between Port Fairy and Warrnambool.

For seconds, he now runs a small, country style cafe/restaurant – **The Pantry Door at Basalt** – with his wife,

Alice.

And for main, he has two small children, **Daisy** and **George**, that dictate his priorities and give him every reason not to return to the “madness” of five-star hospitality.

“I no longer wanted to be doing the 17-hour days that you have to do when working at that high level,” Andy says.

“I was happy to do those hard yards before I was settled, but things are very different now.”



The Pantry Door lives up to its name by offering a range of gourmet, home-made products to take home.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] L
[/dropcap]ife began to change for Andy, who is originally from the UK, when he was invited by his friend, chef **Cameron Goad** (who was in charge before **Dan Hunter**) to join him at the Royal Mail Hotel which, at that time, still had the feel of an upmarket country pub.

Prior to taking up the Royal Mail position in 2006, Andy had already begun to back away from the intensity of the restaurant life by working in Port Douglas as a snorkelling instructor. He decided, however, to take up the offer from his friend.

Alice, from Hamilton, was working in the office.

“I was actually a nurse, but taking some time out and working at the Royal Mail – and that’s how I met Andy,” Alice explains, before having to duck out to meet the gardener who has turned up to discuss their vege patch.



The restaurant has a touch of class while still making people feel at home in the beautiful weatherboard building.

[dropcap style="font-size: 60px; color: #A02F2F;"] T
[/dropcap]he pair married in 2009 and explored different adventures, including 12 months overseas, before Alice’s connections to south-west Victoria (which include her family’s

old beach shack at Port Fairy, where she spent many summers) eventually saw them invited to take over the restaurant at the Basalt winery.

“(Chef) **Chris Grace** had set up the original restaurant at Basalt and he was ready to move on, so (owner) **Shane Clancey**, asked us if we would like to take over the lease and do our own thing with it,” Andy explains.

The opportunity was too good to refuse and the pair opened their business in December 2012, the same week their first child, Daisy, was born.

Almost 18 months on, the **Pantry Door at Basalt** has established itself as a popular place for breakfast and lunch, but also, as its name suggests, a pantry that sells Andy’s home-made preserves, sauces, dressings and a range of other delicacies.

The couple has also recently introduced cooking classes, including those specifically for men, and is building its reputation as a gallery space for local artists.

“It was madness at times – when we were starting out – but we didn’t want to get to 80 and wish that we had taken the chance to run our own place,” Alice says.



Fresh apple tarts made from home-grown apples. Andy's background is as a speciality pastry chef. Yum.

[box type="bio"] **The Pantry Door at Basalt, 1131 Princes Highway, Killarney, is open for breakfast and lunch Wed-Sun. P: (03) 5568 7442. You can also find them on Facebook.** [/box]



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