

# Jam-packed menu of temptation

## LORD HOWE ISLAND KNOWS HOW TO FETE AND FEAST A GUEST, WRITES RENATA GORTAN

It turns out the secret to a good Asian marinade is butter. Yes, butter is what transforms the combination of sesame oil, kecap manis, fish sauce, lime juice, ginger and chilli, the French staple adding a depth and gloss to a classic Asian recipe.

It's one of the tips I've picked up during Steve Snow's cooking demonstrations on Lord Howe Island, part of Pinetrees Lodge's food and wine weeks.

In the afternoons we listen to Snowy's anecdotes, among them one about cooking tagine for the King of Morocco, as he takes us through recipes including kingfish with tamarind sauce and crisp coconut rice, Portuguese seafood risotto and tempura-battered zucchini flowers with labne before tucking into the dishes.

The evenings are all about wine tastings with Morgan Snow, Steve's wife and sommelier at their restaurant Fins on the NSW north coast.

It's a decadent pairing and the week is crowned with a five-course degustation cooked by Snow, with Morgan's matched wines.

The dishes are adapted from Fins and have an island flavour with local trevally plus foraged samphire, warrigal greens and salt bush.

And that's on top of the regular food offering at Pinetrees, which includes a breakfast buffet with two cooked options a day.

Stay at the lodge for a buffet lunch, pack a picnic if you think you'll be at the top of a mountain come noon or have a gourmet barbecue delivered at a picturesque island location of your



The view across Lagoon Beach to Mount Gower from Kym's Lookout, and (above right) chef Steve Snow cooking at this year's Lord Howe Island Food and Wine Week. Pictures: Supplied

choosing. An Esky full of kingfish, rissoles, sausages, onions, bread, cheese and salad awaits, all you have to do is cook it and the staff will collect the remains.

At precisely 4pm guests flock to the lodge for afternoon tea. Every day I tell myself I'll forgo the sweets and just have coffee but it's too hard to say no to caramel and macadamia slice, lemon tart and scones with jam and cream. The calorific day is

crowned with nightly four course dinners.

It explains why Pinetrees' slogan is fitter but fatter. At first it doesn't sound like the most enticing motto for a holiday destination, but if you think about it, isn't that what vacations are all about?

Whether you're strolling Italy's cobblestoned laneways during the day and diving into big bowls of pasta at night, snorkelling a reef in the Maldives then devouring a

seafood platter or skiing the slopes in Chamonix before replacing those lost calories at the après ski bar, exploring and eating go hand-in-hand.

And there's a lot to do on Lord Howe to burn off all those buffets.

Located 600km off the coast of Port Macquarie, the island is a two-hour flight from Sydney. Before 1974 the only way to get there was by boat or Catalina planes, so after the airstrip was built tourists were capped at



### G02 LORD HOWE ISLAND

#### GETTING THERE

Qantas Link flies to Lord Howe Island from Sydney, Brisbane and Port Macquarie.

#### STAYING THERE

Pinetrees Lodge, Food & Wine weeks with six nights accommodation and four meals a day from \$2268. The next events are May 15-19, 2017 and October 23-28, with guest chefs to be announced. [pinetrees.com.au](http://pinetrees.com.au)

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you can go swimming, snorkelling, diving, kayaking or paddleboarding. Lord Howe Island Marine Park, established in 1999, extends three nautical miles from the island and a further nine nautical miles are part of a Commonwealth marine park.

Maybe that's why the sea life is so confident. Just watch the fish descend upon you at Ned's beach as you feed them and, if you're lucky, a curious turtle will swim right up close while wading at Old Settlement beach.

If strenuous activity isn't your thing, hire a bike for \$9 a day and go exploring. It's the best way to get around the island and if you avoid Middle Beach Road Hill you won't work up a sweat.

One thing the island doesn't have is Wi-Fi. There are two public options, but it's slow and expensive. So once I realise I can't access Instagram, a peace washes over me as I realise I don't have to check my screen every few minutes.

I'm more relaxed, more active and more open.

If you want to leave Lord Howe Island fitter, but not fatter, it's best to swap food and wine week for one of Pinetrees' activity weeks, such as wellness week, which comprise twice-daily yoga sessions, or adventure weeks for those into adrenaline thrills. But no promises on not getting fatter if you go home and start putting butter in all your marinades.

The writer was a guest of Pinetrees Lodge



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