



Samson's Paddock head chef Georgi Partnov with a seasonal dish at the Mosman Park eatery. Picture: Kelsey Reid

The secret WA ingredient

From trust to quality, great advertising to a point of difference, these local food businesses are making their mark

Jade Jurewicz

When you're pushing your trolley through a grocery shop there are brands you unconsciously grab for without fail.

Take for example the humble carton of milk. Brownes Dairy was likely the first brand of milk you sipped as a child, with a full carton always sitting in the fridge — well, until someone put it back with a drop left. This might have been the case for your parents and theirs too, with the business leading Perth sales since starting out of Shenton Park in 1886.

Although, with glass bottles delivered to the door, there was no need for late-night mad dashes to the supermarket. To further satisfy their WA customers, the business also reintroduced the milk service during the COVID-19 isolation period, delivering straight to the door once again.

According to Georgia Moore, director of the WA Good Food Guide, Brownes is the perfect



Brownes Dairy milk bottles being delivered in 1955.

example of what qualifies as an iconic WA brand as it ticks the boxes for having social, emotional and functional benefits.

"Over the last 130 years, Brownes and his family and successors have embodied the 'Australian' values of hard work and tenacity; that creates a social connection to the consumer as it aligns with their own values," she shares.

Not every brand in WA has 100 years or so experience building trust and loyalty within the State though. But, according to Moore, that doesn't mean they can't become leaders in their industry.

"Most of these businesses are very small, in the embryonic stages; being across the

production, financials, ordering, logistics and marketing is no easy task, especially when you are doing 12-hour days in your farm for example," she says, adding that without decent investment there could be issues — no matter how superior the quality of the product is.

For Samson's Paddock head chef Georgi Partnov, who moved to Perth five years ago from Bulgaria, produce choices for his menu are based on quality and flavour, rather than the brand itself.

"The first wagyu I cooked with was Futari Wagyu, and I've tried others since then, but come back to this as the flavour is completely different to any others I've tried,"

Credits

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Mottainai Lamb's Suzannah Moss-Wright. Picture: Ian Munro

"There is something really special about WA produce."

he shares. Partnov, who previously worked at a culinary school for 10 years in Bulgaria, was drawn to WA when one of the owners of Samson's Paddock offered him a job after trying his food. But it is the produce that has inspired him to continue to create a seasonal South-East Asian meets modern Australian menu.

"Not only is it very relaxing here with so many beautiful places to visit, but there is just something really special about WA produce," he says.

To celebrate WA food businesses, here are some we've come to know and love, and other up-and-comers to keep an eye out for.

MANJIMUP TRUFFLES

The clumpy looking morsel is the celebrated delicacy foodies around the world can't get enough of, and WA is leading the charge. In 1997 the Blakers, a family business just out of Manjimup, decided to give the truffle game a shot and planted 1300 trees. Now the fungus is one

of the State's most prized-produce items with the Manjimup forests region providing 90 per cent of Australia's gourmet Perigord truffles to around 30 countries including France, the home of the black truffle.

MOTTAINAI LAMB

Based in Lancelin, this WA brand is striving for more than just a high-quality product. Its goal is to reduce landfill by 20,000 tonnes per year, so, approximately 30 per cent of the fruit and vegetables they feed their lambs is produce that would otherwise be dubbed cosmetically unfit for retail sale. It has also become a premium product of choice for some of Perth, as well as the world's leading restaurants, including Grand Hyatt in Tokyo and Hearth at Perth's Ritz-Carlton.

LINLEY VALLEY PORK

For the past 30 years this business in the picturesque Porongurups has gone from strength to

strength. Not only does it supply most WA butchers, the business has built a trusted supermarket brand as well as supplying top WA restaurants, making them the largest fresh pork supplier in WA, and exporting.

MT BARKER CHICKEN

As one of Australia's go-to proteins for meals, it is no simple task standing out in the competitive chicken market, but this Great Southern brand continues to achieve this. Whether it is their famous "send the chooks home" ads, or being the first RSPCA approved chicken producer, it continues to grow to match what consumers want.

FREMANTLE OCTOPUS

On the opposite side of the fence, octopus is often seafood that home cooks steer clear of. But Fremantle Octopus is working to make preparing the seafood simpler, supplying tenderised, marinated or steamed produce.

WA food brands to look out for

LEEWIN COAST AKOYA

It may be the new kid on the block, but the shellfish already appears on the menu of some of Perth's fanciest digs. Served cooked, cured or raw, restaurants including Hearth (pictured), Wildflower, Fleur, Nobu, Manuka Woodfire Kitchen, Uma, Santini, Liberte, Ethos and Little Creatures have created signature dishes for diners to test the decadent produce.



OVANT

As more health-conscious drinkers turn to non-alcoholic alternatives, Ovant — WA's first company to distil non-alcoholic spirits — is ensuring that you don't have to skip on taste. Wanting to create a product using native WA ingredients the business sought the help of high-profile Vue de Monde in Melbourne sommelier and director of Alain Ducasse's Macau restaurants, Christopher Bothwell, and winemaker Elizabeth Reed, of Flor Marche in Wilyabrup.

FUTARI WAGYU

Spotting wagyu on a menu can get the heart racing. And until recently this Great Southern produce was predominantly enjoyed at high-end restaurants. However the pandemic has seen them turn to also offering a home delivery service. The business employs a Japanese agricultural scientist and wagyu expert who works to get genetic data to determine the best breeding outcomes.

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