

# The Truffe

Newsletter of The Truffle Producers Association of Western Australia

Issue 1: June 2014

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## Chairman's Address

Welcome all Truffle Producers to the first member newsletter of the newly incorporated association of **Truffle Producers, Western Australia**. We were gratified to see that nearly all producers have submitted their applications to join. It should be noted that only WA-based producers are eligible to join.

The application for incorporation of the association was lodged on May 16th and **Truffle Producers, Western Australia Inc** was officially incorporated on May 23rd 2014. So we can now process the membership applications from those who have completed the forms and sent them to me. If you have received this and not yet committed to join the association, please do so now.

### AGM

The next date of the AGM has been deferred from the original one proposed. Please mark your diaries for the AGM to be on Saturday, October 25th at 1.00 pm in Manjimup.



### Here is to the best ever truffle season!

We were gratified to see that nearly all producers have submitted their applications to join.

### Thanks

My thanks go to all those who are on the committee and sub-committees, without whose work we could not achieve anything.

Mel Booth has just put up her hand for the role of Treasurer... Thank you

We need everyone doing something to avoid the costs of employing salaried staff. So, if you have yet to commit please give us a call. Be part of this very exciting group of committed people, in what may be best described as the most exciting industry on the planet, phone me know.

### Admin

The Association bank account is now open. Please make membership payments to:

Account Name: **Truffle Producers Western Australia Inc.**

BSB: 036 126 Acc No: 182019

Bank: **Westpac Manjimup**

And reference your name on the EFT.

Here is to the best ever truffle season!

Regards

Mark Horwood

Interim Chairperson

**Truffle Producers Western Australia**

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*"The soils are stirring..... already preparing new treasures for the tables where our best yet line-up of chefs from Australia's great restaurants and much loved tv shows will join with farmers and food lovers alike in a weekend-long culinary festival that indulges in many pleasures!...."*



Visit [www.trufflekerfuffle.com.au](http://www.trufflekerfuffle.com.au)

## Committee Updates

*"The sub-committee dealing with branding, marketing and sales has sent out a questionnaire to all of us seeking our input. There are no magic answers, we need everyone to respond with your carefully considered responses. At this stage less than 50% of members have responded. I urge you to be proactive. Respond and offer your opinions otherwise we cannot gauge what it is you all hope to achieve."* Mark Horwood – Interim Chairperson.

### "Elected" Interim Committee

Mark Horwood, Sue Barnett, Mel Booth, Elke Keller, Anne Mitchell, Dave Pottinger and Neil Stenbeck.

### Branding Marketing & Sales (BMS) sub-committee

Jeff Anderson, Lex Barnett, Gavin Booth, Ken Gwynne, Mark Horwood, Dave Pottinger, Dion Range, Paul Robinson

While Mark has been occupied with other matters, the team has been hard at it, with a barrage of emails going back and forth. We are focussed on establishing exactly what the membership wants. We can then formulate our strategy to address these wants. The questionnaire then is vital. *We need you to be as candid and expansive as you can. Your replies will form the direction we take.*

Paul Robinson is collating the responses in the questionnaires. Please send them to him at: [paul.robinson@spectrumpetroleum.com](mailto:paul.robinson@spectrumpetroleum.com).

## Quality and Quarantine, sub-committee

Mel Booth, Anne Mitchell

*" An outline of on-farm bio-security (farm hygiene) will be presented at the grading workshop on June 14th and work is progressing on requirements to ensure all trees and truffles entering WA are free of contaminants, especially Tuber brumale"* Mark Horwood

## Communications, sub-committee

Janet Leigh, Rose Yeoman

We have been wrestling with the applications and tools to put this newsletter together.

Our primary aim for the newsletter is that it keeps you, the membership, engaged with the business of the association.

Our primary audience will be the individual grower, alone and sometimes isolated on their properties.

We have yet to decide on frequency, but hope to put out several newsletters throughout the growing season; keeping you informed, but also asking you to respond, vote, participate, etc.

Information will not be a one way thing and we plan to speak with as many of you as we can to ask **your** questions, tell **your** stories and focus on what interests **you**. Contact us at:

[janet\\_g\\_leigh@yahoo.com.au](mailto:janet_g_leigh@yahoo.com.au)

[ryeoman@ozemail.com.au](mailto:ryeoman@ozemail.com.au)

## Diary Dates

### Truffle Grading Workshop, June 14th

Register now by emailing Anne at [anne@timelesshill.com.au](mailto:anne@timelesshill.com.au)

*"A must do for anyone expecting to harvest saleable truffles this season. It is vital that all producers know how to clean, grade and present truffle in an internationally recognised manner to a standard. This will maximise the price you receive and ensure our quality standard are maintained. Manjimup is already becoming known for the superior presentation of our truffles. The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia (DAFWA) is pleased to be co-sponsoring the event together with The Truffle and Wine Co."* Mark Horwood

Anne Mitchell will give a presentation on Bio-security as part of the event.

### Truffle Kerfuffle, June 27-29th

*"The event to be held in Manjimup is arranged by the TK committee a Not for Profit organisation dedicating countless hours solely to the promotion of Truffle. They do a wonderful job and deserve the support of ALL producers. Make sure you come along and bring some friends."* Mark Horwood

### AGM, October 25th

Mark your diaries for the AGM to be held on Saturday 25th of October at 1.00 pm in Manjimup.

# Snapshot: Richerenche and Sarlat 2013



written by Rose Yeoman

At first glance the Richerenche truffle market in mid-January, north western Provence, is a small street packed with people and angle-parked European cars. It is cold, people's clothing generally sombre and the amputated leafless limbs of old plane trees define the sides of the street. Despite the overwhelming odour of truffle, there is not a truffle to be seen. Four gendarmes walk slowly through the market and at the end of the street turn and retrace their steps. Nicholas, our host, is part owner of a truffle processing plant that buys around 10 tonnes of Black Truffle each year. He explains that a local truffle grower had shot at and killed a poacher in his orchard. Justice French-style sought the middle way: as the grower was the main income earner and support for a family he was sentenced to jail on weekends and allowed to remain at home during the week to maintain the family farm. Nicholas says the unfortunate death of the poacher had been the impetus for the increased

police presence on market day.

At Richerenche market, farmers selling truffle will approach buyers who stand waiting by open car boots or in old stone buildings off the main street, electronic scales close at hand. The sellers are secretive about quantity. Price



is by negotiation and when there's a lot of truffle around, buyers such as Nicholas purchase truffle at 450-500 euros per kilo. When prices are high as they were the day we visited (650 euros per kilo), he buys very little. But he is unconcerned, saying that after the next full moon he expects an abundance of truffle and the price will therefore be low. Nicholas has several buyers working the market and a number of growers who sell directly to him. Despite the low

visibility of truffle, it is thought that around 50 per cent of France's domestic Black Truffle production passes through Richerenche each year. Inoculated trees, truffle knives and mandolins are sold here too.

There are many small truffle markets throughout France

and we visited a more tourist-focused market at Sarlat in the Dordogne. Here in a room off the town square growers stand in front of their produce. Prices were higher than in Richerenche (800-900 euros) and quantities small but traceable to individual farms. Each grower advertised their name and orchard as part of the condition for selling their truffle. Posters on truffle lifecycle and species line the walls and there are jars of preserved truffle specimens.

Interestingly the poster on *Tuber melanosporum* gives it a culinary value of 4 stars. By contrast *Tuber brumale* merits 3 stars and *Tuber mesentericum* and *Tuber rufum* are 'sans valeur culinaire' or of no culinary value. No trees or truffle paraphernalia are sold here but there are tours on offer and we book ourselves in for a truffle hunt and meal at a local farm.

Our host cheerfully accepts that *Tuber brumale* grows alongside Black Truffle in his orchard. He would prefer *melanosporum* because the flavour is better and it fetches a higher price but says *brumale* is not a bad runner-up. We have a meal of truffled eggs, meat and cheese and bread with truffle butter and finish with vanilla ice cream served with a *Tuber brumale* toffee topping - surprisingly delicious given I'm not a fan of the fungi-sugar combination. After lunch we visit our first French truffle orchard. I am given a small pick, the size of a hammer and asked to gently excavate a Black Truffle. Reassuringly, no shots are fired.

# Restaurant Australia and ... Food as Tourism

written by Janet Leigh

*Remember Paul Hogan telling the world that he would "throw another shrimp on the barbie"... Well, Tourism Australia has almost come full circle with its latest signature campaign to get the travelling world to visit us.*

*"Restaurant Australia is the food and wine element of the 'There's nothing like Australia' campaign. It was launched in Sydney on May 7 to much fanfare and acclaim with top chefs who included Peter Gilmore, Kylie Kwong and Maggie Beer, wholeheartedly embracing the concept.*

*The campaign took surveys across 15 of Australia's key tourism markets and showed that there was a significant gap in the perceptions of Australia's food and wine offerings.*

*For people who have never visited Australia, we do not rate highly as having good food and wine but for those who have visited, Australia ranks second after culinary giant France and ahead of Italy.*

*For visitors from China, the US, France, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, the UK, and South Korea, Australia is ranked number one in the world for its food and wine.*

*"Restaurant Australia" aims to close that gap by telling the rest of the world that unique and exceptional food and wine experiences are being served up every day in remarkable locations; showcasing stories of people, place and produce.*

*The print, cinema, online and television advertising combines stunning land and seascapes as backdrops for extraordinary and unique feasting experiences: a seafood lunch on Whitehaven Beach in the Whitsundays, balloon riding over the Barossa Valley followed by a visit to Hentley Farm, a water taxi arrival at Sydney's Quay restaurant, and dinner at Longitude 131 with Uluru in the distance." (source: Tourism Australia Website and [www.new.com.au](http://www.new.com.au) )*

The campaign is not just about the restaurant, but about the product served there, the people producing that food and the story behind it all.

As producers we can put our stories alongside the restaurants we provide product to. Every stage of getting the food and wine to the table becomes a valuable marketing opportunity for producer and retailer alike.

[www.restaurantaustralia.com.au](http://www.restaurantaustralia.com.au)

To this end WA Tourism approached The Southern Forest Food Council (SFFC) to nominate a story or "character" to represent the South West and without too much convincing Al Blakers of "Manjimup Truffles" was sent along to the launch the "Restaurant Australia" campaign.

This would seem an obvious platform from which to spread the word about WA Truffles.

The media ate up Al's larger than life 'bon vivant.' So how did it go with Al?

I have asked SFFC for some informal comments as we could not all be there, Al - as our eyes and ears must have brought back a tale or two.

If it is to serve its members well SFFC needs to articulate the benefits of this experience.

So while waiting for a response I rang a number of restaurants in the area including Foragers, Silkwood and Hidden River to ask if they had heard of the "Restaurant Australia" Campaign and if so, how they intended to use this new potential.

Foragers, who hosted a Tourism, WA workshop last week, was the best informed and Sophie Zalokar, chef and CO-owner, was enthusiastic about the long overdue value of showcasing our food and wine in this way.

"I have put our story up on their website, and hope to keep refreshing it with new details." Sophie said.

Unfortunately most had not heard about the campaign and did not know about the new opportunities available to promote their product, place or people.

Sophie said "I don't know whose responsibility it is to get this story out there ... it could be WA Tourism but SFFC should also be spreading the word as they are right here, where we live and work"

The campaign website asks Australian food and wine businesses to submit their stories on social media and capitalise on Tourism Australia's online platforms.

*As producers of one of the world finest and most exclusive ingredients we need to stay abreast of such trends and opportunities. So please visit [www.restaurantaustralia.com.au](http://www.restaurantaustralia.com.au) call SFFC and check out [www.winterdownsouth.com](http://www.winterdownsouth.com) to see how you can benefit from Tourism Australia's \$10million dollar campaign to attract visitors to come eat drink and be merry with us.*

