



Gentlemen's CLUB

Halcyon House hosted a mostly male cohort when LA-based photographic artist and tastemaker George Byrne launched a new exhibition over a fabulous weekend.

Photographs **JOSEPH RUCKLI** Words **STEVE CORDONY**
 Recipes **BEN DEVLIN** Recipe editor **CHRISSEY FREER**

Clockwise from top left LA-based photographic artist George Byrne launched his new 'Color Field' series. All set for a casually elegant lunch. Steve Cordony and Michael Booth. The sun seems to always be shining at Halcyon House. Interior vignette by designer Anna Spiro. George is a tastemaker for Mr Porter Style Council. His new works.



An invitation to flee the Sydney winter and head to northern hot spot Halcyon House for the weekend is always welcome. On this occasion there were even more fabulous reasons than just abundant sunshine – Mr Porter was literally in the house and so was LA-based photographic artist, and newly appointed tastemaker for Mr Porter's Style Council, George Byrne. On arrival we were greeted at the airport by the super-efficient Halcyon House transport and delivered to the hotel where our rooms were decked out with luxe goodies including *The Mr Porter Post*, Hayden Cox's book, sunglasses and a cashmere blanket – all perfect ingredients for a chilled but far from chilly weekend.

A cocktail party that night hosted by Tim Olsen of Olsen Irwin introduced George's new works. On Saturday Mr Porter Style Suite opened its doors and showed the latest looks from the likes of Gucci, Common Projects and Givenchy. An elegant lunch at Halcyon's Paper Daisy with bespoke menu by chef Ben Devlin followed.

George was Halcyon's first artist-in-residence in 2016 and over the weekend guests got to view photographs of northern New South Wales he took while there as well as his iconic topographic work that highlights LA's grittier side.

"I was absolutely thrilled to stay at Halcyon House for my first artist-in-residence experience. I was able to explore the surrounding areas and approach taking photographs with a really open mind. My approach to shooting was just to immerse myself in the area and see what happened," says George.

Meanwhile our weekend ended with some fun but less-than-successful surfing lessons with Hayden Cox of Haydenshapes Surfboards. Sunshine, a luxe suite, fashion, food, art and surfing – what more could a man ask for? olsenirwin.com; halcyonhouse.com.au





Clockwise from top: Stunning Cabarita Beach. George Byrne and Tim Olsen talk art. Work from George's 'Color Field'. Lethbridge Wines were a delicious match with chef Ben Devlin's lunch menu. Another work by George.



PIPIS WITH SEMOLINA PASTA & LEMON MYRTLE

SERVES 2

Cabarita Beach is a fertile area for pipis, something we always have on our menu. They can be treated like mussels or clams, but have a milder sweeter flavour, and the cooking juice makes a great sauce.

300g pipis
120g fresh pasta (recipe below)
2½ tablespoons macadamia oil
3 lemon myrtle leaves
Native pepper, to season
60ml (¼ cup) white wine
100g warrigal greens or pea tendrils
25g unsalted butter

PASTA DOUGH

180g semolina
180g plain flour
120ml water
1 tablespoon macadamia oil
5g sea salt

- 1 To make the pasta dough, combine all ingredients in an electric mixer with a dough hook. Knead for 1-2 minutes or until mixture comes together in a ball, adding extra water if needed. Transfer dough to a lightly floured surface and knead for 10 minutes until dough is smooth and elastic. Cover with plastic wrap and set aside at room temperature for 30 minutes to rest.
- 2 Divide dough into 2 equal portions. Wrap 1 portion in plastic wrap. Set aside. Using the palms of your hands, flatten other portion until 2cm thick. Dust dough with flour. Set pasta machine on thickest setting. Feed dough through machine, folding each short end of dough into the centre to form a smaller rectangle. Repeat process twice.
- 3 Repeat feeding dough through, without folding, narrowing settings on the machine, 1 notch at a time, until you reach desired thickness. Repeat with other dough. Place pasta sheets on a lightly dusted surface. Cut into desired shape. Allow to dry slightly.
- 4 To prepare pipis, rinse well then soak in a large bowl of iced water for 20 minutes or until purged of all sand. Drain.
- 5 Cook pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water until al dente. Drain.
- 6 Meanwhile, heat a large saucepan with a lid over a medium heat. Add the oil, lemon myrtle and pepper to taste. Add pipis and wine and immediately cover pan. Cook for 30-60 seconds, or until pipis open. Reduce heat to low, add in the warrigal greens, butter and a pinch of salt. Toss until well combined and a sauce forms.
- 7 Add the pipis to the hot pasta, toss to combine. Serve.

FRESH RICOTTA WITH WATERMELON, RADISH & OLIVE

SERVES 4

We use this dish as a starter, and change it every few days to get the best out of available produce. We make the fresh ricotta, it's sweetish, smooth and not too fatty, and we keep the whey to use in brining meat or making bread.

1kg seedless watermelon
150g Kalamata olives, drained, pitted
Small pinch each anise, myrtle leaf, mustard seeds, ground juniper berries, ground black peppercorns
500ml (2 cups) chardonnay vinegar
10g caster sugar
1 small bunch radishes, trimmed
Fresh baby basil leaves, to garnish
Olive oil, to drizzle

RICOTTA

1L (4 cups) full-cream milk
200ml pure cream
10g sea salt
250ml (1 cup) buttermilk
2 tablespoons lemon juice

- 1 To make the ricotta, place milk, cream and salt in a medium-sized saucepan and stir to combine. Heat over a low heat until mixture reaches 60°C on a thermometer, then remove from heat. Combine buttermilk and lemon juice in a small jug. Stir the milk mixture to create a strong current, then slowly pour in buttermilk mixture, against the current until well combined, without stirring. Return pan to a low heat and cook until mixture is warmed through, and starts to separate at edges. Do not boil.

Remove from heat, cover and set aside for 30 minutes.

- 2 Line a strainer with muslin or tea towel and place over a large bowl. Carefully ladle the curds into the strainer. Gently pour the remaining whey through the strainer, being careful not to damage the curds.
- 3 Set aside until whey separates. Remove ricotta from strainer, stir gently to combine and season. Cover and refrigerate until required.
- 4 Preheat oven to 70°C or 50°C fan forced. Line 2 baking trays with baking paper. Remove rind from watermelon and cut into 2 even pieces. Thinly slice 1 piece and arrange watermelon slices in a single layer on 1 of the trays. Place 100g of the olives on second baking tray. Bake watermelon and olives in the preheated oven for 3 hours, or until watermelon is like leather and olives dry enough to crumble. Set aside to cool. Chop remaining fresh and dried olives, and set aside.
- 5 Meanwhile, place the spices in a medium-sized saucepan and cook, stirring, for 1 minute until fragrant. Add the vinegar and sugar and bring to the boil. Set aside to cool.
- 6 Thinly slice remaining watermelon and place in a plastic container. Add 300ml of the pickling liquid, cover and refrigerate until required. Reserve remaining pickling liquid.
- 7 Thinly slice radishes, then set aside in iced water for 10 minutes. Drain and transfer to a container lined with absorbent paper. Just before serving, dress radishes with a little reserved pickling liquid.
- 8 To serve, spoon ricotta onto 4 serving plates. Scatter with radish. Drain watermelon slices and fold so they stand upright on the plate. Add pieces of dried watermelon, sprinkle with dried and fresh olives, basil leaves and drizzle with oil.



From top: The table set for lunch. Endless sunshine at Halcyon House. Fresh ricotta with watermelon, radish and olive was on the menu. Guests admire George's work over lunch. Felix Forest and Edwina Robinson.