

Lion's Mane

Would you put something called lion's mane on your dinner menu? It may look like a large ball of fluff or a lion's mane but in reality it is quite a meaty textured mushroom. Lion's mane is one of the new gourmet mushroom varieties available around Melbourne farmers' markets, along with coloured oyster mushrooms, nameko, shimeji, shiitaki and king mushrooms. I was very intrigued to find the lion's mane mushroom at the Melbourne Gourmet Mushroom stall at Gasworks on Saturday. Lion's mane is very high in antioxidants and much is made of its disease averting capabilities but vegans also love the texture which lends itself to meat or fish substitution in various recipes. Think fritters and fish or crab cakes. It is supposed to have a slight flavour of lobster but having recently enjoyed Portland lobster over the summer I found the resemblance a bit too subtle for my taste. However, I did enjoy the adventure of cooking something totally new that was locally and sustainably produced and in all likelihood will be a food on plates in a resource-constrained future. I started with the *keep it simple* approach and just sauteed thick slices slowly in olive oil and fresh thyme until it was tender and golden and served it with confit cherry tomatoes and salad.



It was very pleasant but with no obvious mushroom flavour and no, it wasn't a bit furry. A bit like a mass produced chicken breast I think a lion's mane mushroom is a chef's delight, lending itself to added flavours and cheffy tricks. I plan to maintain my explorations with lion's mane and other exotic mushrooms and will keep you posted. These exotics are grown in the Melbourne suburb of Reservoir, so local that food miles hardly count, and are freshly harvested a couple of hours before they appear at market stalls. \$5 for 100 grams.



Backyard Beekeeping

Backyard beekeeping seems to be all the rage at the moment, with an ABC TV program promoting the idea, jars of [Backyard Honey](#) a now familiar site in upmarket food stores around Melbourne and people generally in a buzz about bees and their importance to our lives. Backyard beekeeping may not be on your *to do* list but if you have got the veggie patch, compost bins and worm farms under control then why not consider another dimension to your garden plot with your very own bee hive. Backyard beekeeping is a skill set that needs a bit of guidance from experts and what better way to start on this fascinating journey than with an introductory course at [Think Thornbury](#). Their short introductory beekeeping workshop is running on [Tuesday 19 February at 6:00pm, 800 High St., Thornbury and costs \\$47](#). Even if backyard beekeeping is not your thing consider what you can do to attract bees to your garden by planting appropriate flowering plants and who knows you might be rewarded by a neighbour with hive.

This backyard beekeeping workshop is part of the [National Sustainable Living Festival 1-28 February](#). Check their website for other food related workshops and talks that may be of interest; there is a lot happening.

Schulz Organic Dairy A Glass

Act

[Schulz Organic Dairy](https://www.pozible.com/project/schulz-organic-dairy) has been working hard and so too its many followers in achieving an initial crowd funding target of \$48,000 to expand its new milk in glass bottle operation to 3,000 bottles. The aim is to produce customised, easy to process glass milk bottles with glass printed labels, extend distribution to major retailers and eventually phase out the plastic milk bottle. Having achieved their initial funding target they say they are now 100% committed to going further and producing 10,000 bottles. 10,000 bottle equates to 20-tonne of plastic saved from entering the waste system per year if Simon Schulz and his supporters can make it to \$144,000. If you want to make a pledge and be a significant part of the DRINK | RETURN | REFILL | REPEAT movement visit <https://www.pozible.com/project/schulz-milk-in-glass>

Simon says Australians use and dispose of the equivalent of 2.5 billion 1L plastic bottles of milk used and discarded in Australia each year. That's enough 1L plastic bottles that if we were to lie them down end to end they would circle Australia 1.75 times EVERY MONTH!

I think Schulz's milk bottle venture could become a movement for change. Before you say bottles are too heavy, hard to pour, inconvenient blah, blah, blah. I bet you have no problem carrying, pouring from and recycling bottles of wine. After all milk in glass bottles isn't a new concept.

To help us eliminate plastic, check out our crowdfunding campaign via the link below! Sharing is caring, so please share this link with your networks so they too can be part of the

solution!<https://www.pozible.com/project/schulz-milk-in-glass>

Posted by [Schulz Organic Dairy](https://www.pozible.com/project/schulz-organic-dairy) on Wednesday, August 1, 2018

In Search Of Cannoli – Biscotteria North Carlton

Just over a year old Biscotteria in North Carlton maybe young but there are years of experience at the heart of this Italian pastry shop. Biscotteria is filled with biscotti, as the names suggests, but also lots of small cakes, nougat and pastries. I went in search of cannoli as I am currently on a quest to find the best cannoli in Melbourne. I have fond memories back in the early eighties of stopping in Lygon Street, Carlton on route to the university for a chocolate and vanilla custard filled cannoli. They were deliciously sweet and crunchy and with all the walking I did back then had no adverse effect but after travels in Italy I began to see the virtue of the classic Sicilian and mildly sweet ricotta filled cannoli. With just the tang of orange peel and nutty green pistachios at the ends these delightful cannoli are almost breakfast fare and if coupled with a quick espresso it is exactly how many Italians face the work day. Biscotteria do a lovely classic cannoli as well as the custard filled variety and they also serve coffee, so you can *do as the Romans do*. Another wonderful ricotta pastry is sfogliatella, which means, small leaves, and describes the fine, multilayered leaves of pastry that forms a pocket filled with ricotta and orange zest. I discovered these with my husband on our first trip to Europe. Having just landed in Rome at some ungodly time in the morning, before anything is open, we strolled for some time around the perimeter of The Forum admiring the oranges trees laden with fruit and then with stomachs starting to rumble we wandered down a lane attracted by the smell of freshly baked pastry.

The only thing on offer at this hole in the wall establishment was sfogliatelle, a difficult start for our limited Italian vocabulary but we managed to get our tongues around it. The sfogliatelle were so light and fresh and fragrant with orange it was the perfect breakfast and start to our Roman adventure. What makes great cannoli and sfogliatelle is the freshness of the ricotta and a delicate, crispy pastry. These pastries are at their best eaten not long after filling. At Biscotteria, if you can't see any cannoli in the glass counter, ask, and they will kindly fill some for you. Enjoy at any time of the day.



[Biscotteria North Carlton:](#) 288 Rathdowne Street, North Carlton.



Q le Baker

I'm so pleased to discover yet another great baker in Melbourne. [Q le Baker](#) as the name suggests is the brainchild of French baker, Quentin Berthonneau, who started honing his baking skills back home at the tender age of 15. The slick Q le Baker premises is located on a corner of the courtyard of the Prahran Market where you can see work by pastry chefs in progress as well as the fine fare on offer in the shop. His wonderful fruity Danishes, croissants and pain au chocolate are also sold at the [Slow Food Farmers' Market, Abbotsford Convent](#). In Q le Baker in Prahran expect artisan sourdough breads, brioche and crispy pastries but also some unique and

amazingly crafted pastries.

Shop 709 Prahran Market

Tue 7am–5pm

Thu to Sat 7am–5pm

Sun 10am–3pm



