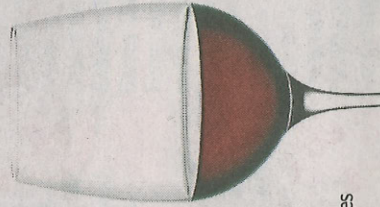


FOOD

Editor's letter

WHEN Attica star Ben Shewry was named 2011 chef of the year at The Age Good Food Guide Awards, he paid tribute to his wife and young family, who were at home watching his moment via the internet. Shewry is one of several Melbourne chefs — and their partners — writer Hilary McNevin spoke to for our cover story on page four. McNevin is married to a chef and restaurateur herself, so was well-placed to talk family, food and the eternal quest for balance. Also this week, Larissa Dubecki dines at The Milliswyn, Patrick Witton uncovers



BITES

Gourmet gallery

FANCY a picnic at the National Gallery of Victoria? The team there have come up with what they are calling "The Art of the Picnic". Served in the Grollo Equestrian Garden (behind the Great Hall), guests receive a boxed package for two. Devised by head chef Terry Clark, it includes a little pot of French goat's cheese, quince paste, a selection of cured meats (sopressa, jamon, bresaola), a Noisette Bakery baguette, quiche of the day and salad. The latter two change regularly — when Epicure visited, a roast pumpkin, red onion and rocket salad was served alongside a quiche of smoked salmon and lemon zest. Dessert is taken care of by The Tea Room, perhaps its signature macarons or a chocolate mousse. Comfort comes courtesy of a supplied blanket and cushions, and a bar is set up beneath the vines for drinks (at extra cost).

JANE WILLSON
The Art of the Picnic: available Sat-Sun at NGV International, 180 St Kilda Road, until March 31. \$35 for two people; extras, such as strawberries, pate and olives, available at added cost. To order ahead, call 8620 2444 or picnic@ngv.vic.gov.au. Orders can be made on the day but take an hour.



Lamington appreciation

THE lamington is a bit like Russell Crowe — claimed as a native by Australia and New Zealand. Thought to have been named after Baron Lamington, Queensland's governor at the turn of the 20th century, its origins are unclear. Australians celebrate National Lamington Day on July 21 but Australia Day is also a prime time for lamingtons. And it so happens that this joyous sweet is part of La Madre's new pastry range; its version is double-chocolate, the smallish cubes of rich, airy cake coated in Belgian chocolate and crusted with shredded coconut. La Madre's serving suggestion? Enjoy with a Red Duck Porter or Surefoot Stout from Mountain Goat Beer. Now, that's true blue.

NINA ROUSSEAU
La Madre lamingtons: \$2.50. Available at La Madre Bakery, 18 Milton Street, Bell Park, 5272 1727, lamadre.com.au.



Mad with flavour

THERE'S no doubting it, you've got to be a lover of all things hot to appreciate this chilli mustard. Part of a new range of Yarra Valley Gourmet Foods named, aptly enough, Mad Dog, it delivers a serious blast, first to the nostrils, then to the back of the throat. The mix of mustard, chilli and vinegar was good with steak and didn't overpower the flavours on my plate (but put too much on your fork and you will pay). More importantly, I kept going back for more. The chilli mustard joins Yarra Valley's line of quality preserves, dressings and sauces and is available from the online store, launched last year. Also in the Mad Dog range are chilli jam, chilli sauce and Indian relish.



TESSIE VANDERWERT
Mad Dog chilli mustard: RRP \$9.95 for 190g. For stockists, phone 5964 4889 or visit yarravalleygourmetfoods.com.au.

DIARY

JANUARY 21
All about cheese

FEBRUARY 2, 3
Cool vines

FEBRUARY 12
Beers for a cause

We want your cake

HAVE a favourite chocolate cake recipe you'd like to share? A classic or family favourite? Send it to PO Box 257, 3001 or