



STUART McEVOY

Next big thing: Calzone
patti, or fried calzone: a
Neapolitan dish that
asn't been introduced
ere as yet, but I'm doing
y best to change that.

ate: There isn't much I
on't like, apart from
rocessed, packet pizza.
s very stodgy, with that
ick base and the
most-plastic topping —
ardly recognisable.

avourite cuisine:
alian, and particularly
shes from my family's
gion of Campagna.

orst meal I ever ate:
ome airline meals have
t me wanting



Vege fest skewered towards the brave

FOOD Detective thinks attending any event advocating a vegetarian lifestyle would be a disturbing experience, so she hardly skipped a beat on receiving a press release from Thailand's tourism board promoting the "harrowing Phuket Vegetarian Festival".

Further investigation reveals this annual happening in the Thai beach resort is the kind of extreme detox that would upset even **Gwyneth Paltrow's** finely balanced chakras.

The festival, which kicks off on September 27, has its genesis in the local Chinese population, which believes sacred rituals — abstaining from meat, sex, alcohol and tobacco, wearing white, behaving properly and keeping clean — will bring good luck and great fortune.

And the rituals don't stop there.

"You will see people piercing and puncturing their cheeks with virtually any object imaginable; knives, swords, spikes, machetes, axes, silverware... and these are just the small things. The festival is not for those of delicate sensibility, faint heart or weak stomach," says a spokesperson from the **Tourism Authority of Thailand** in something of an understatement.

Other weapons of choice include machineguns, petrol pump nozzles and miniature battleships, although *Detective* hasn't a clue where they find the time for such elaborate piercing, what with all the walking across hot coals, climbing of bladed ladders and soaking in hot oil going on at the same time.

And just when it seemed things couldn't get any worse comes the realisation the only thing these punctured participants have to keep up their strength during the nine-day event is the likes of meatless sushi and endless variations on a tofu theme.

Now that is something worth sticking needles in one's eyes over.

More: phuketvegetarian.com; Thailand.net.au

- NO danger of having to hide unsightly puncture marks after attending a celebration of things vegetarian at Hong Kong's **Sevva**, on top of the Prince's Building. The restaurant has chosen the best veg specialties from around the world and combined them in a new afternoon tea comprising nine savoury dishes and six desserts.

Detective rather likes the sound of the truffled scrambled eggs on toasted poilane and the caramel crunch cake, two of the offerings on the three-tiered platter priced at HK\$520 (\$62.50) for two. More: sevva.hk.

- THE inaugural **Kangaroo Island Food Safari** hosted by **Southern Ocean Lodge** kicked off last weekend, with South Australian food stars **Maggie Beer** and **Simon Bryant** — of *The Cook and the Chef* television fame — leading the charge to check out some of the rugged South Australian island's best producers.

The five-night culinary event included visits to marron farmers, beekeepers, a sheep milk dairy and oyster fishermen, as well as degustation dinners and a *The Cook and the Chef*-style cook-off between Beer and Bryant.

An unexpected highlight was sampling Beer's infamous chicken terrine: the same confection that confounded four *MasterChef Australia* contestants, each serving it raw after failing to get the recipe right.

Southern Ocean Lodge head chef **Tim Bourke** bravely took on the task of preparing the terrine for the 30-odd safari guests and *Detective* can happily report there was no sushi-style poultry in sight. See the full report in the October issue of *Wish* magazine.

More: southernoceanlodge.com.au

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