

Another tasty string to the local tourism bow

By **ADAM WRIGHT**

WHAT has the Sydney International Food Festival got to do with the Shoalhaven?

A lot now that Masterchef entrant and Berry foodie Michelle Darlington has secured South Coast food tours as part of the event's schedule.

The Sydney International Food Festival (SIFF) will unfold across the month of October, bringing together Sydney's biggest names in food as well as top chefs from around the world.

And now the Shoalhaven will be part of it.

Ms Darlington has teamed up with chef and trainer Victor Pisapia to organise food safaris called Hungry for the South Coast.

"It's a first for the Shoalhaven," Ms Darlington said.

"We want to run this first one in conjunction with the festival, then we hope to set up other food and produce tours around the region," she said.

She said the tours would be about meeting local characters and helping people understand the passion local producers have for their food.

"It's going to be an experience that not only highlights what is produced

locally but gives people the chance to meet the producers and delve into the stories behind their food.

"I think that extra level makes the food taste better, it's a real connection.

"Over two days in October and November we're going to a communal garden, Berry Woodfired Sourdough Bakery, the Treat Factory, an organic vegetable farm, Jim Wild's Oysters – maybe cook some fish on his deck – it's all very casual.

"Then dinner at Paperbark Camp's restaurant The Gunya.

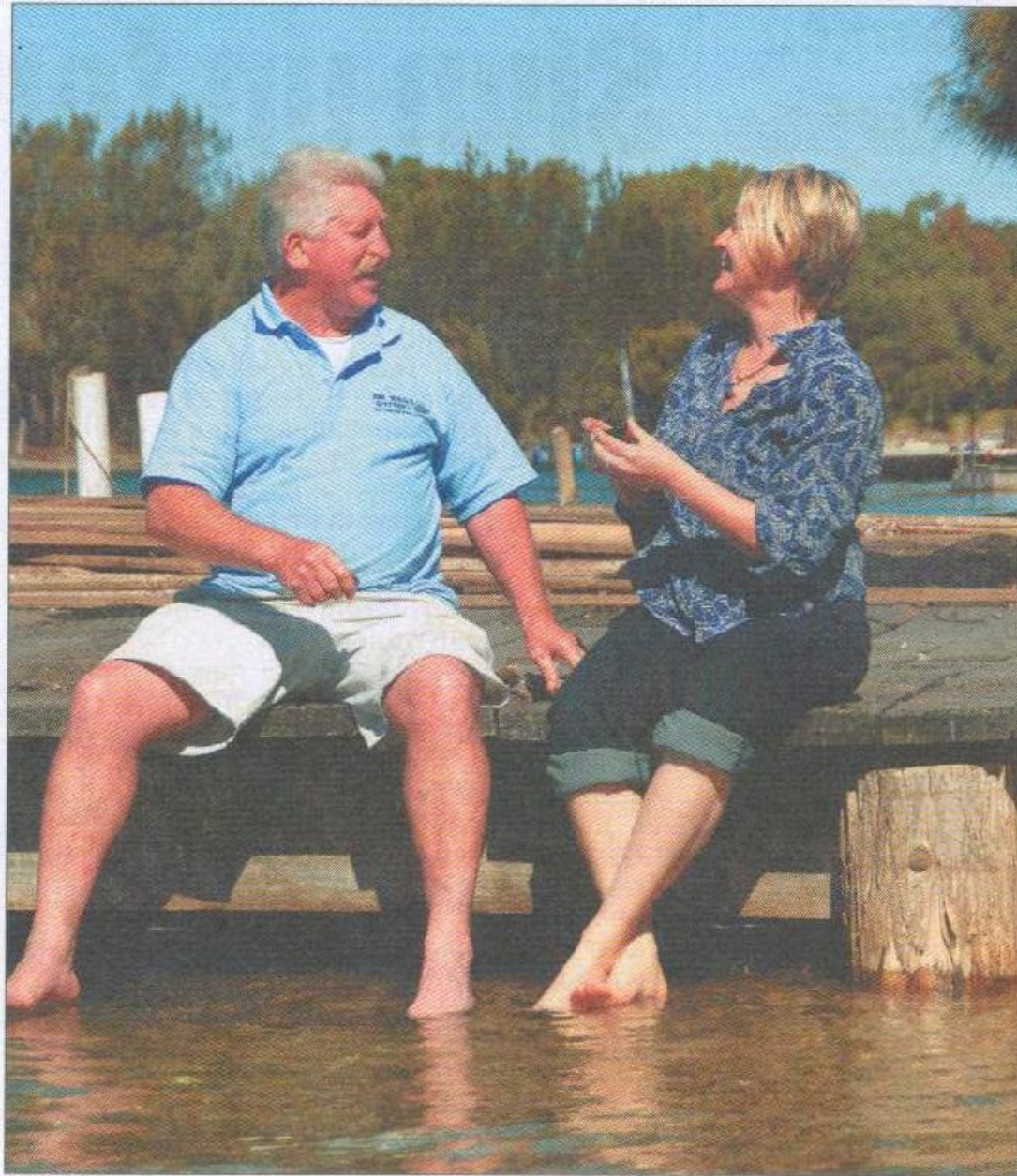
"On the Sunday we're heading further south to Cupitt's Winery to learn about underground wine-making in the barrel cave before enjoying a slow-food lunch and heading back."

Jim Wild from Greenwell Point believes the idea is a winner and expects it will generate a lot of food tourism in the region.

"We all have to do our bit to get people to visit the region.

"Yes, we're already a very popular destination but we can't just sit and wait for people to come to us. We need more of this sort of thing," he said.

For more information about the festival and the food tour visit www.victorsfood.com.au.



PRODUCE SHOWCASE: Greenwell Point oyster farming personality Jim Wild and Masterchef entrant and Berry foodie Michelle Darlington work on the finer points of an upcoming food safari called Hungry for the South Coast.