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Farming the Future

_by Sophie Hansen

Since its birth in 1986, Slow Food has been flying the flag for *good, clean* and *fair* food. Now it has begun to tap a mainstream nerve. A record number of people attended this year's Salone, held bi-annually, and within the program was Terra Madre, the world's largest farmers' meeting.

Among the 7000 delegates from 153 countries at Terra Madre, my husband and I were there to discuss what Slow Food means on the farm.

Ours is a medium-sized agribusiness, Mandagery Creek Farmed Venison. We farm deer near Orange and market venison to domestic and export customers. We are Slow Food members, subscribe to the movement's philosophies and I also spent a few years working in the movement's headquarters in Italy. We are believers.

While Australia's Slow Food movement does a great job in promoting regional foods, we wondered how farmers such as ourselves could better adhere to the ethos of good, clean and fair (GCF) from paddock to plate.

Ours is not an organic farm but our animals are free-range and our pastures managed carefully. We attend farmers' markets most weekends but also export meat and so contribute to food miles. Does this blow our Slow credibility or do our attempts at clean farming offset the "energy backpack" of our exports?

Terra Madre's opening ceremony was a four-hour epic of beating drums, impassioned speeches and processions of flag-bearing delegates in national costume. The executive chef of Longrain restaurants, Martin Boetz, said it was like attending a Food Olympics opening.

Concluding a run of speeches by Prince Charles, US food queen Alice Waters and international ecologist Vandana Shiva, the ceremony's highlight was a plea by Slow Food's founding president and food activist, Carlo Petrini, for good, clean and fair food to become a consumer's fundamental right. He argued this could only happen through consumer education and engagement.

Victorian delegate and organic farmer of rare breed pigs and sheep, Fiona Chambers, said: "It's the consumer's everyday buying decisions that will make the change; they have all of the power."

Terra Madre's 12 workshops were translated into six languages and attended by a global mix of farmers, cooks, academics and youth delegates. We debated everything from geographic indicators and their merits, the ethics of coffee, genetically engineered crops, the future of honey, the viability of community-supported agriculture, the politics of potato farming, the role of restaurants and native-breed meat. (When does a breed become native? After 50 years, concluded the panel.)

It was fascinating to share experiences with people from such a breadth of farming backgrounds. The ideas were approached with small- to medium-sized farms in mind.

At the Salone's marketplace, there were 400-

plus stalls. Every producer was engaged in direct marketing and proudly so. They were passionate about their product and rightly so. We came across one stall selling celery from Trevi in central Italy. In Australia, this vegetable isn't shown much love, usually relegated to the back of a produce stand. But here was a father and son standing behind a pile of the stuff. A tasting with fruity olive oil showed it to be full of flavour, tender and not at all stringy.

This Trevi black celery is part of Slow Food's Presidium project. Presidia work to protect small-scale producers of GCF food and provide them with viable outlets and direct marketing support. Selection criteria is strict but once approved, Presidia are promoted through the movement's massive international resources. A new logo was launched at Salone this year to clearly identify all Italian Presidia products.

If these men can do it with celery, surely Australian farmers can get more involved with the direct marketing of what we grow. And why not look to Presidia or similar branding projects to help out? Organic farmer Michael Campion, from Mangrove Mountain, said: "Direct marketing has allowed us to set our price, constantly improve our product and give us more control. And it's our customers we can thank for making this happen."

Clean food, as defined by our Terra Madre discussions, is that which has been produced with minimal strain on the environment and which arrives at the consumer with as small an "energy backpack" (transport and packaging) as possible. On well-managed Australian farms, smart farmers prioritise the welfare of their pastures and animals.

There is much "greening" to be done in the bush but it isn't cheap. Chambers said keeping her organic certification during the recent drought was a huge financial strain with the cost of organic feed (let alone conventional feed) becoming astronomical and almost prohibitive.

What about that emotive subject of food miles? Many Terra Madre delegates are past, present or future exporters and while all agreed local systems are always the priority, exporting is, for now at least, the backbone of many Australian agribusinesses.

And until an export destination can produce a certain food better, cleaner or in abundance, perhaps it has a place there. About 90 per cent of our venison goes overseas – and export is an important part of the equation – but our local market is far more satisfying in every sense and it is growing steadily.

Chambers tells a similar story. Eight years ago all her product was exported and now it's 30 per cent. She continues to reduce that number, placing priority on local distribution.

At his opening address, Petrini argued we must eat less, spend more and enjoy food more.

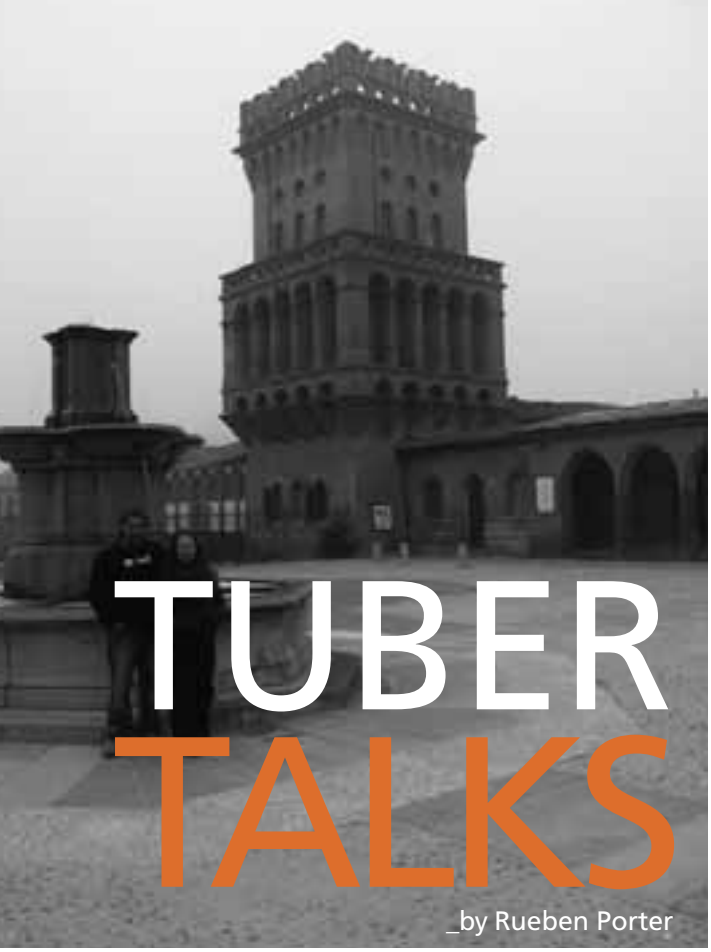
Chef-restaurateur Alex Herbert of Bird Cow Fish in Surry Hills said: "More and more chefs are working closely with good producers but consistency, price variation and availability problems are the main deterrents".

"I've had to explain to a customer why the grass-fed steak he had for lunch today was different to last week. He was happy to hear the dish's story and I was able to tell it because my producer is in regular contact with the restaurant."

Outside Terra Madre, there are thousands more farmers ticking every good, clean and fair box. In our case, we are now researching greener farm equipment and are increasing our local market.

This article was first published in Good Living in The Sydney Morning Herald

153 countries come together for the third Terra Madre world meeting of food communities, and the seventh edition of Salone del Gusto, held concurrently over October 23-27, 2008 in Turin, Italy



TUBER TALKS

_by Rueben Porter

Delegates from four corners of the world share their spud stories, and much more…

Kiaora tatou katoa, ka mihi nui ki nga kaiwhakahaere o Terra madre. Ki nga tangatawhenua o Turino me Bra hoki, tino miharo ou manaakitanga o aku whanau. Mauri ora!

The 2008 UN International Year of the Potato is a significant one for Māori people. Our relationship with food is heard in our songs, read in our stories and recorded in our legends and the tuber is an important part of our existence, which sustained the journey of our people across the Pacific. Kumara, taro and riwai (Māori potatoes) link us to our ancestors, connecting us to important events and to historic developments.

Originating in Peru, the potato has spread to all corners of the world, travelling on vessels during various periods of humankind's history. Today, the importance of the potato is easily understood by its high consumption rate throughout the world and it has an important role to play in the future of the world.

At Terra Madre, delegates at the 'Potatoes and other tubers' Earth Workshop discussed the humble spud's role in world agriculture, the economy and global food security. I presented our situation in Aotearoa and spoke about my experience as a grower of the tuber varieties that are a crucial part of Māori life; the deep connection Māori have for tubers through the history of our ancestors; and how knowledge about the kumara had sustained over 20 generations of descendants.

This discussion brought together representatives of communities who are proud to hold onto their traditional foods and styles of cooking, and who have realized the value of traditional foods for their families and their futures. I felt a great connection with participants in the workshop, regardless of whether they were from Europe, South America or Africa.

It was inspiring to realize that we are not alone. The opportunity to converse with other cultural groups was the greatest opportunity and benefit of attending the Terra Madre conference. Being part of this gathering was a means to freedom from dictation by global organizations, and developed the idea that we were not just simply grocers or potato farmers.

We were there to fight for local production of pure food, because food equals freedom. We were standing up for the rights of all indigenous peoples to protect their most basic entitlement as an independent people – that is to nurture the foods and traditions of their distinct culture in their own unique place on this earth.

I spoke with people from all around the world: from Belarus, Cuba and the USA. One day travelling by train from the countryside to the meeting in Turin, our conversation turned to the underlying principle that feeding our families good food was a responsibility that needed to be nurtured, and perhaps the most important responsibility we have.

There is a Māori proverb: *Te kai o te Rangatira, he korero - the food of kings is language*.

Terra Madre gave representatives of 153 countries the opportunity to meet and speak together, and we humble potato farmers in Aotearoa, thank Terra Madre for this feast. In a word, Terra Madre was inspirational.

Living Heritage

_by Barbara Santich

Tradition: the word itself inspires reverence. Regardless of the term's attachment – whether to dress or craft, to practices or beliefs, or to music or food – the implication is that it will be associated with a history or narrative, with longevity and with constancy.

In the gastronomic world, it's not difficult to find examples of foods and dishes that confirm this understanding – such as *maccu*, the elemental bean purée of Sicily, which in its simplest and purest form is essentially a thick soup of broad beans cooked in water, seasoned with salt and pepper and adorned with a generous spoonful of olive oil. From literature we understand that the Romans ate this same dish, that it persisted through medieval times virtually unchanged, and that domestic and restaurant kitchens in Sicily still prepare it. It is the ultimate in tradition.

Its staying power is easily explained. First of all, the essential ingredient *fava* (broad bean) has been a staple in Mediterranean regions for millennia. In particular, it has been a staple of the poor whose kitchens, if indeed they had a kitchen, might have been equipped with just a couple of pots. They had no option but to cook the beans in water, and no flavourings aside from wild herbs and possibly a piece of salt pork to supply the seasoning. Lack of opportunity prevented them from diversifying the basic dish or dressing it up, and it continued being eaten from generation to generation, virtually unchanged.

Another example, again from Italy but perhaps more particular to Emilia-Romagna, is ravioli or tortellini or other pasta shapes filled with a ricotta and herb mixture. The recipe can be traced back to the fourteenth century and although its language might be rather different to the Italian of today, the dish it describes would be virtually indistinguishable from that of a Bolognese Osteria. Again, there's no doubting the continuity of a tradition.

Yet another Mediterranean example is fried fish doused in a spiced and seasoned vinegar – *escabeche, scabetch, scapece* or *escabetx* depending where you find it, is a dish which goes back to at least the time of the Roman empire. Today's recipes are not identical to that penned in the name of Apicius but they follow the same principles; the essential ingredients are the same, as is the method.

Comparing these dishes, each characteristic of a particular place, offers a way of examining

what qualifies as tradition. What qualities are essential for food – or costume, or crafts practices – to be deemed traditional, or recognised as traditional? Must it be able to trace its origins back through the centuries? Is it sufficient for a tradition to be only three generations old, as agreed by the Euroterroirs national groups in 1992, in order to merit the epithet? Must it remain unchanged and unchanging?

These examples place emphasis on the result, the particular dish, but the tradition is also in the practice, for the recipes are not identical from one household to the next. There have probably been as many individual versions of escabeche as there are fish in the Mediterranean. The recipes are not necessarily codified or standardised; they are not uniform and invariable, at least not until they were taken out of the inchoate form in which they existed and inserted into cookbooks. More important than the recipe is the practice, a particular way of doing things.

The usual interpretation of tradition implies beliefs, customs, legends that have been handed down, often by word of mouth or by practice, from one generation to another, and thus the association with longevity and constancy. This apparently assumes that each succeeding generation will passively and unquestioningly accept what it receives from its elders and in turn pass it, in the same form, to the children and the following generation.

It is more realistic to understand tradition as an active, conscious process, as in Hervieu-Léger's interpretation: 'the combination of representations, concepts, theoretical and practical know-how, behaviours, attitudes, etc. that a group or society accepts to ensure the continuity between past and present'.[1]

Such an understanding recognizes that traditions are not immutable, that they must be able to evolve as the broader environment changes. Emphasizing practices over recipes, at least for gastronomic tradition, easily accommodates this perspective. Jacqueline Bessière's description of the process of building up heritage – and traditions are part of heritage – as one of 'actualizing, adapting and re-interpreting elements from the past of a given group (its knowledge, skills and values), in other words combining conservation and innovation, stability and dynamism, reproduction and creation, and consequently giving a new social meaning which generates identity' also highlights the imperative of adaptability.[2]

In a contemporary context, it seems to me that more important than history and durability is the relationship between the tradition and the population; people should accept it, believe in it, claim it as their own and respect it, even if they do not necessarily practise the tradition. Significantly, this way of viewing tradition allows for evolution and change. While it might seem radical in that it demotes the role of history, it does not deny the significance of history; for though tradition might exist in the practice it also resides in the record, sometimes oral and sometimes written, which both justifies the practice and safeguards it.

Traditions that do not evolve become antiquated, obsolete and eventually die. Modern Greek women who make the traditional dessert, galaktoboureko, something like a Greek version of mille feuilles, are just as likely to buy sheets of filo pastry rather than making the pastry themselves; they are just as likely to use a convenience product, custard powder, instead of eggs and milk and vanilla and sugar to make the filling. The details of the recipe have changed, but the practice – the tradition – has remained the same, as has the place of the dessert within Greek gastronomic culture.

The same adaptability is evident in indigenous communities in Australia where Aboriginal men and women continue to hunt and gather, collecting local 'bush foods'. Where once they might have used spears and boomerangs to kill game such as kangaroo they now might use shotguns; where once they might have built stone traps to harvest fish in the sea or in rivers they might use standard fishing nets; where once they paddled dugouts they might now use outboard-powered dinghies to go fishing. Again, the practice has persisted, though the actual techniques and tools have changed.

Slow Food can and does play a vital role in the progression of tradition. First, it can raise awareness of the tradition, not only in the local community but also in the wider world. It can promote respect in the tradition, inspiring the local population to take pride in its practices and to believe in its tradition. Finally, it can record the tradition, not only as recipes but also as oral histories, as folk tales and local mythology, as music and dance and ceremony. In all this it plays the part of the solicitous angel, ensuring the continued presence in our world of this living heritage.

1. Hervieu-Léger, cited by Jacinthe Bessière, "Local Development and Heritage: Traditional Food and Cuisine as Tourist Attractions in Rural Areas," *Sociologia Ruralis* 38 (1998): 26.
2. Bessière, 27.

In the year in which musicians and natural textile producers join the farmers, herders, breeders, fishers, artisan producers, cooks, academics and youth of the Terra Madre network, Barbara Santich takes a closer look at the meaning of tradition and its significance

Simple Pleasures

_by Claire Inwood

Growing up in New Zealand in the 60's and 70's, my father would return home from his business travels with sacks of Kerikeri oranges, Kumara (sweet potato) fresh oysters, green beans or field mushrooms. At a time when garlic and zucchini were still very exotic, my mother prepared traditional dishes based on English cuisine. Our food was simple, nourishing and primarily all homemade, including many preserves, utilising the seasonal produce my father so enjoyed.

It is only as an adult that I realized the importance of the food education my parents gave me. I became interested in holistic wellbeing, and my first cooking job was at a health spa where I meet two extraordinary cooks, Daniel and Audrey LeBel, who introduced me to macrobiotics. In essence this philosophy dovetails with many Slow Food principles: seasonality, local foods, meaningful work and social responsibility.

While I no longer follow macrobiotics, it continues to inform my cooking. Over the next two decades, I worked as a caterer, chef and teacher in America, and enjoyed the generosity of others passionate about food, sharing recipes and meals, laughter and discussion, and creating events.

The far northern area of New Zealand, which is today my home again, features a diverse and stunning natural environment. It is also home to many food producers - orchardists and organic juice producers, winemakers, herb growers, artisan breadmakers, cheesemakers, salami producers – who come together at our thriving farmers' markets.

Two years ago some friends gifted me a Slow Food membership, and as a member of Waitakere Convivium I had the great pleasure of attending Terra Madre in October 2008. I found that the experience brought together many strands of my life and work, introduced me to a vital and committed community, and a diverse cultural experience.

Returning home from Terra Madre I am even more dedicated to promoting local producers. I realized the great value of the simple exchanges that occur when someone asks you where you sourced an ingredient. Part of the pleasure is also in the forming of relationships with local producers, many selling from their homes. As mentioned repeatedly at Terra Madre, cooks can become a key link between the producer and diner/consumer.

During the event, I followed the workshops focused on education and sustainability in restaurant/food production. Alice Waters' question *What, Why and How do I cook,* was significant for me, as was Fabio Pichi's emphasis on learning to preserve foods, limit waste and the importance of passion and spontaneity in food preparation. All of the chefs who came together in the cook's Earth Workshops – from the famous to the unknown - were looking for

A cook's journey to Terra Madre

practical solutions in their daily practices.

Another highlight of Terra Madre was the time spent with my host family, Giovanni and Mavi Dallorto of Bra. Fellow delegate Gretta Carney and I were welcomed with great warmth and shown much generosity. We exchanged wonderful and amusing conversations with a handful of English and Italian words and Mavi created superb, simple regional dishes for us each evening.

This embodied so much of the Slow Food philosophy for me and brought the focus back to simplicity – one of the key words for me from my experience at Terra Madre. Simple food, prepared well with love, human exchanges, sharing a meal, tending the soil, protecting seeds.

When I was first invited to be a delegate I thought I was too 'small' and not significant enough to attend such an event. Instead, I have returned from Turin feeling very inspired, and with greater understanding of the importance of local action.

TERRA MADRE Spreads it Wings

_by Carlo Petrini

Words fail me when I try to express the feeling of hope and faith that the people of Terra Madre conveyed to all of us during those four splendid days in Turin this past October, and to the public who were following the event with interest, both directly and remotely via extensive international media coverage.

I believe that it is people such as those in the Terra Madre network who represent the future and who will lead the third Industrial Revolution. The local economies they represent are already ahead of their time; they know how to produce food in a virtuous way and many have been doing so for a long time without exploiting nature.

Many have much to learn from them and I believe that the message we are spreading is gaining more and more momentum on all levels. It is no coincidence that we have received an official invitation to attend the G8 meeting in 2009, in Sardinia, Italy. A Terra Madre delegation will meet the world's most powerful people and will be able to talk to them directly.

This is a sign of the unbelievable political strength we have gained. And this is why, after the great charge of energy we've received from those days in Turin at the Oval and the PalaIsozaki, I ask you all not to stop, to keep alive the amazing inspiration that the delegates have passed on to us and to make them an integral part of the Slow Food movement. Now that they have returned home, this is the time to realize our shared projects, to continue the wonderful work that we have done so far and to strengthen the network we are building.

The presentation of the Manifesto on Climate Change during Terra Madre, joining past manifestos on the future of food and seeds, marked another fundamental step. It is an im-

More than 1600 food communities come together for their third international meeting, joined by 800 cooks, 400 academics and a for the first time a delegation of 1000 youth and 200 musicians, representing more than 150 countries

portant political document which must become a central element in our philosophy.

So I will repeat the invitation made during the closing ceremony on October 26th: organize many Terra Madre gathering in your homelands, at a national, regional or local level, in your villages or your cities. Rediscover that spirit of exchange and coming together that we all felt in Turin, recreate it and let those who could not be at our great meeting experience it too.

Spread the message. Continue to believe in this project. Our union represents a new force, a positive force that makes the world better because it can grow, because the whole world is seeking the alternative embodied by the Terra Madre communities since they were formed.

Organize many Terra Madres around the world over the next two years before we meet again: politician, associations, universities, cooks and opinion leaders should always hear your voice, and understand who you are and that you are committed like few others. We will stay in touch, we will stay united and we will stay active, and I am convinced that we will have many reasons to celebrate.

Heritage FARE

Journeying to the roots of food at Salone del Gusto

_by Carla Ranicki and Monica Mascarino

From the vineyards of Georgia to the Japanese coastline to the hills of southwest France, a sampling of three Taste Workshops at Salone del Gusto one day offered a geographical tour that brought new perspectives on food and wine from around the world. As the Salone grows increasingly international - through the portion of non-Italian exhibitors and visitors and with the simultaneous Terra Madre meeting and gathering of Presidia producers - experiences as a visitor, delegate or producer are further enriched. This year, with the two events tied more closely together, the program of Taste Workshops offered visitors a journey to all corners of the world, and to the roots of food.

Gvino from Georgia

Georgia on my mind featured eight wines from the mountainous country on the Black Sea.

Known as the cradle of wine, recent archeological evidence has revealed that people have been making wine, or *gvino*, in

Georgia for 8,000 years. During the 20th century, decades of Soviet rule turned Georgia into Russia's wine reservoir, with mass production more focused on quantity than quality. But artisan winemaking has survived, and some producers are still using the ancient technique of fermenting the wine in *amphorae* - huge terracotta pots of up to 2,000 liters buried in the earth.

The organic wines tasted, all made using natural wild yeasts, provided an overview of the panorama of the country's wine, most from the important wine-growing region Kakheti, and using the white grape variety *rkatsiteli* or the red variety *saperavi*. The white wines which had been fermented in amphorae, displayed a peachy-amber color, a slight cloudiness and rich perfumes. 'Naked wines', wine importer Luca Gargano called them, saying that to palates more used to French or Italian sensory profiles, they might seem like they were missing something because of the lack of wood: "They are outside the canons of Western wine."

A Day in Japan

"I'm going to let you experience a day in Japan, just like I had the chance to," said Annalisa Sivieri, in her introduction to this workshop focusing on some of Japan's unusual artisan producers and food traditions. Annalisa, a graduate of the University of Gastronomic Sciences, came up with the workshop concept after visiting Japan on a field trip during her studies. The result offered a truly interactive lesson, during which the audience listened to producers tell their stories and explain their production techniques, tasted products and prepared dishes.

While an 80-year-old dried-persimmon producer from Hachiya, representing his Terra Madre food community, recounted the interesting story of this fruit product through Japanese history, the audience was busy with grains of rice and nori seaweed sheets, trying their best to make traditional *maki* rolls. Next, dishes of grated red turnip from Kiso and sweet potatoes accompanied by salted anchovies called *etari* were tried, further expanding awareness of Japanese cuisine beyond the ubiquitous sushi in this exploration of cultural identity and daily diet in the land of the Rising Sun.

French Vines

The Meeting with the Makers program featured leading producers from around the world in an informal setting, including some outstanding winemakers who described their work and presented some of their star bottles for tasting and discussion. French biodynamic winemaker Anne-Marie Lavaysse, gave a fascinating presentation of her work, in which she uses infusions made from local, wild herbs rather than chemical pesticides in the vineyard.

On a plateau 320 meters above sea level in Minervois (Languedoc-Roussillon), Anne-Marie and her son Pierre have turned Le Petit Domaine de Gimois into one of the world's most celebrated biodynamic wineries. Her Muscat Sec was fresh and minerally with a touch of acidity, and her red, a blend of 16 different grapes, had a savory aroma that recalled more northern wines. "The vineyard is a living organism," she said, explaining her biodynamic principles. "It has moods, it breathes, it has a circulation system, and we have to treat it with the same respect as any kind of living organism. The more you suffuse an organism with products from outside nature, the more fragile it becomes. It's like a body, it has natural defenses."

Voices from Terra Madre

"Traditional and local knowledge constitutes an extensive realm of accumulated practical knowledge and knowledge-generating capacity that is needed if sustainability and development goals are to be reached'. These are some of the wisest words I have heard in recent years and each and every one of you, if I may say so, ladies and gentlemen, is a testament to their truth".

HRH Prince of Wales
Recorded Message for Terra Madre 2008
Opening Ceremony

"Terra Madre was undoubtedly one of the liveliest and most practical events this century. When we were the pioneers attending the first edition in 2004, no one imagined such a wonderful event could exist anywhere in the world… several years have passed, friendships have been strengthened and exchanges established. For a few incredible days our lives have been vastly enriched, food producers of the world have met and learned from each other".

Odome Angone
Terra Madre Delegate 2008
Mbolo Convivium de Libreville
(Gabon)

"Maori call ourselves tangata whenua, people of the land. Traditionally we understand how to maximize the lands potential, without compromising its natural value….We are the caretakers that must ensure the survival or our children. If we don't use our resources, how can we make sure they are healthy? To be able to feed your family is to truly have freedom!".

Heeni Hoterene
Closing Ceremony, TM Delegate 2008
Aotearoa/New Zealand

"I came from Scotland with a community of crafters, the people of the highlands and islands of Scotland. I met my friend Sam from Necofa, Kenya and we talked about how we could link our communities. I introduced him to Norman from Shetland and Neil from the Western Isles. We are hoping to connect two schools in Kenya with two schools in Scotland – the gift of Terra Madre".

Pam Rodway
Terra Madre Delegate 2008
Scotland

"What all of you have started is an unbelievable beginning to a powerful revolution. But I know that all of you are wondering if my generation will be able to continue that revolution, and carry it to the extent of its mission…. I'm here today because I want you to know, that we got it. We will be the generation that reunites mankind with the earth".

Sam Levin
Opening Ceremony, TM Youth Delegate 2008
Masseuchettus, USA

"We are in the midst of three major crisis: the crisis of finance, the crisis of food, the crisis of the environment including climate change, are all routed in the same causes. The globalized economy is based on fictions, it is based on greed, is failing us, is leading from crisis to crisis. Terra Madre invites us to return to the terra – earth, and madre – the earth as mother. All we have to do is once again remember how our mothers fed the world… It's that generosity and abundance of sharing, of caring that we must rejuvenate. We can, we are the future, let's make it happen".

Vandana Shiva
Slow Food International Vice President
Opening Ceremony

www.terramadre.org

A Taste OF THE FUTURE

_by Emma Cobb

23 year-old head chef of Cupitt's Winery restaurant, situated in Ulladulla on the southeast NSW coast, travels to Terra Madre…

I did my apprenticeship with a seafood restaurant that owned its own trawler, and would spend a lot of time with the fishermen, chatting about fishing methods, seasons, species and regions. This experience gave me a fantastic education in using local seafood, and more broadly in learning the value of fresh food. Today I continue to push these values as a qualified chef.

The main focus in my kitchen is to incorporate fresh local produce from our region into the regularly changing menu – which can be modified up to three or four times a week. Customer aren't always happy with this to begin with, but this is part of the educational process as they must understand that a commitment to using local, seasonal produce means chefs cannot always offer the same dishes for long periods at a time, or even week-to-week.

As a young chef, a key aim of mine is to encourage a Slow Food approach among my industry peers, friends, family, producers, suppliers and youth. Through developing a strong connection with the consumer and the producer, we are able to maintain a consistent menu and return support to those who assist us.

I would really like to see a Slow Food module introduced to the TAFE curriculum, providing information on producers by including excursions to farms, gardens, markets, dairies, and breeders. By travelling to a product's origin prior to cooking with it, we learn about the inherent importance of Slow Food.

As a restaurant, we are also active in various community festivities and educational activities, such as our harvest festivals with producers. We also plan to start a community garden on the property, which will first supply the restaurant and then the local community. This will also give us an opportunity to have school children visit, and experience food from the kitchen garden to the table.

Throughout Terra Madre I was able to see how the whole world revolves around food and the many ways in which people are connected to Slow Food - from many different countries, religions and beliefs. I return home having met many young people with similar ideas and with new thoughts about how to go forward and better our situation here.

Balancing Act

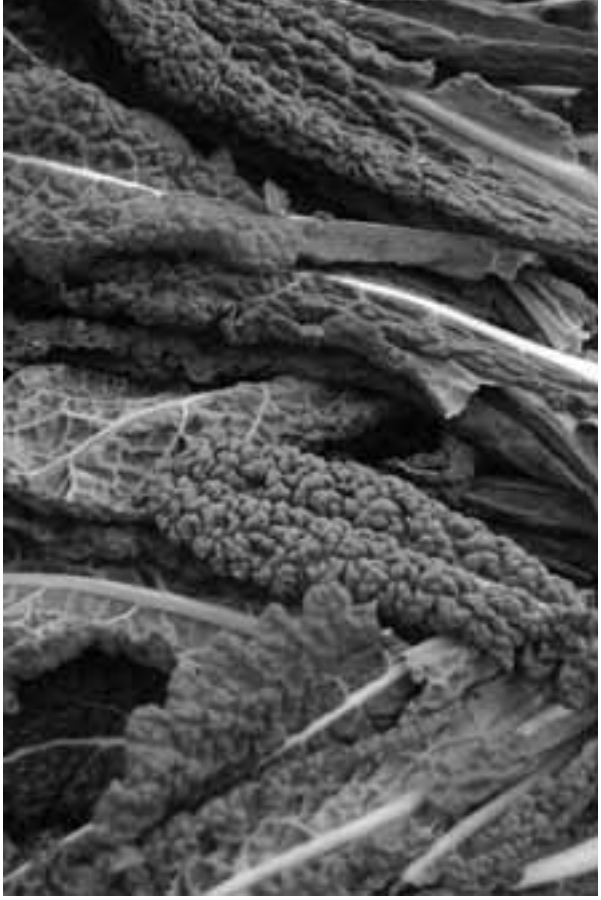
_by Julie Shelton

Slow Food producers are wonderful people to hang out with. Usually they have become a producer of good, clean and fair food as a result of a long-standing fascination for a particular product, or a desire to satisfy their yearning for a livelihood with ecological and social integrity.

What I really like about them is their passion and creativity and that many of them are risk-takers and rugged individuals, with questioning minds and a penchant for challenging the status quo. I'm attracted to the artistic energy they put into their work, and the depth of connection with their raw ingredients, animals, plants or soil. I love that they live for what they do.

What I couldn't say about Slow Food producers is that they necessarily have a great tendency for paper work, balancing the books, or navigating tax legislation or food safety regulations. Most of my artisanal food producer friends avoid these aspects of their enterprise for as long as possible. I know this intimately because I married one.

My husband and I operate a farm in the Sunshine Coast hinterland producing a range of organic dairy products, beef, eggs and poultry. A driving force of the farm is our quest to



The ‘art’ in artisanal and the burecratic challenges facing small producers

produce the best quality food possible. So what constitutes the best quality milk and eggs? And how do you produce it consistently? And how do you do it in such a way that builds up fertility in the soil, ensures animal well-being, minimises harmful impacts on the environment and still ensures a modest living?

Perhaps we were naïve in that we didn’t ask: how do we meet all our statutory obligations and still get seven hours sleep per night? Followed by: how do we do all of the above and sustain the passion and artistic juices for producing good quality food?

I wonder if the ‘art’ part of artisanal is fully appreciated. Producing *slow* food is an art. However, in Australia many small-scale food producers I know complain about the amount of time and energy they must expend on compliance. In particular, there is a feeling that there is unwarranted or disproportionate application of regulations compared with assessed risk; pedantic or inconsistent interpretation of regulations; and overlap (or even contradiction) of requirements from various agencies.

There is a strong feeling that small-scale food production is being regulated out of existence.

This is why I embarked on a fascinating journey to look at what other countries are doing to support their artisanal and small-scale food producers in relation to their regulatory obligations. To assist in the journey I was fortunate to be awarded a Fellowship by the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust, which funded me to travel this year to a number of Slow Food events in the USA, Ireland and, finally, Terra Madre in Italy, where I joined the Australian delegation.

Back at home, my husband and I are questioning how we can continue to make a living out of small-scale farming. It is not just about sales: like many producers, we know the support is out there and I am sure our customers – and co-producers – would urge us to continue. Sales alone may support the bottom line but do they nourish the spirit?

I hope to share the report from my Fellowship project with Slow Food members in the future. However, one initiative that appeals immediately is the establishment of Artisanal Food Forums, whereby representatives from various food sectors (e.g. dairy, cured meats, seafood) meet with the key regulatory stakeholders (in particular, food safety) to discuss issues and explore solutions. The key to the success of this, I imagine, would be appropriate and skilled facilitation, coupled with sound legal and financial advice.

I can’t think of a better way for Slow Food convivia in Australia to actively support their food producers and preserve production of local food that is good, clean and fair.

The Health Link

_by Jan Ritchie

Over the past 20 years, my teaching and research have focused on the long-term promotion of health and disease prevention, in particular exploring how to best support people in their daily lives to do the 'right' thing. My interest in Slow Food arose through this work in the School of Public Health and Community Medicine at the University of New South Wales, and led me to participate in the Terra Madre 2008 meeting along with 400 academics from around the world.

When I first started this work, we were all convinced that all we needed to do was to tell people what they 'should' do with the expectation that once they had the knowledge, they would immediately convert this into action. But we were wrong.

Research has shown us over and over again that although providing information and education is desirable and useful, people's motivations in their daily lives are rarely driven by logical health reasons and instead rely much more on social, cultural, economic and political drivers around them that influence social norms and patterns of behaviour.

In Australia, food-related illness (heart disease, diabetes, cancer) is increasingly a problem. For the 97 percent of Australians who have settled here over the past 200 years, the problem arises primarily through excessive consumption of inappropriate foods. Alternatively, for many Aboriginal people, the other three percent of the population, serious health problems are due to inadequate nutrition.

Working together to foster healthy communities

Knowing the futility of trying to correct these food-related problems by providing individuals with detailed information, our latest studies are showing success where the focus is on entire communities. By fostering a community spirit of positive change, the healthy choice can become the easy choice – in this case choosing appealing, nutritious, healthy food that is easily available and accessible yet affordable.

The principles of eating well and health promotion that I am researching are very compatible with the Slow Food principles of good, clean and fair. From my perspective, one excellent way to influence *Slow* but sustainable and ultimately effective change in Australians' eating habits is for health promoters to harness the passion of the Slow Food community and work in partnership together for our collective good.

Terra FIRMA

_by Michael Croft

Reflecting on Terra Madre 2008 back at home

It came as a bit of shock when I was nominated to go to Terra Madre. My wife Elizabeth and I are members and supporters of Slow Food but this was an unexpected privilege and honour. We had read Carlo Petrini's works, our philosophies of life were very much aligned, and we are practising the good, clean and fair farming the Slow Food movement supports. For us this philosophy equals rare breeds for meat and eggs, biodynamics, and local farmers markets.

I was asked: why go to Terra Madre, why make the trip? Initially that question threw me off guard as I thought it would be universally desirable to attend such an event. The opportunity to hear leading global thinkers and activists such as Carlo Petrini, Vandana Shiva, and Alice Waters; to meet like minded producers, processors and chefs; to enjoy the convivial nature of the event, and to sample the world's best foods at Salone del Gusto, was simply an event not to be missed. Funding the trip after six years of drought was secondary, and I managed to get there with the great help of our local Canberra 4Cs Convivium. www.slowfoodcanberra.com

On reflection I really went to Turin to learn - learn all I could from other producers, from processors, from cooks and chefs and from co-producers. What I didn't realize was that I also had something to contribute, and being asked to address one of the Earth Workshops was an unexpected honour.

As many farmers do, I mostly work alone and the convivial nature of the event and the possibility to connect with like-minded people was a real pleasure. While everyone I met was a delight and firm friendships were formed quickly, I must single out the Italians as perhaps the most hospitable people on the planet.

About 20 Australians were accommodated at a convent's spiritual retreat. The significance of this placement was not lost on us Aussies and we happily enjoyed many of the local spirits. Several nights we returned from the Salone del Gusto with some of the world's best offerings that were then consumed with passion - special mention must go to the white truffle pizza!

If I had one goal when I went to Terra Madre, it was to investigate the potential of value-adding projects for our Wessex Saddleback pork. Italy was definitely the best place to start my investigations of prosciutto, ham, salami and other small goods. I sampled more processed meat products in three days in Turin than I have in a lifetime – and came home a few kilos heavier too. As a result I have a standing invitation to visit a forth generation Swiss German small goods maker and learn what I can. The surprise is that this contact was actually a fellow Australian delegate Thomas Beuke from Tasmania, and his Wallaby salami amongst the best I have tasted. www.blackforestsmallgoods.com.au

What has Terra Madre inspired me to do? Value-add to our already special produce. Elizabeth and I are now planning a small commercial kitchen where we will prepare hams ready for extended air-drying and maturing. The value adding I saw at Terra Madre and Salone was inspiring and will help a small farm like ours remain viable.

Regrets? The only regrets I have are that Elizabeth could not come with me and that Terra Madre the event was over so soon – but there's always next time. All in all I consider my time at Terra Madre to have been an immense success. I enjoyed the city, food, the people, the wine, the music, and I learnt a great deal – what else is there to life?

www.mountaincreekfarm.com.au

GETTING THERE

_by Jamie Kronborg

Twelve delegates make the Perth-to-Turin trip

Slow Food Perth maintains an extensive database of producers, cooks and chefs who work to the Slow Food principle of *good, clean* and *fair*. When nominations were being sought for Terra Madre in early 2008, we emailed the details to all the individuals on this list and published an article in our newsletter *Helix aspera* encouraging convivium members to forward names of potential nominees who would benefit from participating in the international meeting.

We had been provisioning the convivium's Terra Madre fundraising account with 10 per cent of profits from all events throughout the preceding year. Our first major fundraising event to support yet-to-be-selected delegates' airfare costs added to this considerably. Held at Cosham Wines in the Bickley Valley on Mothers' Day in May, the event was named *Il giorne della madre*. 2006 Terra Madre chef delegate Vincenzo Velletri prepared the luncheon which raised more than $1,200 Au towards the 2008 delegates' expenses.

Then in August we participated in the two-day Mundaring Truffle Festival in the Perth hills, attended by more than 10,000 people. On the first day Slow Food Perth hosted a luncheon for 124 guests with the food again prepared by Vincenzo Velletri, and on this occasion featuring the Manjimup-grown black truffle in all courses. On the second day our marquee was transformed into a market and food education space, including: sheep-milking by 2006 Terra Madre delegates Bruce and Jane Wilde from Cambray sheep cheese at Nannup; blindfold food tastings for children; Foodbank charity preparation demonstrations; photo and text exhibition - 'brainfood'; Country Women's Association food heritage promotion; and sales of Slow Food Perth biscuits and on-site wood-fired pizza. An additional $6000 Au was raised over this weekend.

Western Australia's Terra Madre 2008 delegates were selected in August and we then cast about among Perth travel agents for the best possible airfares and connections for delegates' travel, ultimately negotiating a Perth-Milan-Perth return fare of $2157 for each of the 12 delegates from five food communities, two chefs and convivium co-leader Pauline Tresise. Slow Food Perth contributed $1,000 towards each of the food communities' and chefs' costs, and Slow Food Perth members and Margaret River olive oil producers Jill and Tony James held a farm lunch to raise funds for one of the local delegates.

Immediately following Terra Madre, we contacted all delegates and asked for a written report about their experiences, the benefits, what went right, what went wrong, areas in which they believed Terra Madre could be improved, and how they intended to share their Terra Madre knowledge in local communities and use it in their food work.

Like all convivium activities, our Terra Madre strategy was coordinated entirely by volunteers and relied, as always, on the generous support of members, friends and the delegates themselves. Thank you to all!

Golden OIL

_by Ian Crawford

Several years ago I started what has become a fascinating journey discovering the wonders of olive oil.

My wife and I purchased some land in Nannup and decided the best way to utilise it was to grow something that was ecologically friendly, did not require a slaughtering process and would survive with a minimum of intrusive agricultural process.

The only candidate which came close was olives and olive oil. Although the growth of our olive grove has required hard work and regular attention, our toil is handsomely rewarded by the outcomes.

Olive oil stretches back into antiquity like few other products. Back in 6000BC, farmers in Asia Minor discovered that wild olive shoots could be grafted, replanted and successfully domesticated.

From this beginning, history records how the olive has expanded to all the countries bordering the Mediterranean, including North Africa and Egypt. It's almost certain that when the three wise men visited the Holy Land they carried with them cold pressed extra virgin olive oil. In Hebrew, an idiom for a 'good man' is 'pure olive oil'.

Of the 800 million olive trees in the world, 90 per cent of them are found in the Mediterranean region. Spain has more olive trees than Italy, in spite of Italian propaganda. The worldwide turnover of olive products is US$10 billion and last year two million metric tonnes of olive oil was consumed.

Repeatedly through history, we understand that many moments and events of great significance are recorded by ceremonies that incorporate the use of olive oil or some part of the olive tree. It may take the form of anointing the central figure with olive oil or using the twig of an olive branch to symbolise a new beginning.

What is it then about olive oil that commands this deep respect – and sees it remain a staple of the Mediterranean diet?

Medically we know that this mono-unsaturated oil enhances the good HDL cholesterol and reduces the bad LDL cholesterol in our body. This is the type of basic fact that journals tell us about, but I felt sure there were other intrinsic factors which make this oil special.

To start the search my wife and I decided to visit the region of Puglia – the heart of the olive growing region in Italy. We landed in Rome and travelled by car south to the small village of Orsara, situated high in the hills with the flat Puglian plain stretching below towards the Adriatic coastal cities of Bari and Brindisi.

In Orsara we were the guests of Peppe Zullo, a wonderful Italian chef. After working in America for many years, Peppe returned to his hometown to help re-establish this area of Puglia as a centre of excellence for the production and preparation of regional and natural food products.

His first project was to resurrect the old olive grove which had fallen into neglect. By

carefully pruning trees, discarding old trees too damaged to survive and planting new trees, the old grove has been enlarged and complemented and is once again a productive part of his estate.

Being a chef who insists on only using seasonal food grown from the surrounding region, Peppe then set about creating an eight-hectare kitchen garden in which to grow all the species of vegetables and herbs native to the area. In addition, he is regenerating ancient fruit and berry trees no longer found in the area. In his simple and delicious cooking, olive oil is key to highlighting flavours.

Next we headed for Borgo San Marco on the east coast of the heel of Italy's boot. As we travelled for several hours, our constant companion was olive groves stretching out as far as the eye could see. I came to the conclusion that where in Australia we have bush, in Puglia you have olive groves. Borgo San Marco is set in 90 hectares of ancient olive groves and the original historic fortified country manor has been transformed into a 15-suite luxury *masseria*.

The original fortifications were built in the fifteenth century to ward off the invading Saracens and were used by the Knights of Malta, by papal decree, to protect and secure this part of Puglia. The sheer size and majesty of the olive grove was overwhelming. Some of the trees planted by the Greeks were 1000 years old and were still producing abundant crops of olives. It would take four people with outstretched arms to encircle the girth of one of these giants. To walk among these quiet historians was a humbling experience, realizing how much time they had witnessed – if only they could speak of the past.

Alessandro Alamti told us of the ancient beginnings of his property, which still contains the Greek ruins of buildings and implements used in working the grove to produce olive oil all those centuries ago. He also explained the utilization of the few natural resources of the region, and how he was gradually renovating the old structures to be used again. The careful pruning and training of trees, taking advantage of the gravitational movement of water and its storage and the need to live within the environment, which is sparse and dry somewhat like Australia, all combine to produce massive amounts of olive oil.

A Mediterranean search to discover what makes olive oil so special

This is the great strength of olive oil – its international standing as a commodity to be traded across the world, to support vast families of people across a large number of countries, all with their own history, all with their own stories of the 'golden oil'. The process continues as it has for thousands of years, and here I was trying to unravel it. I realised I had only scraped its surface.

Ian and Lauris Crawford own Laurian Olive Oil in Nannup.

Their oil was recognised as the best boutique olive oil at the 2008 Perth Royal Show.

Further Reading:

Olives: The Life & Lore of a Nobel Fruit, by Mort Rosenblum, 1996, Absolute Press

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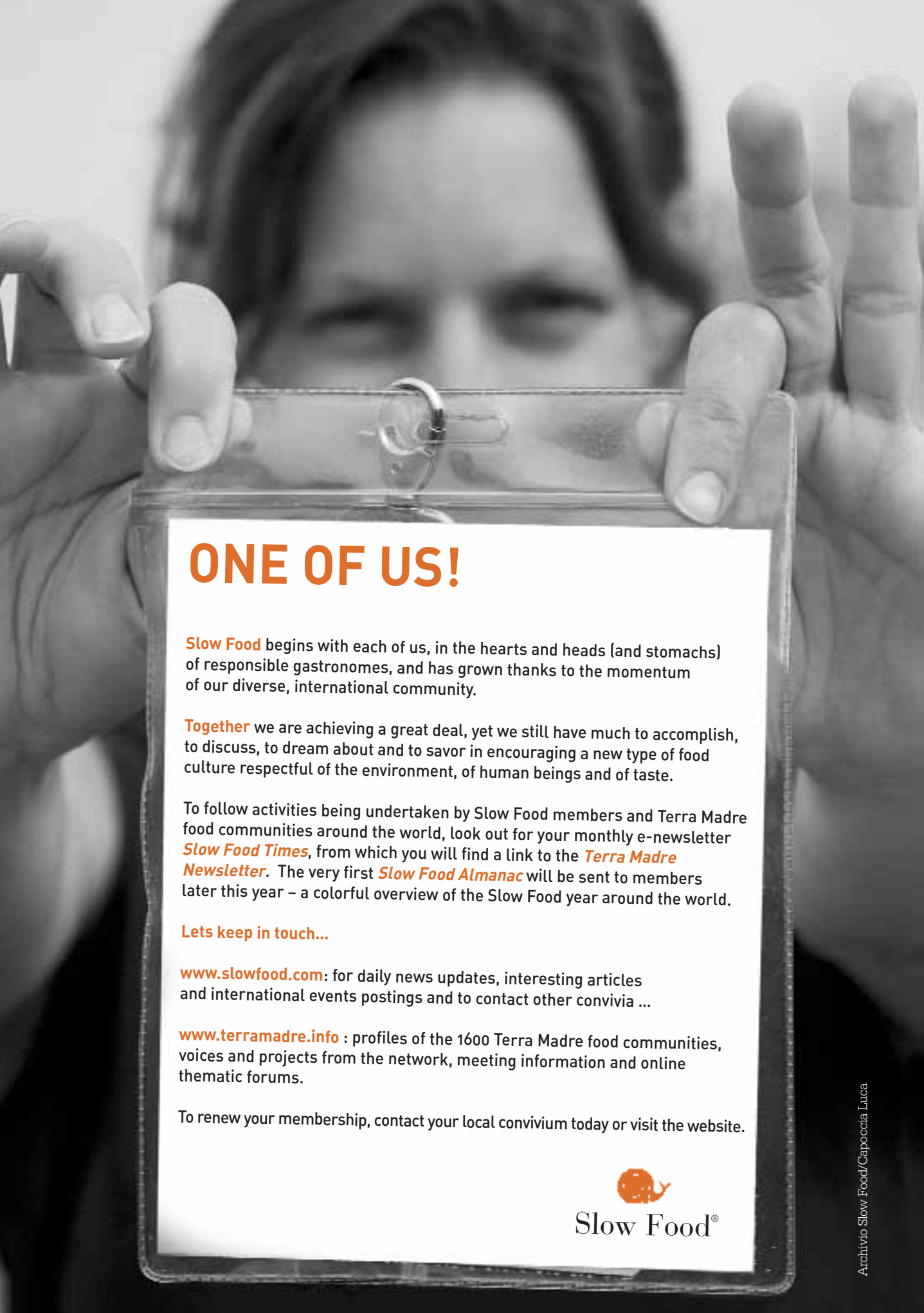

ONE OF US!

Slow Food begins with each of us, in the hearts and heads (and stomachs) of responsible gastronomes, and has grown thanks to the momentum of our diverse, international community.

Together we are achieving a great deal, yet we still have much to accomplish, to discuss, to dream about and to savor in encouraging a new type of food culture respectful of the environment, of human beings and of taste.

To follow activities being undertaken by Slow Food members and Terra Madre food communities around the world, look out for your monthly e-newsletter ***Slow Food Times***, from which you will find a link to the ***Terra Madre Newsletter***. The very first ***Slow Food Almanac*** will be sent to members later this year – a colorful overview of the Slow Food year around the world.

Lets keep in touch...

www.slowfood.com: for daily news updates, interesting articles and international events postings and to contact other convivia ...

www.terramadre.info : profiles of the 1600 Terra Madre food communities, voices and projects from the network, meeting information and online thematic forums.

To renew your membership, contact your local convivium today or visit the website.

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