

# The Unsettled Palate: Understanding the Expression of Aotearoa New Zealand's Cultural Identity in Auckland Restaurant Cuisine

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# Abstract

Following the aphorism by Brillat-Savarin (1825/2009), “tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are” (p. 15) and Fischler’s (1988) concept of incorporation in which “food is central to our sense of identity” (p. 275) this research investigates Auckland chefs’ understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand’s food identity, with the overall goal of understanding more about how they reflect it within their restaurants. The three questions which led the research were: (1) In what ways do chefs reflect their own understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand’s identity within Auckland’s urban restaurant setting? (2) What is the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand’s varied and complex identity and the cuisine that chefs serve? (3) How do notions of settler identity impact chefs’ interpretations and self-ownership of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine? This research utilised a relativist ontology, a constructivist epistemology, and the paradigm of interpretivism. Research methodology techniques included the qualitative descriptive approach. A non-probability purposive sample of chefs participated in semi-structured interviews. Following this, a thematic analysis of the data was undertaken. Key findings include chefs reflecting their own understanding of New Zealand’s identity through the ingredients and produce they work with and the narratives they seek to tell. New Zealand’s complex identity can be seen through the ways in which these Auckland chefs actively include and champion flavours and techniques from all around the world, including the indigenous ingredients and Māori cooking methods. Notions of settler identity have impacted these chefs’ interpretations by instilling their love and respect for baking and preserving, seeking to recreate the New Zealand bach, and ensuring that they acknowledge their own histories through décor choices and only taking self-ownership when appropriate. Though this dissertation does not seek to crystallise one true authentic view of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine, it concludes that it can be seen as a big boil-up which has only just started to bubble.

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## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Signed

Date 22/09/2022

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It would seem that it takes a village to write a dissertation and while at times it seems easy to just list names of family, friends, and supervisors to thank them for their support, this was a difficult process for me, more than I expected, but a rewarding one too, so I feel it deserves more than a simple list.

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# Chapter 1: Introduction

I have always wanted to know more about what it means to be a New Zealander and come from this small group of islands at the bottom of the world. Having been born overseas into a Pākehā<sup>1</sup> family with strong international interests and having spent some of my childhood years in France, I have struggled with my own understanding of what it means, for me, to claim a New Zealand nationality. While loving food and culture but living overseas, I always struggled with the questions: what is Aotearoa New Zealand food and how can I connect with my home country through my stomach?

During the initial COVID-19 lockdown in New Zealand, my family and I often sought to try different foods from around the world in an attempt to feel as though we were travelling through our tastebuds. My cousin in lockdown in Australia made old family recipes, not in an attempt to travel but rather to feel closer to her family. This made me ask – if someone were to travel to New Zealand through their taste buds, what would they cook? And if my international friends were to come to New Zealand, where would I take them to provide an example of what New Zealand food is?

Once I started my Master of Gastronomy studies at AUT, I began to understand that food, eating, and restaurants are more than simply what feeds us, but that they can also be seen as a language of symbols and a way of communicating as well. Two particular concepts continued to feed into these questions of what New Zealand food is and how people understand and create it: Brillat-Savarin's (1825/2009) famous quote "tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are" (p. 15) and Fischler's (1988) concept of incorporation in which "food is central to our sense of identity" (p. 275) and "eating is a daily reaffirmation of cultural identity" (Kittler et al., 2016, p. 4).

This research is a continuation of this questioning. Using interview data obtained through a qualitative descriptive methodology, this research consists of a thematic analysis of five Auckland chefs' reflections on their own understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's cuisine identity within their restaurant. This dissertation is led by one overarching research question and two sub-questions.

In what ways do chefs reflect their own understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's identity within Auckland's urban restaurant setting?

- What is the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand's varied and complex identity and the cuisine that chefs serve?

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<sup>1</sup> White-European New Zealander



- How do notions of settler identity impact chefs' interpretations and self-ownership of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine?

This research was not only undertaken with the goal of completing my master's degree in gastronomy but also with the aim of investigating a topic which I am actively passionate about. The process has led me to not only understand more about Aotearoa New Zealand's culinary identity but also, as a consequence, my own place within it.

As we celebrated Matariki, the Māori new year, for the first time as a whole country and looked towards the stars, I was reminded of the Brillat-Savarin (1825/2009) aphorism "the discovery of a new dish does more for human happiness than the discovery of a star" (p. 15). Aotearoa New Zealand as a country is not only just discovering new meanings in the stars, but our chefs are also creating new dishes through which we can find meaning, a sense of collective unity and perhaps, even happiness.

## Overview of the dissertation

To make the reading of this work clear and easy to follow, the following provides a roadmap of the dissertation.

Following this introductory chapter (**Chapter 1**) in which I have introduced my research questions and rationale, **Chapter 2** consists of a literature review which provides context and background to my subject and ranges from food and identity to the importance of restaurants in national cuisine, New Zealand's complex identity, and the history of the restaurant in New Zealand.

In **Chapter 3**, the methodology is explained and discussed. This includes the philosophical assumptions, paradigms, methodology, and methods undertaken during this research. This research has followed a qualitative descriptive methodology, using semi-structured interviews and thematic analysis. This chapter also includes a brief section on the effects COVID-19 has had on this research.

**Chapter 4** consists of the findings of the interviews alongside the discussion. The main themes which are considered are the chefs' overall understanding of New Zealand cuisine, the importance of ingredients to the chefs, and how chefs use narratives to reflect upon their understanding of New Zealand cuisine.

**Chapter 5** concludes the dissertation and summarises the findings of this research. It also includes the limitations of the research and areas for further investigation.

## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### Introduction

This chapter critically reviews the literature surrounding questions of gastronomy, individual and cultural identity, national cuisines, Aotearoa New Zealand's complex national identity, and its potential culinary identity. As gastronomy is a multi-disciplinary field of study (Santich, 2007), the literature reviewed includes academic articles, cookbooks, food writing, newspaper articles, and restaurant websites. I first look at food, identity, and national cuisine, before moving on to New Zealand's national identity, and concluding with New Zealand's uncertain culinary identity and the gaps in research which this dissertation might begin to fill.

### Food, identity, and national cuisines

The choice to investigate cultural identity through food has long been seen as an appropriate approach. Since his publication of *The Physiology of Taste: or Meditations on Transcendental Gastronomy* in 1825, Brillat-Savarin has been heralded as the founder of the study of gastronomy. One of the most notable aphorisms from Brillat-Savarin's (1825/2009) meditation, "tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are" (p. 15), has been repeated and discussed time and time again in various forms (Beriss, 2019; Fischler, 1988; Henderson, 2014; Kennedy & Lockie, 2018; Kittler et al, 2016; Mintz & du Bois, 2002; Morris, 2010, 2013; Pearson & Kothari, 2007). One of the more prominent discussions has been that of Fischler's 1988 article "Food, Self, and Identity" in which he argues the importance of incorporation to food and identity.

Fischler (1988) states that "food is central to our sense of identity" (p. 275). This identity is both individual – through personal choices which affect one biologically, psychologically, and socially – and collective – through othering and similarity, and social hierarchy and organisation. The concept of incorporation is crucial to understanding how food constructs individual identity and is deeply rooted in the idea that "food not only nourishes but also signifies" (Fischler, 1988, p. 276). The act of incorporation that Fischler (1988) holds in such high importance is the literal act of eating and the transference of both the sustenance (energy, minerals, and vitamins) together with the symbolic nature of the food: a very literal understanding of Brillat-Savarin's (1825/2009) aforementioned aphorism or, more colloquially, 'you are what you eat'. Although the medical nature of incorporation is important – if you only eat unhealthy food, your health will not thank you – the symbolic aspect is what provides the justification for considering identity through food. Berno et al. (2018) provide a clear explanation by stating that "symbolically, we consume cultural identity through what we choose or do not choose to eat and drink, expressed within constructs of self. Consequently, food is symbolic

of cultural politics and identity” (p. 150). This consumption of cultural identity includes not only individual identities but also collective identity.

Fischler (1988) emphasises the importance of incorporation in relation to collective identity and otherness by stating that “food and cuisine are a quite central component of the sense of collective belonging” (p. 280). Other researchers support this approach. Mintz and Du Bois (2002) have, like Fischler, found that food confirms the collectiveness or the separateness of groups, and that food works as “social allocation, in terms of ethnicity, race, nationality, class, and (less precisely) individuality and gender” (p. 109). Kittler et al. (2016) put the same ideas more simply by saying “what one eats defines who one is, culturally speaking, and, conversely who one is not” (p. 4).

Through the identification of cuisine with what one person or group eats, food becomes instilled with meaning and is, therefore, highly important. This can be seen through Fischler’s (1988) question “if we do not know what we eat, how can we know what we are?” (p. 282), and the inverse is also true: if we do not know what we are, how can we know what to eat? Beriss (2019) takes this further, positing that “along with borders, languages, nation anthems, and flags, it seems like no nation, region or ethnic group can legitimately exist without being able to claim its cuisine” (p. 69). Following these two theories, one could ask what one should eat if one seeks to be a New Zealander. Or can a national identity, let alone a nation, exist if it does not know its national cuisine, and if so, does Aotearoa New Zealand exist?

#### Creating a national food identity

One of the most prominent sources of literature on the creation of national identity through food is Appadurai’s (1988) article “How to Make a National Cuisine: Cookbooks in Contemporary India”, which specifically discusses the construction of a national cuisine in a contemporary Indian context through cookbooks. She views these books as narrators of “unusual cultural tales” (p. 3) as they combine a literature of pleasure through the senses and reveal changes in edibility, budget, domestic ideologies, the logic of meals, and the proprieties of culinary process. These Indian cookbooks have allowed different regions, castes, genders, and ethnicities to explore cuisines they may not have previously interacted with due to issues of language and literacy, location, and the domestic norms placed upon women. Appadurai views India’s creation of a national cuisine as a post-industrial, postcolonial process in which, rather than seeking to conceal its regional and ethnic origins, the distinctions between the cuisines play an important part in the creation of an overall Indian cuisine.

Appadurai (1988) concludes that it is the varied nature of the regional and ethnic cuisines that has created “Indian” cuisine, rather than hindered it, and that “in culinary matters, the melting pot is a myth” (p. 22). This supports Mintz’s (1996, as cited in Beriss, 2019) scepticism, in an American context,

that national cuisines do not exist at all, but rather only regional cuisines do. Much like Appadurai (1988), Mintz (1996, as cited in Beriss 2019,) contends that “cuisines, when seen from the perspective of people who care about the *foods*, are never the foods of a country, but the foods of a *place*” (p. 69, emphasis in original). However, when examining a place, even specifically looking at just the size, New Zealand is markedly different from both India and America, in which the smaller land mass from which regional cuisines are created likely plays a part. With this in mind, should New Zealand cuisine be viewed as a collection of regions in which the Northland kaimoana and Southland cheese rolls are enough to qualify as regional cuisines? Or is New Zealand cuisine simply understood by comparison to the rest of the world?

Henderson (2014) explains that while an identifiable national cuisine can be used as a nation-building tool and create civic pride, “national cuisines are often more imagined or invented than real” (p. 906). In her article “Food and Culture: In Search of a Singapore Cuisine”, Henderson (2014) explores the connection between food and culture and its interaction with globalisation and national cuisine. Henderson (2014) notes that “there is ... some doubt about whether a uniquely Singaporean cuisine exists given its diverse cultural elements and constant evolution. Nevertheless, certain dishes are endowed with iconic status by citizens” (p. 904). Henderson (2014) argues that “globalisation does not inevitably destroy indigenous food culture and there are possibilities for co-existence and conjugation” and “that mobility and exchange within and between continents have occurred throughout history, with repercussions for domestic foods and diets” (p. 905), for example the adoption of tomatoes into the Italian food canon despite their South American origin. While there are similarities between Singapore and New Zealand with its relatively young, diverse culture and the rapid changes due to globalisation, New Zealanders have picked up sushi for lunch and Indian takeaways for dinner easily, but Māori food has not become a regular mainstay in the New Zealand diet. Perhaps, then, in the New Zealand context it is rather the homegrown British-Pākehā settler food culture that has not been destroyed but co-exists alongside international foods in this modern stage of globalisation, whereas the Māori indigenous food culture is still facing the repercussions of the colonisation by European settlers.

#### Gastronomic authenticity

Gastronomic authenticity can be understood as the desire to find the one true ingredient, recipe, or taste of a particular cultural group, area, or time (Weiss, 2011). For example, one might search for authentic Thai or Indian food whilst visiting those places, or authentic hāngi within New Zealand. Weiss (2011) explores the concept of authenticity in relation to gastronomy, observing that “gastronomic authenticity is a ‘soft’ concept, usually referring to the appropriateness of linking a specific ingredient, technique or recipe, or a relation between dishes or between wine and a dish, to

a particular time and place” (p. 74). Furthermore, he states that authenticity and cultural identity share a connection based more on “town pride than on culinary reality” (Weiss, 2011, p. 74).

While the term ‘authentic’ is often dismissed by academics and seen as judgemental and strict, Weiss (2011) sees authenticity as “a complex notion of site-specificity, whereby a recipe is inextricably linked to place, time, culture” (p. 75). Following this statement and Weiss’s (2011) conclusion that “tradition without awareness of history and without possibility of change is mere stereotype, and that innovation without consciousness of genealogy and situatedness is sheer experimentation” (p. 77), we can see that the search for the one true and pure understanding of authentic national cuisine is difficult and finding it may even be impossible.

Combining all these concepts, this research adopts the idea that most authentic national cuisines are imagined, are linked to places (not nations), and are dynamic in nature. They also function as a vital tool of self-identification and collective belonging.

Restaurants and chefs as symbolisers and creators of national identity

When examining questions of food’s culture-identifying nature, restaurants work as an ideal study because “many of the most interesting aspects of social and cultural life in our contemporary world are featured in restaurants” (Beriss & Sutton, 2007, p. 1). Kittler et al. (2016) explain that ‘food as self-identity’ is particularly distinct within these locations, as restaurants not only fulfil tangible nutritional needs but also provide emotional satisfaction. This is done through not only the food available on the menu but also the ambience, service, cost value, and the atmosphere or décor. Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni (2020) discuss how the material culture used in the décor of restaurants is not only employed to attract customers, but also has emotional power to create a feeling of home through providing a familiar setting in which food is served. Ethnic restaurants are particularly important to immigrants as they can act as familiar and homely spaces in which to eat ‘authentic’ foods and take part in rituals (Kittler et al., 2016; Miranda-Nieto & Boccagni, 2020). Beriss and Sutton (2007) go so far as to say that chefs have been “transformed into media stars and restaurants increasingly [carry] out symbolic work previously reserved for monuments and parades, representing the ethos of cities, regions, ethnic groups and nations” (p. 1).

However, Williamson et al. (2009) note that “the sociological study of *public* food and eating is a minority interest with most research being done in the domestic and nutritional areas” (emphasis in original, p. 55). Therefore, in regard to the aim of studying this important public space, it is necessary to ask: Which chefs and restaurants in Auckland are transforming into monuments and representing New Zealand as a nation? Or, rather: What part do chefs play in the dynamic nature of national cuisines and how do they create the monuments that represent Aotearoa New Zealand as a place?

## Unsettled roots: Aotearoa New Zealand's national identity

Within the highly multicultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand, a cohesive cultural identity has never quite formed and a oneness or unified sense of ourselves has been difficult to achieve (Bell, 1996; Pearson & Kothari, 2007). In her book *Inventing New Zealand: Everyday Myths of Pākehā Identity*, Bell (1996) declares that from the first moment that Abel Tasman put Nieuw Zeeland (Dutch spelling) on the European-made map New Zealand began its “long process of invention” (p. 3). Whilst Māori were struggling with the cultural and economic effects of the British settlers, the British began to re-invent Aotearoa in their image as New Zealand while appropriating Māori resources. Due to the sparse nature of the settlements on coastlines and rivers and the negligible communication systems in the early years of New Zealand's colonisation, this sense of collective identity was not easily accomplished. Bell (1996) points out that the strong ties to the motherland in England and the associated national identity there – including their food traditions – made the invention of a distinctive New Zealand culture even more complex. Bell (1996) continues to state that the invention of New Zealand national identity has been further slowed and made complex by the country's almost constant arrival of immigrants, whether it be the British in the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, the Chinese gold miners in the 1860s, or the influx of Pacific Island people in the 1950s. As a result of this, and the more recent addition of immigrants from the Pacific and Asia, Auckland is now the fourth most culturally diverse city in the world (Thornber, 2021).

Bell (1996) claims that alongside all these external factors of geographies and ties to the motherland, a nation is built through “the politics that enables one culture to obliterate or assimilate another, through such processes as colonisation, genocide and immigration policies” (p. 8) and that ultimately it is those “with the most power [who] can recreate ‘nation’ in their own interest, and have the rest believe in it as ‘commonsense’ reality” (p. 9). This commonsense that Bell speaks of is likely made more complex, as Henderson (2014) points out, by the effects of modern globalisation through the influence of media, popular culture, and food, which all shape our own perceptions of how we should create ourselves.

Like Bell (1996), Willmott (1989) poses several hypotheses as to why New Zealand has struggled to create a sense of cultural identity. These issues range from the settler and colonial process by which land was stolen off Māori and sold to Britons looking for a higher standard of living, to the lack of national consciousness due to the absence of New Zealand history being taught in schools. Willmott (1989) claims that by only learning British history, New Zealanders were left “without a personal history, without indigenous roots in New Zealand” (p. 4) and were given the idea that England and being British was ultimately better and more desirable than identifying with being a New Zealander.

Moreover, as Pākehā enjoyed a higher standard of living compared to and at the expense of Māori living in relative poverty, the disparities and inequalities between different classes, races, and genders created an obstacle for “the underprivileged to recognise any common identity with other New Zealanders” (Willmott, 1989, p. 3).

Regarding Pākehā identity, Willmott (1989) states that their culture is “characterised by an ongoing struggle between the indigenous and the imported” (p. 5), and that this struggle can often lead to extremist, racist right-wing views that are intent on “preserving the ‘purity’” (p. 6) of New Zealand’s identity as white, British, devoid of anything originating from immigrants from non-white countries, Māoritanga, or deviation from norms in regard to sexuality or gender.

When looking specifically at Auckland as a city, we can see that its cultural makeup is significantly diverse. Thornber (2021) states that with 39 per cent of its population born overseas, Auckland was named the fourth most culturally diverse city in the world, ahead of London, Singapore, and New York in the 2015 *World Migration Report*. Thornber (2021) quotes Dr Terruhn who cautions that statistics based on foreign-born populations can be misleading and “this is especially so in a settler society. New Zealand’s share of a foreign-born population was incredibly large in the 1870s, but it certainly wasn’t very diverse” (para. 8). However, there is some truth in the matter as in the 2018 New Zealand census “45 per cent of Aucklanders identified with an ethnic minority ... 53.5 per cent of Aucklanders identified as European [Pākehā], 28.2 per cent as Asian, 15.5 per cent as Pacific, 11.5 per cent as Māori, 2.3 per cent as Middle Eastern, Latin American or African (MELAA), and 1.1 per cent as ‘other’” (Thornber, 2021, para. 14). One then must question which, if any, cultures have been obliterated or assimilated (Bell, 1996) and which have moulded and shaped New Zealand’s culinary landscape. Furthermore, one must ask: Is Auckland’s food scene representative of the percentages of ethnic minorities who are now part of our multi-cultural society?

For the dominant national culture, Pākehā New Zealanders, their “settler – migrant and colonizing – origins” (Bell, 2009, p. 145) make their own identity claims complex. Bell (2009) suggests that as Pākehā are “neither metropolitan or indigene, one of the key dilemmas of the settler identity ... is the lack of a sense of cultural specificity, the problem of having ‘no identity’” (p. 147). This idea of contrasting states of being can also be seen in what Pearson and Kothari (2007) call “twin states of cultural euphoria and melancholy” coming from “geographic isolation and public expressions of self-doubt” (p. 47). However, despite agreeing with Ranginui Walker in stating that Māori and Pākehā are two identities which are “‘binary oppositions’ ... that neither can exist without the other: there can be no such things as a Māori identity without an opposite, namely, a Pākehā identity” (p. 10), Willmott (1989) offers another vantage point by viewing Māori and Pākehā as the common identity of New

Zealanders, and asks us to question “what is the opposite we infer by calling ourselves New Zealanders” (p. 10). Much like Weiss (2011), Willmott (1989) offers us the advice that, when studying national identity, we “should not be focused on a concept of ‘national soul’ or on some ideological view of the world, but rather on what individuals think and feel about their nation” (p. 9).

Following the writing of these authors we can see that Aotearoa New Zealand’s identity is highly complex in nature. From the very beginning, the Pākehā settlers have struggled with the process of differentiation from ‘Mother England’ but have been left without their own history (Willmott, 1989) and Māori culture has been fighting for its place alongside Asian and Pacific people to not be obliterated or assimilated (Bell, 1996). Although the settler-coloniser Pākehā are those with the power to be able to create a ‘commonsense’ reality by obliterating and assimilating (Bell, 1996), they struggle with their own lack of cultural specificity (A. Bell, 2009).

## What is New Zealand food?

Whilst there is a large amount of literature on Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultural landscape, ranging from the Māori renaissance to Pākehā identity struggles, there is very little literature that investigates our cuisine and food culture. In her preface, Bell (1996) asks, “are all kiwi kids Weetbix kids?” (p. 1) but focuses very little on food and cuisine in her book. In relation to food, Morris (2013) argues that there is a “struggle for symbolic capital”, for what can be called New Zealand food and cuisine, which is ultimately “the struggle between Māori and Pākehā” (p. 213) and this is addressed in a further section, “Kai or Kiwi?”.

Johnson (2017) argues that, in New Zealand, food is connected to all parts of life and that our “burgeoning contemporary ... food identity is one that helps us to understand our place as a Pacific and multicultural nation” (p. 9). This food identity includes both food within the home and in public spaces. Like Appadurai (1988), Morris (2013) suggests that cookbooks are important documents for the development and representation of national cuisines. Morris (2013) contends that, through cuisine, “we imagine ourselves as members of a nation by eating the same food, and by developing a cuisine through which we present ourselves to ourselves, and to others” (p. 211). Within the highly multicultural context of New Zealand, the development of nation and the presentation of ourselves to ourselves has not been easy (Pearson & Kothari, 2007).

There are several short summaries of what can be seen as or are claimed to be classic New Zealand foods. Mavromatis (2017) explains “the story of New Zealand developing its own cuisine is a story of immigration” (p. 14), and it is this story that this section seeks to explore. In his book which primarily investigates New Zealand cooking through cookbooks, Veart (2008) comments that “cookery prior to



the 1980s was for most people a dimly remembered world of badly cooked meat and vegetables, with slightly better baking” (p. 13). Books like *Afghans, Barbecues and Chocolate Fish: The ABC of New Zealand Food* (Hingston, 2009) provide a straightforward view of New Zealand’s foodscape without much commentary. This collection includes a billy,<sup>2</sup> ANZAC biscuits,<sup>3</sup> colonial goose, and Sunday roast, alongside a large selection of Māori food from kina,<sup>4</sup> pāua,<sup>5</sup> hāngi, and rēwena parāoa,<sup>6</sup> alongside (Hingston, 2009, pp. 20–106).

Another more recent example is from New Zealand Youtuber Jordan Watson, who creates viral comedy videos under the title *How to Dad* and summarises New Zealand food in a 2019 video. His list of classic New Zealand food includes: lamb, instant noodles, Watties’ spaghetti,<sup>7</sup> tomato sauce, meat pies, Weetbix, Raro,<sup>8</sup> kiwifruit, onion dip,<sup>9</sup> fairy bread,<sup>10</sup> pavlova, hokey-pokey ice-cream,<sup>11</sup> sausage sizzle,<sup>12</sup> pineapple lumps, hāngi,<sup>13</sup> and boil-up.<sup>14</sup> However, unlike Hingston’s (2009) list, which adds further tea-time treats like slices and biscuits, Watson (2019) also includes foods that could be considered more international. Alongside several other lollies<sup>15</sup> and food items frequently bought at a dairy<sup>16</sup>, the addition of Chinese, Indian, Thai, Samoan, and Middle Eastern cuisines shows the story of immigration that Mavromatis (2017) speaks of. The ‘classic’ New Zealand foods are listed with taro, pad Thai, chicken tika masala, sushi, chow mein, and couscous, and come together to create what Watson calls a “big melting pot of all different cultures and ethnicities. You could say we’re a big boil up pot of all different flavours and it’s the best blimmin’ boil up I’ve ever seen” (Watson, 2019).

Kittler et al. (2016) consider foods that have a large presence during childhood, and are associated with safety and positive experiences, to be generally affiliated with cultural identity. As such, the idea that fish and chips, pineapple lumps, pavlova, kiwifruit, feijoas, and a Sunday lamb roast are New Zealand’s food identity is justified, albeit limiting. However, to claim this is all that New Zealand cuisine

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<sup>2</sup> A camping pot.

<sup>3</sup> Biscuits made for the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps in the First World War.

<sup>4</sup> Sea urchin.

<sup>5</sup> Abalone.

<sup>6</sup> Māori potato bread.

<sup>7</sup> Canned spaghetti in tomato sauce.

<sup>8</sup> Powdered fruit cordial.

<sup>9</sup> Traditionally made with packet onion soup and condensed milk.

<sup>10</sup> White bread topped with hundreds and thousands, served at children’s birthday parties.

<sup>11</sup> Vanilla ice-cream with small honeycomb nuggets.

<sup>12</sup> A barbecued sausage served on buttered bread with onions and tomato sauce, often purchased outside a hardware store.

<sup>13</sup> Traditional Māori earth oven.

<sup>14</sup> Traditional Māori broth made of pork hock and watercress with dumplings.

<sup>15</sup> Lolly refers to confectionary as American say ‘candy’ and British say ‘sweets’ (Bardsley, 2013).

<sup>16</sup> New Zealand corner shop.

is would limit the country's food identity to only one lolly, a culturally contested dessert,<sup>17</sup> two imported fruits, and two meals which have strong British connections, and would be unlikely to reflect the childhood experience of every New Zealander.

## New Zealand cookbooks and making New Zealand chefs

As Appadurai (1988) argues, cookbooks can be an imperative factor in the creation of national identity and within this next section we can see this nation building in the Aotearoa New Zealand context. In the introduction to his cookbook *Eat Up New Zealand*, Brown (2017) voices the "doubt we will ever have a 'New Zealand cuisine' as such – and I don't actually think that's a bad thing" (p. 10). Brown (2017) views New Zealand's place as a New World country as one that gives freedom within cooking practices, since it is not bound by centuries old traditions as Old World countries are. Through travel, New Zealanders have realised that since "we can grow grapes, surely we can grow olives?... If we can grow olives, what about pine nuts?... Saffron? Tick. Truffles? Tick. Wasabi? Tick" (Brown, 2017, p. 10). This is the source of New Zealand's rich, abundant cuisine culture which Watson (2019) and Hingston (2009) list in their summaries.

In their article "New Zealand Nation-building with the *Edmonds Cookery Book*", Kennedy and Lockie (2018) argue that cookbooks not only signify how a group of people live and eat but also that they can be seen as a "commentary on the social development and transformation of a colonial settler colony into an independent nation apart from 'Mother England' " (p. 75). Kennedy and Lockie (2018) examine the role played by the "cultural artefact" (p. 83) the *Edmonds Cookery Book* – which is known as "New Zealand's iconic and longest-standing cookbook" (p. 75) – in New Zealand's nation building. As the *Edmonds Cookery Book* has been in print since 1908 and has sold over 3 million copies (Ministry for Culture and Heritage, 2015), its influence on New Zealand's culinary culture through people's love of baking cannot be understated.

Within Hingston's (2009) book there are several baked goods, from biscuits to slices to buns to cakes; similarly, Brown's (2017) recipe book contains, not uncommonly, a baking chapter with an introduction championing the New Zealand baking history. Brown (2017) emphasises that "As a nation, one of the things we should be proud of is our baking prowess. It's a pillar of our young eating heritage and is also usually the first thing that enters my mind when I'm asked about the history of our cuisine" (p. 305). He points out that "Names like Louise cake, melting moments, Afghans, Anzac biscuits, yoyos and ginger crunch are all synonymous with New Zealand upbringings, and add a convivial sweet layer to our country's identity" (p. 305). These baked goods and those that feature in

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<sup>17</sup> Pavlova being the contested dessert, which is also claimed to have originated in Australia (Leach, 2008).

Hingston's (2009) compendium can be seen to originate from the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985, pp. 16, 18, 34, 37, 38, 49).

Baking can also be seen to play a role in the differentiation from the 'Mother Country' through New Zealand's relationship to Christmas pudding. Chevalier (2018) compares New Zealand and Australia's connection to the Christmas pudding with that of India and the USA. Chevalier (2018) reflects that in New Zealand, despite the steaming hot Christmas pudding making very little sense in the warm climate of a summer Christmas, "when it comes to national symbolic dishes, national tradition prevails over local circumstances" (pp. 368–369) and early settlers continued to make the unseasonable pudding. However, as Chevalier (2018) explains, it may have been a more complex choice than simply continuing a tradition; rather, it was perhaps an expression of the complicated balancing act of distancing oneself from the 'Mother Country' by creating new roots and seeking to reinvent this strange land into a comforting homely space.

Brown (2017) also champions another one of the "traditional foods" (p. 346) of New Zealand: preserves, which are also mentioned in Hingston (2009) and Veart (2008). Brown retells the story of a tourist food writer who, whilst dining with a family on a farm, was given some homemade plum sauce alongside his dinner. This food writer was apparently "euphoric" at finding "the most glorious ketchup" (Brown, 2017, p. 346). Brown (2017) posits the idea that from the traditional Māori fermenting techniques to the preserves and pickles made by early Pākehā settlers, "these preserves are still firmly entrenched in our cooking and eating DNA today" and that "many of the traditional foods, or tastes that have become everyday to us here in New Zealand are seen by the rest of the world as completely unique" (pp. 346–347). Perhaps, then, as a country New Zealand is blind to its own singularity and, because these simple preserves are not as "exotic or fascinating as dishes like bouillabaisse, paella or rabbit pappardelle" (Brown, 2017, p. 14), we are less inclined to see and promote the euphoric taste possibilities that come from them.

It is not only the British home cooking recipe books and culinary traditions which have moulded New Zealand's food and cultural identity but also the training which chefs receive, which can be an influential part of the process. In their chapter "Kiwi Cuisine: Cookbooks, Chefs, and Cultural Identity in Aotearoa New Zealand", Berno et al. (2018) unpack the effect that the training and books that chef students use have on the creation of cultural identity. The authors note that as New Zealand lacks a homogenous culinary tradition or identity, chefs act as "gatekeepers of cuisine" and play a vital part in the creation and reinforcement of "culinary, cultural, and national identity" (p. 150). However, the true gatekeepers and thus potentially the source of the absence of a national identity in New Zealand's culinary scene may be the very techniques and texts used within teaching. The London City and Guilds

qualifications from Britain, used in teaching New Zealand chefs, were heavily influenced by French techniques and did not logically translate well to the southern-hemisphere context. Students were tested on fruit seasons by month (i.e., strawberries in July) and, despite New Zealand's diverse fish populations, needed to know species like Dover sole and whiting (Berno et al., 2018). This lack of New Zealand specific education can be seen in relation to Willmott's (1989) observation that, by solely learning British history, New Zealanders were left without roots and a lack of national consciousness.

The nature of this gatekeeping has shifted following reforms within the education sector in the 1980s, and the realisation that the New Zealand qualification needed differentiation from the British one. This took the form of a new culinary educational text (Berno et al., 2018). *The New Zealand Chef* authored by Lesley Christensen-Yule was first published in 2002, and its most recent 4<sup>th</sup> edition was published in 2017 with co-author Lindsey Neill. With the inclusion of native ingredients on the cover page of the first edition and titles in the table of contents being written in both te reo Māori and English, the bicultural socio-cultural context of Aotearoa New Zealand is seen and elevated to a place of importance. As the text is "written by New Zealand chefs for New Zealand chefs" (Christensen-Yule & Neill, 2017, p. vii), it is still actively contextualising how a New Zealand cuisine can be constructed and provides an example of Morris' (2013) argument on national cuisine being developed through the presentation of oneself to oneself.

## Kai or Kiwi?

Morris (2013) is not so optimistic about the supposed inter-weaving of the Pākehā and Māori culinary culture, and rather sees a struggle between two opposing parties for symbolic cultural capital. In her article "Kai or Kiwi? Māori and 'Kiwi' Cookbooks, and the Struggle for the Field of New Zealand Cuisine", Morris (2013) questions the significance of four Māori cookbooks which were all published "almost-simultaneously" (p. 211) and the "skirmish in the struggle between Māori and Pākehā for the place of Māori in the nation" (p. 213). Much as, Kennedy and Lockie (2018) and Veart (2008) noted, Morris draws attention to the fact that Pākehā settlers did not actively seek out the culinary traditions of the local Māori but rather sought to reproduce British traditions. However, Morris (2013) discusses how, as New Zealand compares itself to global cuisine and with time passing, Pākehā began to seek indigenous ingredients to distinguish themselves on the world stage. This desire to set oneself apart from the world becomes fraught as "what makes 'the local' specific in New Zealand is the increasingly powerful presence of Māori who, as the indigenous people, problematise Pākehā claims to 'the local' " (Morris, 2013, p. 214). This problematisation can be seen through the addition of Māori flavours or ingredients being used as food adventurism by which one gains cultural capital through the

consumption of foods or, as bell hooks (1992) puts it, the “seasoning that livens up the dish that is mainstream white culture” (p. 21, as cited in Morris, 2013, p. 215).

Morris (2013) concludes her article by stating that there is an overwhelming and constant struggle surrounding highly valued ‘local food’, whether that be native ingredients or different cooking techniques, and its classification as “Māori food, Pākehā food, *kai*, or Kiwi” (p. 200). Although this struggle and separation between what she sees as four cuisines is an important one, and the re-emergence of Māori cuisine in the mainstream is an important cultural step towards a more bicultural nation, it begs the question of whether New Zealanders are placing limitations in front of chefs, or whether the question of Aotearoa New Zealand’s culinary identity is in fact as complex as its national identity.

This struggle for space for Māori cuisine is also emphasised by Morris (2010) in an article noting the absence and failure of Māori restaurants in New Zealand’s culinary scene. In this article, Morris (2010) notes the duality that Māori foods hold and the selectiveness by which native ingredients have been incorporated into mainstream Pākehā food culture. Ingredients like pipi,<sup>18</sup> kina,<sup>19</sup> tuna<sup>20</sup> and tītī<sup>21</sup> are Māori foods because they are undesirable for Pākehā, whereas pāua,<sup>22</sup> green lipped mussels, whitebait, kōura<sup>23</sup>, and kūmara<sup>24</sup> have been accepted and have been transformed into New Zealand foods (Morris, 2010). Furthermore, Morris (2010) states that “for Pākehā, Māori food is not sophisticated food” (p. 13) despite ‘Kiwi’ or ‘New Zealand’ food holding value through differentiation on the global stage by using Māori ingredients.

However, since the publication of Morris’s articles, one Māori chef has risen to fame not only domestically but also internationally and is seen as a highly respected industry representative. Monique Fiso is a Māori chef and co-owner of the restaurant Hiakai in Wellington. In 2019, Hiakai was one of the 100 places that were included in *Time Magazine’s* World’s Greatest Place List (Hincks, n.d.) and most recently received three hats at the 2021/2022 *Cuisine* Good Food Awards and Chef of the Year (Cuisine, 2022, p.13). Fiso et al.’s (2020) cookbook of the same name won the best illustrated non-fiction at the 2021 Ockham New Zealand Book Awards (New Zealand Book Awards Trust, n.d.) and has been named the “perhaps the most important cookbook in the country” (Turnbull, 2020). Hiakai is an unapologetically Māori restaurant which has put Māori ingredients, cooking techniques,

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<sup>18</sup> Small saltwater clam.

<sup>19</sup> Sea urchin.

<sup>20</sup> Freshwater eel.

<sup>21</sup> Mutton-bird.

<sup>22</sup> Abalone.

<sup>23</sup> Crayfish.

<sup>24</sup> Sweet potato.

and a Māori wahine<sup>25</sup> on the world stage, elevating the kai to a highly desirable and sophisticated cuisine.

## The history of New Zealand restaurants

Rowland (2010) remarks that “dining out has a very short history in this country” (p. 2) and while there have been several books which have focused on the early history of New Zealand’s restaurants, this short history can, perhaps, explain the lack of research literature on the subject. Books such as *Dining Out: A History of the Restaurant in New Zealand* by Rowland (2010) and *A Distant Feast: The Origins of New Zealand Cuisine* by Simpson (2008) offer extensive histories on early restaurants and early trends in New Zealand cuisine. Another more contemporary book, *New Zealand Restaurant Cookbook* by Mes (2017), is a collection of recipes from restaurants around the whole of New Zealand but does not provide much commentary other than a short introduction.

An earlier book by Simpson (1985), *An Innocent Delight: The Art of Dining in New Zealand*, also provides some history of New Zealand cuisine. Simpson’s book includes descriptions of New Zealand from the 1873 *Labourers’ Union Chronicle* “in almost biblical terms as ‘a good land, a land of oil, olives and honey, a land wherein thou mayest eat bread without scarceness’ ” (cited in Simpson, 1985, p. 6) and remarks on New Zealand being similar to Scotland in that, in New Zealanders’ opinion, “baking is the better part of cookery and [they] spend their ingenuity, exhaust their interest on cakes and pasties and ebullient vast cream sponges” (Eric Linklater, as cited in Simpson, 1985, p. 12). This notion that New Zealanders regard baking as an important part of cooking, can be seen in both Brown’s (2017) cookbook and Kennedy and Lockie’s (2018) article which places baking at the very heart of New Zealand’s nation building. Despite questioning why New Zealand, with a vast array of high-quality ingredients, stayed rooted in “a derivative and colonial culture” within its eating habits, and blaming cultural cringe (Simpson, 1985, p. 2), Simpson’s book, like that by Mes (2017), is foremost a recipe book for those who have entertaining in mind and does not provide us with much to discuss on New Zealand identity and cuisine.

This cultural cringe also features in Hingston’s (2009) introduction to *Afghans, Barbecues and Chocolate Fish: The ABC of New Zealand Food*, which suggests that “for many years we New Zealanders, in our self-deprecating way, insisted that there was no real ‘New Zealand cuisine’, that our food simply belonged to the country or ethnic group from which it came” (p. 5). This sense of belonging or, rather, the question of where or with whom we belong, reinforces Mavromatis’ (2017) statement that “the story of New Zealand developing its own cuisine is a story of immigration” (p. 14).

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<sup>25</sup> Woman.

In addition to New Zealand's lack restaurant culture (Mavromatis, 2017; Pearson & Kothari, 2007; Rowland, 2010; Tai, 2017), Williamson (2017) argues that there is a historical distrust of the hospitality sector in New Zealand. He states that the "New Zealand Government and public has consistently underestimated the economic potential" of the industry and that working in hospitality is often met with disdain (p.205). While Simpson (2008) notes that, unlike France or Italy, New Zealand does not place social activities that involve food at the centre of culture, he goes so far as to state that after having lived in Europe for some time he dreaded coming back to New Zealand as, prior to his departure, it had not been a "mecca for gourmets" (p. 9). Much as Brown (2017) has, in the past, described New Zealand as "a bit of a culinary wasteland" (p. 12), he contends that this was due to the early introduction of British settlers who brought with them a "culinary heritage of the last couple of centuries [that] has not garnered much of an international reputation ... [and] has been the subject of ridicule" (p. 12). Despite the ridicule, the dominant culture kept its roots in English heritage and, consequently, most early ethnic restaurants altered their food to fit European tastes by serving steak and chips or buttered bread alongside chicken chow mein (Mavromatis, 2017).

There are differing views on what the catalyst was for the expansion of New Zealand's restaurant scene, or when it occurred. In *A Distant Feast: The Origins of New Zealand Cuisine*, Simpson (2008) declares that when he returned to New Zealand in 1980, "New Zealand had ceased to be the virtually restaurant-less food wilderness of my recollection, and we had become instead a nation of diners-out" (p. 9). Whether it was the presence of Americans during the Second World War and the post-war influx of Greek immigrants (Mavromatis, 2017), the influence of food television (Pearson & Kothari, 2007), or changes to Auckland's urban area to make space for more dining options for the 2011 Rugby World Cup (Tai, 2017), in December 2019 there were 1,679 licenced cafes and restaurants in Auckland alone (Cann, 2021).

## Auckland restaurants

Despite the various histories of New Zealand cooking and cookbooks, apart from Morris's (2010) article there is very little academic material on identity creation in New Zealand or Auckland restaurants. Unlike an earlier published history of the restaurant in New Zealand by Rowland (2010), which gives an in-depth look at the early restaurants in hotels, the books by the Lazy Susan group (an online community of primarily Auckland-based food enthusiasts), *Auckland Eats* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2021, 2022), are among the few books that specifically focus on the contemporary Auckland cuisine landscape, and on restaurants that have been operating in the last 50 years.

These two volumes, *Auckland Eats: The Prequel* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2022) and *Auckland Eats: Recipes and Voices from a Vibrant Food City* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2021), provide us with a snapshot

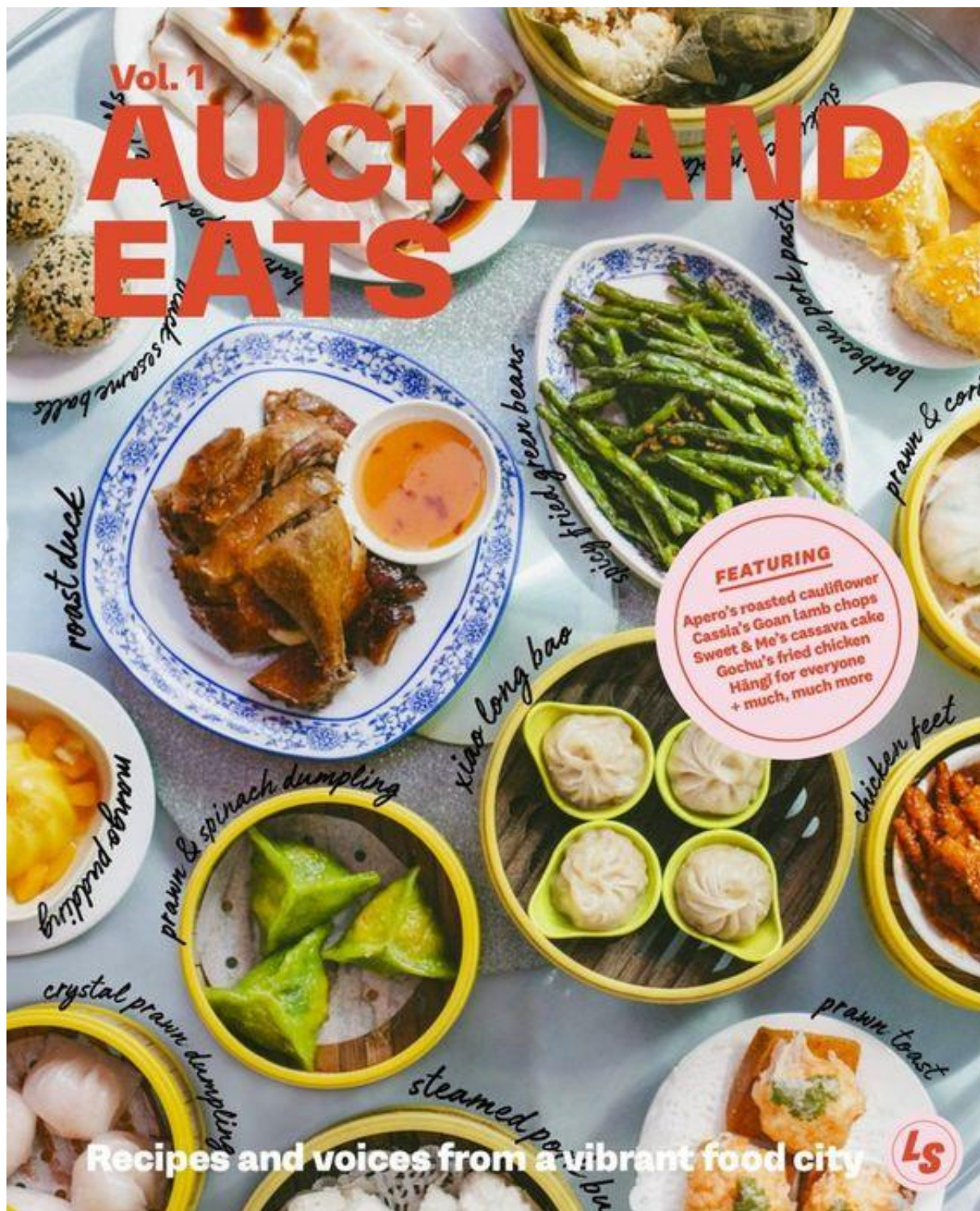
of the transformation of Auckland's restaurant dining experience. In *The Prequel* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2022) there are various examples of past menus written in French from restaurants such as Antoine's (pp. 12–13), Clichy (p. 33), and Le Brie (pp. 66–67). Throughout the entire volume we can see the European ideals and hierarchy at play, for example Le Brie restaurant served French onion soup and crème caramel every day for 15 years (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2022, p. 67). However, all immigrant food was not treated or elevated in the same way. The 1968 menu for the recently opened Chinese restaurant Ming's has an entire section of the menu dedicated to grills: "Fillet Steak with Mushrooms and Chips ... Fillet Steak and Eggs and Chips ... Fish and Chips ... Thick Ham and Eggs and Chips" (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2022, p. 62). As Mavromatis (2017) explained, although people were happy to accept the European and French ideals, in Chinese restaurants there was a need to have a simple 'un-ethnic' alternative.

The change in Auckland's dining scene can even be examined through the cover images and restaurants selected for the two books. The first volume, *Auckland Eats: Recipes and Voices from a Vibrant Food City* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2021), has a front cover image (see Figure 1) of a table spread with dumplings, chicken feet, and mango pudding, and features 25 recipes and stories from non-Western restaurants. The prequel volume provides a stark contrast as it only has an artichoke on the cover (see Figure 2) and features only four 'ethnic' restaurants (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2022).

Within an urban setting, food aids in the connection between a city and the people who live there, whilst providing the city with its own identity (Tai, 2017). And as restaurants not only serve meals but provide atmosphere and particular services within varied price ranges and areas, their function as self-identifiers is highly important (Beriss & Sutton, 2007; Kittler et al., 2016; Miranda-Nieto & Boccagni, 2020). Moreover, what is eaten in those spaces is highly important as Morris (2013) states that "we imagine ourselves as members of a nation by eating the same food, and by developing a cuisine through which we present ourselves to ourselves, and to others" (p. 211). Following this, we can see that this line of inquiry can be highly informative in regard to understanding more about Aotearoa New Zealand as a nation through food.

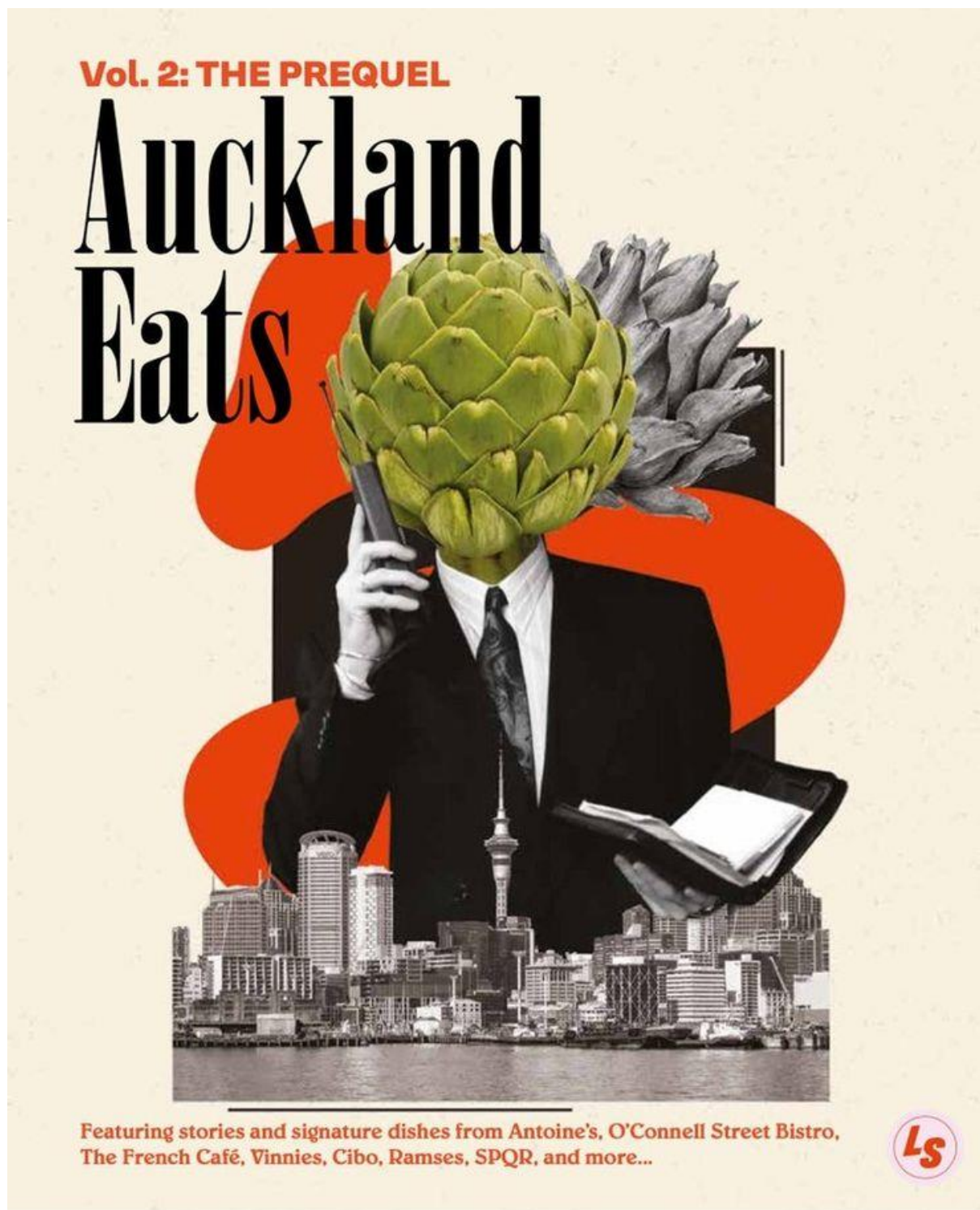


Figure 1. Cover image from *Auckland Eats Vol. 1*



Note. Cover image from *Auckland Eats Vol. 1*, by Lazy Susan, n.d.  
(<https://www.lazysusan.nz/shop/p/auckland-eats-vol1>). Used with permission.

Figure 2. Cover image from *Auckland Eats Vol. 2*



Note. Cover image from *Auckland Eats Vol. 2*, by Lazy Susan, n.d.  
(<https://www.lazysusan.nz/shop/p/auckland-eats-vol2>). Used with permission.

## Summary of literature

Through the literature reviewed in this chapter we have seen that food and cultural identity are intertwined (Appadurai, 1988; Kittler et al., 2016), and as Aotearoa New Zealand's cultural identity is complex (Willmott, 1989), so too is its culinary identity. Within New Zealand cuisine there have been some moments of trying to recreate Britain despite the opposite seasonal climates (Chevalier, 2018), moments of differentiation from Britain with cookbooks (Kennedy & Lockie, 2018), struggles between Māori and Pākehā (Morris, 2010, 2013), and huge influencing factors from immigration (Mavromatis, 2017). Alongside this complex culinary past, there is also the small history of restaurants in the country (Rowland, 2010) which have evolved over time to become highly diverse (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2021, 2022) and, as such, a clear articulation of a New Zealand restaurant cuisine is not visible.

This study seeks to follow the advice of Weiss (2011) and Willmott (1989) and does not search for a specific New Zealand identity within food culture. Rather it seeks to fill this gap and investigate how Auckland chefs think and feel about New Zealand identity, and reflect it within their Auckland-based restaurants through the three main questions: In what ways do chefs reflect their own understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's identity within Auckland's urban restaurant setting? What is the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand's varied and complex identity and the cuisine that chefs serve? How do notions of settler identity impact chefs' interpretations and self-ownership of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine? The following two chapters detail how this research was conducted and the resulting findings.



## Chapter 3: Methodology

### Introduction

This chapter discusses the methodological approach to this research. It begins with the positioning of the researcher, ontology and epistemology, and paradigms, before discussing the methodological approach, the method, selection criteria and participant biographies, and the effect of COVID-19 on the research, and concludes with a summary of the interviews, the thematic analysis, and the ethical considerations.

This dissertation was approached through a relativist ontology, a constructivist epistemology, and the paradigm of interpretivism. Key research methodology techniques included the qualitative descriptive approach, a non-probability purposive sampling method, semi-structured interviews, and thematic analysis.

By following the interpretivist paradigm, one agrees that “knowledge is relative to particular circumstances – historical, temporal, cultural, subjective, and exists in multiple forms” (Benoliel, 1996, p. 407, as cited in Levers, 2013, p. 3). These circumstances form the ways in which the researcher’s analysis has been interpreted and, as such, with the aim of acknowledging these circumstantial lenses, my position as the researcher must be made explicit.

### Positioning myself

I am a 26-year-old cis-female, queer, white Pākehā New Zealander. I am a New Zealand citizen through both my parents despite being born abroad. Having parents who lived in Europe or America for most of their youth or early adulthood and with an American grandmother, I grew up with a complex sense of cultural self-identity and very international but Western notions of food. I was also fortunate enough to have grown up in a family in which going out to eat at nice restaurants was something of a normal occurrence, and I had the privilege of experiencing a high level of cuisine in my youth. I have worked in the hospitality industry in New Zealand and the United Kingdom since 2014, in several levels of establishments from canteen service, barista, bar staff, to waitressing at fine dining restaurants.

My international upbringing has enhanced my desire to soak up the world around me and be influenced by it. However, it has also left me with a confused New Zealand identity and questions regarding my place within the country. This is ultimately what has led me to this research and the aim of discovering what it means when chefs say they serve New Zealand food.

## Ontology and epistemology

When embarking on or reading any research, there are some key elements that are important to clarify at the outset. These key elements surround notions of how we see the world and how we know the things we know. Creswell (2007) tells us that “the research design process in qualitative research begins with philosophical assumptions” (p. 15), those being ontology and epistemology.

As the study of being (Crotty, 1998, as cited in Levers, 2013), ontology investigates “the nature of existence and what constitutes reality” (Gray, 2004, p. 19). This research is based on a relativist ontology in which reality is a subjective human experience, and in which the things humans experience constitute reality (Levers, 2013). A relativist ontology is a pragmatic pairing with studies following a qualitative approach as they aim to understand people, cultures, and situations through contact with participants (O’Leary, 2017).

Following the consolidation of the research’s ontological standpoint, the epistemological perspective must be established. According to Denzin and Lincoln (2005), epistemology is the study of knowledge and question, “how do I know the world?” (p. 183). There are two possible epistemological standpoints which can be paired with a relativist ontology – subjectivism and constructivism.

Subjectivism argues that universal knowledge devoid of individual reflections and interpretations is impossible (Levers, 2013). Denzin and Lincoln (2005) state that, within subjectivism, knowledge is “always filtered through the lenses of language, gender, social, class, and ethnicity” (p. 21). For myself this creates an acknowledgement that my knowledge is filtered through my own middle-class, English- and French-speaking, cis-female, queer, Pākehā lens. Not only is my knowledge filtered through this lens, but also my participants and I influence each other.

Gray (2004) offers constructivism as an epistemological view in which “truth and meaning do not exist in some external world but are created by the subject’s interactions with the world. Meaning is *constructed* not discovered” (p. 20, emphasis in original). Constructivism opens the research up to multiple perspectives and allows differing and contradictory views of the world to exist. This is similar to the relativist ontological view that there are as many realities as there are those interpreting (Levers, 2013). Gray (2004) explains that, within constructivism, various contrary accounts of a phenomenon are possible and valid because participants construct their own understanding of the world.

This research is based on the belief that truth and meaning is, like constructivism, indeed created rather than discovered. However, like subjectivism, if truth and meaning are being constructed, then one must ask who is constructing it and how does their lens or understanding and experience of

language, gender, social, class, and ethnicity affect their construction? As such, following the positioning of myself as the researcher and the belief about reality being constructed, a constructivist approach was chosen for this research.

## Paradigms

Following the clarification of the ontology and epistemology of this research, the paradigm, which can be seen as a 'net' that carries a researcher's philosophical views (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), must be chosen. The paradigm that best complements constructivist epistemology is that of interpretivism, often combined with social constructivism (Creswell, 2007; Gray, 2004). Levers (2013) explains that because the constructivist epistemology is focused on acknowledging and interpreting different human experiences and is mostly used with qualitative methods, it centres on realising and reporting on the actions and experiences of humans with the goal of meaning making.

Denzin and Lincoln (2005) explain that, within interpretivist studies, the work "is guided by the researcher's set of beliefs and feelings about the world and how it should be understood and studied" (p. 22). In the present research, this can be seen in my feelings around displacement and searching for meaning in food, and my observation that there is a lack of known national identity within New Zealand cuisine. In addition, Grant and Giddings (2002) explain that the role of the researcher in interpretive studies is not just to narrate what participants have said, but to find meaning through their own interpretation, which is guided by their own set of beliefs and feelings, despite the fact that the participants may have not been able to see the findings and meaning themselves."

## Qualitative descriptive

With the aim of not repeating the mistake of other researchers who simply label their project as a qualitative research study without further contextualisation of what kind of qualitative study it is (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), this research used the methodology of qualitative descriptive, which can be seen as an extension of the basic qualitative study. Lambert and Lambert (2012) explain that, through qualitative descriptive studies, the researcher gains in-depth descriptive summaries of an individual's or a group's everyday experiences. These authors emphasise that, unlike other qualitative methodological frameworks, a qualitative descriptive methodology supports a study with as little intervention as possible and requires no particular theoretical view of the research topic (Lambert & Lambert, 2012). As there is no overarching theoretical framework which informs the present research study, it is a good match with qualitative description.

Merriam and Tisdell (2016) state that "a central characteristic of all qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (p. 24) which also fits well within

the relativist and constructivist philosophical assumptions underpinning this research. As all qualitative research follows the assumption that reality is constructed through an individual's interaction with their world (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and that within qualitative descriptive studies there is no description or view that is devoid of subjectivity (Sandelowski, 2000), it can be seen as an effective pairing with the relativist and constructivist philosophical standpoint. As such, the qualitative descriptive methodology recognises that the themes that were uncovered in the interviews and are discussed in Chapter 4 are dependent upon how I, myself, as the researcher, have understood and discovered them.

Within qualitative descriptive studies, sampling is purposeful and aims to acquire a small number of participants who can give information which is rich in data (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000). This research used the common method of data collection in qualitative description, namely semi-structured interviews in either an individual or a group setting, followed by thematic content analysis (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000).

The qualitative descriptive methodological approach to the rich description of the New Zealand restaurant identity in non-complex, everyday language follows the aim of being understood clearly and keeping as close as possible to the participants' interview transcripts (Bradshaw et al., 2017; Lambert & Lambert, 2012; Sandelowski, 2000). This is appropriate for this research as it matches the desire to understand a research topic from the perspective of the participants that is seen in qualitative studies (Bradshaw et al., 2017).

## Method

This research used a non-probability purposive sampling method. Merriam and Tisdell (2016) explain that purposive sampling allows the researcher to select a sample of participants who can provide the most insight into and understanding of the researcher's topic. In addition to the selection of participants who are information-rich, and available, Bradshaw et al. (2017) and Creswell (2007) note that a small sample size is also important in qualitative studies as more in-depth analysis of the data can take place. This was also important in relation to the scope and size of a 60-point master's dissertation.

My criteria were based around seeking well-regarded and influential chefs whose restaurants were either self-identifying as uniquely New Zealand cuisine, as well as those which did not self-identify with any particular culture. The inclusion of both categories allowed the research to investigate those restaurants which actively self-identified as New Zealand cuisine and those which, through a menu, website, and media audit, could be interpreted as New Zealand cuisine despite having not self-

identified as such (menus of all five participants' restaurants are included in the Appendices D-I). Whilst Auckland has a vibrant and varied array of differing cuisines, the exclusion of restaurants which self-identified as ethnic cuisine was implemented to find a sample of those that were questioning "New Zealand" cuisine.

The choice to interview chefs who are well-regarded and on top restaurant lists was made in relation to Beriss and Sutton's (2007) argument that chefs are taking a similar place to monuments or parades in symbolically representing nations. As such, in Table 1, below, I outline the selection criteria used in my purposive sampling and the associated reasoning.

**Table 1. Selection criteria and reasoning**

Chefs and their respective restaurants must be on the <i>Metro</i> Top 50 Restaurant 2021 list (Metro, 2021, pp. 76–150).	- Shows that the restaurant is held in high esteem by peers and the general public, and has a high quality of work.
Restaurant must be actively marketed as New Zealand cuisine, or can be interpreted as New Zealand cuisine despite having not self-identified as such.	- Places the participants within the context of the research questions and ensures that the sample includes those from whom the most information-rich data can be collected.
Chef has received local media attention for their work in New Zealand.	- Ensures that the chef's work is influential and known within the public sphere.
Chef must run an Auckland-based restaurant.	- Provides context to the Auckland cuisine scene rather than all New Zealand. - Allows the sample size to stay manageable.
Chef and their respective restaurant must be on the <i>Cuisine</i> Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022).	- Shows that the restaurant is held in high esteem by peers and the general public and has a high quality of work. - This was in addition to the <i>Metro</i> Top 50 Restaurant 2021 (Metro, 2021) list criterion, as the initial sample size was too small due to lack of responses or chefs being unable to participate (see "This research and COVID-19" section).

Following the selection criteria in Table 1, seven chefs were contacted, five of whom agreed to participate in the research. Potential participants were contacted either through email using the email



contact on their restaurant website or via an introduction by staff at AUT's School of Hospitality and Tourism. Initially, five potential participants were identified as meeting the criteria; however, as several people did not respond or were unable to accept the invitation, the selection criteria had to be widened (see "This research and COVID-19" section). Where first contact took place by email, the participants were given an explanation about the research and provided with both the Participant Information Sheet and the Consent Form (see Appendices B and C).

All of five final participants gave informed consent to be identified by name in the dissertation. The following comprises brief biographies of those who participated.

### **Ben Bayly**

Bayly owns and operates the restaurant **Ahi** in central Auckland which has been open since 2021. Ahi features in both the *Metro* Top 50 Restaurant List 2021 (Metro, 2021) and the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022). Ahi can be seen as a venue that actively markets itself as a New Zealand dining experience by stating that it is a "truly New Zealand restaurant" (Ahi Restaurant, n.d.). Bayly has had considerable media attention for his role as a guest judge on *My Kitchen Rules New Zealand* in 2014 (Cronin, 2014) and for his documentary TV series *A New Zealand Food Story* (Tainui et al., 2020–2022) in which he questions New Zealand's culinary identity whilst he prepares to open his restaurant, Ahi.

### **Al Brown**

Brown is the executive chef at the restaurant **Depot** in central Auckland which features on both the *Metro* Top 50 Restaurant List 2021 (Metro, 2021) and the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022). Depot does not actively market itself as New Zealand cuisine on its website. However, through the auditing of Brown's book *Depot: The Biography of a Restaurant (With Recipes)* (Brown & Street, 2014), we can understand Depot as a New Zealand restaurant through his statements that "the story of where and how I grew up is pertinent ... a lot of my childhood memories (whether consciously or subconsciously) have influenced the framework of what Depot is today" (p. 15) and "Vision: Depot = Bach" (p. 27). Brown has published several other cookbooks including *Eat Up New Zealand: Recipes and Stories* (2017) and has developed his own food brand of products including wines, bagels, coffee, and condiments such as ketchup and mustard (Al Brown & Co, n.d.).

### **Peter Gordon – Ngāti Kahungunu and Ngāi Tahu**

Gordon is the owner-operator of **Homeland** in central Auckland which features on the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022). Homeland promotes itself as the "food embassy for Aotearoa and the Pacific" (Homeland, n.d.b), and actively markets its menu as "a celebration of the incredible

producers based in Aotearoa” (Homeland, n.d.a, para. 1). Gordon is known as the pioneer of fusion food (Peter Gordon, n.d.) and was awarded the New Zealand Order of Merit (NZOM) for services to the food industry in 2009 (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, 2008).

### **Tom Hishon**

Hishon is the owner-operator of **kingi** in central Auckland which features on the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022). kingi markets itself as serving “local, sustainably caught seafood that tastes like the ocean it came from”, in which one can “savour the terroir of New Zealand’s oceans, dunes, river mouths and reefs” (kingi, n.d., para. 1). Hishon is known for multiple successful hospitality ventures which also include Orphan’s Kitchen and Daily Bread (Yates, 2020).

### **Michael Meredith**

Meredith is the owner-operator of **Mr Morris** in central Auckland, which features on both the *Metro* Top 50 Restaurant List 2021 (Metro, 2021) and the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards 2021/2022 (Cuisine, 2022). With Meredith’s Samoan heritage, Mr Morris markets its goal as being “to create a modern Pacific and New Zealand experience” (Mr Morris, n.d.). Meredith is well-known for his previous Auckland restaurant *Meredith’s* (Elwin, 2020; Heard, 2020).

This research and COVID-19

This study questions what New Zealand restaurant cuisine is in Auckland in 2022 in the aftermath of several lockdowns and the continuation of the COVID-19 pandemic. It therefore cannot ignore the effects that the past three years of COVID-19 have had on the industry, which the Restaurant Association of New Zealand (2022) described as being “at the brink of collapse” (para. 1). In their paper “Hospitality Business Longevity Under COVID-19: The Impact of COVID-19 on New Zealand’s Hospitality Industry”, authors Hemmington and Neill (2022) argue that “the current COVID-19 pandemic clearly has the potential to exacerbate the pressures on what is already a challenging business environment” (p. 103). Following the immediate impact of the first nationwide lockdown in 2020, the New Zealand Restaurant Association estimated an overall loss “just over a billion dollars” (as cited in Hemmington & Neill, 2022, p. 105). In addition to these losses and those in subsequent years, restaurants must now contend with staff shortages, supply-chain issues, and staff who are “really burnt out” (Muru-Lanning, 2022, para. 1).

Whilst this study was originally planned around a larger (up to six) and highly specific sample of chefs to interview, due to the pressures of COVID-19 some chefs were understandably reluctant to be interviewed as they had busy schedules, and some simply never responded to interview invitations. Due to this lack of response or unavailability to take part in the research, the participant selection

criteria were widened to include chefs who might not previously have been included. In the attempt to keep the differences of the selection criteria as small as possible, the one change was that chefs had to be on either the *Metro* Top 50 Restaurant list for 2021 or the *Cuisine* Good Food Awards List for 2021/2022, having been awarded at least one hat (Cuisine, 2022; Metro, 2021). Prior to this change the chefs specifically had to be included in the *Metro* list. The *Cuisine* Good Food Awards is a similar list to that of the *Metro* Top 50; however, it looks at all of New Zealand, not just Auckland. Additionally, in contrast to the *Metro* Top 50, *Cuisine Magazine* awards ‘hats’ from one to three – similar to the Michelin Star rating system (McKay, 2021) – and has a ‘Ones to Watch’ list (Cuisine, 2022).

To ensure their safety and comfort, the chefs who did take part in the research were given the choice of location or, if they preferred, the interview could take place over Zoom or another video-calling platform. While all the interviews were conducted in person following the New Zealand COVID-19 guidelines at the time of the interviews, some participants required my VaccinePass to be shown upon entry or requested an acknowledgement of my vaccination status prior to the interview.

## Interviews

Interviews with the participants followed a semi-structured approach as recommended by Bradshaw et al. (2017), who explain that interviewing is an ideal data collection strategy as it “enables the researcher to explore ideas with participants through encouraging depth and rigour” and by doing so, new concepts and issues can emerge (pp. 4–5). These semi-structured interviews guide the researcher whilst allowing the participant to speak freely, preventing any restriction of responses (Bradshaw, et al., 2017).

Following Sandelowski’s (2000) recommendations that, through “minimally to moderately structured open-ended” interviews, researchers can discover “the who, what, and where of events or experiences” (p. 338), the interviews were structured around the following four key questions with the intention to allow conversation to flow easily:

1. Can you share your own understanding of what New Zealand cuisine is?
2. How would you classify the food you serve?
3. Do you take your understanding or questions about New Zealand’s identity with you as you create a dish?
4. How does your understanding of New Zealand as a place affect how you curate your menu and design a restaurant?

All five interviews were held face-to-face at a location and time of the participants’ choosing. The interviews were undertaken between March 9 and May 23, 2022. The location of the interviews were

the participants' workplaces, predominantly at their restaurants; however Tom Hishon's interview was conducted at a different restaurant of his (Orphan's Kitchen), and Al Brown's was conducted at his 'HQ' next to another of his hospitality establishments. Conducting interviews in person not only allowed for a full explanation of the study but also, as the interviews were held while consuming a beverage or food item, the commensality of eating and drinking together allowed rapport to be built between the researcher and participant. The interviews lasted from half-an-hour to an hour. Participants were given the choice to either have themselves and their restaurants identified or be given a pseudonym. All five participants agreed to be identified.

The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher after the interviews had taken place. A copy of the interview transcript was then sent to the corresponding participant to allow them to amend any comments they had made during the interview. Out of the five participants, one made a correction, two responded that they were happy with the transcription, and two never responded.

## Thematic analysis

In keeping with the choice of a qualitative descriptive methodology, thematic analysis was chosen as the method to find meaning in my data. Clarke and Braun (2018, 2021) explain that thematic analysis is a method of approaching qualitative data sets with the goal of finding common themes or concepts. This is done by transcribing interviews and subsequently repetitively listening to them to generate themes. This process allows the analysis to move beyond summarisation to interpretation (Clarke & Braun, 2018, 2021).

Vaismoradi et al. (2013) emphasise that thematic analysis is well paired with qualitative data sets and a descriptive methodology because of its ability to find and name themes across complex and information-rich data. In addition to this, the authors explain that within thematic analysis the significance of a theme is seen in terms of its connection to the overall research goal and is not a specific measurable factor.

The transcripts from the interviews are the basis of the findings and discussion in this dissertation, following the process of thematic analysis of Braun and Clarke (2006, as cited in Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 402), as shown below in Table 2.

**Table 2. Process of thematic analysis**

Steps	Specifics
1. Familiarisation with data	Transcribing interviews and finding initial ideas through constant re-readings.
2. Generating initial codes	Categorising important features of the data in relation to the research question.
3. Searching for themes	Collating the features (of step 2) into potential thematic groupings.
4. Reviewing themes	Reviewing the themes and the appropriateness to the research questions, and either refining, discarding, or combining themes.
5. Defining and naming themes	Ongoing re-defining and re-identifying of themes whilst continuing to analyse.
6. Writing the analysis	Finding the most compelling extracts of the interviews to compile a final analysis of the themes woven together within the context of the current literature.

*Note.* Adapted from Braun and Clarke (2006, as cited in Vaismoradi et al., 2013, p. 402).

## Ethical considerations

As this research involved the collection of primary data by way of interviewing participants, there were ethical considerations to be addressed. To ensure the research project was ethically safe and appropriate, a request to undertake research was submitted to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC). Approval was given on February 10, 2022, with the AUTEC reference number 22/8. The Participant Information Sheet and Consent Form were also approved. The letter of approval and the forms are provided in Appendices A, B, and C.

## Chapter 4: Findings and Discussion

### Introduction

This research sought to discover the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand's varied and complex identity and the cuisine that chefs serve, how notions of settler identity impact chefs' interpretations and self-ownership of New Zealand cuisine, and in what ways chefs reflect their understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand's identity in their Auckland-based restaurants. This chapter looks at the findings of the interviews and discusses the main themes that emerged from the thematic analysis in relation to the overall research questions. The themes comprise the chefs' own understanding of New Zealand cuisines, the importance of ingredients, and narrative creation within the restaurants. Prior to a discussion of these findings, this chapter begins with a brief synopsis of what each of the chefs said during their interviews, after which the discussion moves on to the chefs' understanding of New Zealand, then the importance of ingredients, before concluding with the creation of narratives.

### Interview findings

**Ben Bayly** thought that New Zealand cannot be compared to other countries with long-standing culinary histories because as a country it is simply too young to have one. His opinion was that New Zealand cuisine is made up of two things: people and ingredients. In his view, regardless of where the food or the person originally came from, as long as it was made, harvested, caught by someone in New Zealand then it is New Zealand food. Ben expresses these ideas through supporting New Zealand producers and acknowledging them through the menu and stories told by staff in the restaurant. Ben also reflected his own understanding of New Zealand identity, particularly his understanding of his own settler identity, through serving iconic childhood dishes and through the restaurant décor choices.

**Al Brown** spoke of a unique understanding of New Zealand which ultimately stems from his childhood in which the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985) played a large part, along with the strong presence of preserves from his family orchard. However, Al also saw New Zealand cuisine as difficult to fully grasp due to the youth of the country and its constant influx of immigrants. Al sees New Zealand chefs as magpies who pick bits and pieces from other cuisines to create something unique to them. Al created Depot as a commercialisation of the New Zealand bach<sup>26</sup> experience and the feeling of informality which originated from his upbringing. The restaurant features a strong narrative of

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<sup>26</sup> New Zealand holiday home, generally by the beach, and very casual.

informality and approachability that is most evident through his choices of cutlery and glassware. Al also spoke of a desire to showcase cuts of meat and fish which are not often seen within restaurants, and he aims to keep his food simple to preserve the natural fresh flavour of the ingredients.

**Peter Gordon** expressed that he did not believe that New Zealand has a distinctive cuisine and offered several questions of his own regarding at what point non-native ingredients become part of a national cuisine, and whether New Zealand cuisine is just Māori and settler cuisines combined. His main aim for his restaurant Homeland is to be the ambassador for New Zealand and Pacific products and producers. Homeland is not just a restaurant but also a retail store and a cooking school. Peter stated that his primary goal is to support producers, and therefore the entire restaurant and business is seen through this lens.

**Tom Hishon** spoke of the importance of the ingredients and the land in regard to New Zealand's cuisine identity. Tom's views can be seen as a mix of the three previous chefs', in that the youth of the country, the freedom to pick and choose from different cuisines, the ingredients, and the producers play a significant role in his understanding of New Zealand cuisine. Tom placed particular importance on seafood and the provenance of its gathering or fishing. At kingi, Tom mentioned that he seeks to do as little as possible to the ingredients, with the aim of keeping them in their pure state, and he places high importance on showcasing and promoting the suppliers of sustainable seafood and meat. In his restaurant, Tom stated that at kingi he aims to serve fully sustainable and wild-caught seafood and meat.

**Michael Meredith** expressed that he sees New Zealand's cuisine as very multicultural, as it is still in its youth and discovering what it is. He saw the ingredients playing a large part in New Zealand's cuisine and that the influences from the Pacific and Asia cannot be understated. In his restaurant Mr Morris, Michael's approach differentiated him from the other chefs as he is not actively setting out with a larger overall goal other than making food which is delicious. Michael said that he does not actively seek to make narratives and prefers to create subtle references which the customer may or may not see.

In considering these summaries, we can see that the five participants all reflect upon New Zealand cuisine differently. In the upcoming sections these differences (and some similarities) are further discussed in relation to the literature previously reviewed in Chapter 2. We begin with the chefs' understandings of New Zealand cuisine, then the importance of ingredients, before concluding with the creation of narratives.

## What is New Zealand cuisine?

When asked the question, “What is your understanding of New Zealand cuisine?” most of the chefs could not simply identify what it was. However, the thematic analysis revealed four key themes that were common amongst all the chefs’ answers. These were: the ingredients and proximity to the source, the youth of the country and the lack of culinary traditions, colonial ideas of cuisine, and the history of immigration and the resulting ethnic diversity

The ingredients and proximity to the source

Ingredients play a large part in not only the chefs understanding of what New Zealand cuisine is but also how they reflect this understanding within their restaurants. As such this findings and discussion chapter involves two sections on ingredients. This section specifically looks at how ingredients influence the chefs’ understanding of New Zealand cuisine, and the further section “Call yourself a New Zealand restaurant and then order cheese from China, it’s not good enough” – The ingredients of a national identity, unpacks how the chefs use ingredients as part of their reflection of Aotearoa New Zealand identity within their restaurants.

While other chefs expressed their own confusion on New Zealand cuisine, when asked the question “What is your understanding of New Zealand cuisine?”, Peter was very stark in his articulation that he “[thought] New Zealand doesn’t have a cuisine”. Rather, he saw that it has “an evolving dining scene and culinary” scene. Following that, Homeland’s overall philosophy is that of being the New Zealand and Pacific food embassy, Peter aims to continue the evolution of New Zealand’s evolving dining scene and this is done largely through supporting producers by providing classes, retail, and dining (Homeland, n.d.b). This evolution of the New Zealand culinary scene can be seen particularly through the cooking classes which Peter offers at Homeland (Homeland, n.d.b). By holding cooking classes to teach those from lower-socioeconomic backgrounds and paying customers, Peter is actively working for New Zealanders of all backgrounds to have “personal history” (Willmott, 1989, p. 4) in which, like the trainee chefs using *The New Zealand Chef* (Berno et al., 2018; Christensen-Yule & Neill, 2017), they are taught cooking within a New Zealand context.

Peter, though extremely committed to Homeland following the business model of supporting ingredient producers, questioned at what point an ingredient becomes part of the national cuisine canon. In comparing New Zealand kiwifruit to Italian tomatoes, which were originally from South America, Peter mused “at what point [does] kiwifruit or feijoa become part of our story, because they’re not from here. You know, can something as modern as that come in? And I think it sort of can”. Peter’s question shows a New Zealand specific example of what Henderson (2014) saw as dishes “endowed with iconic status by citizens” (p. 904). Kiwifruit and feijoas are both featured in Hingston’s



(2009) *ABC of New Zealand Food* list, and although feijoa is missing from Watson's (2019) New Zealand food list, it has been called "New Zealand's most socialist fruit" by *The Spinoff* writer Greg Pritchard (2017), and "The people's fruit" by *The New Zealand Geographic* writer Kate Evans (2017). This is due to the sheer abundance of the frequently backyard/garden home-grown crop which not only bruises easily but cannot be cool stored, like a banana or kiwifruit, leading to sharing amongst communities (Pritchard, 2017) to the extent that it has become "a New Zealand emblem" (Evans, 2017). By singling out and validating these two non-native ingredients which have become icons in New Zealand, Peter expressed how he sees New Zealand food and ingredients as more than just what is native; rather, they can be brought by early settlers or newly imported.

For both Al and Tom, New Zealand's geography, with its ever-changing landscape which allows for a highly varied and diverse selection of ingredients, plays a part in their understanding of the cuisine. Tom talked about "the geography of New Zealand and the access to everything ... [and how] we kind of travel for only a couple of hours to a certain place and have a completely difference experience from going two hours that way" plays a large part in his understanding of the New Zealand's cuisine canon. Al similarly commented on the size and proximity of sources in the country and how this maximises flavour possibilities. He emphasised that, in regard to the ingredients,

they're not coming from another country or what, you know, everything's very close ... the volume of flavour in our food because of our proximity to where it's harvested or bought or whatever, does all the good shit for us.

Through Tom and Al's connection between New Zealand as a place and food, we can see Mintz's (1996) argument that foods "are never foods of a country, but foods of a *place*" (as cited in Beriss, 2019, p. 69, emphasis in original) is valid and shows Al and Tom's view of New Zealand cuisine being linked to terroir.

In contrast, Ben very specifically saw New Zealand cuisine as made up from two things: people and ingredients. Ben stated that

a national cuisine in New Zealand food can only be the people that have harvested it, made it, ... those ingredients that are grown here ... but it always comes back to the people, the people who grow it. No matter where they are from.

Within the context of Ahi, which actively claims to be a New Zealand dining experience, it makes sense that Ben would need to be clear and concise about his own rationale and understanding of New Zealand food.

In this regard, the importance that ingredients hold and the sourcing of them from New Zealand producers can be connected to the ideas of both Mintz (1996, as cited in Beriss, 2019) and Weiss (2011) about the importance of place and site-specificity. This importance of ingredients that came from a specific place can be seen throughout many of these chefs' menus, but equally shows that New Zealand cuisine can be seen as one where terroir plays a large part.

A youthful country with few culinary traditions

All the chefs commented that it is difficult for New Zealand to have a national cuisine in the same way as other countries. Ben explained why New Zealand cannot be compared to countries with long-standing culinary traditions: "New Zealand's not even 200, I don't know if you can call it 200 years old, I mean, Māori for 800-1000 years old. And so, we just don't have the time."

Alongside the youth of New Zealand as a country came the lack of culinary traditions. Michael questioned this by stating that "it's hard to say what is New Zealand technique." Michael pointed out that most New Zealand chefs are trained in the French style so there are not any particular New Zealand techniques that are being passed down. This connects to the chapter by Berno et al. (2018) which discusses how past trainee chefs in New Zealand were taught by the French-influenced British standards. However, the lack of New Zealand specific training was not seen as a negative by the participants, but rather gave chefs freedom to experiment. Tom saw this as a positive, stating that "what's to our best abilities is the fact we don't necessarily have ... hundreds of thousands of years of ... steep tradition, because it's really hard to break out of." Al similarly stated that, in coming from a young country without the binds of tradition, New Zealand chefs have "this freedom of drawing down on different cuisines or different things." Al saw these differing cuisines as not only those which have 'immigrated' here but also those which chefs see whilst travelling or on their OE.<sup>27</sup> These notions of drawing from other cuisines are mentioned in following sections regarding the diversity of New Zealand's cuisine.

Tom pointed out that New Zealand is experiencing an era in which "we can ... trial whatever, and we're constantly ... evolving. So that's probably a big benefit as is ... not being tied to certain ways of doing things". The idea of freedom and evolution can be seen to relate to Henderson's (2014) argument about evolution within a cuisine. Writing about the Singaporean context, she states that a unique

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<sup>27</sup> Overseas experience. An everyday term for the stereotypical rite of passage or coming of age experience which involves the first large scale travel away from New Zealand that young adults take part in after university study or earning enough money after joining the work force. Generally, an OE is 1-3 years in length and seen as a working-holiday. (Wilson, 2014).

cuisine is hard to ascertain due to its constant evolution. Within the Auckland context, this evolution can be seen in the differences between the two volumes of *Auckland Eats* (King Shahab & Suvalko, 2021, 2022) and is perhaps why New Zealand cuisine has been and is hard to define.

#### *Māori culinary traditions*

Whilst most of the chefs commented on the lack of culinary traditions, there is one claim Aotearoa New Zealand may have as a culinary tradition and it did get mentioned several times – hāngi. In his interview, Peter joked about hāngi in the context of a restaurant saying, “it’s not as if we can dig a hole in the floor and throw the hāngi pit”; however, his menu does feature hāngi pork belly as a side (Appendix F). Peter stated that he “thought, wouldn’t it be interesting if you could go to a New Zealand restaurant and not get bacon, get hāngi pork bacon”. As seen on their menu, at Homeland one can order a piece of hāngi pork alongside Turkish eggs or corn fritters (Appendix F). This fusion of hāngi cooking and typical New Zealand brunch food provides an excellent example of Peter’s own tentative definition of New Zealand cuisine as “an evolution of traditional Māori cuisine, combined with colonial settlers’ ”. This fusion connects with Morris’s (2010) article in which she notes that some Māori ingredients are not seen as sophisticated whereas others are acceptable and have been transformed into ‘Kiwi’ ingredients. This side dish provides an example of how a Māori food, whether it be an ingredient or cooking technique, has actively replaced a British-settler ‘Kiwi’ food without a titular transformation and, as such, it shows the value of Māori cooking techniques within an urban environment. Henderson’s (2014) argument for the “possibilities for co-existence and conjugation” (p. 905) is also relevant in this regard as we can see the co-existence of both a common Pākehā brunch food, and that of a Māori cooking technique; together they have conjoined to create a highly specific New Zealand dish.

Peter, the one participant with Māori whakapapa,<sup>28</sup> was the only chef interviewed who spoke of actively and playfully engaging with hāngi. In the interview, he spoke of having made two hāngi dinners at Turangawaewae Marae<sup>29</sup> on separate occasions. Peter stated that despite many people on the marae being bored with hāngi, they were apprehensive of Peter changing the process and ingredients by simply adding garlic and rosemary, or more intricately pureeing kina to make a kina taramasalata serving it with frybread, or making fishcake with tītī and kūmara. Peter rightly pointed out that “it’s not as though a cultural group always agrees on the same thing” as there were contrasting opinions of his food. Some “burst into tears and said ‘you’re ruining our taonga’ ” whilst others said “if I’d eaten kina like this I might like it.” It seems that whilst Henderson’s (2014) concept of evolution does apply

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<sup>28</sup> Genealogy.

<sup>29</sup> Māori meeting house complex.

in some contexts of New Zealand cuisine, it does not mean that those who consider dishes and ingredients iconic or taonga will not be offended by some of the ways in which it has evolved.

Rather, Peter's experimentations of changing hāngi can be seen in relation to Weiss's (2011) concept of gastronomic authenticity in which he claimed that "tradition without awareness of history and without possibility of change is mere stereotype" (p. 77). Whilst, I do not claim that those who do not alter their hāngi preparation process are merely creating a stereotype of hāngi, Peter's garlic cooked in the hāngi to be spread on bread, shows the ways in which 'authentic' cuisine does not need to be a fixed point but, rather, can move and change with differing circumstances.

#### Colonial settler ideas of cuisine

While the chefs see a freedom in the lack of culinary traditions imposed on New Zealand, their understanding of New Zealand cuisine still includes the remnants of colonial settler food. Some of these remnants can be seen in how the chefs originally explained what New Zealand cuisine could be. Peter commented that, in his youth, "people would think that roast lamb and kūmara would be a national cuisine." Similarly, Tom remarked "if you think about [the] New Zealand diet ... most people kind of [think] ... meat and three veg". These kinds of classic British-style meals are those seen in Hingston's (2009) book: *Afghans, Barbecues, and Chocolate Fish: The ABC of Kiwi Food*. However, both these chefs said this with a kind of apprehension and doubt. It seems that perhaps there is a sense of cultural cringe around the connection to what is now seen to be, as Brown (2017) pointed out, unpleasant food.

However, what was discussed with pride was the high standard of New Zealand's baking. Peter stated that New Zealand "should be rather proud of [our] baking, we have a really good baking tradition", and although he does not mention it, one can speculate that this is due to the large influence of the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985). Al, on the other hand, was direct in asserting that his sweet tooth was satisfied through baking from the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985). In the interview, Al spoke about how when he was growing up his parents were great bakers and made chutneys and relishes with produce from their garden, and that this is where his idea of the New Zealand food came from, and how it still influences how he cooks today. It is clear then that Kennedy and Lockie's (2018) argument that the *Edmonds Cookery Book* is a nation-building cultural artefact is not only supported but can be reflected in these chefs' practices.

Furthermore, whilst Bell (2009) wrote of one of the dilemmas of settler identity being "a lack of sense of cultural specificity" (p. 145), the settler identity constructed through the making of baked goods and preserves can be seen as highly specific to New Zealand, as when Brown (2017) mentions the American tourist's euphoric reaction to a preserve. As such, the promoting and claiming of New

Zealand's baking and preserving history can be seen as a gaining of cultural specificity within nation-building.

The history of immigration and the resulting diversity

What became clear through the interviews with each of the chefs was the importance of the diversity of Aotearoa New Zealand, and particularly of Auckland's population, to how they view New Zealand cuisine. Michael stated that for him New Zealand is "a diverse culture in the way we cook and eat ... it's a very multicultural cuisine at this stage". We can see the significance of this diversity in how all the five chefs do not shy away from this part of New Zealand identity through the manner in which they craft dishes and see New Zealand cuisine as a whole.

Watson's (2019) idea of "a big boil-up pot of all different flavours" can serve as a metaphor for how the chefs see New Zealand's cuisine as highly multi-cultural. This leads us to question whether a melting-pot, which Appadurai (1988) calls a myth, is the same as a boil-up pot. While a melting-pot alludes to a mixture which may have various ingredients and influences from differing cultures, it becomes one homogenous entity. What seems to distinguish New Zealand or specifically Auckland's melting-pot, or boil-up-pot, perhaps is, that rather than just having many different cuisines blended in the same place, all the different cuisines are brought together and the distinct flavours and influences can still be seen, or tasted. Al described this by saying "we became the magpies that we are ... I take something from Korea and mix it with a technique from France." Michael described a similar process of hand-picking elements from different cultures for a dish that could perhaps be seen as a New Zealand specific. He stated that, on the Mr Morris menu, "nothing uniquely stands out as New Zealand. ... We do a steamed snapper, with green mussels. Those relatively are quite New Zealand focused ingredients, but the way it's finished really is French and Asian driven". Within this we can see how the French and British cooking techniques that were taught (Berno et al., 2018) are infused with New Zealand's diverse population and kaimoana to create the multicultural cuisine that Michael speaks of.

It would seem a given that, with 39 per cent of Auckland's population in 2018 being born overseas (Thorner, 2021), there would be a large influence of differing cultures in New Zealand's cuisine. However, Bell (1996) claimed that nations are built through obliteration or assimilation, and as such we could perhaps expect these cuisines to disappear amongst the 'commonsense' of the colonial Pākehā food reality. Perhaps, then, in Aotearoa New Zealand we obliterate and or assimilate everything about a culture except the food?

The magpie approach that Al spoke of, and the dish Michael described further reflect Henderson's (2014) argument that there are possibilities for the co-existence and unification of food cultures.

While writing the literature review, I initially questioned whether it was the indigenous Māori food that has been destroyed by globalisation, the hāngi pork steamed bun which I ate at Ahi during the interview with Ben (although it was not on their official menu at the time of the interview) can be seen as more than simply co-existence of Māori and Chinese food traditions but a fusion of them both and a dish that could only be found in New Zealand.

This section has uncovered the five chefs' varying overall understanding of New Zealand cuisine and discussed it in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. The methods in which the chefs take this understanding of New Zealand cuisine into their restaurants is discussed in the next section.

### “Call yourself a New Zealand restaurant and then order cheese from China, it's not good enough” – The ingredients of a national identity

A key theme that emerged from the analysis of the interviews was the importance that the ingredients, their source, and their producers hold for all the chefs. Whilst ingredients have already been discussed in relation to the chefs' understanding of an overall New Zealand cuisine identity, this section looks specifically at how the chefs use ingredients in their restaurants to reflect this understanding. This has two components: (1) the desire to use local ingredients; and (2) the desire to support local producers and vendors.

For Tom, the main objective of kingi was in being a sustainable seafood restaurant. He said that it is actively “really hard”, due to over-fishing, but he aims to lessen the environmental impact and to use ingredients that are plentiful and are harvested or caught by people who care about the environment. At kingi, Tom lists producers and locations on his menu (Appendix H) as a sign of respect to them and this is discussed further in the narrative section. Within this seafood restaurant there is an importance given to wild-caught fish and wild food, and any meat served is either tahr or venison hunted wild. Tom stated that he “wouldn't just put on *foie gras* or something imported from the outside world. Because, to me, that's not what New Zealand food is”. This reflection of New Zealand food through the ingredients, specifically seafood, is how Tom understands New Zealand cuisine. He expressed his belief that “Kaimoana would probably be ... what really defines our food identity” and how it is gathered, as “everyone's got connection to the ocean. And has memories of ... either fishing or gathering molluscs, or ... floundering.” These memories and his devotion to keeping the sea plentiful so others can create memories like his own can be seen on the statement at the bottom of the kingi menu which reads:

This restaurant is a celebration of independent fishermen and women around New Zealand. Our fish is caught from our surrounding waters, it is wild. We support

people who believe in sustainable practices and who care about ensuring future abundance of fish stocks and actively protect larger mammals, bird life and the sea floor when they fish. – Appendix H

Ben and Peter are similar in their attention to ingredients and their sources. Ben spoke of seeing New Zealand's cuisine as "people and the ingredients", though the ingredients do not need to be native to New Zealand, like kawakawa<sup>30</sup> or freshwater tuna<sup>31</sup>, since "a national cuisine in New Zealand food can only be the people that have harvested it, made it, ... those ingredients that are grown here". As a result, Ben was quite explicit about being very selective about what food on the menu has been imported and what has not. He stated that "it's not good enough just to make a New Zealand dish ... call yourself a New Zealand restaurant and then order cheese from China, it's not good enough". As such, we can see that, for Ben, serving something in a restaurant in New Zealand does not inherently make it a New Zealand dish but, rather, he understands it as a process which involves people within the country.

That said, at the time of the interview he served a Roquefort blue cheese imported from France for the explicit purpose of showcasing it next to "the most amazing blue cheese in New Zealand (Blue Monkey) and I want people to taste the difference". In this way, Ben offered diners the experience of having their own assumptions about the ideals of French cuisine challenged. This also reflects the argument that Morris (2013) makes regarding developing a national cuisine through presenting "ourselves to ourselves, and to others" (p. 211). This notion of presenting ourselves to ourselves can be seen in Ben's choice of cheese in which New Zealanders can see themselves reflected on a menu and through this representation an Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine can be further developed. This cheese also provides a clear example of Fischler's (1988) concept of incorporation, through which a New Zealander actively choosing the local blue cheese is not only physically ingesting a product with the same terroir as themselves, but they are incorporating a food product that will affirm their cultural identity, rather than consuming only a French cheese which will not signify any symbolic expression of New Zealand identity.

This notion of comparison, with the desire to show that the New Zealand Blue Monkey blue cheese is of equal if not better value than the French Roquefort, can arguably be seen as nation-building similar to that of the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985). Kennedy and Lockie (2018) argued that the *Edmonds Cookery Book* can be seen a tool used to transform New Zealand into an "independent

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<sup>30</sup> Native plant in New Zealand. The leaves are traditionally used medicinally but also now more commonly in cooking (Jones, 2007).

<sup>31</sup> Māori name for freshwater eel, not to be confused with the deep-sea fish.

nation apart from 'Mother England' " (p. 75). In this instance we can see how notions of settler identity have impacted Ben, as his desire to compare the Blue Monkey and the Roquefort can be seen as a proclamation of New Zealand's value apart from 'Mother France' and her European cuisine ideals.

As previously mentioned, Peter's philosophy about New Zealand cuisine differed from that of Tom and Ben. Despite stating that he does not think New Zealand has a cuisine, Peter said New Zealand should be proud of its baking and, at Homeland, baked goods are served daily during café hours. This provides another example of the long-lasting affect that the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985) has made on New Zealand. However, Peter and Ben were similar in their dedication to championing New Zealand ingredients and producers. Peter called Homeland "the food embassy of New Zealand ... [it's] all about powerful tradable sustainable kai from Aotearoa and the Pacific". At Homeland, Peter said, around 90 per cent of the ingredients he uses are locally sourced and produced, with the intention of supporting local producers and keeping money within the local communities. Peter's understanding of the multicultural nature of New Zealand is evident not only in his choice to include native ingredients or food grown by local producers but also through his support of businesses such as Banu, a Te Atatu based supplier of Indian curry pastes and spices (Banu's, n.d.), which imports spices from India before creating the blends and pastes onsite themselves. The relationship with these suppliers shows Peter's understanding that New Zealand cuisine includes not just Māori and Pākehā but other ethnic groups which live here and which he believes deserve to be supported in his restaurant too.

Peter stated his dedication to using local ingredients extends to the restaurant making its own mirin, Japanese cooking wine, from sauvignon blanc and honey, because there is no local producer. He also stated that he will sometimes using a local version of another ingredient "even if we think it's inferior". Although it may seem strange for a chef to actively state that they will use an inferior product at times, this only further expressed Peter's dedication to supporting local businesses and producers. Through this we can see that Peter reflects his understanding of New Zealand cuisine identity through the constant support for local businesses which also results in an almost constant state of incorporation (Fischler, 1988) of New Zealand food for customers. Those who are from New Zealand will incorporate their own culture, and tourists will get to experience New Zealand through the incorporation of New-Zealand-made mirin.

Peter and Ben also share a friendship with Hāngi Master Rewi Spraggon (Hāngi Master, n.d.). Spraggon is the owner-operator of Hāngi Master, a catering business which can provide a hāngi oven onsite or deliver pre-cooked food from their food truck. Spraggon's aim is to bring hāngi and Māori kai back into the mainstream for both visitors and "our own people of Aotearoa who are slowly losing their



connection with the art of real Hāngi” (Hāngi Master, n.d.). Spraggon provides both Homeland and Ahi with hāngi. Peter recounted how he specifically provides Spraggon with 100kg of pork that has already been brined and then once Spraggon has cooked it in his hāngi pits in Bethells Beach, it is, as previously mentioned, served as a side instead of bacon. Through the connection and outsourcing of the cooking of the hāngi to Spraggon, both Peter and Ben show their respect for Māori culture and cuisine through the hāngi process and its outcomes by passing the baton, or spade, onto those who are more skilled and specialised; and, in Ben’s case, since he is Pākehā, it is more culturally appropriate that Spraggon conducts the process as well.

For Ben this connection and outsourcing was also shown in his own interpretation of his settler identity and his awareness of the importance of championing Māori cuisine within the restaurant. He stated that having Spraggon as a mentor and great friend was helpful as “being Pākehā and giving a restaurant a Māori name ... people made a bit of a target on my back ... it’s not about misappropriation of a Māori word, it’s about honouring the people that were here first”. Through this we can see that Ben’s understanding of his settler identity has made him aware of when to take self-ownership and when to defer the responsibility onto those for whom it is more appropriate.

Although Al did not place such a large emphasis on the producers and the intense drive for locally found ingredients, he did speak on seeking to reimagine ingredients which are perhaps sometimes neglected. Drawing from his childhood experiences of a frugal upbringing with very little waste, he stated:

I want to cook the special-needs vegetables. I want to hero the secondary cuts. I want to show you that [the] eating proposition [of] ... an ox tail cooked well and served over polenta or something in a very rustic way, the eating proposition [of] that is as good as ... Wagyu beef fillet with truffle butter ... to me they’re the same thing.

Alongside this ambition to cook the so-called undesirable ingredients, Al’s aspiration to educate customers about the varieties of ingredients New Zealand has to offer was also apparent. By serving fish wings and bellies, aiming to “break down the boundaries” of what can be used rather than discarded, and serving what Al called “simple stuff” and “relatively basic” dishes, he showed how he seeks to make heroes of all parts of the New Zealand menu by placing them front and centre, not just those ingredients which well known. Perhaps this devotion to cooking the unattractive could be seen as an act of differentiation from the ‘Mother Country’ or other fine-dining ideals. Al stated that when he did work in the fine-dining context, “there was something missing. It was uncomfortable. It felt like the jacket was too tight”. The jacket that Al called too tight can be understood both as ‘Mother

England’ and the hierarchical European ideals of fine dining. By refusing to follow these ideals and swapping the jacket for a t-shirt and apron, Al appears to take ownership of the dishes from his frugal rural settler upbringing and serves them up at one of the best restaurants in Auckland.

Whilst Tom, Ben, Peter, and Al are all actively promoting and seeking to champion New Zealand ingredients on their menus and heavily restricting the imported ingredients that are used, Michael spoke of taking another approach. Michael stated that “80 per cent of the menu is probably driven locally” but aside from that “it’s a palate driven menu” with a heavy focus on cooking over an open fire. Michael sits out from the rest as someone who designed his menu in terms of what tastes good, rather than specific connections to New Zealand food and food culture as was seen with the other chefs. He explained that the two dishes which could perhaps be labelled as New Zealand – steamed snapper with mussels, and a pāua dish – were both finished in an Asian and/or a French style. This reflected how Michael understands New Zealand’s varied and complex cultural and ethnic make-up and brings it into his food by blending New Zealand ingredients with multiple styles and flavours.

Michael’s interview provided an interesting example of a chef who appears to have little desire to try to claim or promote New Zealand cuisine. He stated that he is here to make food that is good to eat “because the end of the day food is meant to be eaten right? No matter what story we tell, no matter what, how we build it up. It doesn’t taste good or delicious. What the fuck? What’s the point?”. This is a marked difference from Peter, who would choose to prioritise local producers “even if we think it’s inferior, we’ll use it” – and if there is not a local option, he will simply go for what is best. This is not to suggest that Michael showed little regard for his ingredients or the producers of his food, nor that the other chefs do not care how the food tastes, but rather Michael prefers the ingredient itself to tell the story. However, what connects Peter and Michael is that they both can be seen to be serving a kind of ‘New Zealand fusion’ in the method by which they bring all the flavours of Aotearoa New Zealand – and the Pacific – together and create something unique. Rather than have a restaurant that is serving Japanese South American fusion, at Homeland and Mr Morris it is simply New Zealand cuisine.

From these differing views of the chefs, we can see that although they may use and treat ingredients and producers differently, ultimately the use of local ingredients plays a prominent role in the overall understanding and reflection of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine identity. The idea of letting the ingredient tell the story is explored in the next section through a discussion of narrative within the chefs’ reflections of this culinary identity.

## “The dish has to tell a story” – Expression through storytelling

### Narratives on the menu

In the interviews, all the chefs apart from Michael told narratives of the ingredients and how the dish came to the plate – who the producer was, how it was cooked – or a story connected to a nostalgic ‘Kiwi’ childhood experience. When asked about creating narratives or alluding to specific cultural references, Michael explained that he has “stepped away a lot from that process of ... selling the dish verbally before the person has it” and do not go to the extent of explaining “this is taken one meter deep of earth, or something”. Michael stated that he used to do this at his previous restaurant Meredith’s but he has veered away from doing it at Mr Morris due to a change in atmosphere. He specifically mentioned that the volume of the music would make anything like that difficult. Michael said that he understood that some restaurants in the “finer dining market” still do this and “you hear that story, you appreciated that” but stated that “people are coming here for food. They’re coming here for the experience... the service, the wine, the atmosphere, so ... we don’t really [tell the food story], unless someone asks.”

This contrasts with the four other chefs who all promote their New Zealand cuisine through narratives. Ben, Tom, and Peter all discussed how they create, showcase, and tell the narrative of the ingredients or producers, either with the inclusion of the name/brand of the producers or the location/terroir from which the ingredient was sourced on the menu (Appendices D, F and H). At Depot, the only menu items which mentions the location of the ingredients were the oysters; however, Al has an extensive narrative on which he draws. This is discussed further in the next subsection.

When asked about how Ben took his understanding of New Zealand culture into a dish, he replied “everything, the dish has to tell a story”. This simple statement provided the basic philosophy of the Ahi menu, which presents a location for every item on the menu. Ben explained that “everything has a story behind, which all our staff know, and it can be explained to the customer”. This is Ben’s story of Te Matuku oyster:

[I]t’s one of our closest suppliers, six kilometres [away] on the south side of Waiheke. It gets delivered to the ferry building, and we go across the road and pick it up. The oyster is the only oyster in New Zealand that’s grown in a marine reserve. Oysters filter 300 litres of water a day, a whole bathtub with one oyster, got millions of oysters there, cleans the water, like filter feeders right. So we tell stories like that.

This kind of storytelling on menus is also evident in both Peter and Tom's restaurants. Homeland has a full list of the producers on their menu (Appendix F) and a statement of their philosophy that sits upon the table as customers arrive (Appendix G). In my interview with Peter, he went as far as to say that

we work endlessly trying to drive the narrative of support local, support local, support local, with the local producers saying to them, have you thought of this, could you try that? Can you do this? So that underpins everything we really do.

Much like at Homeland, at kingi, the menu not only includes the location that the produce comes from, but also the specific people and companies who have caught the fish. For example, dishes are presented in this manner on the menu "Kina on toast, pancetta (Chatham Islands)". After the menu listing the following is written: "Pot Fisher Equinox – Delwyn & Gigi Tuanui – Chatham Islands" (Appendix H). Tom explained how, for the fishermen and fisherwomen who come to eat at the restaurant and see their names and produce on the menu being transformed into something that tastes amazing, "they really get a real buzz out of it ... they appreciate what they're catching and, or what they're doing, but then when they see in the context of a restaurant ... [it is] really amazing". Once again, through Ben, Tom, and Peter's active inclusion of producers, suppliers, and locations, we can see the value held by developing cuisine through the process of presenting the self to the self (Morris, 2013), not only for those who are customers but also for producers and suppliers.

Tom also talked about finding inspiration within his own lived experience and seeking to recreate these experiences through keeping the ingredients as untouched as possible. In the interview, Tom told the story of going to the Chatham Islands recently, catching kina while diving and eating it raw while he was still in the sea. He explained that these are the experiences that people can have in New Zealand and they are more likely to be expressed our cuisine, more so than anything served in a restaurant. As such, he said that he tries to keep the "raw purity" of the produce and to "take people to those places where you might experience something like that". The kina on toast from his menu is this inspiration transformed into a dish and provides another example of settler identity. Tom rightly stated that he cannot specifically claim that New Zealand's food identity is the connection to the ocean, and as a Pākehā man nor can he take ownership of the land or sea in the way tangata whenua can. However, he can proclaim self-ownership of his own lived experiences within New Zealand and reflect those onto the food he serves in kingi.

#### Narratives of childhood and heritage

These kinds of narratives created by Peter, Ben, and Tom that tell the stories of their producers and the location/terroir of the sources provide a useful connection into the more literal narratives told by

Al and Ben which focus on specific moments from their childhoods. Whilst all of the chefs, with the exception of Michael, offered the narrative of their producers and the products on their menu (Appendices D–I), Ben and Al are the only two who connect their cuisine and menus to stories from their Kiwi childhoods. In addition to the food they serve, the importance of material cultural also factors into narrative creation. Michael also took part in this, though in a minor way only, with less emphasis on the customer understanding. This section looks at the ways in which these chefs reflect on their childhood and heritage through material culture and menu items, beginning with Al’s clear narrative for Depot, continuing with Ben, and concluding with Michael.

For Al, there was no one specific dish that he pin-pointed which could tell a specific narrative story from his childhood; rather, Depot as a whole seeks to tell the story of the New Zealand bach or camping experience. This was evident not only in the interview but in the Depot cookbook as well (Brown & Street, 2014). In his interview, Al spoke extensively about how Depot was developed through expanding on his “great food memories” and their connection to “informality, to the bach, to the campground, to someone turning up with a smoked kahawai or half a fruitcake and people drinking wine out of a coffee cup”. Not only can this be seen as a representation of the settler ideal of a bach, but as a reflection of the settler values of making do with what one has and fostering community.

**Figure 3. Depot table setting with cutlery in a tin**



*Note.* From *Depot Eatery & Oyster Bar | The Verdict*, by Killie Blizzard, as cited in McMeekin, 2015 (<https://www.theurbanlist.com/nz/a-list/depot-eatery-oyster-bar-the-verdict>).

Al was distinctively different from the other chefs as he openly stated that “Depot was ... – sounds [like] blasphemy – but kind of trying to commercialise that feeling of what we are as a country”. This feeling of New Zealand was created through the choice of a wood-fired oven and a charcoal grill, the choice of tableware, and through serving what Al called “relatively basic” food. For Al, the choice of the material cultures of crockery and glassware was simply an extension of his commitment to informality and making people feel comfortable. He explained that “people breathed out when they realised that their wine was going to be served in a tumbler, and some of it was going to come out of a tap. And we eliminated the bottle, and the cutlery was mismatched”. Piqueras-Fiszman and Spence (2014) explain that how cutlery is used has changed from being a simple tool and that now it is used to “to convey specific feelings to the diner” (p. 152). And indeed, at Depot the cutlery and napkins are stuffed into an old can (as seen in Figure 3) and the wine or cocktail is poured into a tumbler (as seen in Figure 4) rather than stemmed glass, and these decisions were made consciously to convey the notion of informality and to make people feel comfortable, as though they were at a friend’s bach or campground.

**Figure 4. 90s spiced gin cocktail served in water glass at Depot**



*Note.* Photograph by the author.

Within the context of Depot, Al provided a very clear and specific articulation of his understanding of New Zealand cuisine which was not seen in the other restaurants. Al's dedication to having created a non-judgemental space in which "black, white, gay, straight, fat, skinny, rich, poor, you know, they all come, we all come in there and there's [something] about informality that makes people feel comfortable" can be seen as a very specific expression of Pākehā New Zealand identity in which there is a desire to create community. Miranda-Neito and Baccagni (2020) noted the emotional power that restaurants have through their uses of material culture. Al's desire to recreate the emotional atmosphere of a bach or camp site may speak to many New Zealanders' experience or provide valuable context or marketing for tourists coming into New Zealand. However, it may not be as universal as he believes, as not everyone can afford to have the kind of upbringing that involves going to a bach or camping regularly to entrench those specific memories into their childhood.

In his interview, Al proudly claimed this informality, stating "we're an informal bunch, that's our ace card" and explained that his choices to have Depot's casual ambience, choices in cutlery and glassware, and the kind of cuisine that is served "are about making people feel comfortable". Through these choices, Al's reflection of this highly specific New Zealand feeling can be seen as representation of his settler identity. Al was critical of the sense that "we always felt we had to be like France" and through Depot we can see his self-ownership of this aspect of New Zealand in the way that he presents New Zealand to New Zealand (Morris, 2013) and through the rejection of the French elitism that has been taught for so long (Berno et al., 2018).

These ideas of seeking to recreate an informal and homely environment can be seen in relation to Chevalier's (2018) article on the role that Christmas pudding played in British settler's adjustment to living in New Zealand. While Al is not making unseasonable foods in the incorrect climate or time of year, he can be seen as recreating something which is comforting and familiar, as British settler's made Christmas pudding despite the heat of a summer celebration. Chevalier (2018) states that "when it comes to national symbolic dishes, national tradition prevails over local circumstances" (pp. 368–369), and in Al's rejection of the local fine-dining circumstances in favour of continuing to make food that he views as traditional to New Zealand, he is in turn recreating the choices of his settler ancestors and continuing the articulation of settler identity through food.

Ben, like Al, also used material culture within his décor choice to reference his heritage as a "7<sup>th</sup> generation" immigrant from the United Kingdom, or Pākehā, or as he put it "New-Zealand-grown oak". As the outside of the restaurant is "all native timber – reclaimed totara, rimu, kauri – it looks like a villa weatherboard but in a Māori tapestry" (as seen in Figure 5). While it might not be the most obvious narrative, Ben stated that what native villa weatherboarding represents is a "meeting of two



cultures”. In this décor choice and in Ben’s own understanding of himself as 7<sup>th</sup> generation settler or as a New-Zealand-grown oak, we can see his ownership of his own identity as something that is not native to New Zealand but has grown here. Together with Pākehā techniques and Māori resources, Ben has made a restaurant in which both – and, indeed, all – of Aotearoa New Zealand’s cultures can co-exist (Henderson, 2014).

**Figure 5. Exterior of Ahi, villa weatherboard in Māori tapestry**



*Note.* From *Ahi Restaurant*, by Custom Electrical, n.d. (<https://customelectrical.net.nz/projects/ahi-restaurant/>).

Other décor elements which Ben stated are representative of New Zealand are the choice of marble bench top, designed emulate “the braided rivers of the South Island”, and the wooden panelling of the roof “woven like a kete basket”. Again, we can see Ben’s articulation of his understanding of New Zealand food as people and ingredients through the honouring of Māori people and culture with the active inclusion of the kete basket roof (as seen in Figure 6). Though Ben claimed ingredients as central to his understanding of New Zealand food, by which he meant ingredients that are grown in the country, we can extend this to include New Zealand as a place. As such, the marbled South Island braided river bench top can be seen as a further expression of New Zealand within the restaurant. Through these décor elements Ben told me, and Ahi continually tells the customers, the story of



Aotearoa New Zealand, from its natural wonders to the indigenous Māori culture, and to the meeting of two cultures – Māori tangata whenua and English settlers.

**Figure 6. Ahi wooden roof panelling, woven like a kete basket**



Note. From *Ahi*, by Jack McKinney Architects, n.d. (<https://jackmckinney.co.nz/project/ahi/>).

While Al could not single out a particular dish that encapsulates New Zealand on his menu, at the time of the interview Ben had a ‘naked mallowpuff’ on the menu for dessert, referring to a classic New Zealand Griffins Biscuit, the MallowPuff (Griffins Biscuits, n.d.) (Figure 8), a biscuit topped with a marshmallow and covered in chocolate (as seen in Figure 7). However, Ben described it as “mallow puff without its chocolate on the outside” and on the menu it reads “naked mallowpuff: dark chocolate + coco-pop miso + rhubarb” (Appendix D). This is not the only dessert in which Ben’s childhood has been the source of inspiration:

We did trumpets here, then TipTop sent us a cease-and-desist letter, you’re not allowed to call them trumpets. Like fuck you. I grew up eating that. It’s an icon. So you have those icons of your childhood. We do a lemonade popsicle as a refresher course. So you grow up with this nostalgia, so there’s lots of creative triggers that you use.

**Figure 7. The naked mallowpuff**



*Note. Naked mallowpuff: dark chocolate + coco-pop miso + rhubarb. Photograph by @tezmphoto [Instagram], as cited in A crowd favourite reimaged. The Naked Mallowpuff is the perfect chocolate dessert to finish a meal or even over a coffee and hot chocolate. Playful yet sophisticated, something to try next time you come for a visit, by @ahiresturant [Instagram], 2022 (<https://www.instagram.com/p/Cg5Y9gvv1-X/>)*

**Figure 8. Griffin's MallowPuffs Original 200g**



*Note. From Griffin's Mallow Puffs 200g, Kiwi Shop, n.d. (<https://www.kiwishoponline.com.au/eshop/Griffin-s-Mallow-Puffs-200g.html>).*

Ben's selection of these icons from his childhood relates to Kittler et al.'s (2016) assertion that food which has been eaten frequently in childhood and is associated with positive and safe memories can be linked with cultural identity. We can see in this particular dish, and in past dishes, how Ben was not only connecting with his own childhood but creating a food item that has what Henderson (2014) would call "icon" status. By doing so, he is not only expressing his cultural identity but also persistently claiming it through continuing to make dishes that may result in legal action. Here we see another example of Morris's (2013) argument of development of a cuisine through seeing oneself represented to oneself. Someone who has had a similar childhood experience to Ben of eating MallowPuffs and Trumpets would clearly see themselves reflected upon the menu and, as such, the sense of national cuisine is further established.

Although Mr Morris does not have this extremely overtly referential cuisine, it is worth noting that Michael spoke of having done this at his previous restaurant, Meredith's. However, at Mr Morris his approach can be seen as a more subtle expression of New Zealand identity:

There might be times that you can be inspired by like a lamington and try do a version of that. But we don't go to the extent to tell the person, you know, I feel like the customer recognises them ... then good on you, that is incredible.

This is similar to how Michael designed Mr Morris's aesthetic. He described the restaurant's styling as one that you could "find ... anywhere in the world ... unless you're really driving the focus on a theme." Despite this, there are subtle references to his Samoan heritage. Michael described that the décor elements of curved lights finished with rope (as seen in Figure 9), and the fans at the front door (as seen in Figure 10) as Samoan or Pacific finishes. These fans and lights are subtle allusions which illustrate Michael's heritage but which may be not obvious to or noticed by all customers. However, this is likely exactly what Michael was aiming to do. He explained that his approach to "food is probably the same" as the styling of the restaurant. We can see how these décor elements go alongside his subtle cooking technique of hinting at a cultural group through a sauce or leaving it up to the customer to make the reference to a lamington, rather than actively stating it. In this way, we can see that Michael's approach to food seems to be more aligned with Fischler's (1988) concept of incorporation, rather than Morris's (2013) idea of self-reflection through food which can be seen in Ben's food and décor.

Michael, Ben, and Al provide clear differences in how décor and choices in tableware can be used as a reflection of one's understanding of identity. Both Ben and Al have sought a very clear and specific reflection of their understanding, whereas Michael's can be seen as more subtle. These contrasts

between the three chefs can be seen as a difference in style and what Michael puts down to his own changing of perspective through age.

**Figure 9. Mr Morris's rope tied lights**



*Note.* From *Cheshire Architects | Mr Morris*, as cited in Best Awards, 2021 (<https://bestawards.co.nz/spatial/hospitality/cheshire-architects/mr-morris/>).



**Figure 10. Mr Morris's fan-shaped door handles**



*Note.* Photograph by the author.

This section has specifically discussed the ways in which the five participants reflected their understanding of New Zealand identity within their restaurants through the creation of narratives. These narratives were created through the inclusion of stories about producers and suppliers, specific items on the menu, and material culture within the restaurant décor and table wear.

Tom's statement regarding the importance of a New Zealand cuisine provides a apt way to conclude this chapter. He voiced the idea that

we're ... colonised by the English. So ... I think it's really important that we kind of break away from ... some of those ties and, ... I feel like ... in the last 20 years, we've slowly been doing that.

In this chapter the themes that emerged give evidence of how these ties have been broken and how these five chefs have reflected their own understanding of New Zealand identity, considered its

diverse culture, and in some cases have contemplated their own potential settler identity in relation to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. These themes aid in the answering of the research questions this dissertation sought to respond to. The following, final chapter of this research project concludes the study and folds together all the previous chapters to present closing thoughts and statements, as well as presenting areas for further study.

## Chapter 5: Conclusions – The Boil-up That’s Still Bubbling, or Settling the Settler’s Palate

Following the aphorism by Brillat-Savarin (1825/2009), “tell me what you eat, and I shall tell you what you are” (p. 15), this research aimed to respond to my own personal questions about what New Zealand’s national cuisine might be, and what I should eat in order to feel more confident in my own Pākehā New Zealand identity. However, more specifically, this research sought to answer three key questions regarding Auckland chefs’ understanding of New Zealand’s food identity, with the overall goal of understanding more about how they reflect it within their restaurants. These three questions were: In what ways do chefs reflect their own understanding of Aotearoa New Zealand’s identity within Auckland’s urban restaurant setting? What is the relationship between Aotearoa New Zealand’s varied and complex national identity and the cuisine that chefs serve? How do notions of settler identity impact chefs’ interpretations and self-ownership of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine?

This concluding chapter considers summarises the key findings of the data analysed in Chapter 4 within the context of the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Following this, the contributions and limitations of the research are presented and recommendations for further research given, before I offer my closing thoughts.

### Key findings

This research was built on a central gastronomical concept – the idea that food plays a central part in identity. Whether it be individual or collective, this is done through the processes of othering and incorporation, in which what we eat incorporates into our identity through a biological–physiological process, and symbolically through how one constructs the self (Fischler, 1988). Following this, restaurants provide an ideal framework for studying collective national identity through food because, in these dining spaces, food representation of self-identity is highly pertinent (Kittler et al., 2016), as restaurants not only provides sustenance, but also emotional satisfaction (Miranda-Nieto & Boccagni, 2020).

Following the interviewing and thematic analysis of the transcripts of five highly regarded Auckland-based chefs, there were three key themes which emerged in the discussion. First, that New Zealand’s cuisine can be seen as one that is still in its youth and developing its own sense of style and understanding. This can be seen as paralleling the emergence of New Zealand’s cultural identity in which gaining any sense of cohesive understanding has been challenging (Bell, 2009; Bell 1996; Pearson & Kothari, 2007; Willmott, 1989). The development of New Zealand cuisine has been influenced by enduring notions of settler cuisine, especially the long-term influence of the *Edmonds*

*Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985) which was vitally important within the settler society and provided a space for differentiation from the 'Mother Country', England (Kennedy & Lockie, 2018). The nascent and still-developing culinary culture was discussed by Berno et al. (2018), who outlined the effects of international teaching standards used in training New Zealand chefs with French-inspired British modules, which ultimately led to the gatekeeping of New Zealand cuisine by chefs who were only taught by foreign methods. However, through the reformation of the education section which brought with it a contemporary New Zealand specific text, and the ongoing welcoming of immigrants of different ethnicities, particularly in Auckland, the fourth most culturally diverse city in the world in 2015 (Thornber, 2021), New Zealand's cuisine was ultimately led towards a diverse array of influences (Mavromatis, 2017). The food that the chefs serve is often reminiscent of recipes from the *Edmonds Cookery Book* (Edmonds Staff, 1985) or has flavour points, techniques, and styles of cooking which have been drawn from international cuisines. Al Brown described New Zealand chefs as magpies who take bits and pieces from a variety of cultures. The participants do not shy away from this eclecticism and, rather than seeking to create something devoid of the story of immigration in Aotearoa New Zealand, they actively blend these styles to create a unique cuisine of 'New Zealand fusion'. This blending can be seen as an example of Henderson's (2014) argument for co-existence and conjugation of indigenous and global food cultures and was particularly well displayed through Ben Bayly's hāngi pork steamed bun.

Second, the importance of the ingredients and where they were sourced are held to be of the utmost value to these chefs, who seek to not only support local ingredients but also let an ingredient speak for itself rather than over-working it. Michael Meredith and Tom Hishon provided clear examples of seeking to do very little to the ingredient with the aim of showcasing the ingredient at its best. Tom Hishon and Al Brown also actively spoke of how the geography of New Zealand and the proximity to the sources is a large part of New Zealand food culture. These chefs' understanding of the importance of ingredients and Aotearoa New Zealand's landscape connects to Weiss's (2011) assertion that national cuisines are connected to place rather than a specific idea of authentic nationhood. There is an active drive to promote local producers and suppliers, with the goal of further supporting the New Zealand industry, which the chefs accomplish through telling stories about their producers and suppliers, and using ingredients as a main source of reflection of their understanding of New Zealand identity. This was particularly seen in relation to Peter Gordon, who stated that his main goal for his restaurant is to support local producers and suppliers through continually giving them priority over international ingredients and importers.

Finally, chefs displayed their understanding of their identity by reflecting on narratives from their childhood experiences, heritage, and lived experiences. This included the remaking of classic New



Zealand ice-creams and biscuits, through to commercialising the feeling of informality at a New Zealand settler's bach, or to taking inspiration from gathering kina on the Chatham Islands and turning it into a dish. The manner in which Ben Bayly described remaking Trumpet ice-creams and MallowPuff biscuits as a way of referencing his childhood in New Zealand connects with Kittler et al.'s (2016) statement that foods which appear during this time play a part in the construction of national culinary identities. In addition to Kittler et al. (2016), as per Henderson's (2014) article, these dishes can be seen as examples of food given iconic status within young diverse cultures. Heritage and childhood were also explored through material culture as Al Brown, Ben Bayly, and Michael Meredith all included references to this in the décor and styling of their restaurants. Miranda-Nieto and Boccagni (2020) noted that a restaurant's décor can aid in the creation of a sense of home and comfort, and Al Brown provided a clear example of this through his desire to create an informal dining space which reflected his memories of and associations with a Kiwi bach.

Despite the ample scope of possible research, and Beriss and Sutton's (2007) claims that chefs and their restaurants often partake in the symbolic work of representing cities, regions, ethnic groups and nations which is normally performed by monuments and parades, it was noted by Williamson et al. (2009) that the restaurants are not researched as often as private domestic spaces are. I must concur with Williamson et al. (2009) as, whilst there is research done on the early history of New Zealand dining, cookbooks, and cooking at home (Leach, 2010; Morris, 2013; Pearson & Kothari, 2007; Veart, 2008), there is very little academic literature on how this country's identity is created by chefs who work in these spaces because New Zealand has not had a very long history of restaurants (Rowland, 2010; Simpson, 1985, 2008). As such, the choice to question Aotearoa New Zealand's culinary identity through chefs in a restaurant context allowed the research reported in this dissertation not only to make rich and crucial discoveries but also to fill a gap within this field of inquiry.

To conclude, this research uncovered the ways in which chefs reflect upon their own understandings of New Zealand's identity through the ingredients and the producers they work with, and the narratives they seek to tell. New Zealand's complex identity can be seen through the ways in which these Auckland chefs actively include and champion flavours and techniques from all around the world, including indigenous ingredients and Māori cooking methods. Notions of settler identity have impacted these chefs' interpretations by instilling their love and respect of baking and preserving, and ensuring that they acknowledge their own histories through décor choices and only taking self-ownership when appropriate. Morris (2013) sees that, through food, "we imagine ourselves as members of nation by eating the same food, and by developing a cuisine through which we present ourselves to ourselves, and to others" (p. 211), and through this research we can see how these chefs present themselves to us. Hopefully we can all get a chance to have a bite.

## Contributions of this research

This research did not seek to explicitly answer the question of what New Zealand cuisine is, nor did it seek to answer with full certainty what it means to have a New Zealand restaurant. It has, however, contributed to the literature on how chefs reflect their understanding of national identity within their restaurants; this can be useful within or outside the New Zealand context. As Williamson et al. (2009) pointed out, there is little research conducted on public eating spaces, thus this dissertation has provided another example of this line of inquiry. Within the New Zealand context this is also important as most research and literature whether it is formally academic or not, is mainly focused on the domestic space and on cookbooks. As such, this dissertation has brought the New Zealand food identity out of the home and into the public space.

This research also builds upon Henderson's (2014) article in which she discusses building national cuisines in young countries with high levels of diversity and constant evolution. There are two notable dishes which provide examples of ways in which globalisation has not destroyed "indigenous food cultures and [has shown that] there are possibilities for co-existence and conjugation" (p. 905). These two dishes were Peter Gordon's hāngi pork bacon side and, although not on the menu, Ben Bayly's hāngi pork steamed bun. In this manner, this research can be seen to build upon and provide more examples of the power of diverse food cultures.

## Limitations of this research

This research has had several limitations. Firstly, due to the scope and size of a 60-point master's dissertation, the sample size was quite small. This limitation was further aggravated by the issues arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and several chefs' unavailability for an interview. Alongside this, whilst Bradshaw et al. (2017) and Creswell (2007) emphasise that lengthy in-depth interviews are the norm within descriptive qualitative studies, pressures due to COVID-19 meant that many of the participants were time poor and thus interviews were kept to one short 30- to 45-minute session.

Secondly, as the data is qualitative, it is all highly specific and provides little room for generalisation. As such, this research is highly particular to the context of not only myself as a researcher, but the chefs and their restaurants.

## Areas for further research

Due to the small size of this research project and the vast depths of the subject matter, there are many avenues of further research that could be taken. As a female researcher myself, I was discouraged that the final selection of the chefs interviewed were all male. I believe that there should be a concerted

effort put towards raising up female chefs, especially those who are owner-operators. Unfortunately, the scope of this research meant that several well-known female chefs and operators were not included. Further research could not only look at the previously mentioned Monique Fiso but also, among Auckland long-time leaders in supporting owner-operated businesses, Renee and Damaris Coulter who opened Coco's Cantina in 2009 (Coco's Cantina, n.d.), Plabita Florence of Forest Restaurant who focuses on waste-free vegetarian dining (Forest, n.d.), and Georgia Van Prehn who was singled out as the Rising Talent in *Cuisine Good Food Awards 2021/2022* (2022, p. 64) for owning and operating her restaurant Alta.

Alongside the issues of the male-centric research, it can be said that this research only looks at the Auckland city view of New Zealand food identity. To investigate regional differences, further research could look at chefs from all parts of New Zealand as chefs like Monique Fiso with Hiakai in Wellington (Hiakai, n.d.; Hincks, 2019; Turnbull, 2021), Jeremy Rameka with Pacifica Restaurant in Napier (Pacifica, n.d.), and Vaughan Mabee with Amisfield in Queenstown (Amisfield, n.d.) have made names for themselves as showcases of New Zealand cuisine. In addition to this, research could include investigating chefs who operate restaurants overseas that purport to have New Zealand cuisine on their menus.

However, these restaurants and the restaurants within this research all sit on the higher side of fine dining and are not meals out that the average New Zealand would be able to afford on a regular occurrence. More research could investigate more casual dining establishments and their understanding of New Zealand food identity. This research would produce findings which would be more revealing for the general populace of New Zealand.

## Closing thoughts

This research ultimately began with and has been led by the desire to discover more about the gastronomic culture that I take part in and to attempt to discover what I should eat if I want to be more solid in my own New Zealand Pākehā identity. Though this dissertation never sought to crystallise one true authentic view of Aotearoa New Zealand cuisine, nor did it achieve it, I can say without doubt that if my friends from overseas visited New Zealand and asked to be shown our cuisine, I would happily take them to any of the five participants' restaurants as well as a dumpling house on Dominion Road or the White Lady Burger truck in the centre of town. Though gastronomy as a study can often be pigeonholed as only including the study of fine dining or the culturally specific foods of a particular region, this dissertation has further solidified the notion that gastronomy is more than just food and cuisine, it is the socio-cultural world that is constructed around a dining table or by a roadside food truck. This dissertation for me not only represents peeling back a layer of understanding of Aotearoa

New Zealand gastronomy, but also creating a great sense of understanding of myself and my community around me.

Overall, I have begun to see that the culinary identity of Aotearoa New Zealand is that of a big boil-up which has only just started to bubble. The pot which holds it all together is made from the culinary traditions of Māori and the first settlers, while inside the Asian, Pacific, American, Middle Eastern, and European foods boil together, making a dish that smells, quite simply, amazing. Brillat-Savarin (1825/f2009) stated that “the discovery of a new dish does more for human happiness than the discovery of a star” (p. 15), and within this boiling pot I can see many stars that I can’t wait to taste.

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# Appendices

## Appendix A: Ethics approval



### Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC)

Auckland University of Technology  
D-88, Private Bag 92006, Auckland 1142, NZ  
T: +64 9 921 9999 ext. 8316  
E: [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz)  
[www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics](http://www.aut.ac.nz/researchethics)

10 February 2022

Tracy Berno  
Faculty of Culture and Society

Dear Tracy

Re Ethics Application: **22/8 The Unsettled Palate: Understanding the expression of New Zealand's cultural identity in Auckland restaurant cuisine.**

Thank you for providing evidence as requested, which satisfies the points raised by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee (AUTEC).

Your ethics application has been approved for three years until 10 February 2025.

#### Standard Conditions of Approval

1. The research is to be undertaken in accordance with the [Auckland University of Technology Code of Conduct for Research](#) and as approved by AUTEC in this application.
2. A progress report is due annually on the anniversary of the approval date, using the EA2 form.
3. A final report is due at the expiration of the approval period, or, upon completion of project, using the EA3 form.
4. Any amendments to the project must be approved by AUTEC prior to being implemented. Amendments can be requested using the EA2 form.
5. Any serious or unexpected adverse events must be reported to AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
6. Any unforeseen events that might affect continued ethical acceptability of the project should also be reported to the AUTEC Secretariat as a matter of priority.
7. It is your responsibility to ensure that the spelling and grammar of documents being provided to participants or external organisations is of a high standard and that all the dates on the documents are updated.
8. AUTEC grants ethical approval only. You are responsible for obtaining management approval for access for your research from any institution or organisation at which your research is being conducted and you need to meet all ethical, legal, public health, and locality obligations or requirements for the jurisdictions in which the research is being undertaken.

Please quote the application number and title on all future correspondence related to this project.

For any enquiries please contact [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz). The forms mentioned above are available online through <http://www.aut.ac.nz/research/researchethics>

(This is a computer-generated letter for which no signature is required)

The AUTEC Secretariat  
Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee

Cc: [Hannah.e.diver@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.e.diver@gmail.com); [rob.w.richardson@gmail.com](mailto:rob.w.richardson@gmail.com)

## Appendix B: Participant information sheet



### Participant Information Sheet

#### Date Information Sheet Produced:

06 02 2022

#### Project Title

The Unsettled Palate: Understanding the expression of New Zealand's cultural identity in Auckland restaurant cuisine.

#### An Invitation

Hello, my name is Hannah, I am a student at AUT working towards my masters in gastronomy. I'm interested in New Zealand's food identity and how chefs' understanding of New Zealand's identity is reflected in the food they serve at their restaurants. This information sheet is to formally invite you to take part in this research project. This research will contribute towards the completion of my qualification through the writing of my dissertation.

#### What is the purpose of this research?

The purpose of this research is to gain a better understanding of the relationship between cultural identity and cuisine in New Zealand and its importance, this research will examine how chefs reflect their own understanding of identity through the food they serve at their restaurants. With this in mind, the research will reveal the complex nature of New Zealand's gastronomical cultural identity and explore how culinary identity can be reflected upon and communicated within a restaurant context. This study aims to give meaning to New Zealanders by aiding in understanding their nation's cuisine amongst others around them.

After the successful completion of this research, I will gain my Masters in Gastronomy. The findings of this research may be used for academic publications and presentations.

#### How was I identified and why am I being invited to participate in this research?

You have been invited to participate in this research because of your expertise on the subject and your highly regarded Auckland restaurant can be seen to serve New Zealand food. The definition of New Zealand cuisine that this research follows is that a restaurant serving New Zealand cuisine is either activity self-identifying as New Zealand food or does not self-identify as any other nation's cuisine. Your knowledge and ideas will shed light on my research.

#### How do I agree to participate in this research?

Please read through this information sheet and let me know if you have any questions. You have two-weeks from receiving this information sheet to decide if you'd like to participate. If I do not get a response I shall re-contact you. If you decide to participate, I will ask you to sign an informed consent form and we will set up an interview.

Your participation in this research is voluntary (it is your choice) and whether or not you choose to participate will neither advantage nor disadvantage you. You are able to withdraw from the study at any time. If you choose to withdraw from the study, then you will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to you removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of your data may not be possible.

#### What will happen in this research?

This research involves interviews with up to six chefs working in Auckland restaurants that self-identify/ can be understood as serving New Zealand cuisine.

The interviews will be with me and last no more than an hour. The questions will be about New Zealand cuisine and the cuisine served in your restaurant. The interviews will be recorded and transcribed. I will send you a copy of your transcribed interview, to which you're welcome to amend, by either adding or deleting from the transcript. After actioning your changes, the transcript will be the basis for my analysis.

With your transcripts and those from other participants, I will uncover themes that will highlight my research questions and will aid in the write-up of my findings, discussion, and conclusions of my dissertation. At the end of the process, I will send you a summary of the findings.

**What are the discomforts and risks?**

I believe that it is unlikely that you will experience any discomforts or risk during this process. However, if something has caused (or will in the future) you discomfort or could be seen as a risk, and you would like something to be amended/removed from the transcript of the interview, I am most happy to do so.

**How will these discomforts and risks be alleviated?**

By your clear identification any comment, theme, or question that you would like amended or removed from the transcript will be fully complied by the researcher.

If you and your restaurant would like to remain unnamed and choose a different identifier, I will offer options to ensure your comfort is assured.

**What are the benefits?**

Your contribution will help bring to light the under-researched area of New Zealand's food identity. Through this research you will not only aid in this understanding for me but also sharing of knowledge to other academics and those who are interested in the connection between culture and food. Both yourself as a participant and the wider hospitality community will benefit from this further understanding of the emerging New Zealand food identity. As a participant you may also benefit by having your experience in the New Zealand gastronomical scene highlighted.

Lastly, your participation will assist me the completion and in obtaining my masters of gastronomy from AUT University.

**How will my privacy be protected?**

Unless you a different identity, you and your business will be named in my research. By using a fake name for you and your business I can protect your real identity. However, due to the nature of Auckland's restaurant scene and the specificity of questions asked, even with a false identifier one may be able to speculate your identity.

The choice on whether or not to be named, is entirely yours and I will respect whatever you chose. In whatever instance, the choice to remove from/ amend your interview transcription stands, as such if your privacy will be protected by not disclosing any personal information.

Please let me know if you would be prefer to be unnamed in this research.

**What are the costs of participating in this research?**

There are no costs of participating in this research. However, the interview will take 45-60 minutes of your time, plus additional time to review your transcript.

**What opportunity do I have to consider this invitation?**

You have two weeks to consider this invitation to take part in this research. After two weeks please contact me with a response. If I do not hear from you after two weeks, I shall re-contact you.

**Will I receive feedback on the results of this research?**

If you would like to receive feedback about the result of the research, we can offer a one to two page summary. Please let me know if you'd like this.

**What do I do if I have concerns about this research?**

Any concerns regarding the nature of this project should be notified in the first instance to the primary Project Supervisor, Tracy Berno, [tracyberno@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tracyberno@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 ext 5289.

Concerns regarding the conduct of the research should be notified to the Executive Secretary of AUTC, [ethics@aut.ac.nz](mailto:ethics@aut.ac.nz), (+649) 921 9999 ext 6038.

**Whom do I contact for further information about this research?**

Please keep this Information Sheet and a copy of the Consent Form for your future reference. You are also able to contact the research team as follows:

***Researcher Contact Details:***

Hannah Diver – [Hannah.e.diver@gmail.com](mailto:Hannah.e.diver@gmail.com), 0223816637

***Project Supervisor Contact Details:***

Tracy Berno, [tracyberno@aut.ac.nz](mailto:tracyberno@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 ext 5289.

Robert Richardson, [Robert.richarson@aut.ac.nz](mailto:Robert.richarson@aut.ac.nz), 09 921 9999 ext 8878.

Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 10<sup>th</sup> February. AUTC Reference number 22/8.



## Appendix C: Consent form



### Consent Form

**Project title:** *The Unsettled Palate: Understanding the expression of New Zealand's cultural identity in Auckland restaurant cuisine.*

**Project Supervisor:** *Tracy Berno & Robert Richardson*

**Researcher:** *Hannah Diver*

- ☐ I have read and understood the information provided about this research project in the Information Sheet dated 06/01/2022
- ☐ I have had an opportunity to ask questions and to have them answered.
- ☐ I understand that notes will be taken during the interviews and that they will also be audio-taped and transcribed.
- ☐ I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary (my choice) and that I may withdraw from the study at any time without being disadvantaged in any way.
- ☐ I understand that if I withdraw from the study then I will be offered the choice between having any data that is identifiable as belonging to me removed or allowing it to continue to be used. However, once the findings have been produced, removal of my data may not be possible.
- ☐ I agree to take part in this research.
- ☐ I wish to receive a summary of the research findings (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐
- ☐ I am happy for myself and my business to be identifiable (please tick one): Yes ☐ No ☐

Participant's signature: .....

Participant's name: .....

Participant's Contact Details (if appropriate):

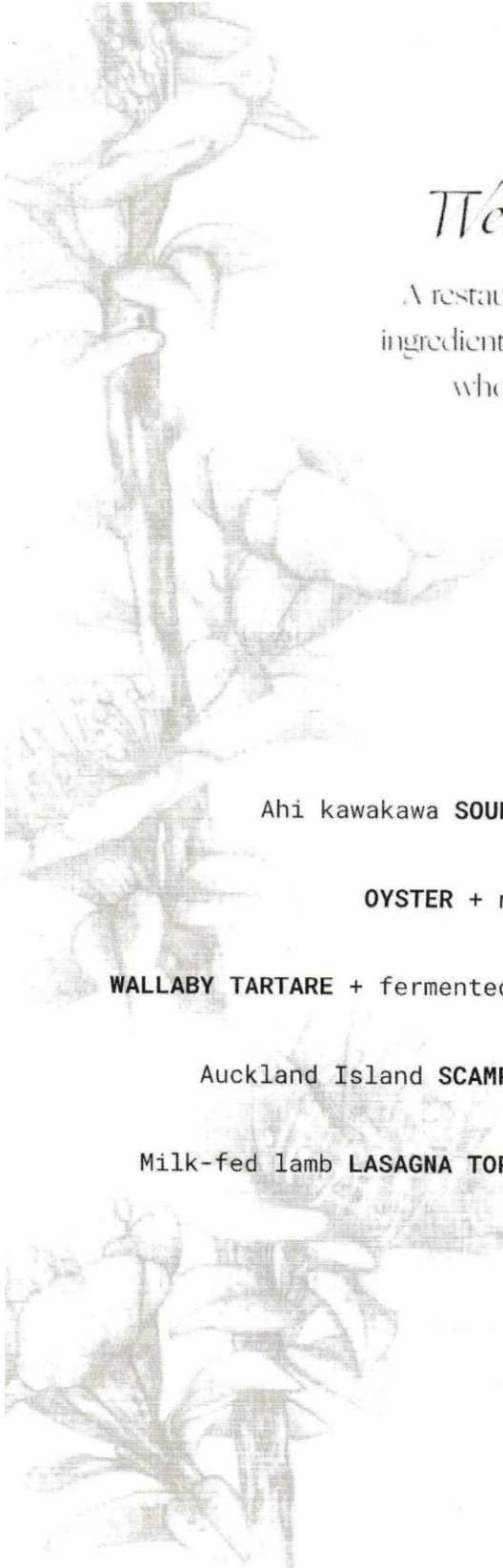
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Date:

**Approved by the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee on 06/02/2022 AUTEK Reference number 22/8**

*Note: The Participant should retain a copy of this form.*

## Appendix D: Ahi menu



*Welcome* to our home.

A restaurant where we honour the special ingredients of New Zealand and the people who harvest, prepare and serve them.

### **SNACKS**

are for the table's enjoyment  
priced per person

Ahi kawakawa **SOURDOUGH** + Bellefield butter 5

**OYSTER** + nectarine & chardonnay ice 6

**WALLABY TARTARE** + fermented hot sauce + wagyu tendon 9

Auckland Island **SCAMPI CORN DOG** + burger sauce 14

Milk-fed lamb **LASAGNA TOPPER** + horseradish ketchup 10

# Ahi.

You can **TRUST US**

4 snacks + 4 courses 145pp  
+ wine pairing 105pp

. . .

## **KINGFISH** *Ruakākā*

pickled clams + escabeche + fermented capsicum 28

Tula **TOMATO** flower *Clevedon*

saffron juice + basil seed + buffalo curd 26

## **CAULIFLOWER** *Patumāhoe*

chicken scallop + oyster mushroom + toasted yeast 28

## **BOIL-UP + '2 MINUTE NOODLES'** *Southland*

paua + crayfish broth + pork floss + lion's mane 28

## **OCTOPUS** *koru Bluff Coast*

pickled pikopiko + parsley mayo + chilli miso 30

. . .

today's **FISH** *the sea*

crispy mussel + parsnip + fennel + pickled celtuce 42

hot-smoked Japanese **QUAIL** *Bombay Hills*

Raglan coconut yoghurt + tomatillo kasundi + carrot garum 43

BBQ'd **WAGYU** *Canterbury + Hawkes Bay*

coal-baked beetroot + koji butter + tōkyō turnip 46

## **PORK** *Kaitaia*

pumpkin + pineapple charcuterie + mustard 42

Black Angus **BIG BOY BEEF** *Otago*

500 gram sharing cut w sides ~100

. . .

**ADD ONS + EXTRAS** 12ea

## **BBQ GARDEN GREENS**

Rewi's **AGRIA** potatoes + mushroom ketchup  
cover crop **SALAD**



# Ahi.

## SWEET AS

**CAMPFIRE BANANA** *Whangarei Heads*  
salted milk caramel + vanilla  
ice-cream + apple marigold 18

**MALLOWPUFF** *Britomart*  
white chocolate + coco-pops  
+ plum 18

**BERRIES & CHAMPAGNE** *Maungatapere*  
champagne parfait + milk crumble 18

**BOYSENBERRY + PŌHUTUKAWA HONEY**  
**ICE-CREAM CONE** *Commercial Bay*  
buffalo milk gelato + peanuts 16

**PETIT FOURS**  
chocolate square 3  
bonbon 4

## CHEESE

- **Reginald**  
goat, semi-soft, Marlborough
- **Tania**  
cow, brie, Otago
- **Mahoe Very Old Edam**  
cow, hard, Kerikeri
- **Blue Monkey**  
cow, blue, Katikati
- **Roquefort**  
sheep, blue, France

Your choice of  
two (40g) 25  
three (60g) 34

## AFTER

**KŌKAKO FILTERED COFFEE** 4.5  
+ Nardini amaro 14  
+ Disaronno amaretto 14  
+ Quick brown fox coffee liqueur 14

**KERIKERI ORGANIC TEA** 5  
- Bay of Islands breakfast  
- Jasmine green  
- Royal earl grey  
- Chamomile  
- Manuka + mint  
- Manuka, lemon + ginger

**KŌKAKO MARTINI** 22  
Coffee-washed vodka, coffee liqueur,  
cascara, Kōkako coffee

## DESSERT WINE 100ml

**Pegasus Bay 'Aria'** 17  
**Late Harvest Riesling**  
2020 • North Canterbury

**Ataahua** 21  
**Late Harvest Gewürztraminer**  
2020 • North Canterbury

**Churton** 22  
**Petit Manseng**  
2018 • Marlborough

**Château Villefranche** 18  
**Sémillon+**  
2019 • Sauternes, Bordeaux, FR

## FORTIFIED 75ml

**Judge Rock 'The Verdict'** 14  
**Saint Laurent**  
2019 • Central Otago

**Campbells 'Rutherglen'** 15  
**Muscat**  
NV • Rutherglen, AU

**Niepoort** 20  
**10 Years Old Tawny**  
NV • Douro, PT

## Appendix E: Depot menu

<div> <div>Friday 29 April You're welcome.</div> <div> <div>OPEN SINCE 7AM</div> <div>DEPOT</div> <div>EATERY</div> </div> <div>available from 12pm daily. R18 for the service of alcohol. host responsibility limits apply.</div> </div>	
<b>THE RAW BAR</b> <b>Oysters</b> Te Mātuku (Pacific) sweet, super briny, creamy finish - Waiheke..... 5.5 Orongo Bay (Pacific) plump and creamy - Russell..... 5.2 Pair w/ Manzanilla La Gitana Hidalgo sherry, 90mls... 15/60 <b>Clams</b> Tuatua - sweet with a briny finish - Marlborough..... 4 Trevally sashimi w/ soy syrup, wasabi peas, kewpie mayo & basil..... 24 <b>Charcuterie</b> Depot's wild rabbit rillette, pig's head croquettes, 'Maikanae' wild pork salami, salish chorizo, 'Cazador' game & pistachio salami & pork coppa. Served w/ cherry relish, 'Olaf's' fig & fennel crostini & egg mayo. Small..... 30 <del>Large..... 40</del> <b>Small share</b> Snapper sliders w/ pickled lemon mayo & watercress..... 21.5 Falafel w/ tomato kasundi, castle point feta labneh & sunflower seeds..... 18 Grilled 'Deckle' brisket w/ pickled carrot, crème fraîche & peanuts..... 26 Fergus' bone marrow - wood roasted w/ parsley & shallot salad..... 25 <b>Bigger share</b> Skirt steak w/ tobacco onions, iceberg wedge & habanero mustard..... 34.5 Grilled kahawai, garam masala crispy potatoes, & ginger coconut sauce..... 32 Tangaroa's treasures w/ mussels, clams, crayfish bisque, chorizo oil crumb & seaweed butter..... 38 Lamb saddle chops w/ raita & chow-chow..... 36 Crisp 'Freedom Farms' pork hock w/ apple & horseradish salsa verde..... 39 <b>On the side</b> Potato skins w/ pecorino, truffle oil & porcini salt..... 13.5 Cumin tempura cauliflower w/ roasted red capsicum rouille & preserved lemon..... 12 Heirloom tomatoes w/ saffron rouille, kalamata olives & croutons..... 14 <del>Iceberg wedge w/ ranch dressing..... 10</del>	<b>Beer &amp; Cider on tap</b> ..... 330ml / 600ml / 1.21 Hallertau #09 Beer of Auckland lager 4.5%, Riverhead . 11/21/40 Hallertau Granny Smith cider 5.1%, Riverhead ..... 11/21/39 <b>Wine on tap</b> ..... gls 160ml carafe 250ml/500ml Tipping Point 'Common Good' Field Blend, Marlborough 2020 ..... 15/24/44 Tipping Point 'The Beachcomber' Rosé, Hawke's Bay 2021 ..... 15/24/44 Tipping Point 'The Woodsman' Pinot Noir, Central Otago 2020 ..... 15/24/44 <b>Champagne, méthode traditionnelle &amp; sparkling by the glass</b> Ayala Brut Majeur ..... 29 Maude Méthode Traditionnelle, Central Otago ..... 18.5 Nautilus Vintage Rosé 2018, Marlborough ..... 21 <b>Wine by the glass</b> ..... 160ml <b>Rose</b> Two Rivers 'Isle of Beauty' Rosé, Marlborough 2020 ..... 15.5 <del>Nevis Bluff Rose, Central Otago 2019 ..... 15.5</del> <b>White</b> Milton Riverpoint Vineyard Viognier, Gisborne 2018 ..... 14 Dog Point Sauvignon Blanc, Marlborough 2020 ..... 17 Wet Jacket Pinot Gris, Central Otago 2020 ..... 17 Tipping Point 'Working Bee' Chardonnay, Hawke's Bay 2020 ... 14 Neudorf Tiritiri Chardonnay, Nelson 2019 ..... 17 <b>Red</b> Alamos Malbec, Mendoza 2019 ..... 15 Ostler Pinot Noir, North Otago 2018 ..... 17 Tipping Point 'The Opportunist' Syrah, Hawke's Bay 2020 .... 18 Two Hands 'Gnarly Dudes' Shiraz Barossa Valley 2020 ..... 19 Black Barn Merlot/Cabernet, Hawke's Bay 2019 ..... 17 Man O War 'Island Estate' Cabernet Franc/Merlot, Waiheke & Ponui Islands 2019 ..... 18 <b>DEPOT TIPPLES</b> Malfy Rosa Gin Grapefruit Sour ..... 16 Red Light. Tequila, chilli, lime, pohutakawa ..... 19 Orange Light. Vodka, Tuaca, bubbles, passionfruit ..... 19 Green Light. Gin, honey, lemon, basil ..... 19 Pineapple Daiquiri. Rum, pineapple, liqueur, lime ..... 19 Cucumber Sour. Rum, Frangelico, lime, cucumber..... 19

Depot will take all reasonable efforts to accommodate guests' dietary requirements, however we cannot guarantee that any menu item will be allergen free due to potential cross contamination in our kitchens or from our suppliers. If you have any dietary requirements or allergies, please inform one of our team members prior to ordering. Please do not be offended if our team determines we're unable to serve you safely.

## Appendix F: Homeland menu



Weekends

8:00—15:00

### HOMELAND

3-Cheese or Date scone, butter		7
Two slices toasted Dusty Apron sourdough, butter + preserves	GF*	7
Lime coconut sago, lime macerated strawberries, toasted coconut	GF.V	17
Homeland granola, fruit, coconut yoghurt, Niue honey (V* = Vegan without honey)	GF.V*	18
Sweetcorn fritters, hāngī pork belly, tamarillo relish		26
Avocado hummus, Fix + Fogg Smoke and Fire peanut butter, and raw tomatoes, crispy chickpeas, toasted sourdough	roast V	19
Hot-smoked Ōra King Salmon, soft-boiled egg, hummus, fennel, phrik num mango dressing, toasted Homeland focaccia	nam GF*	24
Turkish eggs, whipped garlic yoghurt, Aleppo chilli butter, toast	GF*	23
Creamed Chatham Islands pāua on toasted Dusty Apron ciabatta	GF*	27
Smoked Kahawai kedgeriee, crème fraiche, tamarind, soft-boiled egg	GF	24
Greenlea pulled beef cheek toasted sandwich, kimchi, cheese, mustard		21
GF* = can be made with Gluten Free Toast		
One slice toasted Dusty Apron sourdough, or GF toast (not Dusty's GF though)	GF*.V	3
Roast kūmara, kawakawa pesto	GF.V	12
Roast sweetcorn, chilli gun-powder butter	GF	12
Grilled broccolini, feta, Taranaki macadamias	GF	12
Creamy wood-roast mushrooms, mushroom pâté	GF	11
3-Cheese polenta chips, roasted garlic aioli	GF	12
Panko crumbed pig's head croquettes, sweet chilli sambal		14
Hāngī pork belly (100g)	GF	15
And from 11:00		
Watermelon, buffalo feta, chilli gun-powder, minted lemon, Marlborough pine nuts	GF	22
Pickled peach, buffalo mozzarella, Curious Croppers tomatoes, pumpkin seeds	GF	23
Sesame eggplant, sweetcorn, miso tahini yoghurt, Canterbury hazelnuts, pomegranate	GF.V	24
Wood-roast chilli spiced lamb ribs, minted yoghurt, pickled cucumber	GF	24
2 x beer battered Moodew paneer tortillas, sweet chilli, avocado, coleslaw		21
Cloudy Bay Clams, green coconut curry, choy sum, eggplant, lime, toasted focaccia	GF*	25
Wood-roast lemon turmeric cauliflower, hummus, garlic yoghurt, chilli butter, beans	GF	29
Poached + Roast organic chicken, harissa, beetroot, macadamia ajo blanco, grapes		41
Chatham Islands Blue Cod, greens, nam phrik num mango dressing, fried wood ear, shiitake	wok- GF	42
Red wine spiced poached pear, chocolate crèmeux, walnut	GF	18
Ginger mousse, roast plum, gingernut macadamia crumb	GF	18
Peach + basil sorbet, roast apricot, basil sugar	GF.V	18
Cheese: Waikato, Brie De Moutere, Goats Blue, housemade seeded Honey by the Sea honeycomb	crackers,	30

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## HOMELAND

Wednesday - Friday  
Saturdays

from noon  
from 15:30

Panko crumbed pig's head croquettes, sweet chilli sambal		14
Watermelon, buffalo feta, chilli gun-powder, minted lemon dressing, Marlborough pine nuts	GF	22
Sesame eggplant, sweetcorn, miso tahini yoghurt, pomegranate, Canterbury hazelnuts	GF.V	24
Pickled peach, Clevedon buffalo mozzarella, Curious Croppers tomatoes, pumpkin seeds	GF	23
Wood-roast portobello mushrooms stuffed with buffalo feta, pumpkin seeds + spinach, crispy kale, mushroom pâté, many mushrooms, crostini (* can be GF)	GF*	25
2 x beer battered Moodew paneer tortillas, sweet chilli, avocado, coleslaw		21
Wood-roast chilli spiced lamb ribs, minted yoghurt, pickled cucumber	GF	24
Cloudy Bay Clams, green coconut curry, choy sum, eggplant, lime, toasted focaccia (*focaccia can be replaced with GF toast)	GF*	25
Creamed Chatham Islands pāua on toasted ciabatta (*toast can be GF)	GF*	27
Wood-roast lemon spiced ¼ cauliflower, hummus, garlic yoghurt, chilli butter, grilled beans	Aleppo GF	29
Poached + Roast Bostock organic chicken, harissa, beetroot, macadamia ajo blanco, grapes		41
Greenlea scotch fillet, pumpkin purée, wood-roast wong bok, spiced spinach, garlic dressing	GF	43
Chatham Islands Blue Cod, greens, nam phrik num mango dressing, wok fried wood ear, shiitake	GF	42
Wood-roast kūmara, kawakawa pesto	GF.V	12
Salad from Papatūānuku Kōkiri marae, Niue honey dressing	GF	12
3-Cheese polenta chips, roasted garlic aioli	GF	12
Hāngī pork belly (100g)	GF	15
Grilled broccolini, feta, Taranaki macadamias	GF	12
Wood-roast sweetcorn, chilli gun-powder butter	GF	12
Red wine spiced poached pear, chocolate crèmeux, walnut	GF	18
Ginger mousse, roast plum, gingernut macadamia crumb	GF	18
Peach + basil sorbet, apricot, basil sugar	GF.V	18
Cheese: Waikato, Brie De Moutere, Goats Blue, Honey by the Sea honeycomb, house made seeded crackers		30

ALL DAY



Thanks to our featured local food producers:

Papatūānuku Kōkiri marae  
Niue Honey  
Hāngī Master Rewi Spraggon  
Chatham Island Food Co.  
Cloudy Bay Clams  
Ōra King Salmon  
Moodew Paneer  
Origin South Lamb  
Greenlea Beef  
Solomons Gold chocolate  
Dusty Apron bread  
Urban Hippie Miso  
Aotea Barn Organic  
Pinoli Pine Nuts, Marlborough  
Canterbury Hazelnuts  
Taranaki Macadamias  
The Wild Fermentary  
Curious Croppers tomatoes  
Clevedon Buffalo Co.  
Eat Your Greens  
Honey by the Sea  
Heilala Vanilla  
Bostock Chickens & Cider Vinegar

GF = Gluten Free

V = Vegan

Some of our dishes can be adjusted to suit a  
vegan or vegetarian diet

All featured eggs are organic

Eggs as ingredients in baking are free-range

Our milk is organic

WIFI password: greatkai

## Appendix G: Homeland philosophy and producers list



### HOMELAND

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#### Why?

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Because the best kai comes from this land and these waters and too many people are going hungry.

We serve and sell sustainable food from Aotearoa and the Pacific. Much of it is organic.

Small, brave and artisan producers are Homeland's natural family. We want to see them prosper and the food systems of Oceania to grow stronger.

Our consulting team helps with recipe development, food production, marketing and digital production.

And Tāmaki Makaurau's diverse and multilingual communities share food from many homelands through our social cooking programme, Community Wednesdays – supported by Beef + Lamb NZ.

Covid-19 permitting, the Cooking School teaches anyone how to make the best food inspired by the world. Please check our website for details.

Peter Gordon ONZM is known globally as the godfather of fusion cuisine. After 31 years based in the UK, Homeland is his new food embassy.

Thank you for coming to Homeland. Please enjoy your kai.

Our producer whānau includes....

*R = retail when available*

**Cloudy Bay  
Clams**

Tua Tua, Diamond Shell, Moon Shell, and Storm Shell clams come from the surf-lines of Cloudy Bay, Marlborough and Foxton. They are harvested with innovative tools that don't damage the clams and ensure longevity of the beds.  
[www.cloudybayclams.com](http://www.cloudybayclams.com)

**Papatūānuku  
Kōkiri Marae**  
*R*

Papatūānuku Kōkiri Marae is a vibrant urban marae based in Mangere which has the goal of upholding their valued traditions, tikanga and serving their local community. They grow beautiful vegetables, salad greens and edible flowers, and we buy their surplus to serve in our Dining Room.  
[www.papatuanukukokirimarae.org](http://www.papatuanukukokirimarae.org)

**Niue Honey**  
*R*

This award-winning pure organic honey from the pristine island of Niue comes from the luckiest bees on earth. They survived hive destruction by Cyclone Ofa and have remained unaffected by chemicals, parasites and disease. Niue is now a Pacific Bee Sanctuary while other colonies, globally, are in severe decline.  
[www.niuehoney.co](http://www.niuehoney.co)



**Bostock Chicken  
& Cider Vinegar**  
R

Brothers George and Ben Bostock are passionate about quality, animal welfare and sustainability. Their chickens are free ranged under an apple orchard, grown with care, without Antibiotics or Hormones, and they are fed only certified organic feed.  
[www.bostocksorganic.co.nz](http://www.bostocksorganic.co.nz)

**Chatham Island  
Food Co Pāua,  
Blue Cod  
and Koura  
(Crayfish)**  
R

Homeland is delighted to serve this stunning export grade kaimoana. Chatham Island Food Co's methods and sources are impeccable and their pāua mince, Chatham Blue, and Koura tails exemplify powerful, tradeable, sustainable kai. Watch out for Kina too when we can get it.  
[www.chathamislandfood.com](http://www.chathamislandfood.com)

**The Taipa  
Salt Pig**  
R

Why buy French or English sea salt with our huge coastline? That idea spurred the founders of Taipa Salt Pig into action in 2009. They have perfected organic and sustainable salt harvesting from the perfect waters of Taipa, Northland.  
[www.thetaipasaltpig.com](http://www.thetaipasaltpig.com)

**Pinoli Pine  
Nuts**  
R

Having relied on European and Chinese pine nuts for pesto, salads and garnishes for the last 30 years, Kiwis need look no further than Marlborough for a stunning local source. These large, creamy premium pine nuts are irresistible.  
[www.pinoli.co.nz](http://www.pinoli.co.nz)

**Canterbury  
Hazelnuts**

Canterbury Nuts is the home of locally grown and naturally delicious hazelnuts and hazelnut butter. They connect paddock to plate with authenticity, passion and love.  
[www.canterburynuts.co.nz](http://www.canterburynuts.co.nz)



**The Wild Fermentary**  
R

Award winning The Wild Fermentary is passionate about living food for a new way of living. They are champions of wild fermentation and love spending time in the wild to forage ingredients, like dandelion, stinging nettle, nasturtium and pūhā for their ferments. Earth care, people care and fair share are at the heart of everything they do.  
[www.thewildfermentary.co.nz](http://www.thewildfermentary.co.nz)

**Honey By The Sea**  
R

Honey by the Sea makes honey that reflects the coastal flowers special to the East Coast North of Auckland. Pockets of Manuka trees, Pohutukawas hanging on the cliffs, the salty terroir, the birds and bees. Like good wine, the area where honey comes from defines the honey. No honey is the same.  
[www.honeybythesea.co.nz](http://www.honeybythesea.co.nz)

**Solomons Gold**  
R

Every six months, ten tons of organically grown beans are shipped from the Solomon Islands to a small chocolate factory in Mount Maunganui where every step of the bean-to-bar process is completed by hand. Hundreds of chocolate bars are completely handcrafted daily.  
[www.solomonsgold.co.nz](http://www.solomonsgold.co.nz)

**Eat Your Greens**  
R

Ian King is one of our favourite growers. He painstakingly raises sprouts in certified organic soil and purified water – no hydroponics – and their texture, flavour and sheer strength are exceptional.  
[www.eatyourgreens.co.nz](http://www.eatyourgreens.co.nz)

**Ironclad Pans**  
R

In an era of disposable stuff, the Ironclad Pan company wanted to create a product that would last for generations, and we love using them in the kitchen and Cooking School. These are pans people will pass on to their kids and their kids' kids.  
[www.ironcladpan.com](http://www.ironcladpan.com)

If you'd like to know anything more about us, check out  
[www.homelandnz.com](http://www.homelandnz.com) or drop us a line at  
[hello@homelandnz.com](mailto:hello@homelandnz.com)

And please follow us on Instagram @**homeland.nz**

## Appendix H: kingi menu

### *. . . BREAKFAST*

Southland cheese roll . . .	9
Croissant with preserves . . .	10
Hemp heart granola, raspberry, kiwifruit, greek yoghurt . . .	18
French toast, walnut, raspberry, granny smith, maple . . .	24
Eggs, sourdough . . .	16
Scrambled eggs, kina, pancetta, sourdough . . .	24
Kūmara tortilla, fried eggs, mole . . .	21
Silverbeet, smoked hemp heart butter, sourdough . . .	19
Mushroom bolognese, buffalo curd, sourdough . . .	23
Fried eggs, mushrooms, paua XO . . .	27
Rosti, smoked kahawai, slow poached egg, pickles . . .	23

### *. . . SIDES*

Sourdough 3 / Sprouted Quinoa loaf (GF) 3
Streaky Bacon 6 / Avocado 3

## *kingi*

Breakfast is available from 7am (8am over the weekend) until 11:00am.

We cater to all diets. Our fish is line-caught using sustainable fishing methods.  
Our meats and produce are locally sourced and organic whenever possible.

... *COFFEE*

Espresso (Coffee Supreme) ...	4.50
with Green Valley organic cow's milk ...	5
Bottomless fetco filter brew (single origin) ...	6
Cold drip coffee on ice (single origin) ...	6
Miann 70% hot chocolate (Colombia cacao origin) ...	8

... *TEA*

Jasmine green ...	5
English Breakfast and Earl Grey ...	5
Rooibos ...	5
Yerba Mate ...	8
Tonic Room Petals, buds and berries ...	8
Tonic Room Sweet and spicy ...	8
Tonic Room After dinner mint ...	8

... *NON-ALCOHOLIC*

Organic cold press orange juice ...	8.5
Organic green juice ...	8.5
Kingi Mate kombucha ...	6
Pete's Natural soda's ...	6
Antipodes sparkling water (1l) ...	13

... *SLIGHTLY-ALCOHOLIC*

Prosecco, organic orange juice "Mimosa" ...	13
Perez Baquero fino and tonic ...	13
Henri Bardouin pastis on ice ...	10

*kingi*

... *ANTIPASTI*

Wood fired flatbread ... 8  
Kūmara sourdough, cultured butter ... 12

... *RAW BAR*

Diamond shell clam (Cloudy Bay) ... 4.00 each  
Te Matuku Bay oyster (Waiheke Island) ... 6.50 each

Fish plate  
Dry aged Kahawai (Hawkes Bay) ... 25  
Trevally tartare, smoked yolk, butternut (Leigh) ... 25

Kina on toast, pancetta (Chatham Islands) ... 16

Marinated olives, chickpeas ... 12  
Telegraph cucumber, paua XO sauce,  
chilli (Chatham Islands) ... 15  
Heirloom tomatoes, fig leaf, raspberry (Clevedon) ... 14  
Wood roasted mushrooms (Auckland) ... 18  
Stracciatella, feijoa, endive (Wairau Valley) ... 20  
Wild game charcuterie plate (Cazador) ... 20

Octopus carpaccio, hibiscus, rhubarb (Wairarapa) ... 13  
Marinated Ortiz anchovies ... 15  
Green-lipped mussels, nduja (Mills Bay) ... 15  
Hot smoked Kahawai (Little Barrier Island) ... 13  
Snapper head terrine, parsley, pickles (Leigh) ... 15  
Smoked white fish brandade (Leigh) ... 15  
Blue cod wings, burnt lime, ranch  
(Chatham Islands) ... 20

... *MAINS*

Wood roasted eggplant, apple mole, cauliflower, hazelnut (Kumeu) ... 26  
Kingi burger, pickles, buttercrunch lettuce, potato bun (Little Barrier) ... 26  
Seafood pappardelle, arrow squid, octopus, diamond shell clams, bisque (Tora Bay) ... 36  
Yellow belly flounder, capers, curry leaves (Kaipara Harbour) ... 42  
Pan roasted snapper, leek, kohlrabi, parsley sauce (Leigh) ... 38  
Blue cod, battered curry, baby radish, mussels, coriander (Chatham Islands) ... 36  
Wapiti venison backstrap, pear, onion, bread pudding (Fiordland) ... 45

Bok choy, prosciutto, smoked butter (Ohakune) ... 15  
Bitter leaves, cabernet sauvignon vinaigrette (Kumeu) ... 13  
Potato, wakame rosti ... 13

*kingi*

We cater to all diets. Our fish is line-caught using sustainable fishing methods.  
Our meats and produce are locally sourced and organic whenever possible.

*. . . LONG LINERS*

Bona Dea II – Jacob Drake – Tutukaka  
Coral V – Alex Dryland – Leigh  
Coastal Rover – Dan Harvey – Bay of Plenty  
Sapphire – Bruno Bell – Tutukaka  
Tungsten – Zac Paikea – Totara North  
Arapawa III – Russel Nicol – Bay of Plenty  
INXS – Thomas... – Marsden Cove  
Taiana – Guy Ashton – Leigh  
El Mama – Scott and Maaike McNeil – Kapiti

*. . . POT FISHER*

Equinox – Delwyn & Gigi Tuanui – Chatham Islands

*. . . HAND CAUGHT*

Claire Edwards & Troy Bramley – Tora Bay, Wairarapa

*. . . CAGE CAUGHT*

FV. Chips – Karl and Sarah Warr – Hawke Bay

*. . . SET-NET*

*(HAND-PULLED, MULTI-FILAMENT NET, NOT MONO)*

Tiaki – Peter Yardley – Kaipara Harbour

*. . . BI-VALVE FARMERS*

Jennie Fenwick – Waiheke Island

This restaurant is a celebration of independent fishermen and women around New Zealand.

Our fish is caught from our surrounding waters, it is wild.

We support people who believe in sustainable practices and who care about ensuring  
future abundance of fish stocks and actively protect larger mammals,  
bird life and the sea floor when they fish.

They are our oceans guardians, they are our kaitiakitanga.

*kingi*



Kingi  
29 Gaiety Street, Auckland Central, Auckland

### ... COCKTAILS

- 'Fino and tonic', sherry, tonic, lemon ... 13
- 'Tokyo Highball', whiskey, soda, lemon ... 14
- 'Green Juice', Mezcal, green apple, celery ... 18
- 'Sprit', JK bitters, soda, orange ... 16
- 'Negroni', Riffers gin, JK bitters, vermouth ... 20
- 'Dirty Martini', gordal olive ... 20
- 'Pisco sour', Pisco Mistral, lemon, egg whites ... 20
- Manhattan, Kentucky Bourbon, Vermouth,  
NZ cherry ... 20

### ... BEER

- Citizen Pale Ale, Kohatu ... 13
- Hallertau 'Number 7' IPA, Riverhead ... 13
- Hallertau Granny Smith Cider, Riverhead ... 13
- Fig leaf and Sourdough, Riverhead ... 14
- McLeods Northern Light Lager 2.3%, Waipu ... 12
- Sawmill Bare Beer Pale Ale  
less than 1.15%, Matakana ... 12

### ... ON TAP

- kingi Batchwell kombucha ... 9
- McLeods Longboarder Lager, Waipu ... 10
- McLeods Chilli Pilsner, Waipu ... 10
- Bay of Islands, Kingi White #2 NV ... 15
- Carafe 500ml ... 42 / 1L ... 82
- Bay of Islands, Kingi Red #3 (chilled) 2021 ... 15
- Carafe 500ml ... 42 / 1L ... 82

### ... NON-ALCOHOLIC

- House cold pressed orange juice ... 8.5
- Pete's Natural lemonade, kola, currant crush ... 9
- East Imperial ginger beer ... 6
- Kingi soda:  
V.G.T. ... 8.5
- Iced tea ... 8.5
- Antipodes sparkling/still water (1L) ... 13

### ... LARGE FORMAT

- Marlborough, NZ Fromm La Strada  
Pinot Noir 2016 Magnum ... 138

### ... WINE BY THE GLASS

#### ... SPARKLING

- Veneto, Angelo Bortolin Prosecco Brut 2020  
Valdobbiadene DOCG ... 19
- Marlborough, A Thousand Gods 'La Java'  
Methode Ancestrale 2021 ... 20

#### ... CHAMPAGNE

- Bouzy, André Clouet Grande Réserve Brut  
Blanc de Noir NV. ... 26
- Epernay, Beaumet Cuvée Rosé Brut NV ... 24

#### ... CRISPER WHITE

- Marlborough, Folium Sauvignon Blanc 2019 ... 16
- Marlborough, Fromm Chenin/Chardonnay 2019 ... 15
- Nelson, Blackenbrook Pinot Gris 2020 ... 17
- Piemonte, Giacomo Fenocchio  
Roero Arneis DOCG 2019 ... 18

#### ... RICHER WHITE

- Marlborough, A Thousand Gods  
Sauvignon Blanc 2020 ... 19
- Otago, Dicey Chardonnay 2020 ... 18
- Bay of Islands, The Landing Chardonnay 2019 ... 19

#### ... ROSÉ

- Bay of Islands, The Landing 2021 ... 18
- Marlborough, A Thousand Gods  
'Love Letters' 2020 ... 19

#### ... LIGHTER RED

- Wairarapa, Schubert Pinot Noir 2020 ... 16
- Waitaki, Ostler Pinot Noir 2017 ... 17
- North Canterbury, Black Estate Home Block  
Pinot Noir 2019 ... 21
- Hawke's Bay, Easthope Family Winegrowers  
Gamay Noir 2020 (chilled) ... 18

#### ... FULLER RED

- Cadiz, Bodega Huerta de Albala Barbazul 2018 ... 17
- Hawke's Bay, de la terre Syrah 2019 ... 20
- Bordeaux Montagne St Emilion,  
Chateaux la Bastidette 2018 ... 20

*kingi*

# ... WINE LIST

BOTTLE

## SPARKLING

Penedes	Mas Candi Corpinnat Brut Nature	2018	\$90.00
Veneto	Angelo Bertolin Prosecco Brut Valdobbiadene D.O.C.G.	2020	\$95.00
Lombardia	Vezzoli Franciacorta Brut D.O.C.G.	NV	\$110.00
Marlborough	A Thousand Gods 'La Java' Methode Ancestrale	2021	\$119.00

## CHAMPAGNE

Reims	Andre Clouet Grande Réserve Grand Cru Blanc de Noir	NV	\$132.00
Epernay	Beaumont Cuvée Rosé Brut	NV	\$125.00
Verzy	Larmandier-Bernier Latitude Blanc de Blanc Extra brut	NV	\$175.00
Poligny	Marie Courtin Resonance Blanc de Noir Extra Brut	2017	\$196.00

## CRISP WHITE

Marlborough	Follum Sauvignon Blanc	2019	\$69.00
Marlborough	Fromm Chenin Blanc/Chardonnay	2019	\$70.00
Marlborough	A Thousand Gods Sauvignon Blanc	2020	\$91.00
Marlborough	Rock Ferry Orchard Egg Ferment Pinot Blanc	2017	\$73.00
Piemonte	Giacomo Fenocchio Roero Arneis (D.O.C.G.)	2019	\$88.00
Galicia	Valdesil Pezas da Portela Godello	2018	\$141.00
Chablis A.C.C.	Domaine Gilbert Picq & ses Fils en Vaudecorse	2019	\$155.00

## RICHER WHITE

Nelson	Blackenbrook Pinot Gris	2020	\$85.00
Otago	Prophets Rock Pinot Gris	2019	\$92.00
Hawke's Bay	Aurulent Chardonnay	2020	\$81.00
Otago	Dacey Chardonnay	2020	\$88.00
Bay of Islands	The Landing Chardonnay	2019	\$92.00
Waipara	Greystone Chardonnay	2019	\$110.00
Rioja	Clos Ibañeta Garnacha Blanca	2018	\$100.00
Lirac A.O.P.	Domaine Lafond Roc Epine Grenache Blanc, Roussane, Viogner	2019	\$95.00
Marlborough	Hans Herzog Viognier	2018	\$153.00

## ROSÉ

Bay of Islands	The Landing	2021	\$86.00
Marlborough	A Thousand Gods 'Love Letters'	2020	\$91.00
Tavel A.O.P.	Lunar Apogee	2018	\$109.00

## LIGHTER RED

Waikato Island	Citizen Pinquette 2021 (gentle spark and chilled) 5% abv	2021	\$55.00
Hawke's Bay	Easthope Family Winegrowers Gamay (chilled)	2020	\$58.00
Beaujolais	Domaine de la Madone Perron Fut de Chêne	2016	\$91.00
Wairarapa	Schubert Pinot Noir	2020	\$75.00
Waitaki	Ostler Pinot Noir	2017	\$80.00
Marlborough	Follum Pinot Noir	2018	\$85.00
North Canterbury	Black Estate Home Block Pinot Noir	2019	\$105.00

## FULLER RED

Cadiz	Bodega Huerta de Alcala Barbazul Tintilla de Rota blend	2018	\$68.00
St Emilion	Chateau de la Bastidette Merlot	2018	\$85.00
Hawke's Bay	de la terre Syrah	2019	\$96.00
Montsant D.O.	Dido Tinto 'La Universal' Grenache blend	2014	\$125.00
Otago	Domaine Thomson 'Surveyor Thomson' Pinot Noir	2016	\$111.00
Otago	Rock Ferry Tempranillo	2016	\$115.00



## Appendix I: Mr Morris menu

<b>Snacks</b>	
Chicken skin, parfait, cherry	9
Pain au black pudding	9
Paua, ginger, seaweed	15
Cheddar pao, honey, goat curd	9
Salt & vinegar oyster mushroom	9
Potato bread, butter	10
<b>Entrée</b>	
Kingfish, cucumber, shiso, tamarind	29
Prawns, sweetcorn, koji butter, sauerkraut	36
Swiss brown, shiitake, pickled peanuts	27
Quail, mandarin, grilled onion	29
Octopus, chipotle, hibiscus, pickled carrot	28
<b>Mains</b>	
Lamb, tomato, coriander	
Free range chicken, rice gnocchi, mirin, enoki	39
300g Aged scotch, bone marrow, salsa verde	48
Snapper, chickpea, green-lipped mussel	41
Pork collar, apple, fennel, capers	39
<b>Vegetables and Grains</b>	
Cos lettuce, pear, salted lemon, feta	17
Peach, tomato, bresaola, bocconcini	18
Cauliflower, raisin, hazelnut	14
Tagliatelle, lemon cream	16
Agria, black olive, parmesan	16
<b>Kitchen Experience Menu</b>	140
Wine Pairing	80

