

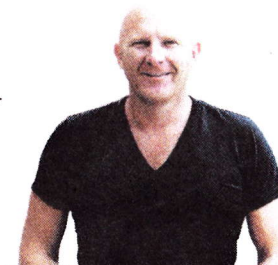


Top mix: Dominic Xavier, manager of Cobbler, West End, knows his whisky and cocktails. Picture: Anthony Weate

team know their whisky and take their cocktails just as

DINING IN

MATT MORAN



Retro cocktail to honour avocados

Travelling through the Gascoyne region of WA while filming *Paddock to Plate*, I was treated to the greatest hospitality and generosity of spirit.

After you leave Perth, once you get to Geraldton it becomes desert. But fly over Carnarvon and it's an oasis.

Carnarvon was the first place in Australia to grow bananas and Chris and Nadine Collins claim the crown of largest banana producers in town.

Carnarvon bananas are said to be sweeter than Queensland counterparts (I think I can hear cries of dissent). Their bananas are ripened on the tree for 15 months (Queensland standard is nine months), allowing for more of the starch to be converted to sugar. The Collins' little beauties were superbly creamy and sweet.

It was great to meet local legend Jo Bumbak and make banana jam. Jo has a thriving jams and preserves business (and makes delicious ice cream) using produce that would have been waste – 40-60 per cent of fruit is deemed waste for being the wrong size or shape, or if it has a minor blemish.

Carnarvon is renowned for its pink

snapper and the blue swimmer crab is near-legendary too. I saw the harvest alongside Peter Jecks, a local crab fisherman. His grounds were wiped out by storms several years ago, and he'd noticed his haul was getting smaller, so he stopped crabbing for a while to give the population a chance to get back on its feet. That's true sustainability.

Ketut and Wes Bassett have a certified organic, biodynamic avocado farm with 180 trees featuring eight varieties, mainly hass and fuerte.

My mind turned to an old-school prawn and avo cocktail – you'd be hard-pressed to find someone who doesn't love this retro classic. I've stayed pretty true to the original, but added tangy ruby grapefruit and deconstructed its presentation a little to bring it up-to-date.

It's the perfect way to showcase the flavour and texture of avocados.

Paddock to Plate airs Wednesdays at 8.30pm, The Lifestyle Channel.

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