

 Seasonal cook


Photo: Emma Photos

# Crunch time

The freshness and flavour of Australian hazelnuts make them a treat worth seeking out, writes STEVE MANFREDI.

**H**azelnut-growing is an expanding industry in Australia, with plenty of potential. March and April are prime picking months. To give you some idea of the quantities involved, domestic consumption of the nuts sold in their shells is about 80 tonnes, in addition to about 2000 tonnes sold as kernels. This equates to about 4000 tonnes in-shell. Australia's total current production is about 100 tonnes in-shell.

Turkey leads the world, producing more than 70 per cent of all hazelnuts consumed – about 300,000 tonnes annually. Italy follows, with 100,000 tonnes, then Spain with 20,000 tonnes, and the US with 15,000 tonnes.

While Australia imports a substantial

quantity, at this time of year local hazelnuts are so fresh and flavoursome that I urge everyone to look out for them.

As for the best imported hazelnuts, my preference is for the Italian Tonda Gentile variety from the Piedmont region.

This hazelnut has its own appellation, protected by Italian law. It comes into Australia in small quantities and is well worth seeking out. To celebrate the nut harvest, I'm heading to the Wandi Nut Festival in Wandiligong, Victoria, to cook with new-season hazelnuts, chestnuts and walnuts on April 28.

smanfredi@smh.com.au  
twitter.com/manfredistefano

## LENTIL, CARROT AND TURNIP SALAD WITH HAZELNUT SAUCE

150g lentils, sorted for stones then washed  
200g hazelnut kernels  
3 cloves garlic, minced  
80g salted capers, soaked and rinsed well  
1 cup finely chopped parsley, plus 1 tsp roughly chopped parsley, to serve  
150ml extra virgin olive oil, plus 1 tsp extra virgin olive oil for frying  
Salt and pepper  
Juice of 1 or 2 lemons, to taste  
18 dutch carrots, peeled, each cut into 3 pieces  
12 baby turnips, quartered  
1 tsp baby purple basil leaves

Add lentils to 2 litres boiling water. Return to the boil, reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 20-30 minutes until tender. Store cooked lentils in their cooking water in refrigerator. Place hazelnuts on a baking tray. Roast for 15-20 minutes in an oven preheated to 160C. Remove and, once cooled, rub together in a tea towel to remove skin. In a food processor, finely pulse hazelnuts and garlic. Finely chop capers and mix with hazelnuts and garlic, along with 1 cup parsley. Stir through 150ml olive oil to achieve a thick sauce. Season and add lemon juice to taste. Mix well. Heat 1 tsp olive oil in a skillet and fry carrots and turnips until edges are caramelised. Place sauce on plate, then vegetables. Scatter drained lentils over top, finishing with chopped parsley and basil. Season with salt and pepper.  
**Serves 6 as a first course (pictured)**  
Wine Grenache, shiraz, mourvedre blend

## PRAWNS, OLIVE AND HAZELNUT SALAD

24 king prawns, cooked and peeled  
1 cup hazelnut kernels, lightly roasted and coarsely chopped  
½ cup green olives, pitted and finely chopped  
2 tsp finely chopped chives  
2 tsp coarsely chopped parsley  
1 tsp extra virgin olive oil  
1 tsp hazelnut oil  
1 tsp good-quality balsamic vinegar  
Salt and pepper

Ensure prawns are deveined by removing the black digestive tract along their backs. Prawns can be left whole or chopped into 4 or 5 pieces each. Place in a large bowl with hazelnuts, olives, chives and parsley. Make dressing by mixing together oils, vinegar and lemon juice. Add to prawns, season to taste and toss gently.

**Serves 6 as a first course**  
Wine Vermentino or young semillon

 Full bottle

## QUAFFING YALUMBA EDEN VALLEY VIOGNIER 2010, \$25



I've long loved Yalumba's Eden Valley viognier. It's a beautifully balanced wine, incredibly textural and slick without being cloying or weighty on the palate. In a way, it's subtle for a viognier. There's plenty to enjoy from its honeysuckle and citrus blossom fragrance, spice including a hint of ginger and almost buttery apple tart character. With its savoury notes and long, persistent finish, this is an utterly delicious viognier.

## TRYING PAZO DE SENORANS ALBARINO 2010, \$40



Seafood features prominently in Spanish cuisine. While albarino is found, in the north-west of Galicia, octopus is a speciality. It goes brilliantly with this wonderful floral, perfumed wine from Pazo de Senorans. It's loaded with ginger spice and citrus extract, giving it weight as well as texture and a slickness on the palate. This super-bright and zingy wine has plenty of good acidity to cut through oily fish but it can handle more subtle seafood such as prawns or that octopus. A wonderful drop to drink over the next few years.

## CELLARING

### FRANKLAND ESTATE ISOLATION RIDGE VINEYARD RIESLING 2011, \$32



When it comes to riesling, Frankland Estate needs no introduction. It produces some of the finest in Australia. Isolation Ridge is one of its top single-vineyard wines. The drive on this riesling is long, pure and very refined, with a touch of florals and citrus, as well as fine, almost chalky acidity before a long, lingering finish. This will age beautifully for at least 10 years if you can resist drinking it as a young wine.  
**Jane Faulkner**

jane.faulkner@winematters.com.au