Jam-packed menu of temptation

LORD HOWE ISLAND KNOWS HOW TO FETE AND FEAST A GUEST, WRITES RENATA GORTAN

I turn out the secret to a good Asian marinade is butter. Yes, butter is what transforms the combination of sesame oil, kecap manis, fish sauce, lime juice, ginger and chilli, the French staple adding a depth and gloss to a classic Asian recipe.

It’s one of the tips I’ve picked up during Steve Snow’s cooking demonstrations on Lord Howe Island, part of Pinetrees Lodge’s food and wine weeks.

In the afternoons we listen to Snow’s anecdotes, among them one about cooking tajine for the King of Morocco, as he takes us through recipes including kingfish with tamarind sauce and crisp coconut rice, Portuguese seafood risotto and tempura-battered zucchini flowers with lemon before tucking into the dishes.

The evenings are all about wine tastings with Morgan Snow, Steve’s wife and sommelier at their restaurant Fins, and short cooking sessions, or adventure weeks comprising twice-daily yoga classes, or wellness week, which comprises twice-daily yoga classes, or adventure weeks. It’s a decadent pairing and it’s best to swap food for fitness. At Pinetrees Lodge, Food & Wine Week, Pictures: Supplied, foraged samphire, warrigal greens and salt bush.

If hiking isn’t your thing, then maybe you want to try kayaking, which is surrounded by crystal clear turquoise waters. This UNESCO World Heritage Site boasts 11 hiking trails, ranging from gentle tracks like Little Island and Clear Place, a more taxing 500-step slog to make it to Kym’s Lookout for postcard-perfect views of the island and lagoon or the strenuous Mount Gover hike, which takes eight hours and can only be done with a guide.

You can go swimming, snorkelling, diving, kayaking or paddle-boarding. Lord Howe Island Marine Park, established in 1999, extends three nautical miles from the island and a further nine nautical miles are part of a Commonwealth marine park. Maybe that’s why the sea life is so confident. Just watch the fish descend upon you at Ned’s beach as you feed them and, if you’re lucky, a curious turtle will swim right up close while wading at Old Settlement beach.

If strenuous activity isn’t your thing, hire a bike for $9 a day and go exploring. It’s the best way to get around the island and if you avoid Middle Beach Road Hill you won’t work up a sweat.

One thing the island doesn’t have is Wi-Fi. There are two public options, but it’s slow and expensive. So once I realise I can’t access Instagram, a peace washes over me as I realise I don’t have to check my screen every few minutes.

I’m more relaxed, more active and more open.

If you want to leave Lord Howe Island, but it is a bit of a hassle, then why not get a boat or a plane? You can fly from Sydney, Brisbane and Port Macquarie.

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The writer was a guest of Pinetrees Lodge.

GO2 LORD HOWE ISLAND
GETTING THERE
Qantas Link flies to Lord Howe Island from Sydney, Brisbane and Port Macquarie.

STAYING THERE
Pinetrees Lodge, Food & Wine Weeks with six nights accommodation and four meals a day from $2268. The next events are May 13-19, 2017 and October 23-28, with guest chefs to be announced. pinetrees.com.au

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401 to preserve the natural beauty. And it’s worked.

Native Kentia palms, banyan trees with their twisted roots that descend from on high, and towering Norfolk pines dominate the island, which is surrounded by crystal clear turquoise waters.

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