



Aaron Turner

IGNI

A restaurant's first year

Photography by Julian Kingma

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hardie grant books

008	the end		july	146
018	nashville		squid/chicken fat and marron broth jerusalem artichokes cooked in coals overnight	
			august	164
028	january		king edward potatoes/goolwa pippies/egg yolk broccoli heart/macadamia/cabbage oil mandarin/cultured cream/honeycomb	
		salt and vinegar saltbush seawater-cured scallop roasted oysters/seawater emulsion/oyster leaf aged squab/wild plum/rainbow purslane	september	180
062	february		snacks (pickled mussels and zucchini flowers; dried beef; roasted chicken skin with salted cod roe) beetroot in aged duck fat/whey/mustard leaf	
		society garlic potatoes hay-smoked duck young pepper/pickled strawberries	october	194
082	march		spanner crab/smoked pork broth asparagus/egg yolk/spring herbs/buffalo milk aged duck/wet garlic/dried herbs	
		spanner crab/fermented grains raw cuttlefish/celeriac/lemon/wild fennel seaweed/quinoa	november	208
100	april		whey ferment cultured buttermilk sorbet clarence river prawn/tamarind and tomato fermented blueberries/flowering gum	
		fermented grains/horse mushroom/cured wagyu marron/fermented cucumber/pil pil	december	220
114	may		dried fish bone broth/salted plums/herbs 10-year-old dairy cow/dandelion/kidney fat sauce	
		aged lamb rump/raw honey vinegar/radicchio and parsnip freshly churned butter/cultured butter old ewe/new ewe potato and mussel sauce	january	230
124	june			
		quickly roasted scallops warm charred cabbage salad suckling pig pork belly/slow-roasted carrot	index	236
			about	238
			acknowledgements	239



spanner crab/fermented grains

We rely so heavily on the visual when it comes to eating that I really struggled with serving this dish, fighting against that need to make everything look pretty and trying everything I could to make it look more appealing. In the end though, flavour won out.

| 1 x 400 g (14 oz) live spanner crab

fermented grains

200 g (7 oz) goat's milk
200 g (7 oz) acidic goat's whey
100 g (3½ oz) sheep's yoghurt
20 g (¾ oz) sugar
100 g (3½ oz) rye
100 g (3½ oz) millet
100 g (3½ oz) barley
6 oregano sprigs
4 fresh bay leaves
½ bunch thyme
½ bunch tarragon
1 litre (34 fl oz/4 cups) light chicken stock

serves 4

For the fermented grains, combine the goat's milk, goat's whey and yoghurt together in a bowl and whisk in the sugar.

Put the grains in a separate large bowl, pour over the goat's milk mixture and add the oregano, then cover with muslin and leave to ferment on a bench at a stable room temperature for 4–7 days, or until a skin has formed on top of the grain mix. The grains will start to smell bready when fermentation has begun. If mould appears on top of the mix then scrape it off.

When ready to cook, tie the rest of the herbs together with string and place in a large saucepan. Scrape the skin off the fermented grain mix and add the grains to the pan, cover with the chicken stock and leave to simmer gently until the grains are al dente. Keep warm.

Meanwhile, bring a large saucepan of water to a rapid boil, add the crab and cover with plastic wrap. Remove from the heat and leave to sit for 35 minutes, then remove the crab from the pan and leave to cool. Once cool, pick all the meat from the shell, being careful not to leave any behind.

To serve, divide the grain mix among bowls and spoon over the freshly picked crab meat.





quickly roasted scallops

I'm not a big fan of cooked scallops—I've always preferred eating them raw (and still serve them like this as a snack in the restaurant) but this relies on getting them live and fresh and using them immediately.

The scallops I took on this camping trip weren't quite as fresh as I had originally hoped, so I tried something different and cooked them like this. It gave them an intense, roasted shellfish flavour as well as a lovely, earthy smokiness and is something I've since taken back to the restaurant, where we cook them to order in the hot embers of the fire.

- 4 scallops in their shells, scallop meat trimmed and rinsed
- 80 ml (2½ fl oz) olive oil
- pinch of salt flakes
- 1 fresh horseradish root

serves 4

Detach the roes from the scallop meat and roughly chop, adding olive oil and salt to form a rough paste. Spoon the paste over the scallop meat, grate over the horseradish and tie the shells together with string.

Place the tied scallops onto hot coals and leave to cook until you see the filling mixture start to bubble out of the side of the shells. Remove from the heat and eat immediately.



warm charred cabbage salad

If this is left in the right place in the fire it will slowly cook itself, needing little to no attention. Try adding leftover herbs or smoked fish to the salad before serving.

- 1 savoy cabbage
- 100 ml (3½ fl oz) olive oil
- salt flakes

dressing

- 6 anchovies, minced
- 1 small garlic clove, minced
- 1 tablespoon green peppercorn mustard
- juice of 1 lemon
- 1 egg
- grapeseed oil
- salt flakes and cracked pepper

serves 6–8

For the dressing, mix the anchovies and garlic together to form a paste, then add the mustard, lemon juice and egg and mix well. Whisk in enough grapeseed oil to bring everything together, then season with salt and cracked pepper.

Using a large knife, make a series of large incisions on all sides of the cabbage. Rub the cabbage with the olive oil and salt, then set it over the centre of a medium fire, or directly in the middle of the embers if you prefer. Roast until the cabbage is cooked through, testing it with a skewer to check if it is tender and moving it around the fire while cooking if the embers are intense.

Remove the cabbage from the heat and peel off and discard any burnt outer layers. Roughly chop the remainder and toss together with the dressing. Serve.



mandarin/cultured cream/honeycomb

I love the flavour of citrus skin and sometimes I happily chew on it as it is. Juicing the mandarins whole with the seeds and skins—like they do in Spain—means the sorbet contains all those lovely essential oils which lend it the bitterness I love. Combined with the lactic tang of the cultured cream and the floral crunch of the honeycomb, this has become one of our most popular desserts.

- 500 g (1 lb 2 oz) mandarins, skin on
- 125 g (4½ oz) glucose
- 1 egg white
- 50 g (1¾ oz) freeze-dried mandarin

cultured cream

- 100 g (3½ oz) cultured cream
- 100 g (3½ oz) sour cream
- 2 litres (68 fl oz/8 cups) liquid nitrogen

honeycomb

- 415 g (14½ oz) caster (superfine) sugar
- 150 g (5½ oz) glucose
- 65 g (2¼ oz) honey
- 20 g (¾ oz) bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

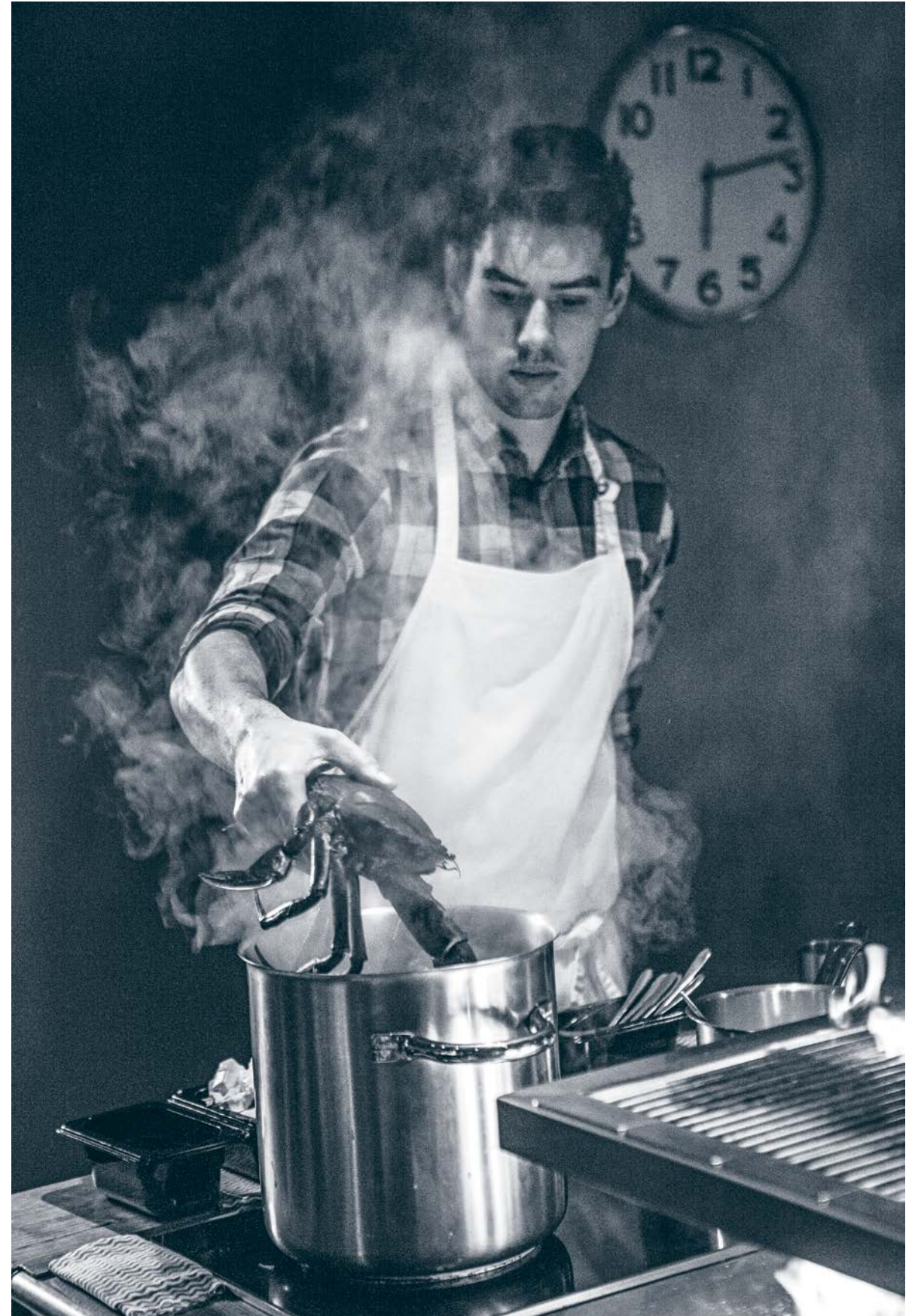
serves 8

Juice the whole mandarins, strain and let settle, then strain again. Weigh out 125 g (4½ oz) of the mandarin juice, add the glucose and mix together well. Churn in an ice cream machine, adding the beaten egg white halfway through the process, until frozen.

For the cultured cream, whisk together the cultured cream and sour cream and place the mix into a squeeze bottle. Drip the mix into a bowl filled with liquid nitrogen to form small balls. Repeat until all the mix is used, scoop the balls out of the liquid nitrogen and place immediately in the freezer. Discard the liquid nitrogen.

For the honeycomb, stir the sugar, glucose and honey together with 75 ml (2½ fl oz) water in a large heavy-based saucepan over a medium heat until dissolved. Bring to the boil and heat until the temperature of the sugar mix reaches 160°C (320°F). Remove from the heat and let settle for a second, then whisk in the bicarbonate of soda and pour into a lined tray. Leave to settle until cooled, then break into rough pieces.

To serve, divide the cultured cream spheres, freeze-dried mandarin and honeycomb pieces among plates and top each with a scoop of mandarin sorbet.



above: fermented cabbage

about

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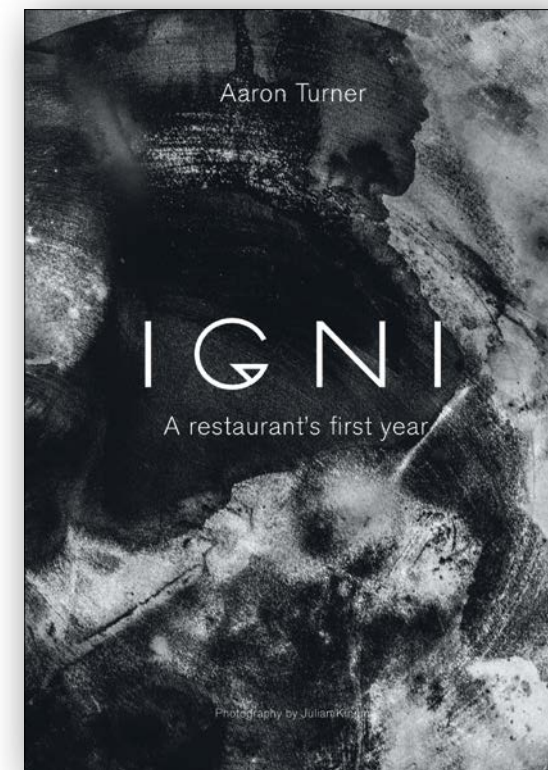
Growing up by the coast in Portland, Victoria, Aaron studied graphic design before travelling and working overseas. In 2009 he opened his first restaurant, Loam, in Drysdale, which went on to win numerous awards including Regional Restaurant of the Year in *The Age Good Food Guide 2012* and Regional Restaurant of the Year in *Gourmet Traveller*. Since closing Loam in 2013 Aaron has worked and consulted in Nashville and opened The Hot Chicken Project and IGNI in Geelong. In its first year of business IGNI has won *Gourmet Traveller's* Restaurant of the Year and has been awarded two hats by *The Age Good Food Guide 2016*, as well as winning the guide's awards for both Regional Restaurant of the Year and Chef of the Year.

Julian Kingma

Julian started his photography career at *The Herald* in 1988 as a cadet. Since going freelance after 10 years as Head Features Photographer for *The Sunday Age*, he has worked for various national and international publications including *Gourmet Traveller*, *Condé Nast Traveller*, *Harper's Bazaar* and *Rolling Stone*. Julian has won Quill Awards for Best Portrait and Best Picture Story, Australian Nikon Photographer of the Year and has exhibited at the National Portrait Gallery in Canberra. He is at his happiest bobbing around on his surfboard in the early hours at Bells Beach, Victoria, near his home on the Surf Coast.

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