

Top New Zealand chefs go underground for Taste of Auckland

After seven years as the largest New Zealand food and restaurant festival, Taste of Auckland challenges six of the nations' top chefs to bring their innovative ideas and gourmet ingredients to a traditional Maori Hangi. This new Hangi restaurant will be in operation throughout the 4 day culinary affair allowing thousands of festival visitors to indulge in these ground breaking recipe combinations.

It will be one of the most ambitious culinary projects to date. Each day at Taste of Auckland, the festival will see a top chef or restaurant bring their own unique ideas and ingredients serving 4000 gourmet hangi dishes. The star chef line up includes Ben Bayly of The Grove, Mark Southon of O'Connell Street Bistro, Makoto Tukoyama of Cocoro, Tu Fearn, Tasting Shed and Cazador.

"Challenging top restaurant chefs to unleash their imaginations on the Hangi is one of the most exciting things we have ever done at Taste of Auckland," says Rob Elliot, Taste of Auckland Festival Director. "There will be a real emphasis on flavour, appearance and textures, and no two Hangi at the festival will be the same. We hope to stimulate the debate about what New Zealand Cuisine really is. This will be a great experience for chefs and delicious fun for visitors at the festival,".

Culinary reinventions will include a Hangi Slider – Maori bread, char siu pork, pickled cucumber, karengo aioli and watercress - by Tu Fearn, as a taster of what guests can expect. All dishes promise the genuine smoky, earthy flavour that only comes from hours of careful minding in the traditional manner, whilst pushing the hāngi to its modern-day limits. Taking the most ancient of Maori cooking techniques and challenging leading chefs to put forward their interpretation of a Hāngi, Taste of Auckland hopes to stimulate the debate – what is it that makes New Zealand Cuisine truly unique? Hāngi Masters, Rewi Spraggon and Riki Bennett will oversee the entirety of the Hāngi and keep the fires burning. Ahi kā.

As a nation filled with chefs that have originated from and travelled to many parts of the globe, most cuisines of the world are well represented in New Zealand and will play an influence in the creation of the original menus.

The Taste of Auckland Gourmet Hāngi Schedule:

- Thursday 5.30pm Cazador / Stolen Kid – goat shank with preserved lemon, potato and feta
- Friday 12pm Makoto Tukoyama, Cocoro / Miso marinade Hangi Ōra King Salmon served with Aotearoa earth smoked Japanese Takikomi-Rice
- Friday 5.30pm The Tasting Shed / Chilli Pork, with white kimchi, sesame & peanut brittle
- Saturday 12pm Tu Fearn / Hangi Slider – Maori bread, char siu pork, pickled cucumber, karengo aioli, watercress
- Saturday 5.30pm Ben Bayly, The Grove / Steamed Pork Buns with Duck, Horopito & Hoisin. Pickled cucumber, coriander & baby radishes
- Sunday 12pm Mark Southon, O'Connell St Bistro / The Sunday Roast Hangi with all the trimmings
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One taste-sized plate of contemporary Gourmet Hangi at Taste of Auckland will cost 12 Crowns (\$12) at the festival. Due to the nature of Hangi, servings may be limited and will be available on a first come, first served basis.