



hot wheels

Rebecca Martin

A portable wood-fired pizza oven is providing gourmet fare in the most unlikely places.

Yoho Pizza Yollo

HEAD TO THE CAMPING GROUND rich forests of the South-West and you'll find yourself short of many of the comforts of home but you could, in theory, get yourself a wood-fired pizza.

All you need to do is call Charley and Lisa Cannon at Yoho Pizza Yollo. These Nannup locals bring their wood-fired oven to you, wherever you are and serve up what Charley describes as a pizza party.

"We'll do appetiser pizzas with just a couple of things, and then more main-fare pizzas, with meat and potatoes. We've just started one with thinly sliced potatoes and rosemary soaked in truffle oil.

"Then for dessert would do some kind of decadent chocolate pizza. Lately its been chocolate and chilli. I call it the hot chilli pizza."

Yoho Pizza has been on the roads around the South-West for two and a half years now, serving up piping hot wood-fired pizza from Bridgetown to Geographe Bay, to timber traders, wineries and even to a group of cyclists at Sue's Bridge on the Blackwood River.

"We go directly to someone's house or out into the bush, anywhere, and you don't need power," says Charley. "We travel all over, about 100 kilometres in any direction."

The business has also become something of a travelling marketing campaign for South-West produce. The Cannons source their pizza ingredients from local suppliers including Cambray Sheep's Cheese in Nannup, Holy Smoke trout and chicken, Margaret River Venison and Eden Valley Stone Milled Biodynamic Flour.

"We are particular about sourcing food from and around the South-West, and try to keep everything as low-food miles as possible.

"We've just found out about a biodynamic beef and lamb grower in WA, so we are working on sourcing from them as well," says Charley.

"People come back and say 'thanks, that's good food.' I don't think they're used to it, they're used to chips and stuff. I love to get into people's mindsets that they can eat well, and fresh, and it doesn't need to be fried."

This travelling gourmet lifestyle came about partly by happy accident, partly from need.



When Charley, an American who spent many years in Europe, married Australian-born Lisa, they decided to set up home in Western Australia.

Charley had for many years worked as a tour operator. Now 'domesticated', life on the road seemed a little lonely. But he didn't want to give up the everyday contact with people.

After the Cannons built a wood-fired pizza oven in their own outdoor kitchen, Charley thought back on the wood-fired pizza ovens he'd seen in France and Italy that locals would put on the back of a truck, park on the corner and sell pizzas. He realised a similar concept could work here. It meant Charley could hit the road, talk to people, but also stay close to home.

A friend helped build the mobile brick woodfired oven on a trailer, and Yoho Pizza hasn't looked back. Things have been so busy that Lisa threw in her day job to focus on pizza making. But they are not out for world domination.

"We don't want to get too big as the logistics make it difficult as to how much food we can carry and how good the food is when we have other people make it for us," says Charley.

This summer these Nannup locals and their pizzas will be found close to home as they launch a new Wednesday night tradition.

"We're starting 'Pizza in the Park' on the Nannup foreshore," says Charley. "It's a beautiful park that never gets used. [And when you hold things there] all the local musicians tend to come out of the woodwork."



Forno

PAT GAFFNEY CAN MAKE a pizza a minute, and they still taste good. Just ask his neighbours.

As a furniture maker, Pat Gaffney had always been good with his hands. So after seeing wood-fired pizza ovens on trips to Europe, he figured he could build his own.

His first one went up in his backyard nearly 15 years ago, not perfect, but a good start.

"It kind of worked, so I made improvements and came up with a design and then thought I'd sell one."

It was another three years before Pat decided to turn his wood-fired pizza ovens into a business, Forno Woodfired Ovens, and he timed it perfectly for a rush of interest in wood-fired pizzas.

"It was slow in the beginning. Everyone would say 'people won't buy them', but then it took off. Getting a decent pizza can become a bit of an obsession. Everyone does their own thing."

Pat built a pizza oven on a trailer to use as a display for his business. When a friend said he was having a party and planned to order in pizzas, Pat suggested he bring over

his mobile wood-fired pizza oven and make them instead.

"There were about 40 or 50 people there, and that was the start of [my catering business]. Everything has happened through word of mouth. For every job I do I get one or two more."

So Pat now has two businesses, one in making pizza ovens, the other as a mobile pizza-maker for parties.

Pat says he's got an idea about what makes the perfect pizza.

"The pizza dough is the main thing to get right. It has to have a certain lightness to it and the oven has a lot to do with getting it right. You could do the same pizza in your home oven, and one in a woodfired oven, and it would taste completely different," he says.

"I make my own dough and put it straight in the fridge. When I take it to a job the first thing I do is make up dough balls and let them rest until the dough is soft enough to work. It should also be worked by hand, not by rolling pin. It takes a bit of work to get that skill up, but it's the little things that give you the texture and the taste."



And when you are serving up to 100 people a go, a little speed and proficiency helps.

"We did a party a few weeks ago and we were doing 60 pizzas an hour, which is one a minute, between three of us. But there were 130 people at that party, so we had to get them out quick."

Pat's perfect pizza has no more than three toppings, although for parties he always does a supreme, a sure-fire favourite. After that toppings depend on what he feels like on the day, special requests from the party host, and the age of the crowd.

"They've all got different tastes," he says. "The young kids always want pineapple, while the older [parties] want smoked salmon, camembert, pear and rocket."

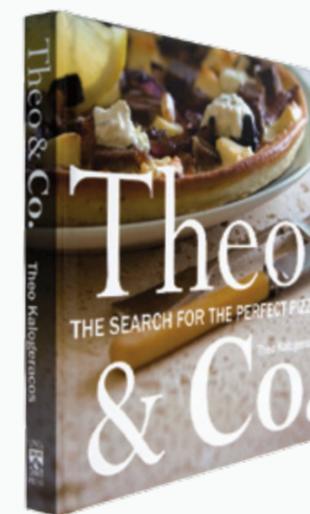
While Pat's daughter and wife claim to be a bit pizza'ed-out, his two sons and neighbours never say no to a slice. Come Sunday evenings they can often find one at the end of the street when Pat puts his pizza



oven out on the street corner and cooks for the neighbours.

"If I put the oven out there, they know [what's happening] and they come. We probably get 40 or 50 people sometimes. I'll bring the pizza dough and the toppings. The other night someone else bought a roll of pork, another a rack of pork and someone else some chicken, so there is plenty of food to go around.

"It doesn't happen every weekend, but maybe once every four or five weeks. It really depends on how tired I am." ✨



tome delivery

Rebecca Martin

Theo Kalogeracos's Little Caesars pizzeria in Mundaring is one of Perth's worst kept secrets. It's become a must-travel-to for some of the best pizza in the state and, judged by the international awards garnered, the world. He's also just published a stunningly good-looking and wide-ranging book on pizza.

Theo & Co: The Search for the Perfect Pizza is a two-year labour of love by Theo and his publishers, the academically inclined, Western Australia based, UWA press. The result is a mouth-watering, delicious tome filled with anecdotes of his life and work, his love of family, and some of his favourite award-winning pizza recipes. It's equal parts beautiful, surreal, and practical.

"I'm over the moon [with the book]," he says. "It's something that I never thought I could achieve. I left school in Year 10. I feel it's a big achievement that I have been able to do this," Theo said.

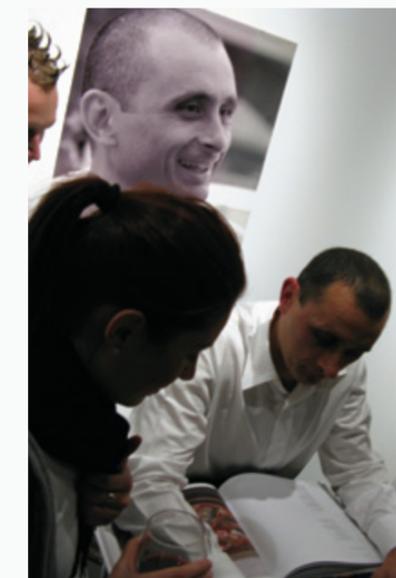
He's not worried that he is telling everyone how to enjoy a Little Caesars pizza at home — sharing the intimate details of the sauces, the bases and the toppings. Instead, he says, it's driving his own creativity.

"I need to [tell everyone how to do it]. Otherwise you can become complacent and just rest on your laurels, and you can't have that. Knowing that everyone has got these [recipes], I'm going to have to come up with something even better to stay ahead."

The book has only been out a few months and already there are four new pizzas on the Little Caesars' menu, with more on the way.

"I've been mucking around, and I'm really into Spanish flavours lately, so I think that's the style I'll be going for. I've had a few disasters, but the ideas are there." ✨

Little Caesars - www.littlecaesarspizzeria.com.au
and Theo & Co: *The Search for the Perfect Pizza*
UWA Press - www.uwapress.uwa.edu.au



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