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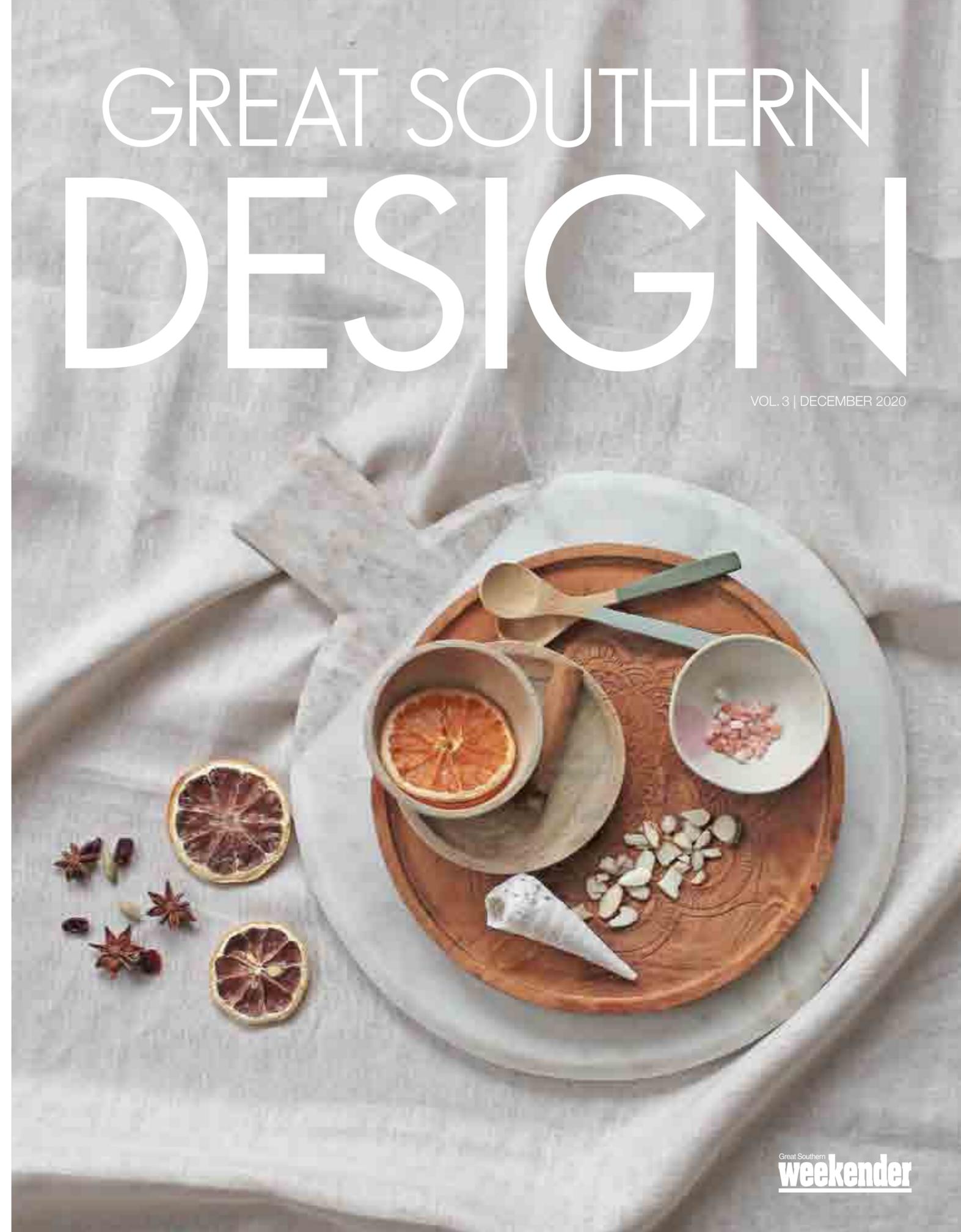
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VOL. 3 | DECEMBER 2020



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GREAT SOUTHERN DESIGN

United by passion

IN DESIGNING this *Design* magazine, I realised the word itself comes up with numerous different connotations for people of all educations and backgrounds. There is a combination of acquired technical knowledge and artistic skills to produce an object that was planned accordingly. The end design can be something tangible and functional to conveying an emotional message and/or connection. Design can even change in that years ago, whipping up the family meal and

placing the meat and three veg simply on a plate was an accepted norm, to nowadays, with the pressures of reality cooking shows, people strategically place their coriander on their snail porridge or lickable wallpaper. Design is omnipresent. So grab an edible fairy light drink and sit back and read about these inspiring designers from our very own Great Southern.

Ian Beeck,
Editor



4 Family first, business second



6 The doctor will see you now



8 Hands-on creative approach



9 Weaving positive relationships



10 New world photography

COVER PHOTO: Jami Welshman

Great Southern **weekender**

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FOOD WITH FUNCTION

AS MORE and more consumers crave the back story behind the food they are purchasing, creative packaging and design and how produce is presented are becoming increasingly important factors influencing buying decisions.

From concept to plating to consuming, when all elements of the presentation process are considered it can often provide a truly spiritual experience for the consumer.

One such company is Tuesday Foods, which is an Australian brand that celebrates food with function.

Tuesday Foods Director India Bell fell in love with the art of preserving premium foods in creative packaging, revelling in the art form of taste and design this industry had in spades.

Ms Bell's inspiration came from countries such as Portugal, Spain, Italy and France and she recognised there was a gap in the Australian market that needed filling.

"We are so used to consuming fresh seafood because we do have an abundance of premium fish readily available, however I wanted to explore what could be done with preserving local fish, oils and herbs," Ms Bell said.

"I was working in a marketing agency in Sydney, specifically on food and alcohol brands in the retail space.

"I quit my job and moved to Perth to find fisheries who would work with me in creating the Australian edition of marinated sardines, anchovies and any other fish we could use."



A key ethos of Tuesday Foods is that it supports quality taste with sustainable fishing methods and only chooses species that are not endangered or farmed.

Making the change from imported products or overexploited stock, Ms Bell only selects delicious Australian products made from sustainable fisheries with certified management systems in place.

The search for a similarly aligned supplier led Ms Bell to Albany where she connected with fisherman Tony Westerberg.

From that meeting a partnership was formed and Westerbergs are now a key supplier to Tuesday Foods.

"The sixth generation of the Westerberg family is now learning the fishing ropes," Ms Bell said.

"They are a dynamic family who care and invest in innovation and sustainability.

"They share the same values in exploring what we can do with under-utilised species who have a high population and safe environmental effect on the ocean."

Tuesday Foods now has a range of products that includes Sir Albany chilli sardines on caramelised orange and goats' cheese on toast, Sir Albany marinated sardine fillets and various delicacies based on the wild Australian salmon.

The Sir Albany range takes inspirations from Spanish white anchovy recipes and the idea from Samin Nosrat of mastering the elements of cooking; combining salt, fat, acid and heat to create the perfect dish.

Ms Bell is also now experimenting with native plants and herbs to give the marinated fillets even more unique flavours.

And what was the inspiration behind the unique name, Tuesday Foods?

Ms Bell said Tuesday resembles the fork in the road, the "to be or not to be" of the week ahead.

"We choose optimism, we choose Tuesday as confidence," she said.

"Post each Monday, comes Tuesday where we can lift our spirit and conquer our week ahead."



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FAMILY FIRST, BUSINESS SECOND

EVENT stylist Brodie Baum has her hands full looking after two young boys on a family farm just outside Ongerup. But she doesn't see raising young children as something that limits her ability to succeed in the entrepreneurial world.

The self-described "coffee-fuelled mum" found her calling at the end of 2016 when she quit her job as a high school teacher and started event styling business The BIB Approach.

Ms Baum was sitting in on a two-week course where her Year 8 students were learning all about what it takes to be an entrepreneur – and it had a profound effect.

"By the end of the two weeks I was on the phone to my friend who is a graphic designer getting him to start working on my logo," she said.

"This also happened to coincide with the planning of my own wedding which just fuelled my love for the industry."

"I then travelled to Indonesia with another incredibly supportive friend, spent a week sourcing and designing my own custom range of cocktail furniture and decor and imported a 20-foot container."

"I'll never forget seeing the truck driving down our driveway on the farm."

For someone who says she's obsessed with love stories, fashion, live music and food – you expect Ms Baum is in her element in the "addictive" wedding industry.

Styling events along the south west coast of



Photo: In the wilds of someplace



Photo: In the wilds of someplace



Photo: Nectarine Photography

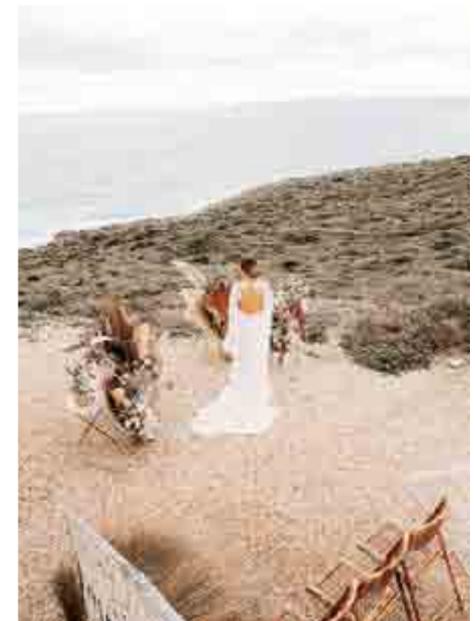


Photo: Greta Wolzak Photography

WA from Perth to Bremer Bay, Ms Baum says she takes an organic approach to design.

"Allowing each step to manifest and grow naturally is so important," she said.

"You can't force creativity and so if it's not happening, walk away, find what gets things flowing and come back to it."

"I would like to think that our products are one of the things that set us apart. I'm very passionate about sourcing quality, high-end décor and wares and am always searching for other creatives that are producing interesting, custom-made products."

While living between an ancient mountain range and the Southern Ocean sounds like an idealistic lifestyle, running a business from the isolation of the Great Southern bush

doesn't come without its fair share of challenges.

When you are stationed hours away from the nearest city, full-time daycare simply isn't an option for busy mums.

So, to make sure she gets to spend quality time with three-year old Hudson and 10-month Corbyn, Ms Baum crams in work while the little ones are fast asleep.

"It's a frenzy to see how much I can get done whilst my boys sleep," she said.

"Even my clients know my kids sleep schedule and will ring during that time."

"Whilst my boys are young, I just know that that is the only time I can run my business. I want to be present in their day so I think it's important to dedicate a set time to when you will run your business."

"Raising incredible little people is the most important job

of all so it's integral to the success of both hats to find where and how your business will fit around your family."

Often stationed hundreds of kilometres away from clients, wedding venues and vendors – Ms Baum finds herself travelling the width and breadth of the Great Southern for the simplest business appointments.

"I'm definitely a textures and touch person so being able to see and touch products is essential for me," she said.

"That is a challenge, but I've just come to accept that driving hours to simply see a new product is not out of the question."

"I think a major difference to running a business in the city is the services and amenities you would have access to in the city that would perhaps enable you to take more on business-wise as you could off-load some

of the domestic jobs. There's definitely no lawn-mowing service, Uber Eats or cleaning service out here."

One decision an entrepreneur can often struggle with is whether to expand and build on a successful business venture.

And as an event stylist in hot demand, the mother of two nearly made that leap last year.

"Your business will get to a point where you need to decide whether to employ more staff to sustain the pace," she said.

"I had to make a decision last season whether I was going to send staff to execute my design briefs and decided not to."

"Rather I found 'my pace' - knowing how much I was able to take on and still give my clients the attention and

time they deserve.

"I like to think of my business as simply a branch in the lifestyle we have created as a family. It has meant I could transition out of the daily grind and create a completely balanced and wonderful lifestyle, doing what I absolutely love whilst getting to soak up those precious years with my kids before they're off to school."

Michael Roberts



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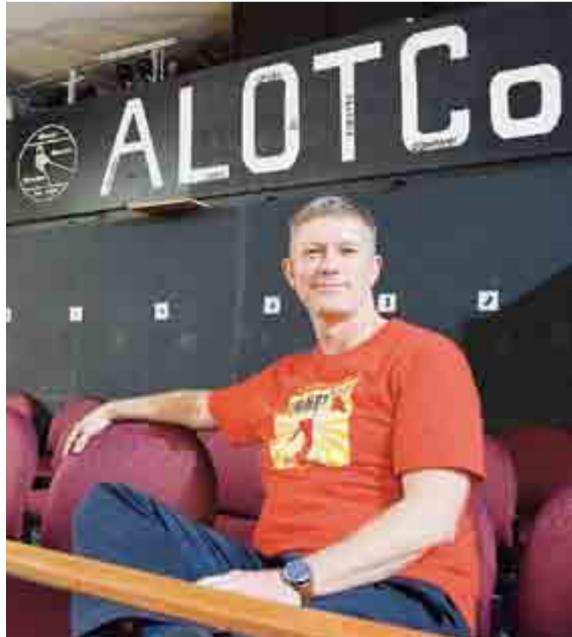
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And if you're an anaesthetist or surgeon, a person's life is literally in your hands in the operating theatre.

A lot of work goes into designing a musical theatre production too.

From lighting to costumes, building sets and coordinating music scores, to cast member drama and choosing a show people will buy tickets to, there's often a lot on a director's plate.

Although these two types of theatre are worlds apart, they are tightly intertwined for Albany's Airell Hodgkinson.

And he wouldn't have it any other way.

Despite the lifestyle being stressful at times, Dr Hodgkinson's love for rural healthcare and musical theatre is clear.

He cares about people and makes it his mission to make sure everyone is looked after and happy; be it a patient, an actor or a stagehand.

Albany Light Opera and Theatre Company (ALOTCo) has put on three of Dr Hodgkinson's plays and each was a sell-out success in its own right.

But if fate had taken a different path, the likes of *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Spamalot* and *Urinetown* may never have made it to an Albany stage.

"Initially I wanted to be a military pilot, like every six-year-old boy does, or maybe a commercial pilot," Dr Hodgkinson said.

"I did sports, music, classical piano, a bit of performing arts at school – my parents were always looking for things to entertain me because I was short attention span and so they always looked for new and exciting things for me to do.

"But fate has a way of turning us toward different things, so I ended up going straight into

medicine straight out of high school."

Dr Hodgkinson did various rural and regional stints before settling in Albany 15 years ago.

He decided upon rural generalism as his specialist area and takes pride in giving all patients access to quality healthcare.

He first experienced local musical theatre at ALOTCo's rendition of *Annie* in 2006.

"I was struck by the real community feel to it," Dr Hodgkinson said.

"It was a really high-quality production in this potato shed next to the train track.

"The following year they did *Les Miserables* and I missed auditions, but they had a few vacant parts. So, I slotted in as a dirty poor person and a student, and that was the start of me being killed in every production I do."

It was only a couple of productions later that the doctor scored himself a leading role.

He was none other than the big man himself in *Jesus Christ Superstar*.

"JC was very challenging vocally, as well as performing," Dr Hodgkinson said.

"There was a big range in that part which I really struggled with but it was good fun, we had a lot of banter on and off stage."

Following that performance with the role of Raoul in *Phantom of the Opera*, Dr Hodgkinson thought it was time for a break.

Balancing work and rehearsals is a demanding task but it wasn't long until Dr Hodgkinson found himself back in the theatre – the musical kind – once more.

This time, he was on the other side of the stage.

"We had already started directing our own scenes – Findlay MacNish would let us go away and play and build our own scene, because he was often doing the musical directing and the whole show directing," he said.

"From that I thought, hey, what not give this a go, bossing myself around and maybe one or



two others and setting up a whole show?"

Dr Hodgkinson's directional debut came with *Spamalot*, alongside co-director Andrew Wenzel.

Eighteen months later, *Little Shop of Horrors*.

And after that, *Urinetown*.

Dr Hodgkinson's directing profile threatened to outgrow his list of medical qualifications.

But his enthusiasm for the art only increased with each performance.

"I enjoy the rush that you get performing something well on stage; it's a challenge that you rise to, and it's a bit of a drug in that sense," he said.

"I often talk to the cast about the hairs standing on end – that's when we know we've reached that point; that's when we know we've got it.

"Once it's over, you always feel like you want to go back and do it again ... now, today, can we do it tomorrow?"

Although Dr Hodgkinson enjoys designing musical theatre productions in his spare time for the sake of it, the hobby is also a significant contributor to his wellbeing.

He highlighted the importance of having a work-life balance and looking after one's mental and physical health.

"A wise man once said, 'you've got to have a scientific outlet, a creative outlet and a physical outlet', and so I try to have those in addition to work, and theatre often ticks the creative and physical outlet," Dr Hodgkinson said.

Ashleigh Fielding

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HANDS-ON CREATIVE APPROACH

PEOPLE who have had an up-close-and-personal, hands-on experience with a crocodile are far and few between, I'm sure.

But it was a task taken up by Albany's Ian Michael without a moment's hesitation.

Mr Michael was more than eager to craft a life-size replica of the semi-aquatic reptile using scrap metal when commissioned by the Shire of Ashburton for Onslow Airport a few years ago.

The task was one of Mr Michael's first major projects which saw an increase in his personal interest in crafting original sculptures.

His handiwork can be seen at he and wife Jane's landscaping and homeware business, Designer Dirt.

"He's always been practically creative," Mrs Michael said.

"When I was out bush, there was no Bunnings; if you wanted something, you'd make it," Mr Michael added.

Following the crocodile commission, Mr Michael was asked to craft an osprey with eggs in its nest, a cow, and just recently, a pig.

The cow must be seen in-person to fully appreciate its beauty – hundreds of different sized pieces of scrap metal, intricately melded and intertwined together.

"That one I did 'cold'," Mr Michael explained, pointing at the metal cow in the yard.

"I made it, and if it was wrong, I pulled it apart again until I got it. That's the painful way to do it."



"I actually stopped work on it for about five months because I made a head, but the nose was wrong.

"Then I saw that [chain link] and I got the nose right, and that was rewarding because it was the perfect fit."

The Michaels do what they can to reduce, re-use and recycle, using primarily scrap metal for Mr Michael's sculptures, and Mrs Michael's tin flowers and screen designs.

"I've got a formula – industrial-strength coffee and cheap red wine," Mr Michael laughed, when asked how he crafts such gigantic beasts.

"I did the cow 'cold' but with the pig, I made a wire frame and then as I built it, I got rid of the wire frame, or I'd go off a sketch in chalk on the floor; that's the better way to do it."

While Mr Michael's eye-catching sculptures demand attention as you walk past, Mrs Michael's delicate creations stir just as much excitement.

Putting down one of her unfinished tin flowers on the countertop after showing *Great Southern Design* her work, two customers were quick to ask about its price and whether there were any more.



"I do a lot of cut outs and screen designs, and I also do the tin flowers and flowers out of flywire, which are really popular," Mrs Michael said.

"Jane's got to make her own flowers because I never buy her any," Mr Michael cheekily cut in.

Mrs Michael is passionate about the creative process, expressing how important it is to have a creative outlet and get away from computer and phone screens.

She too uses recycled goods in her crafting.

"I like working with flywire because you get the shape, you get that flow," Mrs Michael explained.

"You've got to muck around with it a bit, so it doesn't fray too much.

"But it's good to work with your hands; it's the best bit about being here, with the variety of what we do."

People keen to learn a few of the Michaels' tricks of the trade are encouraged to follow the Designer Dirt Facebook page and keep an eye out for workshops in the new year.

Ashleigh Fielding

WEAVING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS

A GROUP of Menang women have come together to develop an art space which aims to foster social enterprise and economic independence for local Indigenous women.

The Women's Weaving Circle was an endeavour first launched by the Museum of the Great Southern's Aboriginal Learning and Community Liaison Officer Kathleen Toomath, who saw a gap in engagement opportunities.

"We looked at what had been done in the past and one thing that was a small vestige of interest was around a multicultural weaving-type project that had happened two or three years ago," Ms Toomath said.

"That project involved all women but had very little participation from any Aboriginal women.

"So, coming here in March and having a much more profound arts background coming from the culture and arts department from Lotterywest, I was in a scenario where I was thinking 'what could work here?'"

"I was having those conversations with the community, I started building a better relationship with Kurrah Mia and I thought it was a great opportunity to have a small community gallery, but how do you feed that gallery?"

Thus began the Women's Weaving Circle, engaging local Indigenous women in traditional arts practices and natural fibre gathering.

"We wanted to get that point of engagement for Aboriginal people to start to work within the arts and develop both arts excellence and some knowledge of the business side of arts," Ms Toomath said.

"So this would be a really good vehicle for it and for women and empowering them in their family units and giving that economic side as well.

"You could have those lovely social impact outcomes around mitigated loneliness through Covid as we were lucky enough to still get together, there was intergenerational learning between older Aboriginal women and younger Aboriginal women. Even though we're in the Aboriginal context, just younger cohorts of women in general have sort of lost those hand skills like



sewing, mending and making their own clothes, and the older women were reflecting on that."

The project is now hosted at the Noongar Centre and will be facilitated by Menang woman Violet Pickett, with the hopes the project will eventually be amalgamated with a local Bush Camps project.

Ms Toomath said the Women's Weaving Circle had already been commissioned to create one of their colourful balga trees by a person from Perth, proving the potential economic successes for women involved.

"Some of even the little pieces could sell for around \$60," she said.

"A lady could sit and do maybe three or four of those a day, and that would give them the opportunity to sell at Kurrah Mia, giving the women a monetary return and also giving Kurrah Mia the chance to grow into a bigger gallery space.

"I think even as a wider community to have representation of local Aboriginal culture, that's what international tourists expect to see."

Charlotte Woolldridge

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NEW WORLD PHOTOGRAPHY

EXCHANGING a wine knife for a digital SLR, Torbay photographer Meleah Farrell has wowed audiences with her abstract work since moving out of the hospitality industry over a decade ago.

Growing up, Ms Farrell was the kind of kid who always had a camera ready at hand to capture a special snap here, there and everywhere. Back then it was all on film, of course.

However, the passion remained a hobby through her formative years, where she instead chose to work in hospitality management in Perth.

It wasn't until a three-year stint in Malaysia during the early 2000s that Ms Farrell bought her first digital camera.

"That opened up a whole new world of photography because you are able to take control of your camera and learn how to take photos that I wanted to take, rather than my camera telling me what photo it wanted to take," she said.

"I still hadn't developed my style. But I look back on that work and I see the bones of what I do now."

After moving back to Perth, Ms Farrell went about a drastic career change – enrolling in a photography course in TAFE, quitting her hospitality gig and taking up a position at a photo lab in Northbridge.

"It was a great work experience and opportunity for learning the printing-side of photography, which is really just an extension of the art form that's been lost with digital photography," Ms Farrell said.

"There were so many networking opportunities there because our main clientele were professional photographers.

"I was reaching for my passion, which can be a tentative thing, but I was really excited."

Determined to pursue a creative career full-time, Ms Farrell relocated to Albany nine years ago so she could concentrate on her abstract photography.

"My work can be broken down into two processes – the first is a pre-conceptualised way of shooting," she said.

"I have an idea or image in my head and I try and use my camera to create that. That makes up 80 per cent of my imagery.

"The other 20 per cent is experimental and just playing around with different settings. I use a lot of conventional and unconventional techniques with photography.

"I hope my work brings a sense of calmness and puts a smile on people's faces, but also sparks a sense of curiosity. I like to challenge people's perceptions of what they are seeing."

Finding the perfect spot for a gallery up on Torbay Hill, Ms Farrell converted what was an old shed into the beautifully curated artistic space you can visit today.

"I can just sit and stare out and get lost in this amazingness," Ms Farrell said.

"The longer I've lived here, the more my body of work has shifted to reflect the environment down here – trees, nature, forests, oceans, water. It's amazing how many different photographs you can get of the same objects.

"Hopefully more creative people move up here. Word on the street is another artist has moved into the old Torbay Hill Function Centre. It would be nice to have a creative hub up here."



Photo: Third Eye Photography

To the untrained eye, Ms Farrell's mesmerising pieces might look like they've been heavily manipulated through photoshop, but nothing could be further from the truth.

"All of the work is created in camera with very little, to no post-production," she said.

"My camera is my artistic tool. I use my camera to create the work. I already spend so much time on a computer with other aspects of my arts practice, I don't want that to be the core of my work.

"In saying that, I will use photoshop to add a bit of contrast and density into my blacks. I often desaturate my work, which is very different to what other photographers do."

Despite more and more people having access to cameras that take near-perfect pictures at the touch of a button, Ms Farrell couldn't see a future where people didn't need a professional.

"I don't think it will ever die out as an artform," she said.

"There are always young students, who's interest is sparked by old techniques. I think film will still be around in 50 years and have a resurgence of some sort.

"The post-production side of things is really blurring those lines between what is reality and what's not. It's not my thing, but it is an art form in itself. I can only see that happening more and more."

Although those old hospitality days are a distant memory, Ms Farrell has been able to mix her passion for food and photography through a separate venture.

"I run another business called the Seasonal Creative, where I run art workshops and long-table lunches," she said.

"I invite other creatives to run workshops to share their skills. We have so much artistic talent down here."

Michael Roberts



Photo: Third Eye Photography

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