

Stepping up to the plate

BY BERNARD FEHON

THE majority of tourists are looking for a memorable food experience when they come to the Blue Mountains – and the local food and beverage industry is stepping up to the plate.

Research from Destination NSW shows “dining at a restaurant or cafe” is the most popular activity for visitors to the Blue Mountains. The Blue Mountains Economic Enterprise (BMEE) is seeing local hospitality business owners stage innovative events and collaborations that are helping mark the Blue Mountains on the map as a food destination.

Along with BMEE’s own series of business development meetings last year, where representatives from Jobs for NSW and the Department of Industry met with local food industry operators to look at business growth through export and funding opportunities, other noteworthy initiatives are boosting the local food scene both for consumers and business owners.

The recent Edible Gar-



ATTRACTING TOURISTS: Leura Garage. Photo: Destination NSW - www.visitnsw.com/destinations/blue-mountains/dining-and-entertainment.

den Festival and Trail, and workshops and panel discussions by Lyttleton Stores in partnership with local produce farms Epicurean Harvest and Providence Hill, are examples of businesses strengthening the local in-

dustry, while meeting the call of tourists for a Blue Mountains food experience. A recent “mingle” night at Leura Garage also reflects the level of innovation and activity in this sector.

But chair of food and wine

advisory group, Plate Up Blue Mountains, Pam Seaborn, believes our culinary culture could stand out more with better marketing.

“If we could have regular promotion in Sydney and our wider regions about all

the events we have – we’d get more visitors who are more satisfied with their experience,” she said.

Events such as Leura Harvest Festival and The Majestic Long Lunch held as part of The Roaring 20s festival,

which showcase local chefs and produce, are the kind of events that truly satisfy tourists’ tastebuds, but could reach their potential with more promotion.

Media coverage in *The Sydney Morning Herald* as part of Good Food Month and in TV shows such as Luke Nguyen’s Food Trail on SBS (a Blue Mountains-focused episode screens on SBS on March 29 at 8pm) and a recent MKR High Tea episode in February do much to promote what our region has to offer. In October 2018 a new print publication, *Harvest Blue Mountains + Beyond* by local publisher Just Pressed, will focus on “wining, dining and exploring” experiences.

BMEE has in the past secured funding for the Food Industry Development Project and is exploring options to continue this effort in the future. For now, one thing is clear: collaboration and innovation is key to the local food and beverage industry’s success.

For more details email: admin@bmee.org.au.

Bernard Fehon is CEO of BMEE.

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