

THE AUSTRALIAN

Guest chef Jake Kellie's South Australian seafood feast

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The famous Coffin Bay oyster needs no introduction – and little more than a simple mignonette dressing to make it sing. This one showcases a light, bubbly rosé made in the Adelaide Hills. The ocean jacket or kawahagi (*Nelusetta ayraudi*) is one of the region's undervalued stars – a deep-sea fish with moist white flesh.

COFFIN BAY OYSTERS WITH MIGNONETTE

12 fresh Coffin Bay oysters

2 tablespoons finely diced French shallots

60ml chardonnay vinegar

60ml sparkling rosé such as Ngeringa Pétillant Naturel

10g kampot pepper

To make the mignonette, mix vinegar, rosé and diced shallot; set aside. Shuck oysters (or ask your fishmonger to do this for you), making sure to loosen the oyster from the shell so it's easier to eat. Discard the outer shell and get rid of any gritty bits. Arrange oysters on a plate of crushed ice. Top each oyster with a teaspoon or two of mignonette and finish with cracked pepper. Serves 4-6

BARBECUED OCEAN JACKET CHEEKS ON TOAST

8 ocean jacket cheeks (see tips)

200g unsalted butter

2 lemons

2 slices good-quality sourdough

4 slices lardo (cured pork fat) or pancetta

For the brine

1 litre filtered water; 50g salt

For the spice mix

100g sumac

10g vinegar powder

30g brown sugar

10g dried chilli flakes

For the aioli

1 egg

1 teaspoon Dijon mustard

1 tablespoon (20ml) lemon juice

½ clove garlic

¼ teaspoon yuzu kosho (see tips)

350ml olive oil

Light the barbecue: a small one with coals and a grill plate is best. To make the aioli, using a small blender or stick blender and jug, combine the egg, Dijon mustard, lemon juice, garlic and yuzu kosho, if using; blitz until well combined. With the motor still running, very slowly add oil until the mixture firms up. Season with salt.

To prepare the ocean jacket cheeks, pat dry, then use a sharp knife to remove the skin and trim off any sinew. Place the cheeks in a large bowl. Make the brine by combining the water and salt, giving it a good whisk until dissolved. Pour over the cheeks and leave for 20 minutes; then strain off the brine, place fish cheeks on a tea towel and pat them dry.

Place butter in a saucepan and cook over medium-high heat until it turns nut brown; strain through a fine sieve. Mix all the spices together and season with a pinch of salt.

Once your grill plate is hot and you have glowing red coals, lightly oil the cheeks and grill them on one side for about 3-4 minutes. Turn them over and cook briefly, just long enough to cook through. Remove from the grill and place on a tray. Squeeze lemon juice over the top and leave to rest.

Brush the sourdough slices with the brown butter and toast over the coals until golden brown. While still hot, brush toast with aioli then cut in half. Place two fish cheeks on each piece of toast, spoon over a little more aioli and season with spice mix. Trim the toast and cover each piece with a slice of lardo. Serves 4

Top tips

I like to use Greenly Island kawahagi (southernoceanexpress.com.au); the easiest way to buy the cheeks is in fresh-frozen packs.

Ask at your local fish supplier or order online. Yuzu kosho is a Japanese chilli-citrus condiment available in Asian grocers.

Jake Kellie is the co-owner and head chef of arkhé restaurant, Adelaide. As part of the Tasting Australia festival (April 29 to May 8) he will co-host a full-day seafood escape to Coffin Bay (April 30, from \$850 including flights, excursions, food and wine). More at tastingaustralia.com.au