

KITCHENS + BATHROOMS
YOUR ESSENTIAL 40+ PAGE

HOT ISSUE

AUSTRALIA

belle

THE HOT

40

BEDS
CHAIRS
LAMPS
STORAGE
TABLES
SOFAS

Inside ELTON JOHN'S glamorous apartment

PLUS: PARIS TREND REPORT
MEXICAN WAVE: COOL NEW HOTELS
TALKING TO AXEL VERVOORDE
AN INTERIOR BY MARCEL WANDERER

**STYLISH
HOUSES**
FROM SYDNEY
TO SAN DIEGO

APRIL/MAY 2010

30 DAYS
of home &
entertaining

\$8.95 AUST (INCL. GST)
(NZ \$10.00) PP255003/00004



02

9 313006 001201

SHEER BRILLIANCE

Fabulous homes that really set the pace



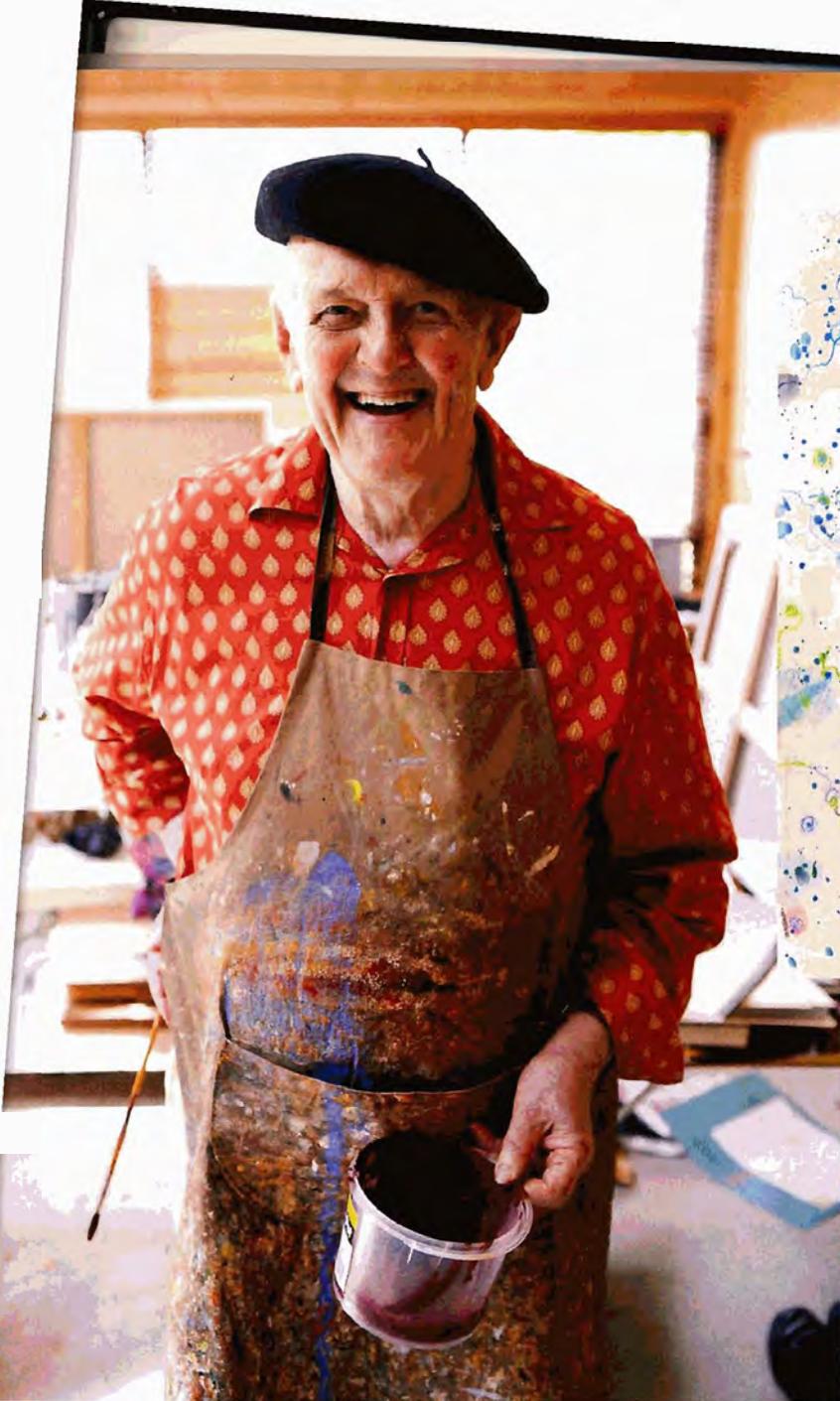
CULINARY ARTS

A lifelong love of cooking is the inspiration behind John Olsen's latest exhibition.

PHOTOGRAPHS JEREMY SIMONS WORDS TAN A BUCHANAN RECIPES JONATHAN BARTHELMESS RECIPE EDITOR CHRISSEY FREER



THESE PAGES Artist John Olsen and his paintings, including (from left) *Seafood BBQ* and *Butcher's Cart Deià de Mallorca*, prompted chef Jonathan Barthelmess to create recipes to match.



It's not often that you get the chance to have Australia's greatest living painter advise you on the finer points of cooking – in particular, how to make a paella – but that's exactly what happened when I spoke with Dr John Olsen AO about his new exhibition, *Culinaria*. The show, which opened at son Tim Olsen's Woollahra gallery on March 2, is a series of works celebrating John's well-known passion for food that began when he lived and worked in Majorca in the 1950s.

Seeing the paintings prompted *Belle* to ask another fan of Mediterranean cuisine, and one of Sydney's up-and-coming young chefs, Jonathan Barthelme, to use three of John's works as inspiration, and create the dishes and recipes to match.

Jonathan was happy to oblige and got to work after a long talk with the legendary artist. "Like John I have been influenced by Mediterranean cooking and I believe in stripping everything back to the best produce. I loved the opportunity to create peasant-style dishes, as John refers to them, using his art as inspiration," said Jonathan.

When John Olsen left Australia for Europe in the 50s, Australia's culinary offerings were pretty dire. "When I left I didn't know anything about food, like most of the population. Any chance to be influenced by other cultures was eclipsed by the tyranny of distance. Most of our food was a misinterpretation of English cooking which could fill you with horror. The meat had to be as hard as cardboard with grey vegies – chops were grilled to a cinder," he recalls. However, the discovery of Elizabeth David's classic cookbook *Mediterranean Food*, and his work as a sous-chef in Majorca while pursuing his art instilled a lifelong appreciation of cooking and sharing food.

THESE PAGES Jonathan Barthelme's seafood-rich stew was inspired by John Olsen's *The Bouillabaisse* painting (opposite), which is part of his *Culinaria* exhibition at Tim Olsen Gallery, Sydney.



BOUILLABAISSE

SERVES 4

4 small whole fish, such as mullet,
cleaned, scaled and gutted

12 large green prawns, deveined,
peeled, heads and tails intact

400g vongole, cleaned

1 litre (4 cups) chicken stock

Grilled bread, to serve

Salmon roe aioli

100g salmon roe

1 egg yolk

2 tbsp strained lemon juice

2 tbsp water

1 clove garlic, finely chopped

1 tsp freshly ground white pepper

200ml light olive oil

1 To make the aioli, place half the salmon roe in a blender or food processor and add remaining aioli ingredients, except the olive oil. Blend well. With motor running, add olive oil slowly, drop by drop at first,

then in a slow, steady stream until it is all incorporated. Remove from blender, fold remaining salmon roe through the aioli, then set aside.

2 Prepare and clean the seafood – you can use whatever is best at the fish markets.

3 Bring stock to the boil in a large saucepan, reduce heat to low and keep at a simmer. Leave the fish whole and poach gently in the stock until just cooked through, then remove and keep warm. Add prawns and vongole to the stock, poach until just cooked and the vongole open, then remove and set aside.

4 Strain stock, return to a clean saucepan and bring to the boil. Whisk in 400ml of the salmon roe aioli. Divide the fish and seafood between 4 large serving bowls, pour over the hot stock and serve with grilled bread.

"THE FOOD I
COOK CAME
OUT OF PEASANT
SOCIETY. SHARED
PLATES OF FOOD
WITH COMPANY
YOU ENJOY ARE
THE BEST MEALS."

SQUID IN ITS OWN INK

SERVES 4

2 cloves garlic, peeled
100ml extra virgin olive oil, plus
2 tbsp extra
1 long red chilli, finely chopped
 Juice of **1** lemon
1 tsp squid ink
16 bottle squid, cleaned
 Nasturtiums and day lilies, to garnish

- 1** Finely slice 1 garlic clove and crush the other. Heat olive oil in a large frying pan or wok. Add the sliced garlic clove and chilli and cook until light golden.
- 2** Strain the oil, discarding the garlic and chilli. Add the lemon juice and squid ink to the infused oil and set aside. Toss the squid in the extra oil and crushed garlic to coat.
- 3** Return pan to a high heat and, when it starts to smoke, add the squid, in batches, and cook for 30-40 seconds. Remove and drizzle with the reserved dressing and garnish.



John Olsen's *Squid in its own ink* painting and the dish it sparked (above).

"When I arrived in Barcelona I visited a market called the Boqueria where I saw whole chickens that had been soaked in saffron, and a huge snapper suspended on strings. It was surreal. It was Salvador Dalí. I had never seen aubergines, green or red peppers. It was amazing," explains John. "I've never been enthralled with haute cuisine. The kind of food I cook and am interested in came out of peasant society. Shared plates of food on the table with company you enjoy are the best meals," he says.

And, just for the record, John's cooking lessons involve not drinking too much during the process, especially when making his beloved paella. "Yes, if you drink too much it spoils the system. Having said that, with Jonathan's bouillabaisse I would drink a big white wine such as an oaked chardonnay from the Margaret River or McLaren Vale or a mature riesling."

Although John has had his recipes included in such books as *The Artist's Lunch*, by Alice McCormick, and his biography *Drawn from Life*, he has never considered publishing his own recipe collection. However, visitors to the Culinaria exhibition will be treated to some of his cooking secrets when they peruse the catalogue. "I am writing an introduction about my experience with food and I will include some recipes, including the paella," he says.

And what to drink with the paella? "Whacko – whatever you like. Go in boots and all! In summer, a chilled beaujolais or rosé would be great – but a good one – you need one that is very dry," says John.

Our chat is winding up as the artist has lots of work to do. "I am still painting for the show. I have to go and cook a barbecue so I can paint it. Australian men always think they are masters of the barbecue and are so often not. All the paintings have to be finished very soon. One is a memory of a butcher's shop in Majorca ... and of course there will be paella." ■

John Olsen's *Culinaria* is on display at Tim Olsen Gallery Woollahra, March 2-21. Jonathan Barthelmess is head chef at Manly Pavilion restaurant; manlypier.com.