

A charitable feast

A culinary extravaganza for a good cause? Now that's a great excuse for a long lunch.

by CATHY ANDERSON

Long lunches are something of an extravagance. Hours spent working hand to mouth instead of fingertips to keyboards is a luxury that modern time-poor professionals can mostly ill afford. But when such an event has a charitable purpose, the excess is justified.

This year's ChillOut festival will kick start with a culinary marathon at Sault restaurant, a French chateau-style building about 7km out of town. The meal will feature oodles of local produce, wine and a

fundraising initiative for the anti-bullying Better Buddies program coordinated with the Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

From February 14, ChillOut will help to raise \$22,000 for the Communities Caring for Children appeal, which has enlisted businesses in the region to donate money from each transaction. Sault has joined the initiative, and will also host an auction of prizes during the long lunch. The auction will be hosted by Dolly Diamond with speeches from ChillOut's special guest Adam Sutton and Dr Judith Slocombe from Alannah and Madeline Foundation.

Owners of Sault, the husband and wife team of Jodi Flockhart and Damien Aylward are not new to charity fundraising. Damien was involved with the Bone Marrow Donor Institute's Red Ball, and the restaurant is a supporter of the local Kinder Project, an initiative to install



Sault's regional tasting plate is packed with local produce.

a fully functional kitchen into Daylesford Primary School to help educate children about food.

The Daylesford region has a strong reputation as a regional gourmet centre, and Flockhart and Aylward have built up the restaurant's reputation by promoting its extensive use of local produce. Slow lunch diners can expect a three-course menu jammed full of food grown, baked or matured in the area.

"We are really excited about the fact that there is so much here," says Flockhart. "People love it when they come from out of town and they can actually try something that is grown locally."

Flockhart says Sault has built its own gardens on-site at its sweeping lakeside location, and regularly uses home-grown herbs and vegetables.

The menu for the slow lunch will include Sault's

regional tasting plate as an entree, piled with house-marinated olives, house-made bread, melzanne (pickled eggplant), Meredith feta, house-made pate and pickled baby vegetables along with other tasty treats. The main dish will be the Hopkins River eye fillet served on a bed of spinach with red wine jus, sides of local green beans with rock salt, house-baked kipflers and green leaf salad with honey balsamic dressing. Dessert is apple and rhubarb crumble with five-spice ice-cream and custard. Wines for the afternoon have been donated by local vineyard, Hanging Rock.

"We thought it was a good opportunity to raise a large amount of money for the foundation, and a nice way to start ChillOut, with a nice wholesome lunch." **A**

The Slowest Lunch at Sault Restaurant
2349 Ballan Road, Sailors Falls/
Daylesford
Friday March 7, 12.30pm – 4.30pm
Details: www.chilloutfestival.com