

## Australian Culinary Television: Visions of the Real

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### **Abstract**

Ideas of the real are pervasive in contemporary food television programmes, reflecting a broader concern with the real that permeates current Western-centric popular cultural forms. This paper examines television representations of the real in the Australian culinary programme *Gourmet Farmer*, a series based on the life of host, Matthew Evans, as he creates a new identity as a Tasmanian farmer. It finds that the real is utilised as a powerful form of branding which guides viewers towards alternative forms of consumption, constructed as sustainable and ethical in contrast with non-discretionary consumption associated with mass food production systems. In investigating the television construction of a lifestyle based on artisanal food production and consumptions, this paper explores the aspirations of viewers and the meanings with which food is embedded in this text.

### **Introduction**

'Food', as the renowned anthropologist Margaret Visser argues, 'is never just something to eat' (1986, 12). What and how one eats allows for the expression of multiple identities, some of which may change over one's lifetime. This also extends to the food television we choose to consume. Depictions of food and food-related traditions in culinary programmes play an important role in enabling the viewer to vicariously experience alternate lifestyles and cultures, assisting in the articulation of taste and aspirations. As the modern condition is characterised by a sense of lost connection and, in the West, a move away from traditional ways of life towards lifestyles, the individual is increasingly responsible for confronting questions relating to understanding one's identity; 'Who to be?' and 'How to act?' (Beck, Giddens and Lash 1994). Lifestyle television, including culinary programmes, guides viewers in understanding where they are situated in relation to lifestyle and identity by 'inspecting' the lifestyles of others and bearing witness to their transformations and revelations (Bonner 2003, 32).

Given that television, in many ways, constructs a common reality through which audiences come to understand self, relationships and society, there is a need to critically examine the messages and meanings that culinary programmes communicate. Ideas of

the 'real' and 'authentic' are pervasive in culinary television, reflecting a broader sense of nostalgia prevalent in contemporary living. In an era of increasing globalisation and industrialisation, including the corporatisation and homogenisation of food production methods which are thought to endanger local food practices, food television can provide links to culinary traditions that may otherwise be lost, or perhaps never were (Bell and Hollows 2007; Phillipov 2016). This is a view put forward by Gunders, who argues that we now place importance on that which has 'been subsumed by globalisation', leading us to seek out the real through connections to places and cuisines, and, perhaps, television programmes that allow us to take this journey (2008, 19).

This paper examines television representations of the real in the Australian culinary programme *Gourmet Farmer*. In investigating how the real is produced within this form, this paper explores the lifestyle aspirations of viewers and the meanings with which food is embedded in this text. It finds that the real has an important symbolic function in this programme by conveying and illustrating what quality food is, where it comes from, how it should be consumed and its cultural symbolism. Food consumption is much more about social meaning than simple physical sustenance, and *Gourmet Farmer* communicates potent messages about class mobility between the tastes of luxury, and those of necessity, feeding the status anxieties of those that Bourdieu calls the 'new petit-bourgeoisie' (1984, 6). While critiquing non-discretionary consumerist culture, *Gourmet Farmer* encourages an alternative means of consumption closely linked to notions of the real, which it asserts is a more ethical, sustainable and quality form of consumption. Hence, this series produces the real as a brand, looking back, somewhat nostalgically, to the food traditions and practices of the pre-industrial past to educate viewers as to what real living and real food is.

Culinary television operates within a range of popular discourses that share a growing interest in the real, including music, art, travel writing, and, in particular, reality and lifestyle television (Boyle 2003). As Boyle argues, reality television 'claims to meet the needs of people for authentic television' (2003, 134). The use of real people, often placed in extraordinary circumstances, accounts for much of the popular global formats *MasterChef*, *The Biggest Loser*, *Big Brother* and *The Voice* (Bonner 2003; Ouellette and Hay 2008). Roscoe (2001), in her discussion of *Big Brother*, states that the programme's producers accept that viewers of the series are highly media literate and acutely aware of the 'reality' that this programme is constructed. *Gourmet Farmer* differs from these reality programmes in that its premise is centred on the depiction of an actual life, apparently less manufactured and more aligned with the authentic. Matthew Evans, host of *Gourmet Farmer*, claims in the series that 'I want to build a new life, one that revolves around artisan food – making it and selling it, to afford the new life' (season 1, episode 1).

### **Gourmet Farmer**

Screened on the Australian public broadcasting network Special Broadcasting Service (SBS) from 2010 to 2013, with a subsequent series screening in 2017, *Gourmet Farmer*

documents the life of food critic and chef Evans as he relocates from urban Sydney to rural Tasmania. This programme initially screened in the primetime slot of Thursday evenings at 8pm from December 2010, a time which remains a mainstay for food programming on SBS. *Gourmet Farmer* is included in the food television genre as its primary focus is the production and sourcing of quality food. Although Evans often gives instructions on how to prepare dishes, this is not central to the series' narrative. *Gourmet Farmer* is based on Evans' real-life attempt to establish a new rural home on Puggle Farm in the picturesque Huon Valley area of Tasmania's south, an area renowned for artisanal food production. He aims to become both a local and producer, growing his own vegetables, rearing livestock, and situating himself in a network of other like-minded food producers (Glaetzer 2012). An important construct in the *Gourmet Farmer* series is the idea that real living lies outside the urban environment and is intimately connected to the food one chooses to consume.

Parkins and Craig (2006) argue, importantly, that *Gourmet Farmer* and similar television series provide viewers with a vision of what sustainable living may look like. Programmes such as this and its BBC counterpart *Beyond River Cottage*, as well as the local adaptation, *River Cottage Australia*, are examples of what these commentators claim is an emerging genre of 'green lifestyle' television, functioning to simultaneously entertain and educate viewers about sustainable ways of living (Parkins and Craig 2006; Phillipov 2016). Bell and Hollows suggest that this form of lifestyle television works to popularise ideas of ethical consumption, making apparent the distinction between 'ethical' and 'unethical' lifestyles (2011, 179). This is noticeable in the central construct of programmes such as *Gourmet Farmer* in which the host appears to have arrived at the realisation that a good life and good food are found outside the city. Moreover, the urban is associated with a less healthy and fulfilling life, and with foods of lesser quality, despite the diversity on offer.

The downshifting, tree change narrative format of the television programmes discussed above is generally one dominated by male hosts and it is uncommon to see representations of women within this form. Both Evans and his UK counterpart, Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall of the *River Cottage* series are both middle class, white professional males who occupy a privileged position in their obvious mobility, and in the choices they have made as a reaction to the pace and consumerism of contemporary life, to lead simpler, more frugal lives; decisions seemingly made of free-will and not borne out of the coercive forces of poverty, government policy or religion. Such choices entail a degree of economic independence and stability (Etzioni 1998). Hence, these programmes are also classed; the individual lifestyle choices described above are in actuality only accessible to a privileged few (Skeggs 2004).

Lewis, like Monbiot (2007), claims that ethical consumption is 'increasingly associated with social distinction' (2008, 238). This is bought home to the *Gourmet Farmer* viewer, few of whom are likely to have the means to relinquish regular paid employment to purchase a farm and remake their lives. Similarly, the quality gourmet products which Evans encourages viewers to consume can be equally inaccessible. The locally-produced

olive oil he purchases in episode nine, for example, costs \$90 per litre, considerably more than that readily available in supermarkets (Series 1:9). Evans states that the old-fashioned wood-fired cooker he purchases for his farm kitchen, 'costs as much as a car'. In the third season he purchases a further property to expand his farming enterprise. While green lifestyle television goes some way in educating viewers about how to consume ethically, at the same time it also conveys potent messages about class.

It is important to observe that *Gourmet Farmer* is a production of a public broadcasting network, SBS, which has, at times, had a problematic role in the Australian media in attempting to simultaneously serve both ethnic audiences and the elite tastes of cosmopolitan viewers (Jacka 2003). Gunders (2008) argues that while commercially produced programmes such as *My Kitchen Rules* and *Ready, Steady, Cook* tend to emphasise competitiveness and drama between contestants, public broadcasters generally focus on the authenticity of cuisines and cooking techniques. These are of secondary importance in food programmes on commercial networks which tend to utilise readily available, often pre-made ingredients such as packaged stocks that are convenient and accessible over those that are thought authentic. It is unsurprising then that SBS has been described as the channel preferred by the 'foodie' who places greater importance on authentic foods and related traditions (de Solier 2008).

The focus on food by this network has culminated in the introduction of the free to air SBS Food Network in 2015, which only screens food television programmes. De Solier (2008) argues that an earlier SBS programme, hosted by Maeve O'Meara and Joanna Savill, *The Food Lover's Guide to Australia* (1997) marked a noticeable shift in the direction of culinary television programming for public broadcasting networks in Australia. While commercial networks continued to produce personal, home and garden makeover, and travel shows, public broadcasters deliberately honed in on the niche genre of food programming. De Solier claims that *The Food Lover's Guide to Australia* overtly targeted a new viewer demographic; the food lover or what has come to be known as the 'foodie' (2008, 65). The shift in programming is part of what she calls the 'foodie makeover of public television' in Australia (de Solier 2008).

### **Matthew Evans – The Gourmet Farmer**

Evans encapsulates the essence of the 'foodie' in seeking out experiences of real food (Barr & Levy 1984). He is a white, middle class professional who moves effortlessly between various media forms, encapsulating Lury's (2004) notion of food presenters as 'living brands', who transform the often homogenous exchange between the producer and consumer into an ongoing, familiar relationship. Along with his work as a food writer in the print media for *Vogue Australia*, *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Evans has penned several food related books, including the *Lonely Planet's* (2000) guide to the food of Italy and *The Sydney Morning Herald's Good Food Guide* (2002). Since relocating to Tasmania he has written *The Real Food Companion* (2010), *Winter on the Farm* (2011), *The Gourmet Farmer Goes Fishing: The Fish to Eat and How to Cook It* (2015) and *Not Just*

*Jam: The Fat Pig Farm Book of Preserves, Pickles and Sauces* (2016), all of which extol the virtues of sourcing and eating local, real food. Along with fellow foodies and *Gourmet Farmer* regulars, Ross O'Meara and Nick Haddow, he has also written *The Gourmet Farmer Deli Book* (2012). Besides his media roles, Evans, along with O'Meara and Haddow, formed the company *Rare Food* during season one of the programme, which produces a range of *charcuterie* (preserved meat) products sold through a market stall at Hobart's Salamanca Place. Evans and Haddow currently run a produce store, *A Common Ground*, in the same location, which appears in the third season of *Gourmet Farmer*.

The first series of *Gourmet Farmer* works by constructing a dichotomy between Evans' previous urban life and that of the life he has chosen in Tasmania. In the opening sequence to the series Evans states that he 'was Sydney's most feared food critic', and contains images of a business suit and takeaway coffee cup, creating a sense of stress and speed. This works to establish an explicit division between the city and the country and the inauthentic and the natural, central to the overarching narrative of the series. There is a ruthlessness associated with Evans' previous city based life, in contrast to the nobility of his farm life. On the farm, he forms rewarding, reciprocal relationships with those who provide him with produce and assist with establishing his new life, and develops familiar relationships with his animals.

*Gourmet Farmer* re-imagines regional Australia as a land of plenty, rich with food possibilities of the finest quality waiting to be discovered by the informed and conscientious consumer (Phillipov 2016). The sense of the importance of quality food is pervasive in the series and most notably it provides Evans with the initial impetus to remake his life. It was the desire for fresh milk in particular that Evans claims set him on the path to seek out and produce quality produce (Evans 2010). The prioritising of quality food reflects a longing for a broader increased quality of life. A central part of ensuring superior food experiences includes the preservation of local food traditions and reinvigorating a sense of community around food in response to the practices associated with the mass production of food in a globalised market; fast food, factory farming and so on. These are aspirations that Evans shares with the global Slow Food movement which also bemoans mass, non-discretionary consumption because of its disconnection from natural processes and because the food produced in these conditions is rarely fresh or local (Petrini 2001).

Season two of *Gourmet Farmer* brings a new dilemma for Evans which is articulated in the opening sequence to that series; the arrival of his partner, Sadie Chrestman and their child, Hedley, to *Puggle Farm*. Evans' voiceover here adds to the new focus of the season 'Just when I thought I had it all figured out along comes Sadie...'. After a year alone on the farm he appears to have, to a degree, come to terms with his new life. However, his newly ensconced family provides him with further challenges; the foremost is that the farm must now provide them all a livelihood. The installation of a seemingly ready-made family reminds the viewer of how much of his 'new' life they are actually privy to. While it is not a requirement that Evans share all his life with the audience, the repeated

narrative of the series is that he is starting over. This suggests that what is shown in the series is a 'whole life'. The appearance of a partner and toddler makes obvious the reality that the series is creating a constructed version of life, and so undermines its claims to represent a 'real' life.

### **Real Food, Real Life**

Central to Evans' life in bucolic Tasmania is food, particularly the quality of the food he produces and consumes, and the role it plays in situating him in a new lifestyle and within a community of like-minded locals who share his values. Within this context the concept of the real operates as an ideal: a way to determine how and what one should consume in order to live meaningfully, ethically and authentically. It is a term frequently used in television in relation to food and associated traditions, but rarely clearly defined, and therefore, easily appropriated. While the real may seem ostensibly simple, this series asserts a particular understanding which is, at times, problematic in its emphasis on understanding and experiencing the real through consumption.

The various uses of the real in *Gourmet Farmer* reveal that it has become a distinctive form of branding, appealing to the contemporary viewers' desires for connection and truth. Hence, the real has strong emotional connotations. The power of real is even more significant in this context given the intimate connection individuals have with what they eat (Kneafsey, Holloway, Cox, Dowler, Venn & Tuomaine 2008). Food, and television representations of it, are some of the few ways that the real can be materialised in a physical form, making it accessible and available to the consumer; an object that can be seen, touched, acquired, and taken into the body, albeit vicariously. This is made more pertinent given the 'urge to turn to food for security and nurturance', when 'many of the other certainties in our lives are crumbling' (Iggers 1996, XIV), reinforced by the fact that many of the food products available in modern supermarkets are more like what popular food commentator, Michael Pollan calls, 'edible foodlike substances', rather than actual food (2007, 1).

Evans uses the real to encapsulate his approach to food and its production, adopting it in the title of his cookbook, *The Real Food Companion* (2010). Originally understood as that which actually exists, or alternatively something which is not artificial or fake, real, in relation to contemporary food cultures, has come to symbolise produce that is unlike anything produced using conventional food production practices, which are capital-intensive and large scale. These conventions frequently involve the wide use of artificial pesticides, herbicides and fertilisers. In contrast, real food is produced at a local level, or home-made from quality ingredients (Pietrykowski 2004). It is epitomised by the 'Real Ale' movement in the UK, which seeks a return to traditional brewing methods, an undertaking sometimes criticised as a pursuit of the middle classes (Gofton 1983).

Real food is also a term loaded with moral connotations and linked with produce thought superior in quality and hence, better for the consumer and producer, both physically and

ethically. There are numerous indicators in *Gourmet Farmer* which offer some idea as to what real may signify in relation to the food featured in the series. While making goats milk ice-cream in episode two, Evans describes the eggs he uses as real, stating that 'you can tell they are real' because of their imperfect exterior (Series 1:2). These eggs are not uniform in appearance and are flawed in contrast to those produced by caged-hens, available in supermarkets which give the impression of being more standardised. Real food, therefore, is not always aesthetically pleasing. It associated with production that is less intensive and aligned with natural processes, and consuming such food is intricately linked to living in a more authentic way.

To eat real food is to eat seasonally; produce that is naturally available and best at any given time of the year. The technological advances of modern industrialised food production such as the use of artificial preservatives and refrigeration, have allowed for the rapid circulation of products over great distances, standardising food manufacturing practices and allowing many to eat most foods at any time of the year (Pietrykowski 2004). The environmental impact of mass food transportation such as increased greenhouse emissions have in turn spurred the 'locavore' movement, which aims to decrease 'food miles', by encouraging the consumption of locally produced food whenever possible, a view that Evans shares (Engelhaupt 2008).

Evans' own homespun philosophy of 'one degree of separation', which he explains in *Gourmet Farmer* and more extensively in *The Real Food Cookbook* (2010), is a micro interpretation of the manifesto of the Slow Food movement. In the first episode of season one he introduces the viewer to his hopes and dreams for a new rural life; 'I believe that to really know and trust your food, you need to either grow it yourself, or to be or no more than one degree of separation from the person who did' (Series 1:1). 'One degree of separation' or the 'new food philosophy' maps out the ideal physical distance between consumer and producer (Evans 2010, 16). Living on a farm Evans is able to grow and rear his own produce and live in geographical proximity to those other producers who supply him with what he can't produce himself, something he was unable to achieve in his earlier city-based life. Beyond the second degree of separation, Evans writes that food becomes 'just stuff for sale in a shop and any personal assurances count for nothing', as it is for many Western consumers living in urban areas (2010, 16).

The *Gourmet Farmer* reiterates his commitment to real food by consuming food when it is best, or by storing or preserving such food to be used at a later date. In episode three Evans visits a local farmer, 'George the Greek' who provides him with tomatoes needed to make *passata* - a sauce which can be stored and later used in various dishes. Evans gathers his 'friends' together to partake in the Italian tradition of *passata* making which he tells the audience is usually done by the extended family and the resulting 'spoils' shared amongst them (Series 1:3). In this act he is regenerating a seasonal tradition borrowed from European peasants. At the same time, he is also recreating a new kind of community in bringing people together to participate in the practice. He does the same in

season three in an episode titled *Breaking down a Pig*, when he gathers various locals to spend the day making a range of products from a freshly slaughtered animal (Series 3:6).

In *The Real Food Companion* Evans writes that in Australia, unlike in France and Italy, 'We are devoid of a peasant food history', and that '...we are now building a repertoire of great produce never before seen in the world' (2010, 12). This is a view originally put forward by Symmons in his history of post-colonial eating in Australia, *One Continuous Picnic*, '... without an agrarian tradition, we never developed knowledge of natural resources, experience in cultivation and cooking, or a self-respecting national cuisine' (1982, 300). Instead, Symmons (1982) uses the metaphor of a picnic to describe the tradition of eating and drinking in Australia, suggesting that the past relationship with food has been, to a degree, somewhat opportunistic. Part of Evans' culinary movement includes the appropriation of those select parts of other, mostly European peasant cuisines that are appealing to the foodie, such as in the *passata* making scene discussed above. In contrast to the in-authenticity inherent in the contemporary world of 'plastic humanity', it is 'the poor, the oppressed, the violent, and the primitive' that are, according to Trilling, ascribed as real (1972, 102). Another example of the reclamation of peasant cuisines is exemplified in the appropriation of offal by the foodie, which is now, as Strong (2006) argues, synonymous with distinction when previously associated with cuisines of the lower classes, of not being able to afford better cuts of meat. In the first season of *Gourmet Farmer* Evans visits a local Hobart woman, originally from Serbia, who teaches him how to prepare and cook the internal organs of a pig (Series 1:2). One of the dishes prepared involves wrapping meatballs made out of these organs in the membrane of intestines, then baking them in a sauce. When Evans tries the dish he likens the taste to 'really concentrated meat'.

Evans' suggestion that Australian cuisine, up until the 1980s, when a transformation of Australian cuisine was declared, was somehow devoid of its own working-class food customs, ignores Indigenous food practices as well as the long practiced food traditions of baking, roasting, pickling and preserving (Newman & Gibson 2005). In fact, as Newman and Gibson argue, such Anglo-Australian fare has come to symbolise all that must be left behind in the move towards a 'multicultural society'; 'a bland, homogenous culture, dominated by stultifying British precedents and lacking in innovation and flair' (2005, 84). Evans' selective appropriation of peasant culinary customs is nostalgic and disregards the harsh realities of peasant life, including the gendered work on which such food practices depend.

The 'nose-to-tail' eating scene described previously reflects an important aspect of Evans' food philosophy and his decision to become an ethical, sustainable producer. All parts of the animal must be consumed and nothing wasted. The offal used in the scene is actually from Evans' own pigs which he has had slaughtered at a local abattoir. There are numerous scenes of animal slaughter throughout the series including a scene when another farmer instructs Evans on killing his chickens, using a killing cone; a contraption where a chicken is placed upside down, in order to make it simpler and quicker for

slaughter, apparently minimising stress for the animal (Series 1:5). Parry claims these gastronomic texts form part of what media commentators call the 'New Carnivore' movement which 'strive to present animals becoming meat as a humane, benevolent and wholly 'natural' process' (2010, 381). Consuming meat produced through the method gives one a kind of moral authority in that it acknowledges the 'bloody facts' of eating meat (Strong 2006, 35). In killing animals Evans demonstrates his self-sufficiency and the sometimes harsh reality that goes along with real food consumption. The sometimes cruel reality of mass meat production systems are usually unseen by consumers.

Another concern that Evans shares with the Slow Food movement is that of the increasing use of genetically modified crops and their impact on the diversity of local foods, as well as the ability of local growers to choose what and how to grow their crops. The Slow Food Ark Manifesto seeks to identify, protect and promote foods in danger of extinction, such as heritage breeds of livestock and endangered seeds, grains and fruits, as well as protecting the producers of these commodities (Meneley 2004). Evans too, mourns the loss of diversity in produce. When visiting a local apple grower, Bob Morgan, Evans appears astonished to discover that there are more than two hundred varieties of apples grown on the farm, the kind of apples that Evans says 'you dream of buying' (Series 1:4). Evans states that these apples are not uniform or perfect in appearance as are those purchased in supermarket chains, where longevity and appearance are of primary importance and 'flavour isn't necessarily a consideration' (Series 1:3). Today, many supermarkets only offer five to six common varieties of apples, such as Granny Smith, Golden Delicious, Fuji, Gala and Red Delicious. These are varieties which are easily harvested, respond well to pesticides and mass production, have fairly uniform tastes and able to withstand the perils of transportation and refrigeration without destroying their exterior (Patel 2007).

While Evans does not blatantly identify with the Slow Food philosophy in season one of *Gourmet Farmer*, in season two he is invited to travel to Italy to participate in the Slow Food movement's annual salon – *Salone Del Gusto*, an event which brings together small food producers from around the world (Series 2:9). In many ways Evans encapsulates the essence of the movement, having rejected a fast-paced city based life in favour of a rural life centred on the production of artisanal produce. He deliberately ensconces himself in a local community of like-minded producers, who, like him, are often refugees from city life and share his values of authenticity and love of fresh, home-grown produce. He participates in an alternative economy of barter where favours appear naturally reciprocated, regenerating an age old system of goods and services exchange. When his friend, Jen Owen, comes to instruct him on how to kill a chicken, he in turn prepares a meal to share with her (Series 1:5). Similarly when a local, unidentified man comes to 'dispatch' one of his lambs, Evans tells viewers that, 'I'll invite him over later for a roast, keep the favours flowing' (Series 1:8). It is an economy based on mutual obligation, shared values and moral accountability.

## Conclusion

The subsequent seasons of *Gourmet Farmer* depict Evans further establishing himself as a food producer and part of the rural community of Cygnet, Tasmania. In season three he purchases another property he names *Fat Pig Farm*, expanding his enterprise. He opens a produce store in Hobart's Salamanca Place, *A Common Ground*, and continues to produce cookbooks. Moreover, his partner and child are now well-established characters in the programme's narrative. Where the first season appears to be a trial at living authentically, the following seasons depict more of an actual, ongoing life rather than an experiment. Evans appears to have successfully managed the transition from urban professional to farmer. He has shown viewers that it is possible to live in a simpler, albeit ideal, way; a way that attempts to replicate life prior to industrialisation and urbanisation (Beck *et.al* 1994).

However, the ideal vision of agrarian life based around the production and consumption of real food that *Gourmet Farmer* presents, may be out of reach for most viewers for whom relocating and purchasing a farm is impossible. The lifestyle it promotes is aspirational, and powerfully classed. Nevertheless, the programme offers a vicarious experience of this lifestyle, through which viewers can express taste and values by opting to view it. Although a similar relocation is unattainable for many, sampling and producing real food may be an affordable way of accessing this lifestyle. Just as Evans is seen tasting peasant cuisines, others can sample the artisanal foods of the middle-class which he represents.

The real has an important function in *Gourmet Farmer* as it signifies the aspirations of select consumers such as Evans and those in his food community, and acts as an anchor for audiences in navigating the complexity of contemporary food systems. In channelling food consumption away from corporations towards smaller, artisanal producers, *Gourmet Farmer* values seasonal food that is produced locally, and without artificial pesticides and chemicals. In doing so the series attempts to address the contemporary hunger for the real and offer reassurance to consumers in its visions of alternative ways of consumption (Iggers 1996). Therefore, the concern with the real can be understood as another form of market branding and not an actual challenge to the mechanisms of capitalism, reinforcing the notion of lifestyle creation through consumption.

As programmes about food such as *Gourmet Farmer* continue to be a staple and popular form of television in Australia and globally, they will continue to generate opportunities for both scholars and audiences to explore issues of identity and lifestyle in the contemporary era. Recent food programming has seen new formats broadcast on both public and commercial networks in Australia, in addition to the continued screening of familiar celebrity chefs' series such as Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson, Rick Stein and Heston Blumenthal. Food continues to be a key preoccupation of Australian television programmes, continuing to provide a rich source of material for further cultural analysis.

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