

Chef of the Year' cooks up the next Great Barrier Feast

Celebrated chef, Ben Shewry from Melbourne restaurant Attica who was recently named 'Chef of the Year' by The Age's Good Food Guide 2011, will host Hamilton Island's third event in the Great Barrier Feast series on 26 to 28 November at the world-class luxury resort, qualia.

Over the gourmet weekend, food and wine lovers will enjoy postcard perfect views of the Coral Sea and surrounding Whitsunday Islands whilst enjoying a beachside welcome dinner, a Veuve Clicquot-paired lunch, a cooking master class and a showpiece degustation dinner.

Known for his inventive modern European cuisine, Ben Shewry's self-described 'emo' food is a combination of hand foraged ingredients, traditional flavours and molecular culinary technique. 2010 has been Shewry's year of accolades with him being invited to be the first ever Victorian Chef to present his cuisine at the "Madrid Fusion" in Spain in January and his restaurant Attica ranked 73rd on the San Pellegrino World's 100 Best Restaurants list.

Renowned wine critic, James Halliday will attend and pair wines for the weekend meals including selections from the Robert Oatley Vineyards range. The emcee for the weekend will be former MasterChef presenter, Sarah Wilson.

The November weekend will include the following events:

- Beachside welcome dinner at Pebble Beach, qualia, by the resort's executive chef, Jane-Therese Mulry. Jane-Therese is an acclaimed chef and was appointed Marco Pierre White's first female chef when she was working in his London kitchens.
- Electrolux Master Class, providing an exclusive two-hour cooking instruction by Shewry.
- Veuve Clicquot intimate lunch at the Long Pavilion, qualia, offering guests the opportunity to interact with Shewry.
- Showpiece dinner at qualia in which Shewry will take guests through the preparation of his culinary delights direct from the kitchen. This will be visible to guests through a live camera link-up.

Nicky Oatley, Hamilton Island special events manager, commented, "Ben Shewry's distinctive style, both high-tech and primal has delighted diners from all over the world. We are thrilled to be bringing Shewry to qualia for guests to learn cooking tips from the 'Chef of the Year' and to showcase the Whitsunday's premium local produce."

The Great Barrier Feast series consists of exclusive chef's table events, promising to showcase the finest food and wine within a world class setting. The weekend in November follows the success of the July event which featured acclaimed chef Justin North, and the inaugural March event which was hosted by internationally acclaimed chef, Tetsuya Wakuda.

Luxury Accommodation Packages

Luxury accommodation packages are being offered for the gourmet weekend and guests can choose between accommodation at the premier luxury resort of qualia or the boutique Beach Club. For qualia packages, prices start from \$1,550 per person, based on twin share *. Beach Club packages are from \$1,195 per person, based on twin share*. For more information about this event, please contact the Luxury Specialist team by email: luxuryspecialist@hamiltonisland.com.au, tel: 1300 780 959 or www.hamiltonisland.com.au/feast/

Group accommodation options include the new Hamilton Island Yacht Club Villas, a collection of private waterfront four-bedroom, four-bathroom Villas ideal for a group getaway of up to eight people with family and friends (the Great Barrier Feast is available to guests 18 years and over). Complimentary concierge services available for guests include priority tee times at the new Hamilton Island Golf Club and bookings at Spa qualia (exclusive facilities available by invitation-only for non-qualia guests).

-ENDS-

Notes to editors:

*Packages include two nights' accommodation; breakfasts both days; *Welcome Dinner* by qualia executive chef, Jane-Therese Mulry; *Electrolux Master Class*; *Veuve Clicquot Lunch* on Saturday; *Showpiece Dinner* on Saturday night prepared by Shewry; VIP chauffeur service; VIP return Hamilton Island Airport/Marina transfers and use of non-motorised watercraft. qualia packages also include the hire of a golf buggy. The Great Barrier Feast is available to guests 18 years and over.

Biographies:

Chef, Ben Shewry

A native New Zealander, Shewry believes that food can be evocative, emotional, and thought provoking. With his cooking, he aims to appeal to all of the senses with the purity of each ingredient. The volcanoes, rivers, ocean, and native bush surrounding his hometown of North Taranaki serve as his inspiration today. These childhood memories prompt the artistically plated dishes he turns out each evening at Attica. His unmatched expertise in the field was recognised most recently with an appearance as the first ever Victorian Chef to present his cuisine at the "Madrid Fusion" in January 2010, voted the Chef of the Year for The Age's Good Food Guide 2010 as well as with Attica ranking 73rd on the San Pellegrino World's 100 Best Restaurants 2010 list.

James Halliday

James' career started in law, before moving into winemaking, writing and judging in the 1970s. Since establishing the wineries of Brokenwood and Coldstream Hills, Halliday has written over 60 books and been a significant contributor to others, including *Oxford Companion to Wine* and *Hugh Johnson Pocket Guide*. Many of his books have been translated into other languages, such as French, German and Japanese. He continues to write, judge and consult and has a weekly wine column for the Weekend Australian newspaper. He is often described as 'Australia's leading wine writer'.

Sarah Wilson

An Australian journalist and television presenter, Sarah presented the first season of the highly acclaimed cooking show, MasterChef Australia. Before MasterChef, Wilson was the restaurant reviewer and editor of Australian Cosmopolitan magazine until 2007.

Robert Oatley Vineyards

Robert Oatley Vineyards marks Bob Oatley's return to the winemaking business. The winemaking company began in 2006, evolving from seven of the family's existing vineyard sites in Mudgee – properties that had been retained since the sale of Rosemount Estate. Bob Oatley's homestead and home-block vineyard in Mudgee adjoin the historic Montrose property, comprising a superb vineyard and the region's largest winery, which was purchased in 2006 to serve as the family's winemaking headquarters. The wine brands include: Robert Oatley, Wild Oats, James Oatley TIC TOK and the re-launched Montrose range.

Image library: Hi-res images of Ben Shewry are available in the 'Food and Wine' category to download free of charge for editorial use. www.hamiltonisland.com.au/imagelibrary

Media contacts:

Joanne Wilkinson, PR, Hamilton Island

0416 036 713

jwilkinson@hamiltonisland.com.au

Jill Collins, PR, Hamilton Island

0417 654 474

jcollins@hamiltonisland.com.au