# FLAVOURS TO SAVOUR

Falcon Brae Villa and Stonefly Lodge

DinnerMenu Smoked Salmon Cucumber Cup Pretzel Roll

Beetroot and Avocado Salad with etroot and Avocado Salad with Goats Cheese and Hazelnuts Chefis Wine Suggestion Blanc Saint Clair Sauvignon Blanc

Pan Fried John Dory with Pea Puddings

Pan Fried John Dory with Pea Puddings

Pan Fried John Doratoes and Kalamata Olives iel 3 Milie Judgestini.

# FLAVOURS TO SAVOUR

Falcon Brae Villa and Stonefly Lodge

With

EXECUTIVE CHEF MICHAEL McMEEKEN

CHEF NIGEL BETHWAITE

Photography by Chocolate Dog Studio

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## INTRODUCTION

This book has been a work in progress for many years. It evolved, initially, from the numerous requests from our guests for recipes. We recall, fondly, even receiving phone calls from overseas from past visitors asking for a certain recipe of a dish they enjoyed at Stonefly so they could prepare it to delight their own dinner guests.

This led us to develop and write up some of the favourite recipes ready to send by email at short notice and print some to hand to guests to take home with them. Sometimes, guests who frequent Stonefly regularly ask to have certain favourite meals on their return, which influenced some of the recipes selected for this book.

The ultimate solution was to develop a book, for both past and present guests currently enjoying the cuisine offered at Stonefly Lodge and Falcon Brae Villa, where our chefs and wait staff move seamlessly, producing the same exciting menus at both venues. We have a long list of contacts who have been waiting for this book and we are pleased to finally present these favourite recipes along with many new inspirations.

Our executive chef, Michael McMeeken, is continually pushing the boundaries and inventing new dishes that delight our diners. We are sure you will find the format of this book easy to use and fun to delve into, with an elegant design and that hint of nostalgia we all seek.

Kate and John Kerr Stonefly Lodge

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Lodge owners and hosts Kate & John Kerr with Kenzi

## THE STORY OF STONEFLY

For five years, Kate and John Kerr travelled from Australia every summer to scour the South Island for an elusive property to suit their needs. They wanted to move to New Zealand and build an international fly-fishing lodge that would ultimately be their retirement home.

When they eventually found it, they could see its potential - but also the work ahead of them. The 156-acre property had been planted in pine trees with only a small basic bach (cottage) located along the riverfront of the Motueka River. There was no water, power, heating or lighting, so the initial task was to make the bach usable so they could live there while they developed the infrastructure. Roadworks, water supply, and an alternative off-grid power supply using solar, hydro and wind turbines were all needed before the building could even start, which took another three years.

Most of the construction timber was sourced from the pines on the property, felled and milled on site, along with all the river stones sourced for the build, while the small team of hard-working carpenters and labourers were also locals.

Stonefly Lodge opened to the public in 2009. Since then Kate and John have enjoyed entertaining guests at Stonefly from all parts of the world, and they have become good friends with many who have visited year after year. And now guests can enjoy the luxurious Falcon Brae Villa as an alternative.

## THE STORY OF FALCON BRAE

Following the sale of the family's private company in the USA, Stacey and Don Fergusson travelled extensively, staying at luxury villas, hotels and lodges in France, Italy, the Caribbean, Hawaii, Fiji, Australia, and New Zealand, making notes of what made each one special. They dreamed about one day having a lodge themselves, and they settled on the Nelson area in which to look for a property. It was an easy decision. They liked its mild climate and highest number of sunshine hours in New Zealand on average, the spectacular beauty, world-class trout fishing, fine local wineries, three national parks nearby, and easy international access.

In 2009, Stacey happened to see an advertisement for Stonefly Lodge opening in the coming season. Months later, Don stayed at Stonefly, caught his first 9-pound brown trout, and began a conversation with the owners, Kate and John Kerr, about collaborating on a project someday. Each year, Don returned to continue the fishing - and the conversation.

At one point, John said, 'Well, if that sheep station next door ever comes up for sale, that would work.' But it had been in the same family for more than 70 years; the odds of a sale seemed low. However, in 2016, the Fergussons did acquire the farm and the dream of owning a villa began.

After three years of development, under the supervision of Stonefly Lodge, the new luxury Falcon Brae Villa opened in December 2019. The Fergussons designed the floor plan, their style brought to life by local architects and interior designers, and the same masonry artist lined it with local stone. Furniture, fabrics and materials showcase New Zealand talent, with most of the joinery, cabinetry, furniture, carpets and other furnishings sourced and made here. Much of the art was purchased from local galleries and artists.



Villa owners Stacey & Don Fergusson and son, Quinn

Both the lodge and villa operate under Stonefly management and they share a passionate team of professionals who are proud to provide the dining experiences and cuisine.





## THE LODGE

Stonefly Lodge is designed to meet the needs of the most discerning traveller and yet provide real home comforts and hospitality from its experienced hosts.

The lodge's interior focuses on the large stone double-sided fireplace, which provides ambience to the games room, dining and sun rooms. A large open kitchen adjoining the dining area offers a relaxed atmosphere where guests sit together; however, private dining can also be catered for. Breakfasts are served on the guest room private balcony. The food is made fresh from the extensive garden with home-made produce, local quality meats and fresh seasonal seafood. Special diets are easily catered for.

Complete with library, snooker table, and the Matai Bar, guests will have the ideal setting to relax after an exciting day's fly fishing or having explored the sites and attractions of the local region. Four guest rooms are located upstairs complete with ensuites, and each with a balcony overlooking the Motueka River and surrounding mountains.

The upper landing above the dining room provides a quiet, secluded place to utilise our fly tying area and guest computer or just indulge in a game of chess or relax with a good book, before retiring to your accommodation.

This multi-award-winning lodge has been recognised for excellence in its sensitive development and environmental sustainability. The total complex is powered by alternative energy sources built onsite to reduce the project's environmental footprint.

The lodge has been designed for entertainment and is also ideal for private functions, weekend getaways or exclusive events.





## THE VILLA

Falcon Brae Villa is as perfect for multigenerational families as it is for those seeking total privacy.

The villa is perched on a hilltop high above Stonefly Lodge, with spectacular 360-degree views over the surrounding mountains and the majestic Motueka River below. It is located on 350 acres of property, surrounded on two sides by rivers, including a private forest and spectacular native bush walks.

The architecturally designed contemporary residence features a large central lounge area with a 5-metre-high ceiling, sunken bar, grand piano, media theatre, commercial kitchen and three dining areas, and a stunning collection of New Zealand and local art.

The large deck space overlooks the mountains and river, featuring a pool & outdoor heated spa, and barbeque area for dining and entertaining with a shaded pergola. Directly in front of the helipad terrace is the games den, where guests can use gym equipment, pool table, table tennis, darts and a games table.

The entire luxurious villa can be booked for exclusive use with a private chef and house staff, offering complete privacy, and for groups of up to 10 guests (six adults & up to four children) with access to three individual suites and an additional bunk-bed room. For larger groups, there is the option of renting both the villa and Stonefly Lodge, with a total capacity of 14 adults and 4 children.

As with Stonefly Lodge, Falcon Brae Villa is completely off-the-grid with solar panels providing all the power required. Centrally located between three national parks, the villa is an ideal luxury private retreat, of the highest of standards, providing easy access to all the major activities in the Nelson-Tasman region.











## EXECUTIVE CHEF MICHAEL McMEEKEN

Executive Chef Michael McMeeken of Stonefly Lodge and Falcon Brae Villa is a humble chef with a notable career. Born and bred in Southland, New Zealand, Michael honed his culinary skills in some of the world's most highly regarded restaurants and he has worked under some of the world's leading culinary authorities. These include chefs Thomas Keller of Per Se, Daniel Boulud in Café Boulud, Palm Beach, and also in Marcus (formerly known as Petrus) in the famed Berkeley Hotel in London, England, under Marcus Wareing and Gordon Ramsay.

Michael has found his place at Stonefly Lodge and Falcon Brae Villa. He heads up a small, talented team to provide a unique culinary experience. His approach to food consists of multiple layers. 'We use the best quality, local, sustainable produce, including our onsite gardens, fruit and nut trees, and beehives, as well as sourcing ingredients from the surrounding native and pine forests, and the Motueka River right on our doorstep. Pair this with each dish, telling a story of a memorable experience or inspiration, plus unpretentious cookery, and you're in for a treat.'



### CHEF NIGEL BETHWAITE

Nigel Bethwaite is a Nelson-born chef. He trained in classic Italian cuisine in Australia, and then spent 10 years in the New Zealand restaurant scene, sharing kitchens with some amazing and talented people. A meticulous and patient chef, he takes pride in balancing taste, texture and colour to produce memorable and distinctive food. He says, 'The lodge and villa are exceptional venues to work in, and I love the focus on locally sourced ingredients, either foraged or made by passionate local people.'



## **OUR FOOD PHILOSOPHY**

Like any cook, I am instilled with a desire to use fresh, quality produce from as local a source as possible. I need a personal connection, someone I can call on to discuss ideas for some crazy dish I want to make that involves salsify, when the usual greengrocer doesn't know what salsify is, let alone is able to get any for me. The freshest fish, line-caught and delivered to my door, or a cheese-monger who knows I'm playing around with a new idea and offers me a first sample to work with. These are the snippets of magic that inspire us humble cooks.

From the first interview with Kate and John Kerr, and setting my sights on the slice of paradise they have created up the Motueka River in Stanley Brook, I could see they shared this same ethos: a passion and an art for pleasing guests through food.

John and Kate have set up the most extraordinary garden. There are numerous fruit trees such as fig, quince, apple, plum, peach, olive, feijoa, chestnut and walnut, along with beehives, grape vines, glasshouses filled with tomatoes, chillies, herbs and raspberries, fruits, vegetables and flowers, chickens for farm-fresh eggs, ducks, sheep and even alpacas (not for the kitchen!). These supplement what nature already provides here in the form of native and pine forests, wetlands, rivers and brooks, rolling hills and grassy meadows. And the Kerrs are not resting there. The orchards and gardens are currently being extended to reach 100 per cent supply of produce to the kitchens, preserving any excess.

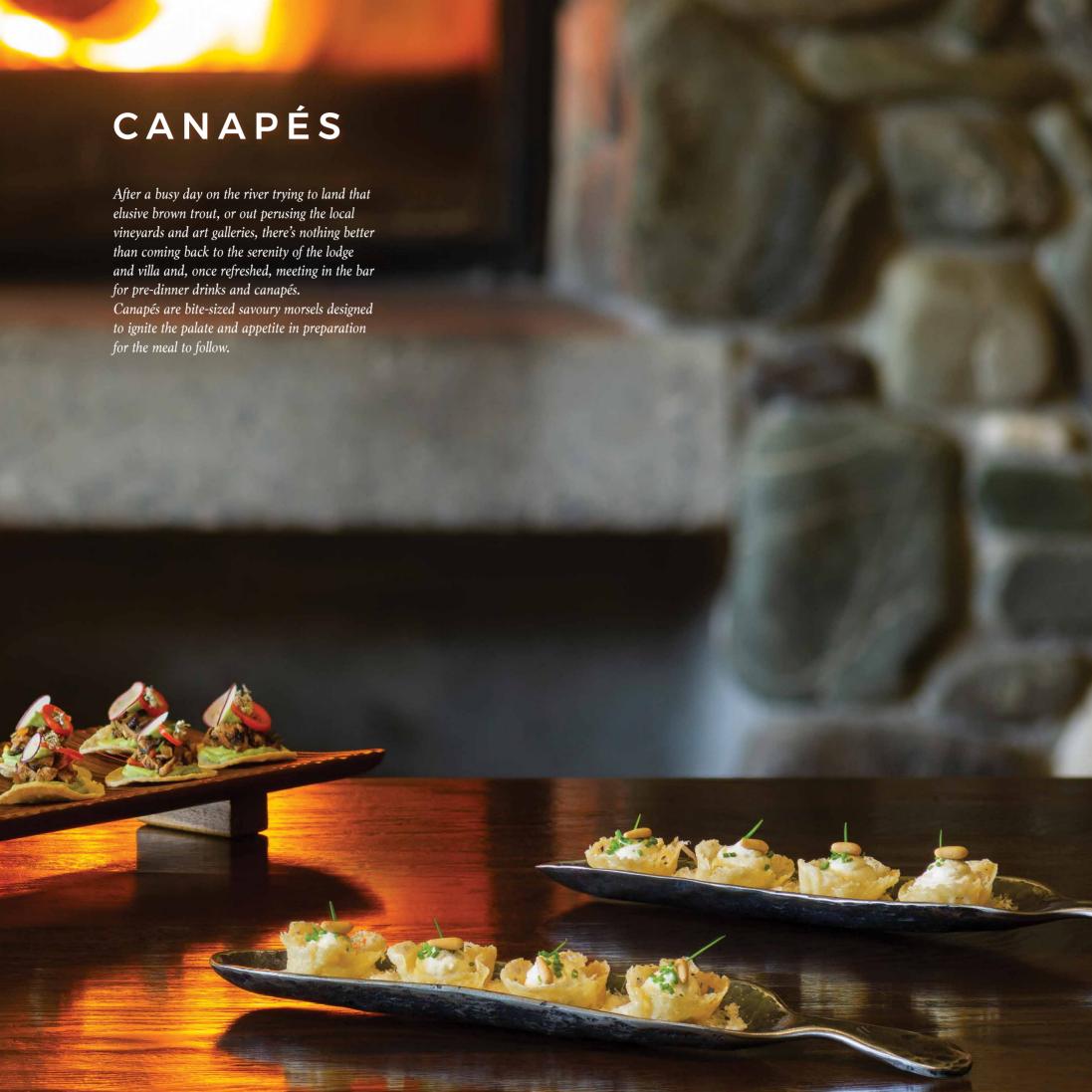
The inspiration for the food we create at the lodge and villa is provided by the gardens and nature surrounding us, but also by like-minded locals in the surrounding area. A great example of this can be found on the quiet country Neudorf Road, situated halfway between Nelson and Motueka. I have never seen anything like it in all my travels. This one stretch of road is filled with a new generation of foodies who provide a variety and quality of products that are unparalleled. There are strawberries, wild mushrooms, truffles, olive groves, black garlic, smallgoods and charcuterie, proper cheeses, award-winning wines and talented artists. It doesn't stop there, either. As you explore further into the region, you discover more and more like-minded people. It's a true kete or basket of love in this district – in New Zealand, for that matter.

It's a cook's dream. There is so much inspiration to pull on for our menus and for our guests. For us, it is about recreating our experience of tasting these pieces of goodness and turning them into modern dishes wrapped in nostalgia.

Michael McMeeken Executive chef







# BREAD

Pretzel rolls (recipe, page 27)

Multigrain rolls (recipe, page 25)

Bread, at its essence, requires just three ingredients: flour, water and yeast. However, it is crucial that these ingredients are fresh, of high quality, and used correctly to produce good bread.

The types of flours to use in bread making are so varied. We use a top quality New Zealand-made baker's flour for our recipes, which is blended with other types of flour where specified. As with flour, yeast is also an important ingredient. Always ensure it is fresh bread-making yeast.

A good stand-mixer is worth its weight in gold when it comes to bread making. Make sure it is large enough to handle the quantities the following recipes produce, otherwise you'll have a floury mess to clean up or a burnt-out motor. We use KitchenAid stand mixers in our kitchens.

During the course of the evening meal, at our two accommodations, we offer two bread services, the first as the guests are seated for the commencement of the meal and the second just before the main course is presented. The purpose of bread service for us is to showcase the skills of the kitchen, to create an added element of surprise for the guests, and because it is perfect for 'mopping up' the juices off the plate to enjoy every last drop.

Parker House rolls (recipe, page 26)

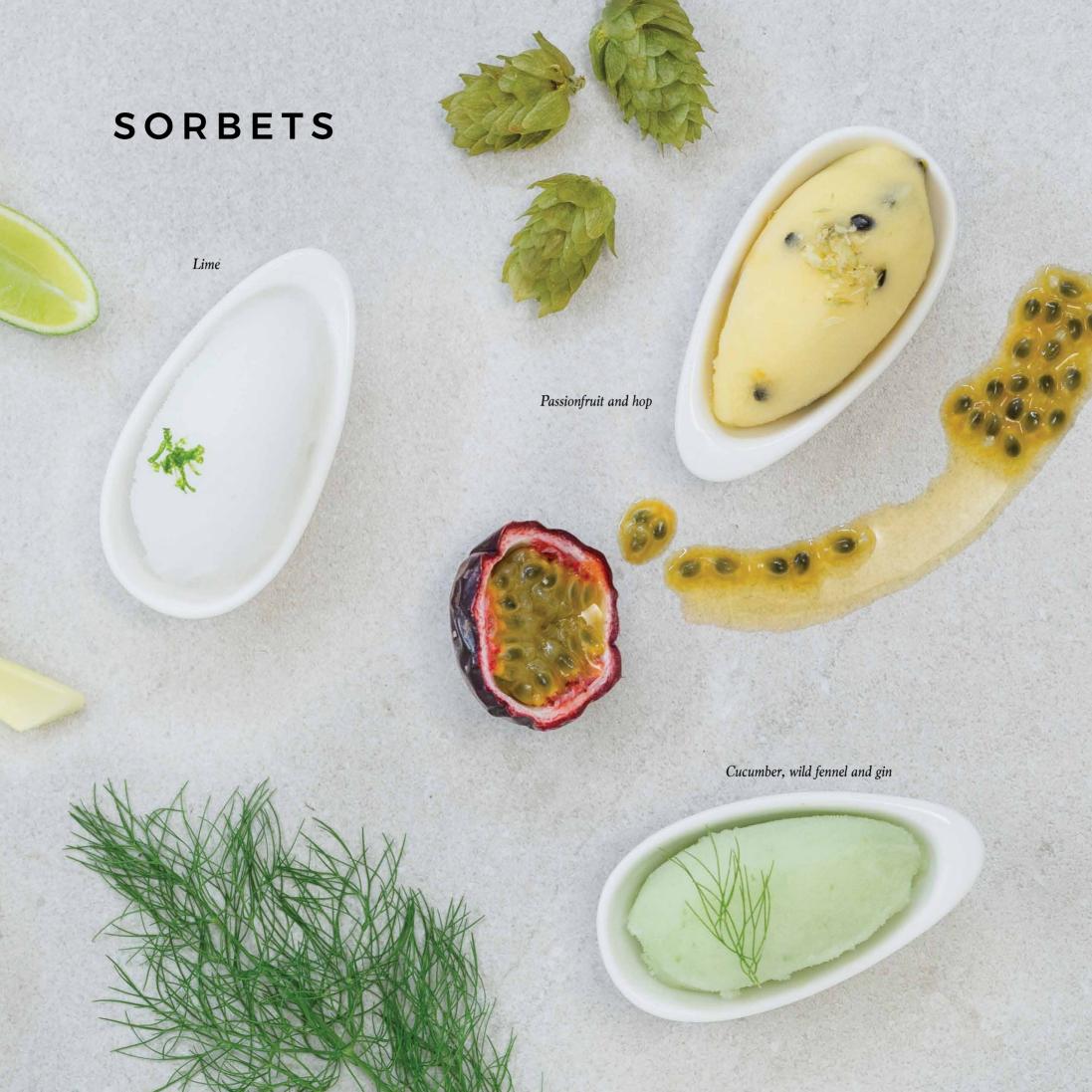












## MAINS

Generally, we view the main course as the pinnacle of your dining experience. The kitchen has also been building up for this course. From the sourcing of the protein, be it beef that has aged for 30 days, fresh fish from the local market, or air-drying whole duck for an extra crispy skin, through to the variety of skills and techniques needed to create the accompaniments to support the protein, the combined efforts result in dishes that are balanced, exciting and appealing. They are also designed to satisfy and nurture the soul.





# **DESSERTS**

Desserts are often one of the most creative courses and the combinations are limitless. We see this as the playful stage of the meal. A classic dessert can be redesigned to look nothing like the original, but yet has the same flavour profile and nostalgic effect. Sweet and savoury work together to create new sensations. Salt with caramel, honey and thyme, strawberries with basil. The possibilities are endless.

Custard square (recipe, page 92)



# FLAPPY FLORAL STORAL MANUKA HONEY NEW ZEALAND



## [HAPPY TO BEE] HONEY

Our chefs take great pride in using only the freshest produce for our kitchens and this certainly applies to our home-harvest honey.

Falcon Brae owners have planted over 75,000 native trees on the property, 52,000 of which are mānuka trees in order to produce mānuka honey from our own bee hives. Our beekeeper is a local with many years of experience in beekeeping and cares for over 500 hives in the region.

Guests of Falcon Brae can sample our 'Happy to bee' honey at breakfast and take a sample of it home. The honey comb comes from specially adapted bee hives on the property where we have the bees do all their magic engineering straight into our own containers for guests to enjoy the honey in its most natural form.







