



Pyrmont Growers Market

PYRMONT

BY JESSICA WESTCOTT

If you want to see the peak of human resistance, go to the markets in the rain. Given many had driven over three hours to attend the most recent Pyrmont Growers Market, there was a real sense of disappointment amongst the stallholders as they watched their trade disappear with the appearance of storm clouds.

However, that didn't get them down: at the newly re-opened market, traders from as far as Bungendore and the Southern Tablelands offered their fare. For those of us braving the rain, it proved well worth soggy boots.

Joining with other top foodstagrammers in Sydney, your resident foodie was taken on a private tour of the market to meet the people and hear the stories behind the beautiful, lovingly displayed produce. There was Pino of Kogarah's Pino's Dolce Vita Fine Foods, who put on a brave smile when telling the story of his beloved premises going up in flames on Christmas morning. Two months later, grinning and offering out a stunning tray of porchetta baguettes, he told his captive audience that he was "so happy to have my uniform back on again." Priceless.

We moved on to meet Lucaciano, born and raised in Italy and a fond user of "bloody" as a term of endearment. A chef for 25 years, he took his Italian roots and his knowledge of sourcing products and started his own line of pasta sauces. Featuring blends such as caramelised onion and fresh thyme (stunning with gnocchi or ravioli), he made clear his intent to only create products if there was a clear invention gap in the marketplace.

Although there hasn't been a huge orange season this year – sourcing the fruit has become a full time job over the past few months – the crew at Parker's Juice Co seemed optimistic when we met with them at the market. Deciding instead to invent a range of cold press juices including a watermelon and mint

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blend and a green antioxidant, the hard-workers have managed to carry this great Aussie start-up through the citrus drought unscathed.

Parker's juices are found right across Sydney and are instantly recognisable, but the crew revealed that it all started for them at small markets like Pyrmont Growers. Indeed, this proved to be a common theme throughout the day: the sense of gratitude vendors felt towards the chamber of commerce for bringing back the markets was palpable.

Perhaps one of the greatest success stories of the Sydney market scene is Pat and Stick's ice cream sandwich kingdom. Standing out the front of his stall clutching his ten-month-old daughter (which, by the way, ranks as the best marketing technique I've ever seen), Stick told us how he started selling his ice cream sandwiches at smaller marketplaces around Sydney 11 years ago, in the process proving what a farmers market can do for a small business.

"We wouldn't be anywhere without the markets in Sydney," he said. "We started with our first market in Balmain, testing our products and we ended up selling out every week ... We've moved from a small factory in the back of an old pizza shop to a much bigger premises, and from making 100 items per week to over 30,000."

Clearly then the grassroots evangelism that has always followed the products at a farmers markets is making a real difference in the lives of small business owners. Pyrmont Growers Market was sorely missed in its absence, and is an awesome way to spend a Saturday morning – even with the ever-present drizzle.

Where: Pyrmont Bay Park, Pyrmont

When: The next market takes place on Saturday March 25, from 7:30am – 12pm



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