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Plot to Plate 自耕自煮

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With traceability, quality, seasonality and sustainability all on the agenda, green-fingered chefs are growing their own gardens. 本著源頭可考、品質保證、不時不吃且環保等好處，善於園藝的廚師們開始建立自己的菜園，自耕自足。 **By Rachel Duffell**

Plot to plate 自耕自煮

How do you cook the best food? Working as a chef in Sydney, it was a question Rodney Dunn was mulling over. The conclusion he came to was: "If you've mastered your technique, the only way to get a better result is better ingredients."

This realisation formed part of the impetus for his move to Tasmania to open what would become The Agrarian Kitchen Cooking School & Eatery, finding a property with land that would allow for a direct connection between vegetable plot and plate.

Today, The Agrarian Kitchen offers agricultural – or agrarian – experiences that embrace curing, fermenting and baking, as well as picking and preparing produce fresh from the farm, and is attached to the award-winning Eatery restaurant. It continues to grow: the garden is currently being expanded and Dunn will be adding gardening classes to his curriculum.

For him, the driving force was flavour. Although he says that it is, of course, great to know exactly what's been sprayed on to your fruits and vegetables – or what hasn't – it's really about flavour.

"Being able to pick it and use it immediately is a different experience in terms of the flavour of that food. There's a whole bunch of health benefits, but for me, my motivation was how do I get the best flavours," he says.

怎樣才能做出最棒的美食？在悉尼任職廚師的Rodney Dunn曾經認真地思考過這個問題，他得出的結論是：「如果你已掌握精湛的烹調技巧，剩下來就只有採用優質材料一途。」

這個結論驅使他移居塔斯曼尼亞，找到一座毗鄰一大片土地的房子，在餐廳廚房旁邊設立菜園，然後慢慢發展成現時的烹飪學校兼餐館The Agrarian Kitchen Cooking School & Eatery。

擁有得獎餐廳Eatery的The Agrarian Kitchen，目前提供多個農耕和烹飪體驗活動，包括教授醃製、發酵和烤焗等技巧。參加者亦可親自到農場採摘蔬果，並學習新鮮農產的處理方法等。The Agrarian Kitchen的規模不斷擴張，菜園面積正在增加，Dunn亦打算在課程中加入園藝班。

對Dunn來說，味道才是推動他自己耕作的推動力。雖然他也說過知道自己吃的蔬果被噴過或沒被噴過什麼是相當重要，但重點還是味道。

他解釋：「將新鮮摘下來食材馬上拿去做菜，味道會截然不同。自己耕種有許多健康益處，但對我來說，如何獲得最好的味道才是我的動力。」



A spread at the Agrarian Kitchen Eatery in Tasmania
塔斯曼尼亞餐廳Agrarian Kitchen Eatery供應的菜式

Chef Matt Orlando of Amass in Copenhagen agrees. "If you pick a piece of fennel in the morning, or you pick a piece of fennel 10 minutes before service, the fennel tastes different. Having that accessibility to flavour – the more intense flavour of things – has been amazing."

Orlando, who previously worked as chef de cuisine at Noma, established Amass in 2013, ensuring there was an adjacent chef's garden. But he had no idea of the impact it would have. "It's every chef's dream to have a garden outside the restaurant that they can walk through and pick herbs and lettuces and whatever is growing out there, but what I found really quickly is that the garden completely influenced the way we cooked, and I wasn't expecting that."

Dunn felt that influence on his cooking too, finding that his style became simpler. "We're not trying to mask the flavours of our vegetables with other things. We're trying to highlight them," he says. He admits that the menu became more vegetable-based, too. "I love my meat, and I will never be vegetarian, but increasing our content of vegetables is a good thing for everybody."

Simon Rogan, a British chef who runs a number of restaurants in the UK, including L'Enclume, Roganic and Aulis, and has outposts of Aulis and Roganic in Hong Kong, had a similar experience. "I'm by no means a vegetarian and we're not vegetarian restaurants, but I'm a firm believer that the answer to our food problems around the world is eating more organic fruits and vegetables. Therefore, our restaurants have always been focused on plant-based products that really are the stars of the show, supported by some proteins where necessary," he says. "The farm is my vehicle to follow by beliefs."

Having accessibility to flavour – the more intense flavour of things – has been amazing
可以得到食材本身更濃郁的味道，真的太棒了
– Matt Orlando, Amass



Opposite page, from left to right:
The Argarian Kitchen's
co-founder Rodney Dunn;
The venue's kitchen area

對頁左至右：The Argarian Kitchen
的創辦人之一Rodney Dunn；
The Argarian Kitchen的廚房

This page, from top to bottom:
The Argarian Kitchen in
Tasmania; Co-founder Rodney
Dunn leading a class

本頁上至下：位於塔斯曼尼亞的
The Argarian Kitchen；創辦人之一
Rodney Dunn正在授課

哥本哈根餐廳Amass的大廚Matt Orlando也有同感：「早上採摘的茴香跟上菜前十分鐘才採摘的茴香，味道已經不同。如此簡單就可以得到食材本身更濃郁的味道，真的太棒了。」

曾任職Noma菜式主廚的Orlando於2013年開設Amass，並在餐廳旁設立由廚師親自打理的菜園，但他當時並不知道菜園會帶來怎樣的影響。他說：「每個廚師都期望在餐廳旁設置菜園，好讓他們隨時去菜園採摘那裡種植的香草、生菜等等，但我很快發現，菜園會完全改變我們的烹調方法，這是我始料不及的。」

Dunn也有同感，認為他的烹飪風格也受到影響，變得更簡單。他解釋：「我們不會嘗試用其他東西去蓋過蔬菜的味道，反而會想辦法突顯這些味道。」餐廳也供應更多以蔬菜為主的菜式，「我喜歡吃肉，永遠也不會變成素食主義者，但增加餐廳的蔬菜菜式對所有人都有裨益。」

英籍廚師Simon Rogan在英國和香港兩地擁有多間餐廳，包括位於老家的L'Enclume、Roganic和Aulis，以及香港的Aulis和Roganic。他也有相似的經驗：「我自己不是素食主義者，我的餐廳也不是素食餐廳，但我深信，多食用有機蔬果有助舒緩全球糧食供應的問題。因此，我的餐廳一直都強調以蔬果為主、肉類為副的菜式。農場是我實踐信念的工具。」



Rogan set up his own farm in the Lake District to supply his British restaurants. It felt almost like a necessity, given an absence of quality ingredients in Northwest England, but it also enabled him to indulge his desire to use hyperlocal, seasonal, organic produce.

The result has been total control over the ingredients used in his kitchens. "Obviously the ethos is paramount, but we can grow what we want, when we want, climate permitting, and we have the ability to satisfy our creativity by using every part of a product, be it the root, the stem, the leaf, the fruit or the flower," says Rogan. "I get excited by everything from the humble cabbage to the most delicious peaches. All, though, are treated with the same respect and ethos, so we utilise them in the simplest ways possible to highlight their amazing flavour and quality."

Having his own farm and growing his own produce transformed Rogan's cooking, too. "It changed everything. In the past, we took inspiration from all sorts of areas. Now, our greatest inspiration is the farm and the product available on it."

Growing your own produce isn't always easy, particularly where climate can be unpredictable or changeable, and commitment to principles can also be a challenge. For example, Rogan has seen whole crops lost to infestations. "It can be a real heartbreaker," he says.

But there's plenty to reap. For example, fennel thrives in the Amass garden, with its sweet, aniseed flavour, as does borage, a fresh vegetable with a cucumber-like taste and sweet flowers. Many of the plants from the Amass garden also boast a certain salinity due to the restaurant's proximity to the ocean. There are fig trees there, too, which have taken five years to start producing fruit, and myrtle that after several years is now ready to be used in making the Amass's own schnapps.

Clockwise from below right: Chef Orlando of Amass in Copenhagen; Simon Rogan's farm in the English Lake District; a dish at Amass
右下圖起順時針方向：哥本哈根餐廳 Amass 的大廚 Matt Orlando；Simon Rogan 位於英格蘭湖區的農場；Amass 供應的菜式

Rogan 在湖區開設農場，為他在英國的餐廳供應農產品。英格蘭西北部素來缺乏優質食材供應，這座農場的重要性不言而喻。此外，它亦讓這位大廚可以利用超地方性的當季有機農產烹調菜餚。

這座農場讓他可以完全控制廚房裡可用的食材，他說：「理念歸理念，但我們在氣候條件容許下，可以決定種什麼東西、何時栽種。我們亦可以善用農產的每個部分，包括根、莖、葉、果和花等，盡情創作。由平凡的捲心菜到香甜的桃子等所有蔬果，我都一樣喜歡，處理時都抱著同樣的尊重和信念，就是以盡可能簡單的方法來突顯它們本身無與倫比的味道和品質。」

擁有自己的農場和自己種植蔬果也改變了 Rogan 的烹調風格，「它改變了一切，我們以前會從各方面尋找靈感，但現在農場及裡面種植的農產就是我們最主要的靈感來源。」

自己種植蔬果有時候會遇到困難，特別是氣候變幻莫測和多變的地方。此外，要忠於原則也不容易，Rogan 曾經因為蟲害損失了一季的收成。「真的好傷心。」他說。

幸好，Amass 菜園的收成其實也很豐富。茴香籽味道甜甜的茴香生長蓬勃，新鮮時味道像青瓜、花香甜甜的琉璃苣也欣欣向榮。由於餐廳鄰近海洋，許多 Amass 出產的蔬菜都帶有一點鹹味。菜園裡還有種了五年才開始結果的無花果樹。多年前栽種的香桃木，果子也終於可以拿來釀製餐廳自家的杜松子酒。

在地球的另一邊，約十個不同品種的莓果在 The Agrarian Kitchen 的菜園裡茁壯成長。菜園嘗試盡量種植不同品種的水果、蔬菜和香草，去年夏天就有 60 種不同品種的番茄、各種顏色的蘿蔔和粉紅芹菜等等。



On the other side of the globe, berries thrive in The Agrarian's Kitchen's garden, which boasts around 10 different varieties, but the team tries to grow as great a variety of fruits, vegetables and herbs as possible. Last summer, the garden produced 60 varieties of tomatoes, carrots of every colour and pink celery, among other things.

With such diverse produce and so many variables, flexibility in the kitchen is key. "When you have your garden, you need to be in tune with it," says Orlando. "You need to be aware what your garden can and can't give you, and adjust."

Adapting and being creative also ensures that nothing goes to waste. "We use everything," says Orlando. "Towards the end of the season, when it starts to get cold, we blanket-pick the garden, we pickle all the flowers, dry all the fennel and ferment all the parsley and the stems, so there's nothing in that garden that isn't used."

Although growing your own produce has many advantages, it requires a lot of work. "It's taken us seven years to understand fully what grows well and to understand the capability of the garden. Start small and build up, because you don't want to be sitting on so much produce that you can't use it all," says Orlando.

"Preparation is 90 percent and the growing is 10 percent. If you skip preparation, then you might as well not start, because you'll never get the quality you're after," advises Dunn, who adds that your own plot is nice to have, but it's not a necessity. While The Agrarian Kitchen currently grows 30 to 40 percent of what it serves in the restaurant – and hopes to

increase this to 80 percent with the new garden – the rest comes from local producers, fishermen and farmers. "You don't have to grow your own. Engage a community of growers to supply you," says Dunn.

This is what Rogan did for his restaurants in Hong Kong. "We made the decision that to succeed in Hong Kong, we needed to extend our ethos and unashamedly keep our identity by not fusing our food with local styles. We needed to find the ingredients to do the job. The organic farms of the New Territories and various markets in Hong Kong gave us all that we needed," he says.

"We know what we can and can't grow successfully out here, and not only from a flavour profile, but also from an efficiency standpoint," says Orlando. "Carrots, beetroots, radishes – those are things we can grow and they can be delicious, but we can't grow large amounts of them, so our farmers are located 45 minutes outside the city where they can grow much more efficiently and the soil is more suited."

Yet there are many perks to using produce direct from a personal plot – and they're not only seen on the plate. "One of the good things about having a garden is that it's really good for your mental health. It teaches you patience. It's such a nice release to spend a day pulling weeds. I think it's really freeing for the mind," says Dunn.

"Having a garden changes the restaurant," Orlando says. "The way that chefs and waiters talk about the food when serving something that you grew yourself is different – and the guests can feel that." 🍷



Chef Simon Rogan at his farm in the English Lake District.
Right: Wah Kee Farm pork, shrimp, mustard and turnip at Roganic
大廚Simon Rogan在他位於英格蘭湖區的農場；右圖：Roganic的華記農場豬肉、蝦配芥菜和大頭菜



🗣️ When you have your garden, you need to be in tune with it
當你有自己的菜園，烹調時就會相應作出微調 🗣️
– Matt Orlando, Amass



Stout sourdough and whipped mushroom at Aulis in Hong Kong
香港餐廳Aulis的黑啤酒酸種麵包和蘑菇蓉

農產種類和品種多，運用起來就更具彈性。Orlando說：「當你有自己的菜園，烹調時就會相應作出微調，你會知道菜園裡有哪些東西、沒有哪些東西，然後作出調整。」

根據農產品作出調整和創作菜式更可以確保不浪費任何食材，Orlando表示：「我們會物盡其用，季末天氣轉冷時就會將菜園裡種植的所有東西都採摘下來，將花拿去醃漬，茴香風乾，歐芹和莖拿去發酵，菜園裡的一切都不會浪費。」

雖然自己種植蔬果有許多好處，但所花的精力也不容小覷。Orlando指：「我們花了七年才知道哪些東西會長得好，以及這個菜園的能力和限制。從小規模的菜園開始慢慢擴展吧，你也不希望出現收成太多而你根本用不著全部農產的情況。」

Dunn忠告：「準備工夫佔九成，種植只佔一成。假如跳過準備一環，不如不要開始，因為不可能種出自己滿意的農作物。」他還說，擁有自己的農田當然很好，但沒有也沒關係。The Agrarian Kitchen現時有三至四成的食材都是自己種植，新菜園啟用後，期望比率能達到八成，其餘食材則來自附近的生產商、漁夫和農夫。他說：「你可以找一批固定的農場供應所需食材，不必自己種植。」

Rogan在香港的餐廳正是如此，他解釋：「我們認為，香港餐廳要成功，就必須延續我們的理念，要百分百保持原汁原味，不能混入本地的風格。這樣的話，我們需要適當的食材，而新界的有機農場和香港不同市場能為我們提供所需的材料。」

Orlando續道：「我們知道這座菜園適合和不適合種植什麼，當中除了味道的考慮，還有效率的問題。紅蘿蔔、紅菜頭和蘿蔔可以種，也可以很好吃，但我們無法大量種植。因此，我們與距離市區只有45分鐘車程的農場合作，因為它們的種植效率更佳，土壤也更適合。」

用自己的農地種植食材還有許多跟菜式無關的好處，Dunn解釋：「擁有自己菜園的好處之一是有益精神健康，它會讓你變得更有耐力，長日漫漫的除草過程也可以讓人好好放鬆。我覺得精神真的可以得到解放。」

Orlando亦說：「擁有自己的菜園改變了餐廳的面貌，廚師和侍應講到用自己親手種植的食材做的菜式時，語氣會不一樣，客人能感受到。」 🍷