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Global dining fit for a king

TRADITIONAL dishes from exotic locations infused with local flavours served by staff from around the world: the Hydro Majestic Hotel in Medlow Bath represents the modern face and cuisine of Australia.

The original Blue Mountains party palace will celebrate its history of cultural diversity during the Australia Day week with a World Degustation Day feast on Friday, January 27.

Escarpment Group general manager Ralf Bruegger said: "The Hydro Majestic has always embraced cultural diversity, not because its first owner Mark Foy was politically correct but because he genuinely loved people of all races, their culture, art and food – just as we do today.

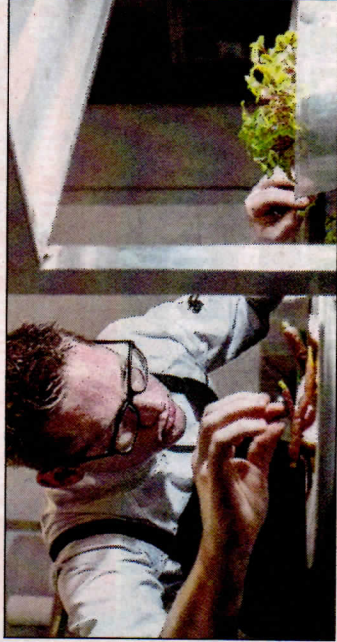
"In fact, what is seen as progressive, even outrageous today, has always been normal at the Hydro Majestic. I mean, what was normal for a man who liked to dress in his wife's clothing and held cross-dressing parties for his friends?"

With the means to satisfy his every whim, the well-trav-

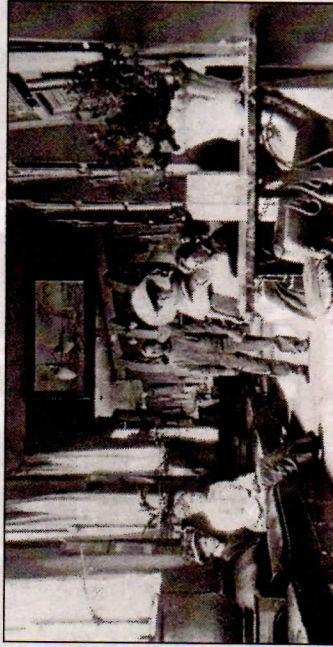
elled Foy had the famous hotel dome pre-fabricated in Chicago and shipped to Australia. Dr George Baur of the Shoeneck health spa in Switzerland was hired to devise and supervise a program of diets and weird and wonderful treatments. Turkish coffee at the Hydro Majestic was served by Turkish waiters, Chinese tea by Chinese waiters. Fascinated by all things



CELEBRATING CULTURAL DIVERSITY: Hydro Majestic Hotel head chef Mate Herceg will cook up a storm on January 27. **Photo: David Hill**



PREPARING FINE FOOD: Michelin star restaurant-trained sous chef Max Vloet. **Photo: David Hill**



LOOKING BACK: The early days of the Hydro Majestic Hotel, Medlow Bath.

Asian, Foy employed many Chinese workers disillusioned with the lack of fortune in the Bathurst goldfields who had found themselves stranded in the Blue Mountains with no money to return to Sydney. One was Louie Goh Mong, nicknamed "Charlie", who worked as a cook at Foy's Sydney home and managing the mayhem at the Hydro Majestic for 35 years.

Today, staff from 15 language groups work at the Hydro Majestic. Mr Bruegger is German and head chef Mate Herceg has a Croatian background.

Guests at the World Degustation Day banquet will be treated to global gastronomy through a decadent seven-course food safari featuring flavours from all seven continents on Earth infused with the distinctive tastes of the Greater Blue Mountains and NSW Central West.

"We'll also have a dish that's quintessentially Aussie, because after all that's our shared experience and we all love being here in this fantastic country of opportunity and diversity," Mr Bruegger said.

The multicultural feast will be prepared by chefs with experience at internationally-recognised restaurants around the world.

World Degustation Day will be held at the Hydro from 5.30-9.30pm on January 27. Cost: \$145pp includes dinner, sparkling cocktail on arrival and entertainment. Bookings: www.hydroramajestic.com.au.