

## Argentinean whispers

Buenos Aires is best known for its steak restaurants, but now a different type of dining is creating a buzz. Closed-door private restaurants run from the homes of local residents are offering a more authentic Argentina.

Casa Coupage, in the upmarket neighbourhood of Palermo, is hosted by sommeliers Santiago Mymicopulo and Inés Mendieta. They offer blind wine tastings paired with modern Argentinian cuisine every week, with prices from \$30 to \$100.

"We never have more than 15 customers here, so it's a very personal experience," explains Santiago. "The idea is to make it feel like your home."

Casa Felix invites its guests to try pescatarian food under the stars. Open

every Thursday to Saturday, there are just 12 places each night at the table in owner Diego Felix's small backyard. As well as the fish-friendly, vegetarians and vegans are also catered for. Meals are just over \$50 for five courses.

Quirky and original menus can be found at Casa Saltshaker, run by American expats Dan Perlman and Henry Tapia at a secret location. Five themed courses and drinks cost around \$50. Perlman and Tapia chat to their guests, making the experience akin to a cosy dinner party. "We have people from all over the world," says Perlman. "That's part of what makes it so interesting." ❄️

**RUTH STOKES**  
[casacoupage.com](http://casacoupage.com), [diegofelix.com](http://diegofelix.com),  
[casasaltshaker.com](http://casasaltshaker.com)

## Capital coffee celebration

Congratulations to Wellington's Caffè L'affare, which is celebrating 20 years of making and serving damn fine coffee in its College St café. With its coffees available nationwide, capital expats can always have a taste of home. [laffare.co.nz](http://laffare.co.nz)

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# UNDER THE GRILL

Dick Frizzell, who lives in Hawke's Bay with his wife Jude, may be best known as the artist who made the Four Square man a national icon, but at Frizzell Wines, with winemaker Rod McDonald, he is also producing some very collectable tipples.



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### WHEN DID YOU FIRST BECOME

**INTERESTED IN FOOD?** At primary school, swapping my jam sandwiches for walnut and Marmite. Or was it the other way round?

**WHAT'S YOUR FIRST FOOD MEMORY?** My mother's chocolate meringue pie. Sadly, the recipe has been lost for all time.

**WHAT IS YOUR IDEAL DINNER PARTY MENU?** Well, we're getting into Jude's department now, but her Thai feasts are something to behold.

**WHO WOULD BE YOUR DREAM DINNER GUESTS?** All my family: kids, partners, grandkids - a lively lot. And also [British art critic and broadcaster] Matthew Collings.

**WHAT'S YOUR PICK OF FOOD DESTINATION?** La Tupina in Bordeaux - at the moment - for its rustic madness. It's very dangerous to your health.

**WHAT WOULD BE YOUR DEATH-ROW DINNER?** Chocolate meringue pie.

**WHAT WOULD YOU WASH IT DOWN WITH?** Frizzell Merlot.

**WHAT'S THE WORST FOOD CRIME?** The food on Alitalia: boiled shrimp in aspic... sliced.

**WHO IS YOUR FOOD HERO?** Jude, because she feeds me.

**WHAT'S COMING NEXT IN THE FOOD WORLD?** Bellatino's in Havelock North, a fab new deli-type food store. Like Nosh in Hawke's Bay. And it's here now!

**WHAT'S YOUR IDEA OF CLASSIC KIWI FOOD?** After six weeks in Italy, France and Spain, I'd have to say our unbelievable variety of choice. And the depth of the quality.

**WHAT WOULD THE FOUR SQUARE MAN HAVE FOR SMOKO?** One of those new chocolate brownie, caramel crunch, square things.

**WHY DID THE CHICKEN CROSS THE ROAD?** He went under it. He was chicken mole.