

{ FOOD DETECTIVE }

Digital butcher stops you looking a chump



MICHELLE ROWE

DUE to what is now referred to as the International Lamb Shoulder Incident, *Food Detective* has been banned from any future dealings with recipes involving this particular cut of meat. Four trips to the butcher last week (each more hysterical than the last); an unseemly tussle with something resembling her grandmother's hairnet and language worthy of a dockworker ended with *Detective* being sent to her room and told not to come out until she'd turned into a nicer person. If only word of a new iPhone application had reached her ears before she began her Saturday dinner-party preparations, things might have turned out differently.

Ask The Butcher, by Sydney's Vic's Premium Quality Meat, enables users to request info on everything from how to cook a particular cut of meat, and a diagram showing what part of the animal it comes from, to simply what to have for dinner tonight. The

application, which costs \$2.49, also has 40 recipes from charcuterie specialist **Romeo Baudouin**, and a timer to make sure you don't fall at the final hurdle.

Detective, who has recently become the proud owner of an iPhone, couldn't download the meat-based miracle worker fast enough. Mr *Detective*, meanwhile, who managed to effortlessly roll and stuff the offending lamb shoulder into its net holster without breaking a sweat, is perhaps hoping his wife will be downloading a few anger-management apps as well. More: apple.com/iphone/apps-for-iphone.

• **RUMOURS** of popular Port Douglas pair **Tony and Di Sassi's** move to open a restaurant and bar in the north Queensland resort town's **Coconut Grove** complex are true.

The Abruzzo-born chef and his front-of-house partner wife, who left their eponymous restaurant at Port Douglas's **Peppers Bale Resort** nearly four months ago after a conflict with management, are in negotiations to open **Sassi Cantina**, a wine bar and dining space, in Macrossan Street.

"Sassi Cantina will be more of a return to **La Cantina**, Tony's first restaurant in Bourke Street [Melbourne] in the 70s," Di Sassi says. "Back then he started with no

SHORT ORDER

MICHAEL Ryan is chef and owner at Provenance Restaurant in Victoria's Beechworth.

Best recent dining experience: The Royal Mail, Dunkeld. On the spur of the moment we drove there for dinner from Beechworth—six hours there and six back—but it was worth it. The food is respectful of the ingredients, dishes are imaginative and it's held together by a very professional operation.

Must-buy ingredient: Salted wakame. It's so much fresher than dried, with a silky texture and an aroma that transports you straight to the ocean.

Most embarrassing pantry item: Tinned spaghetti belonging to

my four-year-old daughter. Perhaps if I added a handful of sugar to some pasta and tomato sauce and overcooked it she may be as excited about that as she is about the tinned stuff.

Can't live without: My chef's knife. My current knife, a Tojiro, is the best I have used.

What I'm cooking at home: I live above the restaurant so any cooking I do is in the restaurant



menu and a wood-fired grill in true cantina fashion. It was a few doors up from Florentino and opposite The Society so many rated him with little chance of success... then it took off like wildfire."

If all goes to plan, the new venture, due to open by Easter, will comprise a wine bar and informal indoor and outdoor dining areas.

"It's a stone's throw from the

beach and a great position for us," Sassi says. "It will be casual, with small and shared dishes, some Sassi classics as well as a wonderful wine bar."

The Sassis are not the only departures from Peppers Bale in recent months. General manager **Graham Oliver** has been replaced by former **Palazzo Versace** GM **Michael Brooks**, while **Shaun**