

good living

Guest chef Greg Anderson

Victory at sea

A passion for food leads to luxury yacht galleys and, now, water views.

When Greg Anderson was washing dishes in Nelson Bay's restaurants for pocket money he scarcely could have imagined it leading to a job on Greg Norman's yacht, Aussie Rules, cooking for the likes of Denzel Washington, Beyonce and Naomi Campbell.

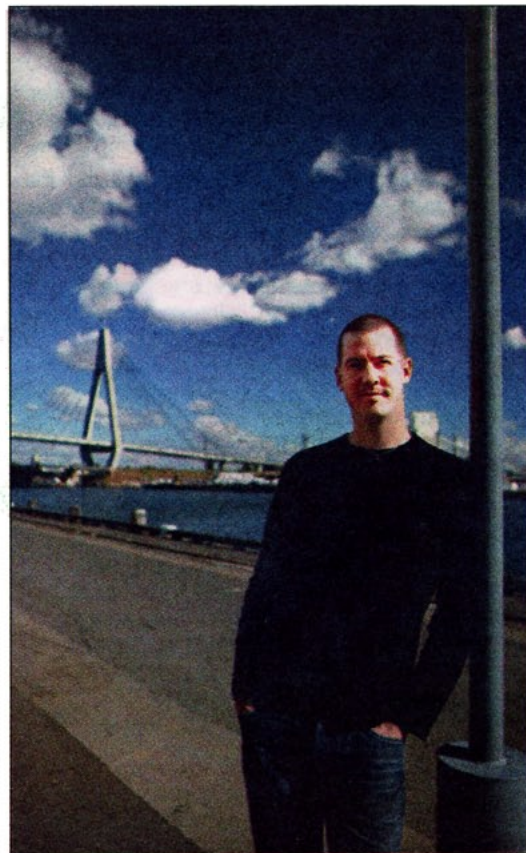
But that's where the 27-year-old ended up after his kitchen experience as a schoolboy grew into a full-blown passion for food.

Anderson landed the job on Aussie Rules, after working his way up through "smaller" boats in the fleets of the rich and famous. "You can't comprehend the money," he says. "Food costs go out the window. It's a case of 'We want lobster, so just get lobster'."

Not that the household names he prepared food for were anything other than well-behaved. For bad behaviour, Anderson says, you need to look at the lesser known super-rich – and, in particular, their wives and partners.

"Some ladies are horrors," he says. "One day they will like tomatoes and the next day they won't. If there are tomatoes anywhere near it they won't touch it."

"I've heard stories where chefs [have] three or



four meals ready in case the missus doesn't like what's prepared."

Happily, tomato-hating hysterics have not played a large part in his restaurant career to date. After working in kitchens here and overseas and an aborted attempt at a commerce degree, he began his formal training, aged 20, under the tutelage of Matthew Moran at Morans, Potts Point.

From there, he accompanied his boss to Aria, Moran's celebrated East Circular Quay eatery. After a stint helping Thomas Johns win a chef's hat at East Sydney's Pello, Anderson ended up on Norman's crew.

"It's not as glamorous as it sounds," he says. "You work hard. You don't get any time to yourself and if you do get a day off you'll probably sleep."

Not that there is much chance for relaxation now Anderson is back in Sydney and running his own restaurant, Sugaroom, overlooking the water at the Pyrmont end of Harris Street. The menu embodies his philosophy of presenting simple dishes using fresh ingredients at a reasonable price.

"I like it when customers are happy, when they pay \$23 for a main course and they walk away feeling that they haven't been ripped off and that they've eaten well," Anderson says.

"We're not trying to reinvent the wheel as far as the cooking goes. We're just trying to keep it simple with everything fresh. I've never been one to over-analyse things. I don't look too much into food. Just enjoy it for what it is."

Nick Galvin

Captains' cook ...

Greg Anderson at Pyrmont.

Photos: Marco Del Grande