

Base Camp

—Stephen Muirhead and Sam Chow

Just as you polish off the last of the rolls, it occurs to you that one of the voices coming from the table serving the free lunch is awfully familiar.

“Mmm. . . this looks like a cracker of a dish.”

As you turn round to get a better look, you see a man walk up to one of the jam-spreaders. “Where’s your passion? Spread it like the world’s watching! No, spread it like you’re saving the world!” Turning to a jam-opener he adds, sagaciously, “That pot is your fate. Like Santa, you have to control your sled.”

You can’t believe it! The Honourable George Calombaris, one of the judges from *Masterchef*, at Melbourne University? Completely in awe, you work up the courage to approach him.

“Hi! I . . . um. . . love your mum’s moussaka!” A lame opening, admittedly.

“Ah, one of my admirers. How do you feel living the greatest day of your life? Come over here for a second. You see that? That bread over there? Yeah? It’s standing straight up, it’s that happy to see me!”

A little confused, you rally quickly, and decide to press on; “Um. . . I’m really excited about *MasterChef* tonight. Can you give me any indication about what’s in store?”

His eyes twinkle and his mouth stretches to accommodate a wry smile. “Ah, it’s gonna be a beautiful show isn’t it? I’m not really allowed to tell you anything, but,” he glances around to see who is within earshot, “I did hear on the grapevine that a couple of celebrities have been getting secret cooking lessons up in Sydney! You never know, there might be some surprise entrants in this year’s competition, ha ha.”

As good a show as *MasterChef* is, you seriously doubt anyone would go to those kind of lengths to win it. As George turns his attention to the roll-slicers, and lets loose another Calombarism (“I love little tarts!”) you decide to take this opportunity to make a casual exit. It must be said, you really shouldn’t meet your idols. They’ll only disappoint.

As you retreat from the Liber-rolls, you notice some strange mountains chalked into the pavement. For at least the fourth time today, you find yourself with no idea what it all means. . .

