



# MAKING A MEAL OF IT

Creating cuisine that matches the tropical island environment is a priority at this exclusive private resort. By **Sue Williams**

Australian billionaire property developer Lang Walker was holidaying on one of the most beautiful of the Whitsunday Islands, among the white sands, turquoise waters and coconut palms. It was blissful – until he sat down for dinner. “They served venison,” he splutters.

“Venison! What on earth is venison doing on an island like that? It has nothing to do with the surroundings.”

So when Walker bought his own island – as billionaires do – and set up his own idea of a perfect resort, one of his top priorities was to make sure the food reflected the environment.

Kokomo Private Island is in Fiji – a 45-minute seaplane ride from the mainland – and Walker preferred to serve light, healthy fare, preferably grown or produced on the island itself or, if that wasn't possible, sourced locally.

And his wish became a command. Now – along with the stunning beachfront villas or grand houses looking out over the ocean, the water sports, the fishing, the lavish spa, the helicopter and the seaplanes – he has employed his pick of Australia's top chefs to dish up cuisine that is perfectly suited to the setting.

Fresh fish? That's selected from the catch that comes off the fishing boat each day.

Fruit and vegetables? That's either picked that morning from the resort gardens or brought over by boat from neighbouring islands. Herbs? Ditto.

Meat? That comes from premium suppliers from either of Fiji's near neighbours, New Zealand or Australia.

And venison? No, that's nowhere to be seen. Ever.

“Building this resort went five times over budget and four years over time,” says Walker, during a long, leisurely

nine-course degustation produced by his new chef, Cory Campbell, formerly of Copenhagen's world-beating Noma, Melbourne's Vue de Monde and, most recently, Matt Moran's Bea in Sydney's Barangaroo.

“My vision is for it to be the best barefoot luxury resort in Fiji, the best in the Pacific and, in two years, one of the top 10 resorts in the world.

“We've had some very rich and high-profile people here but they still enjoy the privacy of the resort and the wellness offering, and we're geared up for families, too, with an amazing kids' club area and nannies that parents

FIJI



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