

Megan Scott is a shining example of how a passion for food can turn a life long dream into a lucrative career, as **JANESSA EKERT** discovers when she meets this talented young women. Photography by Romy Siegmann.

**M**egan Scott has a career to be proud of. As the current head chef at Pescis, her commitment for raising the bar ensures she always stays ahead of the game, while her dedication to fresh produce places the restaurant as a favourite among locals. "I've always been passionate about food ever since I can remember. When I was younger I would always play chef and pretend to use the barbecue when we have friends over," she laughs.

Hailing from Melbourne, Megan moved to Cairns with her family at 16 and was fresh out of high school when she began her culinary career as an apprentice at a Japanese restaurant. After three years, Megan decided it was time for a change and left to work for an Italian restaurant for four years, before returning to Melbourne for a brief stint at a French restaurant. One year later she was back in Cairns and after working at a variety of local hot spots, found her feet at Pescis.

A self-confessed lover of food, Megan admits it is her passion. "For me, food is never boring as it is something you will never know everything about it. "There are just endless possibilities." While Megan might be living her dream, she admits she has had her fair share of challenges to overcome. "For me the hardest thing to rise above was learning to communicate. You have to be able to talk to people and you have to be able to listen," she adds. "Working so closely with people, you also need to be tolerant of each other."

Megan may be making a name for herself in the kitchen, but she attributes much of her success to her sous chef Masaki Harda and the team she shares her kitchen with. "You need to have that back up. I might be the head chef but I'm nothing without the team behind me."

Previous experiences with poor quality food prompted Megan to take a hands-on approach in her kitchen. "You have to be on the ball," Megan goes on to explain. "I'm constantly on the phone searching for new, local suppliers." Megan also proudly states that Pescis is a part of Queensland Catch, which is an Australian initiative to promote local supplies over important ones. "I think it is really important to stick to the home grown goods and to support our local traders." Every Sunday you will find Megan at Rusty's Markets hand selecting her goods and she laughingly maintains that if Gordon Ramsey were to ever drop by, he would not find any frozen seafood in her freezer.

When asked if she has any advice for budding young chefs, Megan is quick to say: "Don't close your mind, always be open and willing to learn. Never be complacent and never go backwards – always strive to raise the bar," she stresses. "And make sure you are passionate about what you do." At Pescis, Megan works hand-in-hand with owner Lucio Gianolla and attributes a lot to the two. "There are a lot of things I may not have done or learned if I hadn't come to work at Pescis," she smiles. Megan also works closely with her mum, Julie Green, who is one of the restaurant's managers.

While her days and nights through out the week are filled with preparing fine food, when the weekend comes Megan likes to leave it all behind. "You can't be about work all day every day, otherwise you might lose your passion for it," she smiles. As for the future, Megan confesses she is more than happy with her place at Pescis. CL



# Passion For Food