

Gourmet Greytown, NZ

Sweets reveal inner secrets

Briar Jensen discovers a colourful little town that balances rural roots with its chic drift

ARE you a folder or a scruncher? Maybe you're a sculptor or a twister? Perhaps even a tearer? Do you gravitate to squares, circles or ovals? Do you prefer soft and flowing or hard and firm? Dark, light or bitter?

I'm at Schoc Chocolates on a Zest gourmet food tour of Greytown, 80km north of New Zealand's capital, Wellington, and answering these questions about my chocolate choices reveals intimate aspects of my personality, habits and behaviour. And what I do with the wrapper is linked to my attitude to sex.

Sound like a load of baloney? I thought so, too, until therapist and "chocologist" Murray Langham, whom I've just met, describes my personality to a tee after I divulge my favourite chocolate choices.

Schoc Chocolates, like Greytown itself, is full of surprises.

Noted as New Zealand's oldest planned inland town, even the name,

after the then governor, Sir George Grey, is a misnomer.

Greytown is a pretty, thriving village of meticulously restored heritage buildings, many dating back to the 1860s. Main St oozes civic pride, with gardens of ruby geraniums and fragrant lavender. Mature trees soften the streetscape and the town is ringed by bright-green paddocks.

Despite its transformation from struggling rural town to trendy weekend getaway, Greytown still supports its rural roots.

Tractors trundle down the main street and a power tool store nestles between up-market boutiques.

I'm exploring Greytown with Susan McLeary, whose company, Zest, operates personalised food tours in key locations around New Zealand. I'm staying in nearby Martinborough, so McLeary collects me from my luxury digs at Parehua Country Estate, proffering Zest's signature orange



envelope filled with postcards on local produce and recipes.

It's a pleasant drive through Wairarapa's lush farmland to Greytown's Main St as McLeary recounts historical anecdotes.

As a local with a small vineyard, she enthuses over the area's innovative, passionate producers. Getting behind the scenes to meet some of them is what makes her tour so special.

At the Main Street Deli, co-owner Glenys extols the virtues of local olive oils as she restocks the dark timber



PIE TIME: The Main Street Deli and Cafe in the middle of Greytown.

shelves with her homemade relishes and vinaigrettes.

Pies are her speciality, including chicken and chardonnay, beef and burgundy, and wild boar.

We head across the road to meet Frenchman Moise Cerson, who married a local girl and established The French Baker. Unfortunately he's away for the day, so I don't get to see him work his magic in the kitchen, but

we indulge in coffee and cake at an outdoor table in the sunshine.

We wander between Greytown's eclectic mix of restaurants, fashion boutiques, and stores selling accessories, homewares and gifts.

No wonder this place is a popular girls' getaway.

At Schoc's Chocolate Studio, a weatherboard cottage nestled behind a picket fence next to the local museum, there's even a "Schoc Treatment" designed for groups.

Described as a "unique blend of gourmet chocolate and self-exploration", Schoc combines "the joy and health benefits of consuming quality chocolate with a deeper understanding of one's inner self".

Langham and fellow therapist Roger Simpson penned the tongue-in-cheek book *Chocolate Therapy* in 1998, after realising certain personalities leaned towards certain chocolate flavours.

The book was originally a spoof on the "therapy thing", but the concept took off and now Langham lectures around the world.

They established the studio in 2002 to hand-make quality chocolates. Now the shelves overflow with tantalising truffles, hand-painted chocolates and mouth-watering tablets like lime and chilli and lemon and cracked pepper.

While chocolate is tempered on marble slabs behind the counter, and Simpson unpacks ingredients for fruity centres, Langham describes my personality. Thankfully, he doesn't ask me what I do with my wrappers.

The writer was a guest of Zest Tours and Parehua Country Estate

Wish you were here

Getting there

Air New Zealand flies daily from Sydney to Wellington. See www.airnewzealand.co.nz

Pacific Blue flies from Sydney to Wellington on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. See www.flypacificblue.co.nz

Staying there

Parehua Country Estate is in Martinborough. Ph +64 6 306 8405 or see www.parehua.co.nz

Doing there

Zest's Greytown Gourmet tours operate daily by arrangement and run from 9.45am to 1.45pm. Price of \$230 a person includes sample treats and a light tasting lunch with wines. Phone +64 4 801 9198 or visit www.zestfoodtours.co.nz

If you can't wait to get to Greytown, Schoc Chocolates will deliver to Australia for \$NZ19 (\$15). Or order a copy of Murray Langham's book *Chocolate Therapy* online for a hilarious game at your next dinner party. See www.schoc.co.nz