

The mood for love

Matt Golinski is cooking up an event for lovers of food and film, writes **Fiona Donnelly**

WHAT do you usually munch when you're out watching a movie? Some popcorn, a handful of Jaffas, a choc-top maybe? Instead, how about a little roasted quail served with rose petal sauce or perhaps beans and chillis, tezcucana style, with walnuts and pomegranate seeds?

As part of the Noosa Long Weekend Festival, award-winning chef and Noosa Slow Food president Matt Golinski is hosting a *Like Water for Chocolate* "feast for the senses" in tandem with the Noosa Slow Food Convivia. Attendees will be able to sit back and follow the cinematic version of Laura Esquivel's Mexican love story, while at the same time sampling 11 different dishes from the book.

"There will be tables of 10 facing lengthways towards the screen and we're trying to get as close to the food from the movie as we can," Golinski says. "We've had to source eight different kinds of peppers alone." When Golinski spoke with Good Life he'd just taken delivery of four of the eight chillis needed, shipped up specially from Ian Hemphill's Herbies Spices in Sydney.

"I've spoken to Ian (Hemphill aka Herbie) and discussed what the best options are for those we can't track down. I'm really excited. Most people will never have experienced a dish such as the turkey mole with almonds and sesame seeds. That recipe alone contains three different kinds of chillis - mulatos, pasillas and anchos."

Like Water for Chocolate was published in 1989 and the film version hit the screens in 1993. The title actually refers to a Spanish phrase used to describe a strong state of arousal, and the only chocolate that appears in the book is as a savoury ingredient in the aforementioned mole dish and in another recipe called Chocolate and Three King's Day Bread - so don't go along expecting a spread of sweet treats.

"I loved the book and movie so

much I've always wanted to have a go at it," says Golinski, who says as far as he knows it's never been attempted in this way before. "It will be a series of little tastes - perhaps a tiny piece of the wedding cake or a little ceramic bowl of oxtail soup," he says.

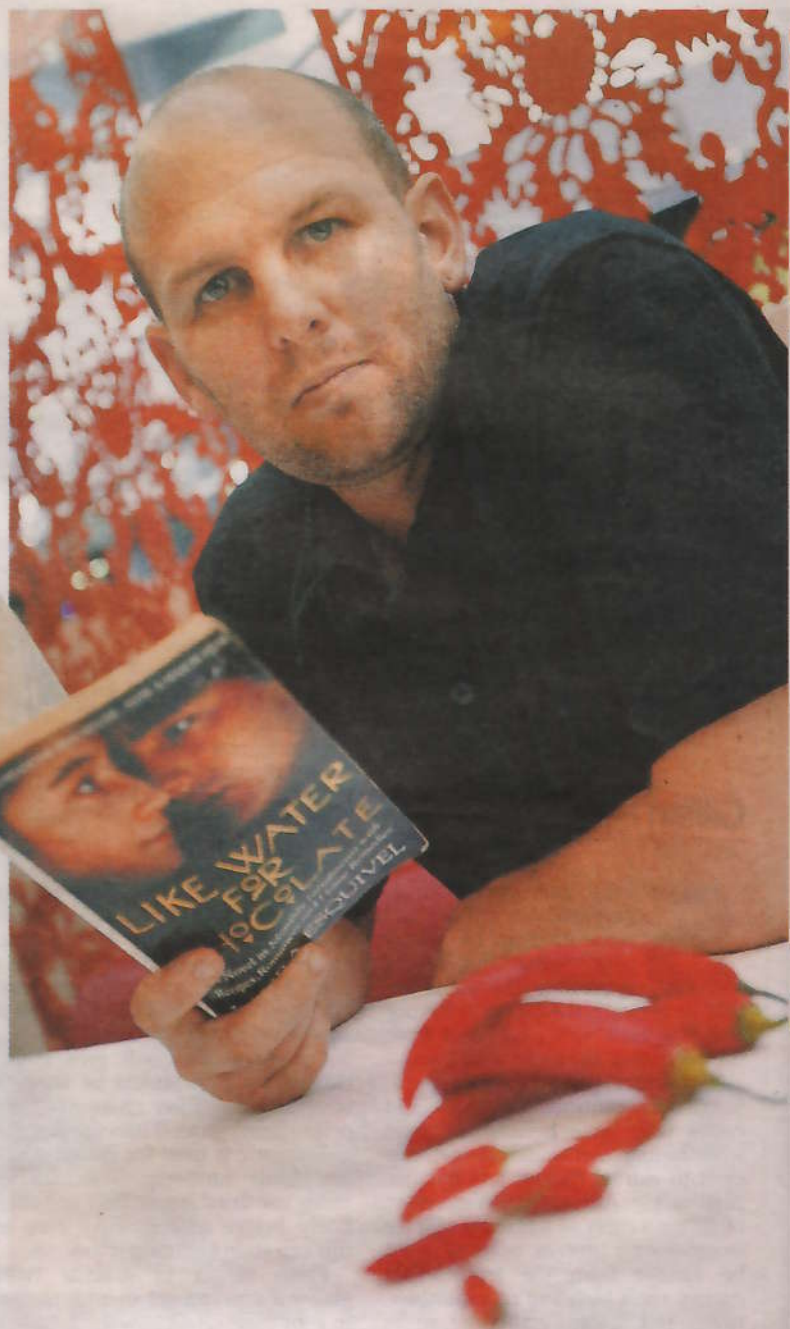
The book is divided into 12 chapters named after the months of the year and each section includes a recipe (see right).

The story follows the thwarted love of young Tita, just 15 at the start of the novel, for Pedro, and her attempts to communicate this passion for him through the food she prepares. Firmly in the magical realism camp, the plot yields plenty of bizarre happenings, most of which occur after the characters consume Tita's special dishes. At the nuptials of Pedro to Tita's older sister Rosaura, the wedding cake made with Tita's tears causes mayhem; a quail confection so excites Tita's other sister, Gertrudis, that she ends up running away from the ranch naked with a soldier, and later finds herself heading a revolutionary army.

"I have a great love of any food movies and could watch them over and over," Golinski says. "*Babette's Feast*; *The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover*; *Eat Drink Man Woman* - the combination of food, emotion and love they explore is something I feel strongly about."

Golinski says he has a slightly romantic view of food. "These days in restaurants it's mainly about pumping it out. I'd like to think that it's all about giving everything care, attention and love, but mostly it's just scared chefs trying to keep up with the demands of hungry diners."

But at home, he says, we can all benefit by caring more about what we buy, prepare and dish up to our families. "If you enjoy cooking and try to make a connection, then you've got a greater chance of enjoying what you're doing," Golinski says. "These days people are disconnected from



CHAPTER and course ... Matt Golinski makes a connection through food.

their food. Slow Food is about keeping traditions alive and that's really the idea behind a function like this - it's a cultural experience."

Yet it can also be as simple as apple pie. "Last night I cooked an apple tart tatin with organic golden delicious apples because my wife asked me to," Golinski says. "It was the most awesome tart and we sat down and ate it and just talked and she fell in love with me all over again. It was great," he laughs.

These days, Golinski, a former head chef at Noosa's Ricky Ricardo's, spends his time shooting episodes of TV series *Ready Steady Cook* and working at his catering company, Rolling Dolmade which also sells a

range of mezze products. Is it likely some of the recipes from the movie will find their way on to the shelves? "You always learn from doing things like this, but the food is really a bit way out there on its own," he says. "I don't think we'll be adding it to the range!"

The Noosa Longweekend, in addition to a slew of plays, music and cultural events, offers gourmet opportunities such as the Eumundi Food Fest on Sunday, which showcases Sunshine Coast produce, and Savour Sunshine, a progressive feast from the likes of Sunshine Beach's Squid Ink, Wasabi and Alegria. For the full program: www.noosalongweekend.com Like Water For Chocolate (three courses and a glass of wine, \$70) is on Monday, The J, Noosa Drive. Bookings through The J Box Office: 5455 4455