



Naomi Ingleton



# Love the Life!

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## Myrtleford Butter Factory

WORDS JACQUI DURRANT

**B**ronwyn and Naomi Ingleton's Myrtleford Butter Factory is the culinary powerhouse of Myrtleford. As experienced chefs, the pair have revived the once derelict building by converting it into a restaurant and produce store. Most recently, the venture has come full circle with Naomi returning the building to its original purpose: that of making fresh cultured butter.

Naomi is the only artisan in Australia solely dedicated to making butter, and she's gone to fanatical lengths to create a unique product. She uses only local Goulburn-Murray cream mixed with her own combination of four different butter cultures. The process of selecting and blending the cultures is not unlike that of blending wine, and Naomi and her mother Bronwyn (also a chef) experimented for more than three months before they settled on a combination that gave them the right flavour profile. It gives the butter a discernable flavour that you won't find anywhere else.

Outside Naomi's 'butter room', visitors can watch the butter-making process through a series of windows. The ripened cream is churned and lightly salted before being shaped into batons and laboriously wrapped by hand. Naomi has opted to use pink salt sourced from Lake Dimboola in Victoria's Western District, and rather than over-process the mixture, she prefers to leave in the satisfying crunch of occasional salt crystals. The label on the butter's foil wrapping includes a map so that buyers will know how to find Myrtleford.

The finished butter is so creamy and full-flavoured it is worth enjoying for its own sake. A refreshing and tangy buttermilk, which has a consistency more reminiscent of thin yogurt, is a delicious bi-product of the butter-making process. But for most people who have never tasted truly fresh butter, the simple pleasure of eating this butter with crusty bread comes as an epiphany.

At the moment, Naomi is churning 2000 litres of cream every week: that is 500 litres roughly every second day, with each batch making 200 kilograms of butter. There is some room for expansion, but given the hands-on and specialised nature of the process it already looks as if demand will eventually outstrip production. 'We can only do so much,' says Naomi. 'Two churns a day is the most we could ever manage without losing quality control, so we don't plan to go beyond that.'

'It's taken us a lot to get to this stage,' says Naomi. 'And I know why no one in Australia is doing it. It's bloody hard work!' 'I grew up in a family who made fresh butter, and I remember its taste from childhood,' reflects Bronwyn. 'These days, lots of people wouldn't even have that memory.'

*Open. Open daily from 8am, Thursday-Tuesday (closed Wed).  
Dinner Friday and Saturday nights.  
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[www.thebutterfactory.com.au](http://www.thebutterfactory.com.au)*