

kitchen spy

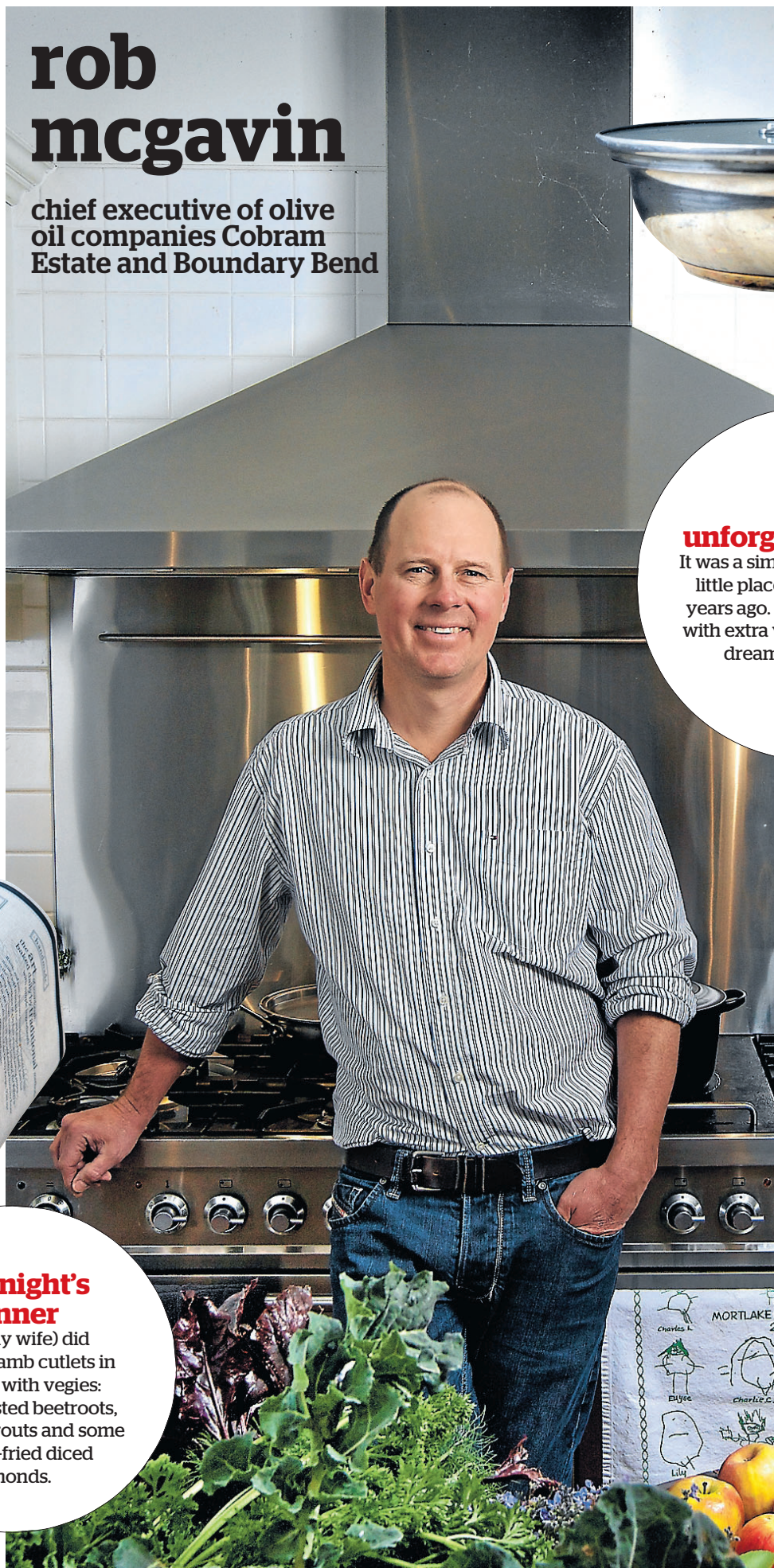
peter barrett

“Our motto is if it comes out of the packet, it’s no good. We often sit down at the table and everything on the plate we’ve grown ourselves, whether it’s the vegies, the olive oil or the lamb.”



rob mcgavin

chief executive of olive oil companies Cobram Estate and Boundary Bend



The staples

My pantry We try to buy only Australian, so we have Ardmona crushed, vine-ripened tomatoes, which are great for anything and full of lycopene, which is a good antioxidant. We’ll always have some Irrewarra sourdough bread from nearby Colac, Vetta pasta, SunRice brown rice and we love Beechworth honey. We always have Vittoria coffee and Bushells tea handy - and Cobram Estate classic extra virgin olive oil too, of course.

My fridge

We buy A2 milk because I don’t feel as bloated drinking it; there’ll be a tub of lettuce from the garden, and vegies such as pumpkin. We get all our meat from Brendan Bouchier Mortlake Butchers and our eggs are from our own araucana chooks. In the freezer we keep Birds Eye Country Harvest Australian Garden Mix vegies for cooking in a hurry.



Last night’s dinner

Kate (my wife) did crumbed lamb cutlets in the oven with vegies: beans, roasted beetroots, brussels sprouts and some shallow-fried diced almonds.

I’m drinking

Sparkling water with fresh lemon. I might have a glass of red wine once a week or fortnight, if I’m lucky. If I’m out, I’ll drink any beer that doesn’t have preservatives - they give me a shocking headache.

Secret vice

Two cans of XXXX Gold. You know you should have only one but I have two. In terms of food, I’ll always have a vanilla slice from the Robinvale bakery if it’s on offer. And I definitely go for the fat on meat.



Most unforgettable meal

It was a simple pasta, in this tiny little place in Tuscany, three years ago. It was a truffle pasta with extra virgin olive oil - I still dream about it today.

My toolkit

I’ve had the Thermomix a long time, about five years, and my Esstele

Australis frypan is nice and heavy and it’s got a clear glass lid - I do a lot of shallow-frying, eggs every morning for brekkie, so I use that a lot. I use my glass coffee plunger every day and dad’s knife isn’t special to look at but is great for cutting steak. And we have a SodaStream so we don’t have to lug heavy bottles around.



Favourite

My basket. Kate bought it from the Wooltrack Store in Lismore, down the road. You pick that up, you walk down the vegie patch and see what’s on offer.



My inspiration

On weekends I’ll go down to the vegie patch, see what there’s heaps of and, if I don’t know a good way to cook it, I’ll just Google it. I also like our Penola Presbyterian Ladies recipe book. The scones never fail and the rhubarb crumble is just brilliant.

Recipe stalwart

Pasta mixed with herbs and greens from the garden: parsley, Italian parsley, celery - whatever’s there. I dice them up really small and put it through the pasta with fresh extra virgin olive oil and parmesan cheese. The kids love it.

Photos: Simon O’Dwyer

Rob McGavin spends his day in cars, planes and helicopters. As chief executive of Cobram Estate and Boundary Bend, which supply 65 per cent of Australian-grown olive oil, he’s always travelling between his three olive groves and home, a 2500-hectare farming property 100 kilometres west of Geelong. Born to sheep and cattle farmers in western Queensland, McGavin was eight when his mother died of cancer; the disease took his father when McGavin was 31. “Hence I’ve got a passion for what foods prevent chronic disease and what foods cause chronic disease,” says the married father of three and extra virgin olive oil true believer.