



Image credit: Alana Dimou

LEE TRAN LAM TELLS ICONIC FOOD STORIES FROM THE POWERHOUSE COLLECTION

Powerhouse has today released the [**Culinary Archive Podcast**](#), a new series produced in collaboration with renowned food journalist **Lee Tran Lam**. Six episodes, released weekly, tell Australian food stories through the Powerhouse collection, from a hand-written tomato sauce recipe from 1858, to 19th Century architectural drawings for Sydney coffee palaces. Through conversations with chefs, producers, growers and historians, Lee Tran uncovers the complex stories behind specific ingredients including oysters, grain, brewer's yeast and beer, coffee, tomatoes and soybeans.

The podcast is part of the [**Australian Culinary Archive**](#), a nationwide Powerhouse initiative to collect the important histories of the Australian food industry, including chefs, writers, producers, creatives, and restaurateurs. It will be accompanied by a [**Powerhouse Late event**](#) on **Thursday 29 September** featuring food stalls from local suppliers, beer tastings with local brewers, and a traditional Ethiopian coffee ceremony.

"By using items from the Powerhouse collection, the podcast shows how much Australia's food culture has changed. A Chinese migrant named Phyllis Wang brought over stone equipment from Nanking in the 1930s so she could make tofu here, and now you can find all kinds of tofu at your local supermarket. I loved having the opportunity to talk to chefs, authors and restaurateurs about how key ingredients can tell us so much about how we used to eat and live – and how food shapes our culture, environment and future today," **said Lee Tran Lam.**

"The *Culinary Archive Podcast* will connect audiences with untold Australian food stories. Lee Tran Lam and the Powerhouse team have done exceptional work to uncover and share

compelling stories about Australian food culture," **said Powerhouse Chief Executive Lisa Havilah.**

- ENDS -

LISTEN TO EPISODE 1 and TRAILER [HERE](#)
IMAGES [HERE](#)

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ABOUT LEE TRAN LAM

Lee Tran Lam is a journalist who has written for *Good Food*, *Gourmet Traveller*, *The Guardian* and *SBS Food*. Named a Future Shaper by *Time Out Sydney*, she hosts [The Unbearable Lightness of Being Hungry](#) podcast (which has been recommended by *Bon Appétit*, *Broadsheet* and *Concrete Playground*); co-founded [Diversity In Food Media Australia](#); and edited the [New Voices On Food](#) anthology, spotlighting emerging creators from under-represented communities and their food stories.

ABOUT POWERHOUSE

Powerhouse sits at the intersection of arts, design, science and technology and plays a critical role in engaging communities with contemporary ideas and issues. We are undertaking a landmark \$1.4 billion infrastructure renewal program, spearheaded by the creation of the flagship museum, [Powerhouse Parramatta](#); expanded research and public facilities at [Powerhouse Castle Hill](#); the renewal of the iconic [Powerhouse in Ultimo](#); and the ongoing operation of [Sydney Observatory](#). The museum is custodian to over half a million objects of national and international significance and is considered one of the finest and most diverse collections in Australia. We are also undertaking an expansive digitisation project that will provide new levels of access to [Powerhouse collections](#).

CULINARY ARCHIVE PODCAST

EPISODE 1: OYSTERS

There used to be so many oysters in Sydney that the roads were literally paved with them. First Nations people feasted on the shellfish and preserved them in their middens — a millennia-old example of sustainability. This episode also covers migration (thanks to oyster saloons run by Greek Australians) and the mollusc's nature-restoring ways (a single hard-working oyster can filter over 100 litres of water a day). Featuring chef [Chris Jordan \(Three Little Birds\)](#), historian [Leonard Janiszewski](#) and photographer [Effy Alexakis \(In Their Own Image: Greek Australians\)](#), bushfoods educator [Jody Orcher](#), industrial designer [Alex Goad \(Reef Design Lab\)](#), and marine biologist [Dr Chris Gillies](#).

EPISODE 2: GRAIN§

This episode also looks at the growing movement to embrace local heritage grains, backed by open-minded chefs who want to knead such enduring flour into ultra-local pasta, pizza and bread. Featuring First Nations grain researcher [Jacob Birch, Aunty Bernadette Duncan](#) (Garragal Women's Language and Culture Network), [Dr. Angela Pattison](#)

([Indigenous Grasslands for Grains](#)), chef **Paul Farag** ([Nour, Aalia](#)), **Luke Finlay** ([Wholegrain Milling Co](#)), and author **Paul Van Reyk**.

EPISODE 3: BREWER'S YEAST

Beer reflects the changing fortunes of women in Australia. In 1797, an ex-convict woman was allowed to open a pub, and yet in the 1960s, feminists had to fight to allow women in public bars. Beer and politics are inseparable – like beer and hangovers. This episode also explores how beer has given us a national icon (Vegemite) and how brewers like Sydney's Wildflower are experimenting with native grains, wild yeasts and local flowers. Featuring **Professor Clare Wright OAM**, **Karli Small** ([The Grifter Brewing Co.](#)), **Topher Boehm** ([Wildflower Beer](#)), artist **Claudia Moodoonuthi**, **Alice Resch Le Cras**, great-granddaughter of Edmund Resch, and author **Paul van Reyk** ([True to the Land: A History of Food in Australia](#)).

EPISODE 4: COFFEE

Coffee wasn't always a popular drink in Australia. In the 1870s, people preferred to use fresh roasted beans to clear away the stench of decaying meat. Things changed with the rise of coffee palaces during the 19th century temperance movement, and the influential Depression-era coffee shops run by Russian migrant Ivan Repin. This episode shows how this paved the way for an inclusive coffee culture that now includes Ethiopian coffee ceremonies and Indigenous business owners presenting native ingredients and reconciliation in a cup. Featuring author **Paul Van Reyk**, **Tinsae Elsdon** ([Djebena Coffees](#)), **Nick Repin**, grandson of Ivan Repin, **Peter Patisteas** and **Shawn Andrews** ([Dhuwa Coffee](#)), **Sharon Winsor** ([Indigiearth](#), [Warakirri Dining](#)), and historian **Leonard Janiszewski** ([In Their Own Image: Greek Australians](#)).

EPISODE 5: TOMATOES

Italian migration to Australia helped make the tomato a mainstream ingredient here. This episode will introduce you to the people who grow it, preserve it or cook it — whether it's Italian Australians bottling passata in their 'second kitchen' (garage) in Sydney, the Cambodian refugee family growing heirloom tomatoes on a former zoo, or the Indigenous cafe owner serving bush tomatoes on her menu. Featuring **Sharon Winsor** ([Indigiearth](#), [Warakirri Dining](#)), food historian **Dr. Cecilia Leong-Salobir**, chef **Joseph Vargetto** ([Mister Bianco](#)), and farmer **Leakkhen Ma** ([Goldenfield](#)).

EPISODE 6: SOYBEANS

Thanks to Chinese miners in the 1800s, tofu was most probably part of a gold rush era diet. But it wasn't until just a few decades ago, thanks to a growing vegetarian movement, waves of migration and people asking for soy in their coffee, that the soybean became part of everyday life in Australia. This episode looks at how a local brewer makes soy sauce, and how an artisan tempeh maker, tofu producer, soy-championing chef and the blockbuster growth of meat substitutes reflect the rise of the soybean. Featuring chef **Darwin Su** ([Ferments Lab](#)), chef **Shannon Martinez** ([Smith & Daughters](#), [Smith & Deli](#)), chef **Sava Goto** ([Tofu Shoten](#)), and **Topher Boehm** ([Wildflower Beer](#)).