

MY SECRET SYDNEY

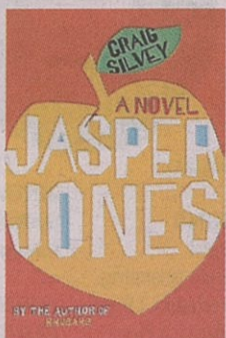
Kate Mulvany

ACTOR AND PLAYWRIGHT

While Kate Mulvany now calls herself a "die-hard inner westie", she didn't feel quite so at home when she first moved there in 1998 from Western Australia. "I was so scared of Sydney. It was the Emerald City and I was Dorothy standing across the field of poppies going 'how do I even get in there?' It felt so impenetrable," Mulvany says.

She soon found her footing in the tight-knit theatre scene and is now hard at work as the writer-in-residence at Bell Shakespeare and Sydney Theatre Company. The 37-year-old actor can also be seen on stage as Charlie Bucktin's mother in Belvoir St's production of *Jasper Jones*, which she adapted from Craig Silvey's coming-of-age novel.

"It's one of those iconic books, it's gone down as part of the Australian canon now. So when I was asked to adapt it I leapt at the chance, because it was a beautiful gift to be given as a writer."



Do you remember the first Sydney stage you ever performed on?

Wharf 2 at the STC [in 1998] and I broke my ankle on the opening night. It was a stage fight gone wrong in a play called *Killer Joe*. I fell badly and my ankle spun around the wrong way, my foot was on backwards. I think the audience thought it was a stage trick, but it was real. I went off-stage and we knocked it back into place. I went on with the show and then got taken to St Vincent's [Hospital] straight after. I spent the rest of the tour on crutches.

You've just moved to Tempe. What do you like nearby?

There are some great new markets called Precinct 75 in St Peters on the second Saturday of every month. There's a bit of everything, craft and homewares and food. We picked up this amazing cushion that has an embroidered picture of the High Line in New York on it, the exact part of the High Line where my husband [actor Hamish Michael] and I got engaged. We were looking at this cushion going, "That's where you knelt down!", so we grabbed that.

Where do you like to head to for brunch?

Daisy's Milkbar [in Petersham] does amazing sundaes and my husband's a real sweet tooth. We love going there for a late breakfast. They also do a great hangover breakfast that comes with Berocca on the



side. If you combine that with a great big banana sundae afterwards, your day is pretty much made and your hangover is gone.

Any other eateries you regularly frequent?

Mary's [in Newtown] is the place we go to get

a cheeky burger on the weekend. We go early because we're too old to line up. We get our fill of burgers then we take off when the music gets cranked up loud and the young ones are queuing out the door. But I did notice the other day that they're now doing home delivery, which is really dangerous.

Which shop do you always drop in on?

The Vintage Drawer [in Newtown] is just beautiful. The woman who runs the place, Deb [Deborah Thomson], trawls the world looking for the best vintage. I go there and blow a lot of money. I picked up this incredible brooch for my wedding, this amazing 1940s brooch that we fashioned into a hair accessory.

What place have you recently discovered?

There's this pool [Col Jones Swim Fitness] just behind us, a swimming pool that I didn't



Clockwise from main: Kate Mulvany indulging at Daisy's Milkbar in Petersham; the "fabulous" Redfern Continental; Go early to beat the crowds at Mary's in Newton; Mulvany adapted Craig Silvey's coming-of-age novel for Belvoir St Theatre. PHOTOS: PETER RAE, JAMES ALCOCK, SAHLAN HAYES

know existed in Tempe, which I took a peek into the other day. It looks really old school from the outside, but inside it's got this rock wall. I mentioned it to a Tempe local the other day and they said don't tell too many people, that's our secret, so I'm probably ruining it for everyone by revealing it.

Where do you recommend for a drink?

We go to the [Redfern] Continental, which is a fabulous restaurant, but there's a secret cocktail bar [Gunther's Dining Room] right down the back which is like stepping into the world of *Mad Men*. I'll get an Old Fashioned and pretend I'm January Jones drinking her husband's drink.

Where did you get your pets?

The Cat Protection Society [in Newtown] is an orphanage for cats so if you're thinking to adopt or foster a cat that's the place to go. We've got two rescue cats from there, Bowie, he's got different coloured eyes, and Heisenberg. They're our fur babies. If you go in [to the Cat Protection Society] you'll see a photo of Bowie and Heisenberg on the wall, we keep them updated on their progress. They take such care of the cats and they really make sure the cats go to the right owners. It's a beautiful place to spend time with a lot of felines that are looking for some love.

What's your favourite thing about Sydney?

I love the inner west light, it's different over this way, I find. I think because it's a little semi-industrial, there's a heat that kicks up off the bitumen and the buildings that makes for a beautiful haze around sunset. I just love that.

Jasper Jones is at Belvoir until February 7.