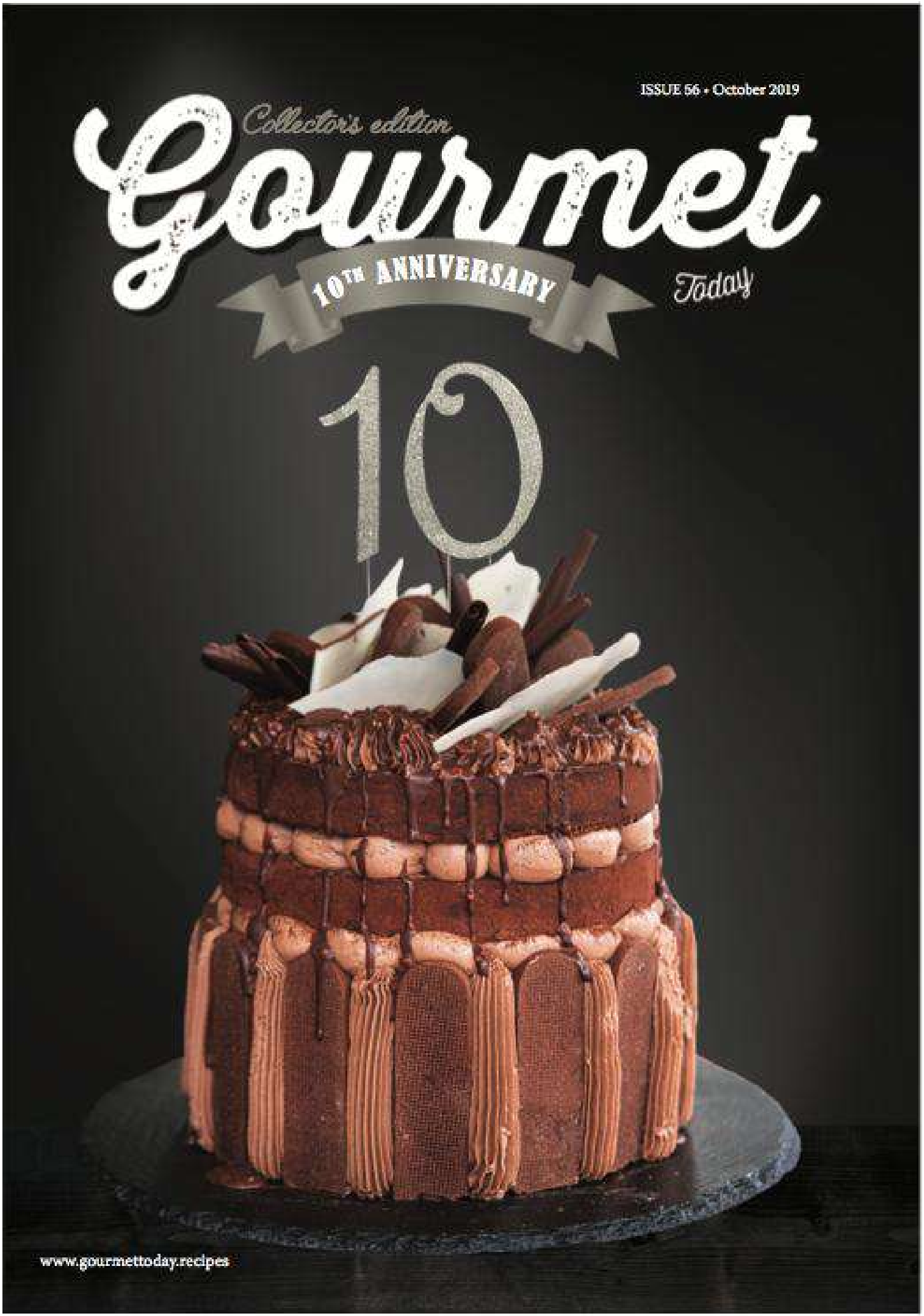
ISSUE 66 • October 2019

Collector's edition

Gourmet Today

10TH ANNIVERSARY



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Fran Farrugia



Robert Cassar



Keith Abela



Kurt Mifsud



Sandra Dimech



Janet Grech



Pascal Holland



Anthony & Samantha



Daniel & Jessica



Editor's Note

As one of Malta's leading food magazines celebrates its 10th birthday, Gourmet Today treats its loyal readers to a special collectors' edition, filled with almost 40 extra special recipes from chefs and home cooks, which have been featured in the magazine over the past decade. Readers will love the combination of extravagant creations alongside simple, everyday recipes to enjoy any day.

55 issues later, Gourmet Today still aims to inspire readers to become better cooks for years to come.

A large section of the magazine is also devoted to chef interviews and restaurant reviews as we dive into Malta's culinary flair and find our way to unique restaurants and gastropubs.

It's our 10th birthday, let everybody eat cake!

Philippa



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Published by:

MEDIATODAY

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printit

Printed at: Print It Printing Services



Cover:
Cake by Pastry Chef Jesmond Borg at Ina's
Photography:
James Bianchi

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with
Pumpkins



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TETTIERA FUJIAN PEKOE

A delicately soft-textured everyday green tea with a hint of freshly roasted artichokes. Intriguing. For more flavours visit stephanieborg.com





VOLCANIC STONE TABLE

he volcanic stone table tops offered by Mediterranean Ceramics are produced locally by Maltese craftsmen. They come adorned with custom, hand-made designs. This artisan touch is inspired by the Mediterranean lifestyle, imbuing in each design a unique sense of authenticity. The qualities which make volcanic stone ideal for kitchen counters also make it ideal for table tops. The finish Mediterranean Ceramics applies ensures the table tops are able to withstand high temperatures and that any liquid dropped would be easy to clean. For more information visit mediterraneanceramics.com



SELECTION OF SHARING PLATES AT MEDASIA

The best part about sharing plates? Not having to choose just the one. Medasia Fusion Lounge offer a wide selection of appetisers... a great segway into lunch or dinner. Served with spicy tomato chutney sauce & spicy mayo, these patatas bravas are to die for. We can't wait to go through their menu this season! For bookings call on 21 333 222.





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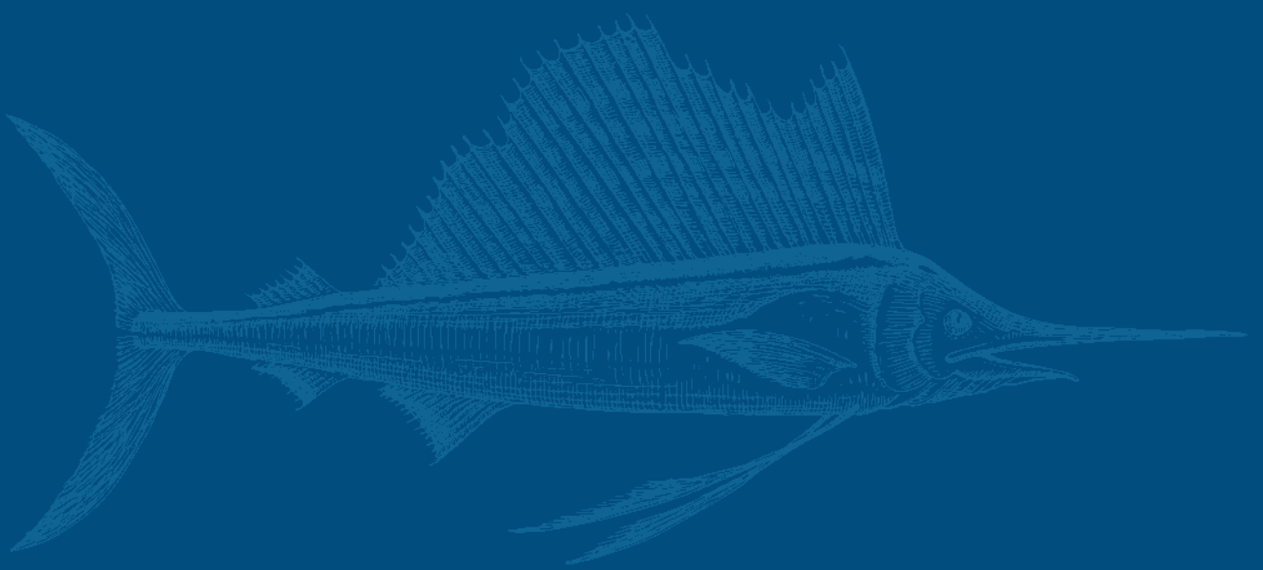
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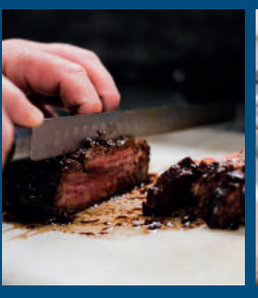
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FRESH NEW MENU AT THE GALLEY RESTAURANT.



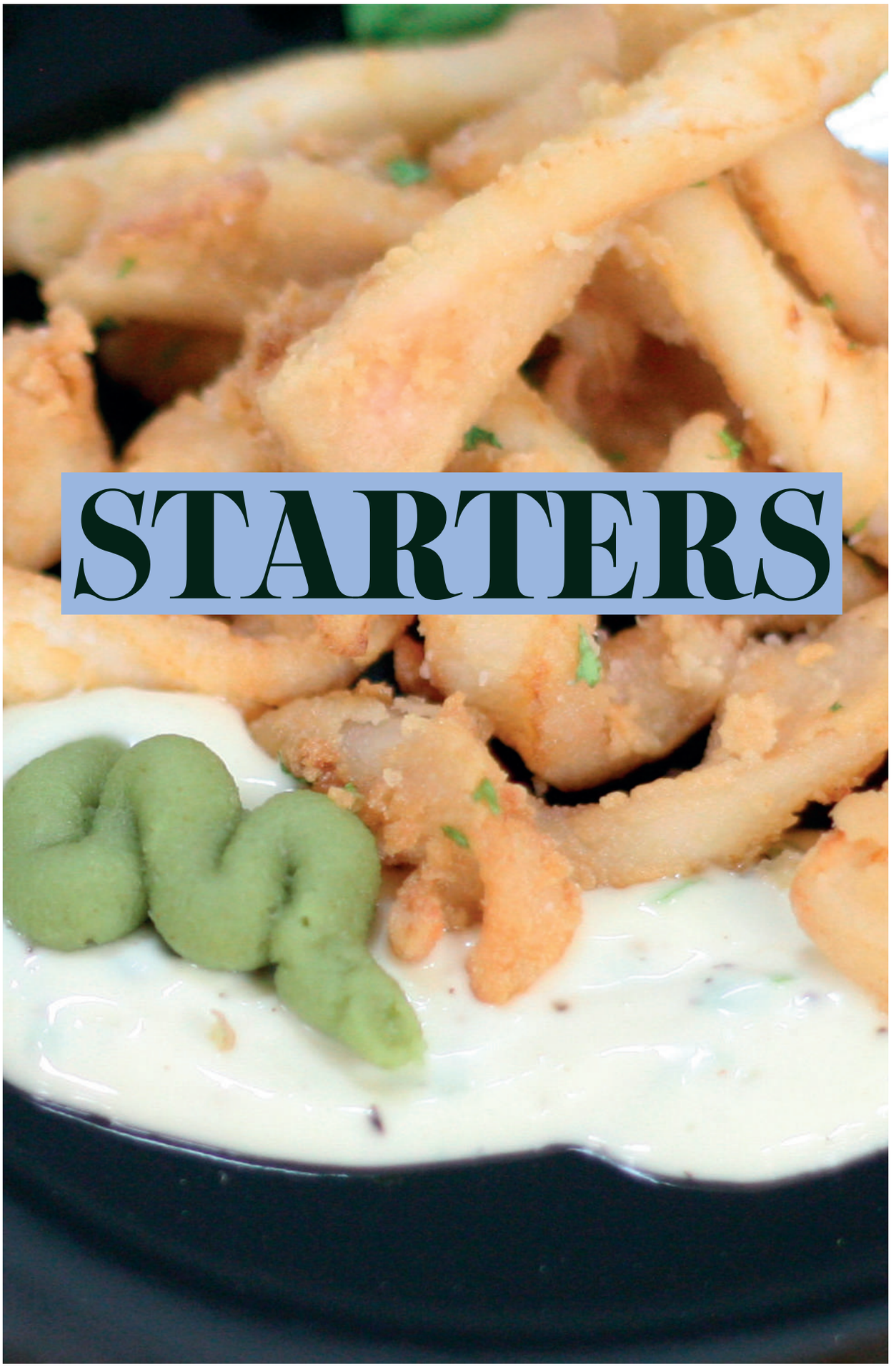
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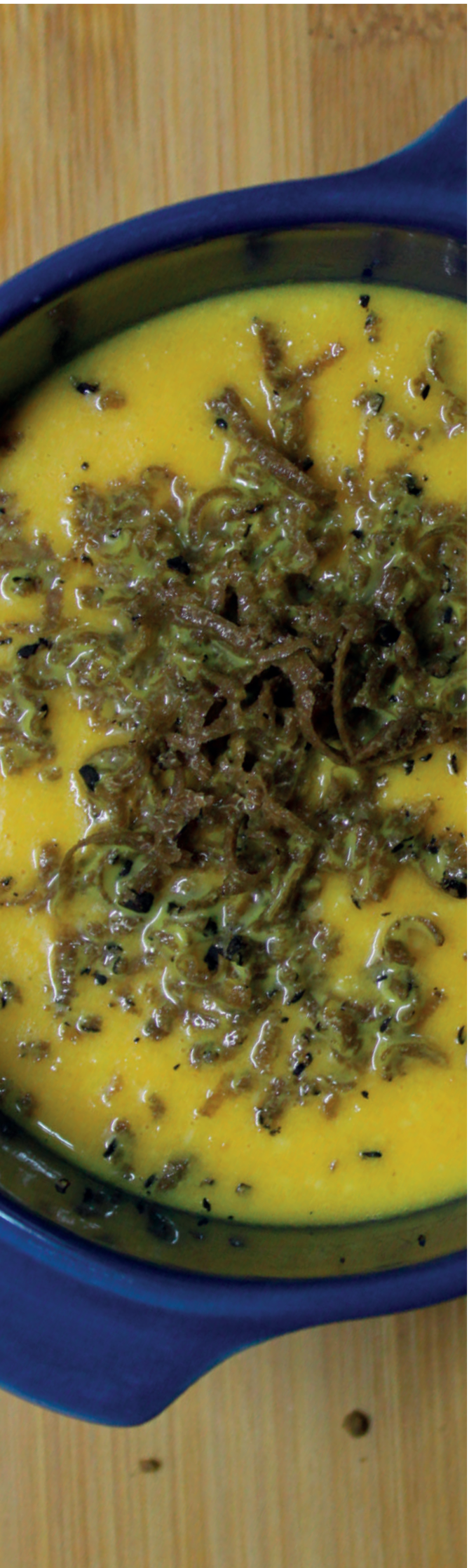


THE GALLEY
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STARTERS



PUMPKIN VELOUTÉ WITH FRESH BLACK TRUFFLE

Fran Farrugia

Serves 4



500g pumpkin, chopped into small cubes



100g salted butter



300ml chicken stock



150ml grated parmesan



15g fresh black truffle



Salt & pepper



Fresh tarragon

METHOD

1. Melt the butter in a heavy bottomed pan on medium heat
2. Add the diced pumpkin and cook, mixing from time to time, until soft and dry
3. Add the chicken stock to the pan and bring to a boil
4. Remove from the heat and stir in the parmesan and tarragon
5. Gently transfer the soup into a blender or use a hand-held blender to blend into a smooth, silky consistency
6. Season with salt and pepper to taste, grate the black truffle and enjoy this decadent soup bursting with flavour.

DEVILED EGGS WITH CRISPY PANCETTA

Keith Abela

Serves 2



4 eggs



1 tsp bicarbonate of soda



15g salt



40g pancetta, diced



1 tsp chives



Pinch of smoked paprika

Mayo



2 egg yolks



100ml grapeseed oil



2 tsp Dijon mustard



2 tsp lemon juice

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of water to a boil and add the salt and bicarbonate of soda. Add the eggs to the water and boil for 6 and a ½ minutes.
2. Remove the eggs and place them into a bowl of ice cold water.
3. Leave the eggs to cool properly, then peel them and reserve for later use.
4. Cut the pancetta into small cubes and fry in hot oil for 2 minutes or till golden brown and crisp. Reserve for later use.
5. For the mayo, add the egg yolks, salt, lemon juice and mustard to the bowl and mix well. Continue whisking the mixture while slowly adding the oil. Add a little bit of oil at a time to ensure the mayonnaise does not split.
6. Cut the eggs in half and remove the yolks. Place the yolks in a separate bowl, and add a pinch of salt, paprika and chives along with 3 teaspoons of mayo.
7. Mix very well till all the ingredients are well incorporated. Once complete transfer the mixture to a piping bag.
8. Lay the eggs flat and pipe in the egg yolk mayo mix.
9. Garnish the dish with some crisp pancetta, a dusting of smoked paprika and some chive tops. Serve as needed.



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DEEP-FRIED CALAMARI WITH JAPANESE MAYO

Sean Gravina



2 local calamari (800g)



50ml soy sauce



50ml sake



1 tsp ginger, finely grated



1 clove garlic, crushed



150ml rice flour



Peanut oil

Japanese mayo



4 tbsp mayo



1 tsp wasabi



1 tsp ginger, grated



1 tsp coriander

METHOD

1. Remove innards from squid by pulling tentacles from the body.
2. Cut across the head, underneath the eyes, to separate tentacles in one piece.
3. Push tentacles outwards, squeeze beak out (discard), cut each tentacle into 3 pieces, place in a bowl and set aside.
4. Slice wings from the body, then remove skin and trim tough flesh (discard). Halve wings and add to tentacles.
5. Remove skin from the tube by running your finger underneath the skin, separating it from flesh, then peeling off in one piece (discard).
6. Remove backbone from tube, cut tube open so it lays flat, then scrape out insides (discard). With your knife on an angle, cut the tube diagonally into thin bite-sized pieces and add to tentacles.
7. Add soy, sake, ginger and garlic and refrigerate for 1 hour to marinate.
8. Heat oil in a wok or deep-sided saucepan to 170˚C.
9. Drain squid well, toss in flour, shake off excess, then deep-fry in batches, turning occasionally, until golden and crisp (2-4 minutes; be careful, hot oil will spit). Drain on absorbent paper.
10. To make the Japanese mayo mix together all of the ingredients.
11. Serve the calamari hot with lemon wedges.

CAULIFLOWER FRITTERS

Pippa Mattei

Serves 6



1 small cauliflower, cut up into florets

+



2 eggs, seperated

+



Parsley, chopped



Salt & pepper

+



Plain flour

+



1 clove garlic, crushed



Oil

METHOD

1. Bring a large pot of water to the boil, add the cauliflower florets, and boil till just tender, then plunge into iced water, drain and set aside.
2. Beat the whites of the eggs separately from the yolks then beat them together. Add salt and pepper, parsley and crushed garlic.
3. Coat the cauliflower florets in seasoned flour, dip into the egg mixture and shallow fry till golden brown. Serve at once with any fish/meat, or just enjoy them on their own.





MUFFELETTA STUFFED MALTESE LOAF

Gaby Holland



1 large Maltese loaf



4 dry, 4 fresh gbejniet



2 tbsp olive oil



Kunserva



12 sundried tomatoes



12 black olives, sliced



2 tbsp capers



1 jar marinated artichoke hearts



1 large long marrow, grilled & sliced lengthwise



1 large onion chopped & fried



Fresh basil leaves



Pinch of salt & pepper

METHOD

1. Cut a circular lid from top of loaf.
2. Remove most of the soft bread leaving about a 1cm crust. (discard removed bread or save for another use).
3. Paint the inside of loaf with kunserva and some olive oil.
4. Layer bottom of loaf with each of the ingredients.
5. Repeat layers if necessary until loaf is well filled.
6. Season with salt, pepper.
7. Spread some more kunserva on underside of lid and replace.
8. Wrap tightly in foil and place on a plate and then weigh down in your fridge overnight (with other heavy containers or a can if you need to).
9. Place in a hot oven for around 25min until cheese melts and loaf is super crusty. Pack the loaf, still wrapped in foil into your picnic basket. It will remain warm till its time to eat.
10. Slice into wedges when ready to eat.

ZUCCHINI MUFFINS

Ann Gatt



½ cup onion, chopped

+



½ cup bread crumbs

+



½ cup cheddar, shredded



¼ cup Parmeggiano, grated

+



1 cup zucchini, grated

+



3 spring onions



Oregano

+



1 large egg

+



Salt and pepper

METHOD

1. Mix all ingredients together except for the spring onions.
2. Place them in a pan with a little olive oil and fry them lightly, add them to the mixture.
3. Place into the moulds and bake in a pre heated oven 160C for about 20 minutes.



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PASTA DISHES



RAVIOLI WITH SAFFRON BUTTER

Michael Diacono

Pasta



300g flour + 3 eggs + 1 tsp salt + 1 tbsp olive oil

Filling



6 fresh gbejniet + Handful borage leaves + Handful borage flowers + Salt & pepper

Sauce



1 tbsp butter + Olive oil + 1 clove garlic + A few strands saffron

METHOD

1. For the pasta, place the flour directly onto the surface and make a well in the centre.
2. Add the eggs, olive oil and salt and beat the mixture slowly encorporating the flour from the sides.
3. Knead the dough until smooth.
4. Wrap in cling film and place in the fridge for 30 mins.
5. For the filling, place the borage leaves in a pan with butter and olive oil. Allow to wilt and allow to cool.
6. Mix in the fresh gbejniet.
7. Add a handful of borage flowers and season with salt and pepper.
8. Add the chopped parsley and set aside until ready to use.
9. Roll out the dough, using a pasta machine if you have one.
10. Place teaspoons of filling approx. 1 inch apart.
11. Moisten the sides with water and fold the pasta over the filling and press down to seal.
12. Cut into individual ravioli and place on a floured tray.
13. For the sauce, melt the butter in pan, add garlic, saffron, salt and pepper.
14. When ready to serve place the ravioli in boiling water and cook for a couple of minutes until the ravioli come to the top of the boiling water.
15. Place in the pan with the sauce and toss. Serve with handful of flowers.

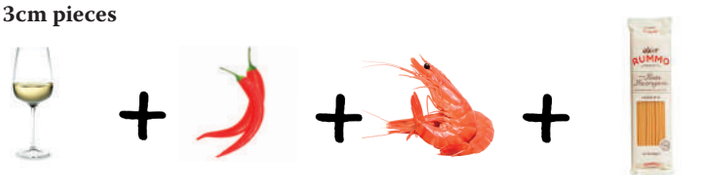
PRAWN & ASPARAGUS LINGUINE

Pippa Mattei

Serves 4



8 asparagus stems, chopped in 3cm pieces + **250g cherry tomatoes** + **4 cloves garlic** + **Juice from a lemon**



Glass of white wine + **2-4 red chillies, finely chopped** + **400g king prawns** + **400g linguine pasta Rummo**



Olive oil + **Handful fresh basil** + **Sprinkle dried oregano** + **Pinch of salt & pepper**

METHOD

1. Fill a saucepan with water and bring to the boil. Add in your pasta and cook for 10-12 mins (see packet instructions).
2. Whilst the pasta is cooking, put a large frying pan on medium heat and add the olive oil.
3. Add the tomatoes and fry for 4 mins.
4. Add in the garlic, chilli, asparagus and prawns and cook for another 3 mins.
5. Pour in the white wine and add the salt, pepper and oregano.
6. Leave to simmer for 3-5 mins, until the sauce reduces and thickens.
7. Once the pasta is cooked, drain and add to the sauce.
8. Add the lemon juice and basil and heat for 1 min before plating up.





MOZZARELLA DI BUFALA & ZUCCHINI PASTA BAKE

Sean Gravina



Extra virgin olive oil



2 cloves garlic, 1 minced, 1 sliced



1 white onion



3 zucchini, cut lengthwise



½ cup chicken stock



½ cup basil leaves



Salt & pepper



450g pasta Rummo Riccioli



1 yellow squash, seeds removed & diced



1 shallot, diced



½ cup fresh bread crumbs



225g bufala mozzarella, drained diced

METHOD

1. Set the oven to 190°C. Make the sauce by heating a heavy saucepan over medium heat. Add some olive oil, heating it until the oil is almost smoking.
2. Add the minced garlic, onion, two thirds of the zucchini and the stock.
3. Simmer until the vegetables are softened. Remove the pan from heat and cool.
4. Stir the whole basil to the zucchini mix until wilted and blend to a fine puree. Pass through a fine sieve, season and set aside.
5. Boil the pasta in salt until al dente.
6. Heat a large saucepan over medium high heat. Add some olive oil, heat and add the sliced garlic, remaining zucchini, yellow squash and shallots and cook. Stir with a wooden spoon as it cooks.
7. Cook until soft but not browned, season with salt and pepper.
8. Add the sauce to the zucchini mixture and heat until warmed through. Stir in the pasta and the finely cut basil and toss to coat.
9. Pour the pasta into a baking dish.
10. Scatter the diced mozzarella over the pasta and sprinkle the bread crumbs over the top.
11. Cover with foil and bake for 20 mins, remove the foil and bake for about 10 mins. Finish off by sprinkling some Parmesan.

PENNE WITH CHICKEN LIVERS

Michael Diacono

Serves 4



500g Rummo penne

+



Knob butter

+



Olive oil

+



½ onion



2 cloves garlic

+



4 large chestnut mushrooms

+



200g chicken livers, cleaned

+



A few leaves of sage



2 tbsp balsamic vinegar

+



1 glass sherry

+



150ml fresh cream

+



Handful parsley

METHOD

1. Boil the pasta in salted water until al dente.
2. Heat some butter in a pan with the olive oil and add the onion and the garlic and cook until soft and translucent.
3. Slice the mushrooms and add to the pan.
4. Add the chicken livers and the sage and fry until just cooked.
5. Add the balsamic vinegar and mix well.
6. Add the sherry and allow to cook for a few mins.
7. Add the cream and mix well.
8. Add the pasta to the sauce and cook for the last couple of mins in the sauce.
9. Add the parsley. Mix well and serve with a little cheese.





PASTA WITH NDUJA AND RICOTTA BAKED IN PUMPKIN

Gaby Holland

Serves 6



1 medium sized pumpkin



400g Rummo conchiglie



150g nduja



200g ricotta



2 onions, chopped



3 cloves garlic, chopped



Chopped parsely



Pinch of nutmeg



Olive oil



½ cup vegetable stock



150g parmesan cheese



Sprinkle of pumpkin seeds

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 375°F. Cut pumpkin in half horizontally, slightly above stem, to form bowl.
2. Remove fibre and seeds. With spoon, scrape out some of flesh so shell has a thickness of ¾ to 1 inch. Set aside the pumpkin flesh to add later to sauce.
3. Brush edge of pumpkin with oil, then place cut-side down on baking sheet. Bake for 45 to 60mins
4. Cook pasta al dente and drain; set aside.
5. Meanwhile fry onions in olive oil, add the garlic and fry for another minute, Add the chopped pumpkin that you have reserved together with the stock and nduja paste until all pumpkin is softened and sauce is smooth.
6. Season with nutmeg and a pinch of salt and pepper.
7. Add the pasta to the sauce and stir in 2/3 of the Parmesan cheese.
8. Carefully turn baked pumpkin over. Place in large shallow baking dish or leave on baking sheet. Fill pumpkin cavity with half the pasta mixture. Dot layer with crumbled ricotta and top with remaining pasta.
9. Bake for around 25mins or until filling is just turning golden. Bring out tray and sprinkle with the rest of the cheese and pumpkin seeds.
10. Return to oven for a further 10mins until a nice crust has formed on top.

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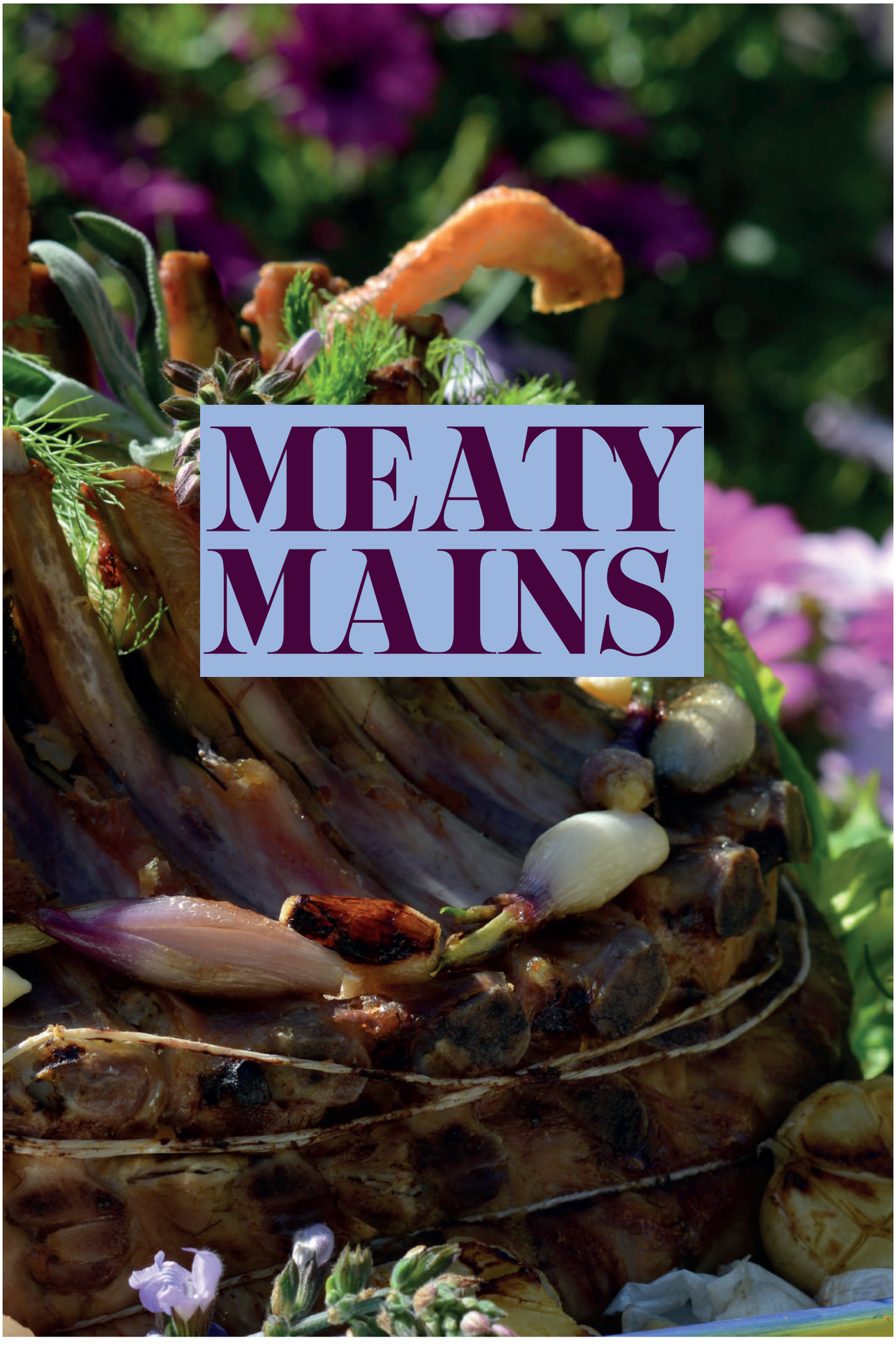
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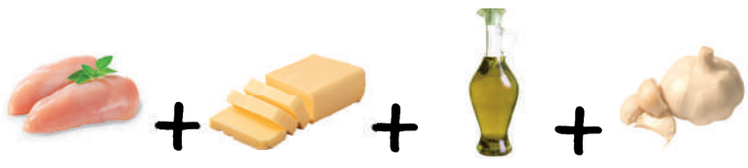
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CHICKEN BREAST IN HONEY & MUSTARD

Ramona & Roberta Preca

Serves 4



800g chicken breast | **60g butter** | **20ml olive oil** | **20g garlic, minced**



100ml brandy, flamed | **15g flour** | **50g mustard seeds** | **50ml honey**



250ml water | **75ml cream** | **400g potato** | **Salt & pepper**



Chopped parsley | **100ml milk, warmed** | **140ml unsalted butter, melted** | **Pinch grated nutmeg**

METHOD

1. To make the smashed potato, cook the potato in a saucepan of boiling water for 15 mins or until tender. Drain. Return to pan.
2. Add the warm milk and butter and mash, leaving some small chunks of potato so they are not as smooth as mashed potato.
3. Season with salt, pepper and chopped chives.
4. Meanwhile, heat oil, butter and garlic in a frying pan over medium-high heat.
5. Cook chicken for 7 to 8 mins on each side or until cooked through, basting with half the mustard mixture for the last 2 mins of cooking.
6. Add the honey and flambé with brandy.
7. Allow the sauce to reduce and remove from the heat, adding the flour, water and finally the cream.
8. Place the potato on a plate and then the chicken on top, drizzling with any sauce remaining in the pan.

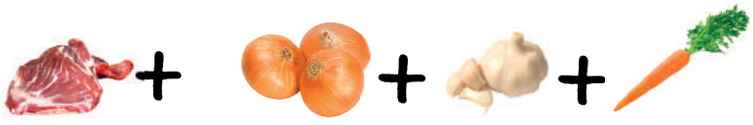




LAMB TAGINE

Kurt Mifsud

Serves 4



400g lamb shoulder or leg

1 large onion, sliced

4 cloves garlic, sliced

1 carrot, quartered



75g dried apricots

50g black olives

1 preserved lemon

25g Ras el Hanout



Salt

Olive oil

50g toasted almonds

Chopped parsley

METHOD

1. Begin by cutting your lamb into large pieces and place in a mixing bowl with the onion, garlic, and carrot. Season liberally with salt, olive oil and ras el hanout.
2. Place the sliced onions on the base of the tagine and layer the lamb and remainder of the vegetables over them.
3. Add the dried fruit, olives and preserved lemon over the top of the lamb and close the lid to the tagine.
4. Place in a 160°c oven for 2 hours or until tender. Garnish with toasted nuts and chopped parsley.

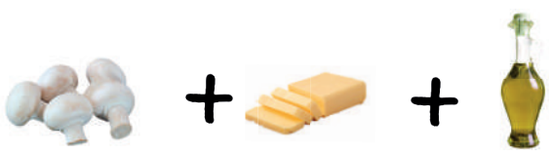
RIB-EYE STEAK WITH SWEET POTATOES AND MUSHROOMS

Robert Cassar

Serves 1



300g rib-eye steak | **1 sweet potato** | **Romanesco**



150g button mushrooms | **10g butter** | **Olive oil**

METHOD

1. Pre-heat your grill pan.
2. Place rib-eye steak on the grill. Cook over direct heat for 4 minutes on each side for medium rare.
3. Cook in the oven for 5 minutes.
4. Let steak rest outside the oven for 4 minutes. The juices will redistribute throughout the meat, producing tender, juicy results.
5. Cut the sweet potato into cubes and boil for 15 minutes.
6. Add 10g of butter and seasoning.
7. Boil the romanesco for 5 minutes.
8. Cook the mushrooms in a pan with oil and butter.





ROASTED RABBIT WITH ORANGE & SAGE

Michael Diacono



1 rabbit, chopped | Salt & pepper | 1 orange, juice only | Few sprigs thyme



Few sage leaves | Bay leaves | 2 cloves garlic | 1 onion, roughly chopped



Olive oil | Handful black olives | 2 anchovy fillets, chopped | 2 glasses dry white wine

METHOD

1. Marinate the rabbit in salt, pepper, orange juice, thyme, sage, bay leaves, garlic, onion and olive oil for a couple of hours.
2. Pre-heat the oven to 200C.
3. Add the rabbit mixture to a baking dish.
4. Add the olives and the anchovy fillets and mix through.
5. Add the white wine and roast in the oven for 40 mins.
6. Allow to rest, covered in foil for a few mins and serve with roast potatoes and seasonal veg.

BEEF STEW

Ann Gatt

Serves 6



800g beef, cubed + 300g pumpkin + 2 handfuls Jerusalem artichokes + 400g small potatoes



2 parsnips + 3 carrots + 2 red onions, chopped + 2 cans cherry toatoes



1 chilli + Garlic + Handful of sage + Flour



Lemon zest + Half bottle red wine + 300ml beef stock + Rosemary

METHOD

1. Chop all the vegetables and prick the fresh chilli.
2. Sauté the onions sage and chilli in the olive oil.
3. Coat the meat in flour.
4. Add all the vegetables except the potatoes and continue to fry.
5. Add the meat, season with salt and pepper.
6. Add the wine and the stock.
7. Add the cherry tomatoes.
8. Add the potatoes to the stew and cover, cook on a low heat for about 2 hours stirring occasionally.
9. Before serving add the lemon zest and chopped rosemary.





LEBANESE CHICKEN

Maria Farrugia

Serves 6



2kg chicken drumsticks



8 potatoes, peeled & cut into wedges



4 cloves garlic, minced



¾ cup fresh lemon juice



1 small bunch of fresh coriander



1 tbsp paprika



3 tbsp chicken seasoning



1½ teaspoons ground pepper



3 tbsp muhammara



5 red roasted peppers



½ cup olive oil



½ cup breadcrumbs



¾ cup walnuts, crushed



1 tsp cumin



1 ½ tbsp chilli powder

METHOD

1. Make the muhammara by preheating oven to 180°C and placing whole red peppers on a greased baking sheet.
2. Roast for about 10-12 mins, turning approximately every 4 mins.
3. In the meantime, place breadcrumbs in food processor and add 2 tbsp of cold water.
4. Blend to make a purée adding more water as needed.
5. Remove peppers from oven and peel off skin. Cut open and remove seeds.
6. Cut into pieces and add to breadcrumbs mixture in food processor.
7. Add remaining ingredients and blend, adding olive oil as needed.
8. Remove from processor and set aside.
9. Whisk fresh lemon juice, minced garlic, coriander, paprika and muhammara in glass baking dish.
10. Pour marinade over the chicken turning until coated.
11. Cover and refrigerate for at least 6 hours or overnight, turning occasionally.
12. Place chicken and potato in a large baking dish. Bake until chicken is golden brown and cooked through – approx 50 mins.
13. Transfer chicken to plates and garnish with tomatoes and fresh coriander.

CROWN OF PORK

Janet Grech

Serves 10



Crown of pork



1 cup water



3 carrots



1 tangerine, juice only

Stuffing



Bunch of fennel



4 sage leaves, chopped



4 shallots, chopped



4 cloves garlic, chopped

Dressing



3 clementines, juice only



4 tbsp Dijon mustard



2 sage leaves, finely chopped

METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to 150°C.
2. Season the pork with salt and pepper.
3. Mix the ingredients for the stuffing and place in the centre of the crown.
4. Place the stuffed crown in a deep oven dish and add the water, carrots and clementine juice and cook for approx. 3 hours until tender and still very slightly pink. Baste in its own juices every 30 mins.
5. Whisk the ingredients of the dressing together.

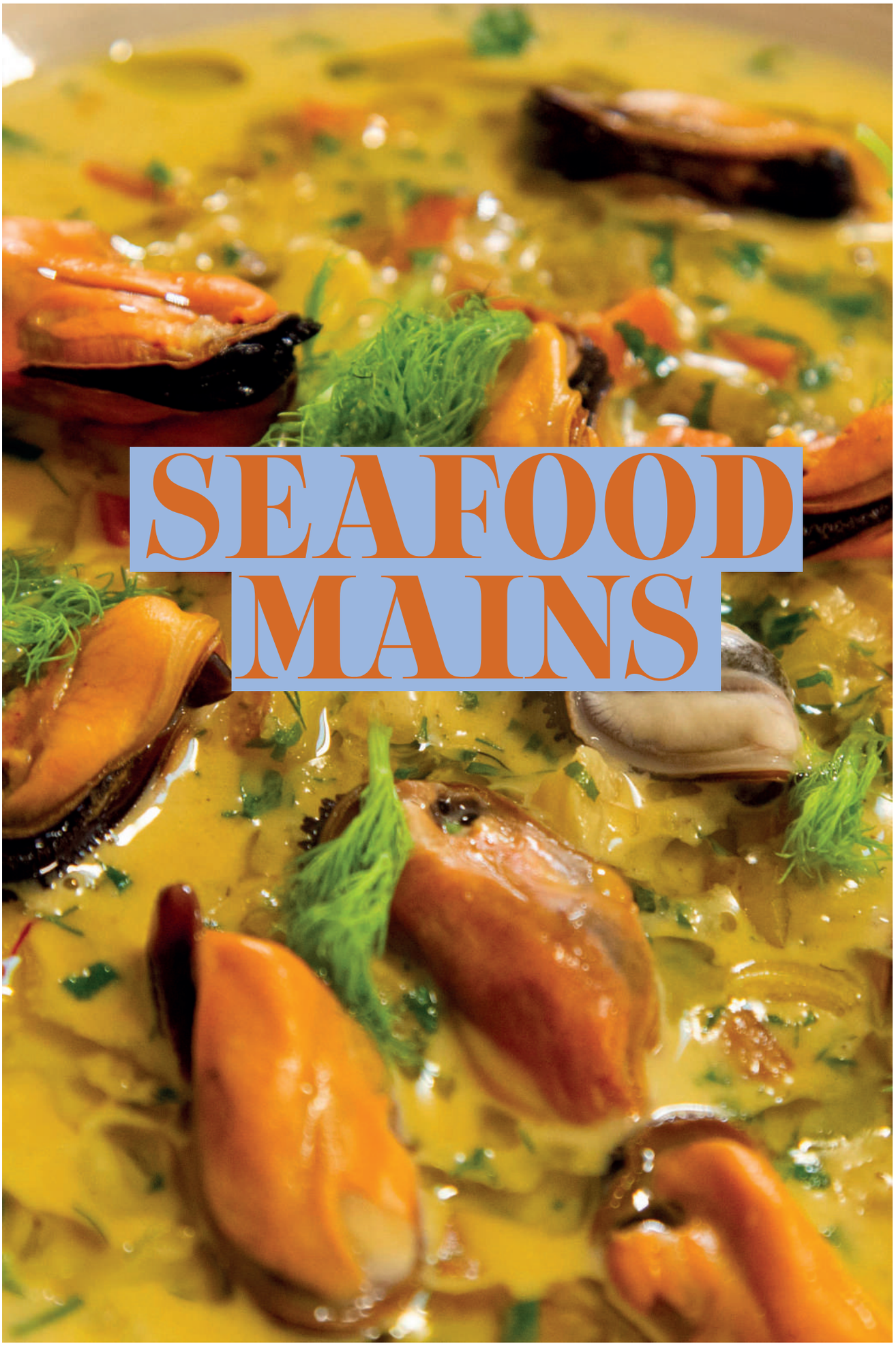




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SEAFOOD MAINS



HONEY-MUSTARD GLAZED SEABASS WITH AVOCADO

Michael Diacono

Serves 4



3 tbsp honey



1 tbsp wholegrain mustard



4 seabass fillets



2 avocados



2 tbsp dill, finely chopped



1 lemon, juice only



1 tbsp extra virgin olive oil



1 tsp nigella seeds

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200°C.
2. Whisk the honey and mustard together.
3. Place the seabass onto the baking tray, skin-side down, and brush with the honey mixture.
4. Roll up the fish fillets and bake in the oven for 10 mins.
5. Peel the avocados and remove the pit.
6. Place into a bowl with the dill, lemon juice and olive oil.
7. Mix together until well combined and season with salt and pepper.
8. Serve the warm seabass with the avocado salad sprinked with nigella seeds.

ASIAN FRIED LAMPUKI FILLETS

Ann Gatt

Serves 4



1 tbsp olive oil + 1 lime + 2 tbsp jasmine rice + 2 tbsp vegetable oil + 1 tsp



4 lampuki fillets + 2 tbsp freshly grated ginger + 2 cloves garlic, crushed + 1 cup veg stock



2 tsp honey + Salt, to taste + 1 red chilli, sliced into strips + 2 shallots, finely sliced



2 tbsp coriander, chopped + 2 tbsp mint, chopped + Bread crumbs + Lemon zest



METHOD

1. To make the rice, cut root end of coriander and wash thoroughly.
2. Slice 2 long strips of lime zest.
3. Place rice into a pot, along with the coriander root and lime zest and add 3 cups water. Cover and cook.
4. Juice the lime and reserve for later.
5. Coat Lampuki with bread crumbs and grated lemon rind.
6. While the rice is cooking, heat oil in a large non-stick frying pan over medium high heat. Cook fillets 3-4 minutes each side or until almost cooked through.
7. Remove fish from pan and cover with foil.
8. Add remaining oil to the same pan and reduce heat to low.
9. Stir in ginger and garlic and cook a few minutes, being careful not to burn it.
10. Cook, stirring, until softened and fragrant and add stock and sugar; simmer until reduced to a thick paste. Adjust seasoning.
11. Remove the lime zest and coriander from the rice.
12. Add lime juice and fluff rice with a fork.
13. To serve, divide rice amongst four plates and top with fish fillet. Spoon ginger paste over fish and top with combined chili, green onion, coriander and mint garnish.



STEAMED MUSSELS WITH ORANGE

Gaby Holland

Serves 4



1 tbsp olive oil



60g butter



2 cloves garlic, crushed



1 large leek, chopped



1 tbsp celery



1 tbsp freshly chopped chilli



1½ cups white wine



800g mussels, scrubbed & beards removed



1 tbsp fresh, grated ginger



Chopped, fresh coriander



Chopped, fresh parsley



2 large oranges

METHOD

1. Heat oil and butter in a large saucepan over medium heat
2. Add garlic, leek and celery and cook for a couple of minutes
3. Add ginger, chilli, wine and the juice of one orange. Cook for a further 2 minutes
4. Increase heat, bring to the boil and add mussels and 1 orange cut into 8 segments.
5. Give all a good stir and cook for around 6 minutes until mussel shells open up.
6. Stir in the coriander and parsley
7. Season to taste and pour the mussels (discarding any that have not opened) with the cooking liquid into a large bowl.
8. Serve immediately with some fresh Maltese bread.

MUSSEL CHOWDER

Keith Abela

Serves 2



500g fresh mussels



2 spring garlic



2 lemons



2 fennel bulbs



2 small potatoes



2 carrots



250ml fresh cream



5 sprigs parsley



2 sprigs fennel



Saffron, to taste



250g white wine



Olive oil, as needed

METHOD

1. Place one pot on high heat and another pan on low heat. Add the butter or oil to the pan on a low heat.
2. Chop all the vegetables into small cubes and add them to the pot on low heat. Add some salt and leave to cook for approx. 5 minutes till the vegetables begin to soften.
3. Add the mussels to the pan left on a high heat and pour in the wine and the saffron. Mix well and cook for approx. 1 minute till all the mussels have opened.
4. Remove the mussels and let cool. Add the mussel stock and wine to the pot with the vegetables, passing all the liquid through a sieve.
5. Add the saffron to the pan and add the fresh cream. Remove all the mussels from their shells. Once out remove the little 'beard' attached to the mussel itself.
6. Grate some lemon zest into the 'soup' and taste for seasoning. If seasoning is good, add the mussels and some roughly chopped herbs and mix them in well.
7. Serve immediately with some lemon slices if needed.





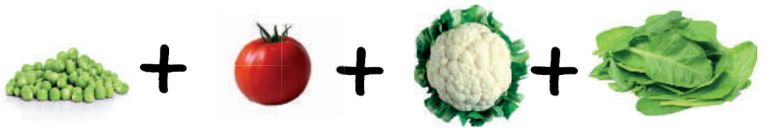
LAMPUKI PIE

Pippa Mattei

Serves 6



500g shortcrust pastry or puff pastry + **1 ½ kg or 2 large fresh Lampuki** + **Flour, for coating** + **2 onions, sliced**



Handful cooked peas + **2 tomatoes, peeled & chopped** + **1 small cauliflower, parboiled** + **1kg fresh spinach, cleaned & cooked**



2 tbsp tomato puree + **2 tbsp capers** + **2 tbsp sultanas** + **6 black olives, pitted & chopped**



1 tbsp mint + **Grated zest of 1 lemon** + **1 tbsp parsley** + **2 large 1 tsp mixed spice**

METHOD

1. Cut the fish into portions, discarding heads and tails. Dip in seasoned flour. Heat oil, and shallow fry until they are cooked through. Allow the fish to cool enough to be able to handle. Remove all the skin and bones carefully and cut up into bite-sized pieces. Put these aside.
2. Fry the sliced onions until soft. Add the peeled chopped tomatoes, cook for a minute after which add the cooked chopped cauliflower, the cooked chopped spinach and the peas. Add a small amount of water and simmer until all the veg is tender.
3. Add the lemon zest, olives, herbs, spice, tomato puree, sultanas, and capers. Season and allow to simmer for 5 minutes. Allow to cool.
4. Roll out the pastry and line a shallow oven dish. Keep 1/3 of the pastry for the top of the pie.
5. Take ½ the vegetable mixture and spread out on top of the pastry base, then place the lampuki over all the veg. Spread the remaining veg as a top layer.
6. Roll out the remaining pastry and place over the top, sealing the edges well. Prick the pastry lid with a fork.
7. Bake in a hot oven 200°C, gas mark 7 for 15 minutes, then lower the heat to moderate 180°C, gas mark 4 and cook further until the pastry is golden brown. Allow to settle and serve warm.

JAPANESE CALAMARI SALAD

Reuben Buttigieg at Genki

Serves 1



200g calamari, gutted & skinned



50ml teriyaki sauce



200g mixed leaves



6 pieces cherry tomatoes, halved



50g daikon radish, grated



50g carrot, grated



50g green onion, chopped



5g fresh coriander, chopped



50ml ponzu dressing (1part soya sauce ,1 part lemon juice, 2 parts olive oil)

METHOD

1. In a medium pot bring 2 litres of water to boiling point.
2. Score calamari flesh with a sharp knife in a criss-cross pattern, and cook for 20 minutes in boiling water.
3. Drain calamari and leave to cool.
4. To assemble the salad, toss all the leaves in a bowl. Then add the daikon, carrot and cherry tomatoes and dress with ponzu dressing, then transfer to serving plate.
5. Marinate cooked calamari in teriyaki sauce chopped green onions and coriander, then place on top of the salad and serve with lime wedge.



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VEGGIE MAINS



PUMPKIN, RICOTTA & QUINOA PIE

Michael Diacono

Serves 4



1 leek



200g white pumpkin



200g orange pumpkin



Salt & pepper



1 tsp cinnamon



400g ricotta



1 cup quinoa, cooked



1 dried gbejna



1 sheet puff pastry



1 egg

METHOD

1. Chop the leek and gently fry in a pan until soft. Be careful not to brown.
2. Add the pumpkin and the squash and season with salt, pepper and the cinnamon.
3. Add a little water and allow to fry for a few minutes until soft.
4. Allow to cool a little and then add the cooked quinoa and mix well.
5. Add the ricotta and the gbejniet.
6. Place the filling into the centre of the pastry sheet and seal.
7. Cover with egg wash and bake in a preheated oven at 200C for 20 mins.
8. Allow to rest for 5 mins before serving.

ASPARAGUS TART

Pippa Mattei

Serves 4



1 sheet pre-rolled puff pastry



500g asparagus (on thin side)



150g Gruyère cheese, shredded



1 tbsp olive oil



1 egg, beaten



Salt & pepper

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 200°C.
2. On a floured surface roll out the defrosted puff pastry.
3. Place on a baking sheet lined with baking parchment (usually wrapping the pastry in the box), allowing a little paper to hang over.
4. With a sharp knife, lightly score pastry dough 2cm (¾ inch) in from the edges to mark a rectangle taking care not to cut right through the pastry.
5. Using a fork pierce dough inside the border.
6. Brush the border with a little beaten egg seasoned with salt and pepper.
7. Chill the pastry for 15 mins in the fridge, then bake until golden and puffed up, about 15 mins.
8. Remove pastry shell from oven, and gently press the central area down with a spoon (so that the pastry has a high border)
9. Sprinkle the pastry shell with the Gruyère.
10. Trim the bottoms of the asparagus spears to fit crosswise inside the tart shell. Arrange in a single layer over the Gruyère, alternating ends and tips. Brush with oil, and season with salt and pepper. Bake until asparagus spears are tender, 20 to 25 mins.





STUFFED AUBERGINES

James Bartolo

Serves 1



1 large aubergine + **100ml tomato sauce** + **100g fior di latte**



100g cherry tomatoes + **6 figs** + **75g gorgonzola**

METHOD

1. Slice the aubergine into 1cm slices and grill from both sides
2. Spread the tomato sauce on the grilled aubergine.
3. Add the halved cherry tomatoes, figs, gorgonzola, and finally the fior di latte.
4. Bake in the oven until the cheese is melted and serve warm

MUSHROOM LENTIL BURGER

Daniel & Jessica Pisani

Serves 6



150g lentils + **250g mushrooms** + **2 cloves garlic** + **1 onion**



1 cup wholegrain flour + **1 tbs soy sauce** + **1 tbsp chia seeds** + **1 tbsp olive oil**



½ tsp smoked paprika + **½ tsp black pepper, ½ tsp salt**

METHOD

1. Boil the lentils in 3 cups of veg broth until soft.
2. Finely chop the mushrooms, garlic and onion. Heat oil in a sauce pan over medium heat. Add the onions and garlic and sauté them for a few minutes.
3. Add the mushrooms and cook them for a few minutes until the juices start to flow and remove from heat after about 5 minutes. In the meantime, add the chia seeds and water to a small bowl for a few minutes - this will create an egg-like consistency suitable for binding.
4. Once the lentils and mushrooms have cooled down, add all the ingredients to a food processor and gently pulse to achieve the desired consistency.
5. Using your hands, shape the mixture into burger patties. To cook, sauté in olive oil for around 5 minutes on each side for the healthier option, pop them on to a baking dish and cook them in the oven for 30 minutes (flipping halfway through).





GIANT FIG AND GOAT CHEESE VOL-AU-VENT

Sean Gravina



1 tbsp plain flour

+



375g all butter puff pastry

+



Salt & pepper

+



5 fresh figs



50g Parma ham

+



75g butter

+



75g caster sugar

+



20g goats cheese, crumbled



Walnuts, toasted

+



1 tbsp micro leaf salad

+



1 tbsp balsamic vinegar

+



1 tbsp olive oil

METHOD

1. Preheat oven to 190°C. Roll out the pastry on a floured surface to the thickness of a large coin.
2. Cut into large circles the size of a breakfast bowl. Using a smaller shape cut a circle into the pastry, taking care not to cut all the way through.
3. Season with salt and pepper. Place on a baking sheet and chill in fridge for 20 mins.
4. Bake for 10 mins until the pastry has risen.
5. When ready, remove the circle from the top, taking care not to break it.
6. Remove any remaining pastry from the inside and prepare to fill the vol-au-vent.
7. Melt the butter in a pan then add the sugar.
8. Leave to melt over a medium/low heat until the sugar dissolves until it looks like a light caramel. Allow to cool.
9. Place the fresh figs on the sides of the vol-au-vent. Add the slices of Parma ham and crumbled goats cheese.
10. Spoon a few tablespoons of cooled caramel mixture and bake in the oven for 5 – 10 mins until the goats cheese starts to melt.
11. Sprinkle with toasted walnuts and micro herbs. Drizzle with olive oil, balsamic vinegar and serve.

CHEESY CAULIFLOWER BAKE

Robert Cassar

Serves 2



1 head cauliflower

+



200g grated cheese

+



Salt & pepper



3 eggs

+



Basil

METHOD

1. Cut the cauliflower and separate it into large florets.
2. Boil it until tender.
3. Drain the cauliflower from the water.
4. In a separate bowl, mix in the eggs and cheese, salt, pepper and herbs until well-combined.
5. In a baking dish, add the cauliflower florets and cheese sauce. Stir together.
6. Top with remaining shredded cheese,
7. Place in the oven at 180 degrees and bake until cheese is bubbly and golden and cauliflower is soft.





Forestals

TOP BRANDS UNDER ONE ROOF





DESSERTS



LEMON RICOTTA CAKE

Sandra Dimech



6 eggs, room temp



350g caster sugar



150g flour, sifted



1 lemon, zest only



8 tbsp limoncello



750g ricotta



250ml fresh cream



1½ teaspoons vanilla extract



400g icing sugar, sifted



5 tbsp lemon juice

METHOD

1. For the sponge cake, beat the eggs and 150g of caster sugar until thick and creamy, about 5 mins with electric beater. Add the lemon zest.
2. Carefully fold in the sifted flour so that mixture does not collapse.
3. Pour mixture into a greased 23cm spring form cake tin and bake in a preheated oven 180°C for about 25 to 30 mins .
4. Leave in pan to cool and invert onto a wire rack and slice into two layers when the cake is completely cool.
5. Line a 23cm spring form pan with cling film, leaving an overlap.
6. Place one sponge cake disc on bottom of cake tin and sprinkle with limoncello.
7. To make the ricotta cream, beat ricotta with 200g caster sugar until smooth, add cream and vanilla and beat again until thick.
8. Put ricotta mixture on sponge cake, smoothen it and cover it with remaining sponge cake, sprinkled with limoncello .
9. Fold the cling film over the cake, cover it and refrigerate overnight. Remove cling film and place on serving dish.
10. For the glace icing, sift the icing sugar into a bowl, gradually add enough lemon juice to get a smooth icing.
11. Pour over the top of the cake and let it run over the edge. Refrigerate until serving.

PISTACHIO CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Pascal Holland



6 eggs



6 tbsp sugar



2 tbsp vanilla powder



2½ cups heavy cream



2 tbsp pistachio paste

METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to 150°C.
2. Separate yolks and in a bowl combine with sugar, pistachio paste and vanilla powder. Stir until mixture is creamy.
3. Pour heavy cream into a saucepan on low heat and heat until almost boiling.
4. Remove and stir into the egg yolks mixture. Beat until combined.
5. Pour into ramekins and place into a large cake pan or roasting pan.
6. Pour enough water into the pan so that it reaches half way up the sides of the ramekins.
7. Bake for 40 to 45 mins until crème brûlée is set but still wobbly in the centre.
8. Refrigerate for a minimum of two hours.
9. Pour granulated sugar over the top, making sure it is spread evenly.
10. With a blow torch carefully melt the sugar until golden brown.
11. Allow to settle for 5 mins and serve.





RAINBOW PANCAKES

Robert Cassar

Serves 4



2 large eggs



250ml milk



200g flour



50ml sunflower oil



Variety of food colouring



Bar of milk chocolate & bar of white



2 tsp baking powder



Sprinkles



3 tbsp vegetable oil

METHOD

1. In a large bowl, whisk together the eggs, flour, milk and oil until smooth.
2. Separate out the batter into 3 smaller bowls.
3. Add drops of food colouring to each small bowl to create different coloured batters.
4. Pre-heat a pan over medium heat.
5. Cook the batter from each small bowl in the pan for 2 minutes on each side.
6. Garnish pancakes with strawberries, melted chocolate, sprinkles or toppings of your choice.

PISTACHIO CRÈME BRÛLÉE

Tony's Foods


250g biscuits of your choice


1 tbsp granulated sugar


Pinch of salt


100g butter, melted


1 can caramel


⅓ cup roasted and salted peanuts - coarsely chopped


3 large bananas peeled and sliced into ¼ inch slices



2 cups heavy whipping cream

METHOD

1. Pre-heat oven to 180 degrees. Use a food processor to break your biscuits, pulse the cookies until fine and transfer to a large bowl.
2. Stir in the sugar and salt. Pour over the melted butter. Stir the mixture until everything's well combined. Transfer to pie plate and press the mixture over the bottom and up the sides of the plate.
1. Place in the oven for 10 mins. Then let cool for another 10 minutes.
2. Spread nearly all of the caramel in a thick layer over the bottom of the crust. Spread the chopped peanuts gently over the caramel layer.
3. Arrange the banana slices in overlapping circles in two layers over the caramel and peanut layers. Keep a few slices of banana for decoration.
4. In a large bowl, whip the cream until it holds stiff peaks (using a hand held electric whisk).
5. Smooth the whipped cream over the bananas, covering the pie completely.
6. Place the left over bananas on top of the pie and sprinkle with the left over caramel. Refrigerate until chilled, ideally at least one hour before serving.



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Refresh your *Autumn* wine list



Autumn is making itself felt. The weather might still be mild or even warm at times, but the food we fancy and the types of wines we start putting on the table are different. GEORGES MEEKERS recommends two great bottles for the season.

The fresh produce and ingredients of the season are beckoning; the cooking goes into a higher gear and the cooler evenings bring with them an appetite for hearty, flavoursome wines that include more and more reds. Of course, there will still be a sparkler on hand in the refrigerator to serve as a refreshing aperitif. But most of the space is now taken up by broader white wines that need to be drunk cool rather than cold.

Moving onto weightier matters, Viognier is a fabulous grape for this time of year. The Delicata winery is a believer in the potential of Malta-grown Viognier and majors in an unoaked, dry mono-varietal in the premium Grand Vin de Hauteville DOK Malta range. This dry white has good heft and tastes smooth and opulent, balanced with jovial fruit flavours of apricot and peach, with a hint of honey, too. Whilst it's rich and comforting, the finish of Delicata's unoaked Viognier is as bracing as a fresh October night.

The wine will perfectly accompany substantial root vegetable dishes, savoury pumpkin pie, mushroom risotto, delicate game but also baked rabbit and heartier roast pork belly, firm fish like lampuka or a heartening chicken tagine.

Autumn is also a good time to appreciate the more complex flavours found in older vintages. Whilst we enjoy young wines in summer, whites and especially reds for autumn sipping can be older and oak-aged. Try aged red wines that entice with a smack of cooked plums and damsons, rather than the bright raspberries and strawberries of fresher, more summery bottles we've been drinking since spring.

As the quicksilver drops and the temptation to stay in rises, we begin to crave richer, full-bodied reds. And, why not uncork food-friendly varietals like Grenache, Carignan, Mourvèdre and, maybe best of all, Shiraz? If you seek a serious red wine which offers a unique spicy suppleness whilst maintaining the stoically strong backbone of Cabernet Sauvignon, look no further. Hunker down with Delicata's Grand Vin de Hauteville Shiraz Cabernet DOK Malta.

With aromas of fresh plum and dark chocolate-dipped cherries, brooding dark fruit, warm spices and sweet mocha, Delicata's oak-aged Shiraz Cabernet blend is a great companion to autumn recipes spiced up with seasonal spices like cinnamon, ginger, allspice, nutmeg, saffron and cloves.

This rich and full-bodied red wine is perfect for chilly evenings, alongside slow-roasted barbecued steak and melt-in-your-mouth braised meats. It is all about texture, poise and generosity. It pulls and pushes with power and elegance like the play of night and day.

Now that summer is gone, you can get cosy and sip on great autumnal wines.

For more information visit www.delicata.com

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microgreens

Adding nutrition to your diet

Gourmet Today catches up with CLAUDE FALZON, a microgreen expert grower who cultivates these tiny gems, which pack a powerful nutritional punch at Green Thumb Farm, his natural farm in Burmarrad. We find out more...

What prompted you to start growing microgreens?

What intrigued me to start growing microgreens is the fact that I am really fascinated by the germination process of a seed. It is amazing how the plant emerges from that tiny seed, watching it grow into a plant gives me a feeling of satisfaction.

What are microgreens? How do they differ from other greens?

Microgreens are vegetable greens harvested just after the cotyledon leaves have developed (and possibly with one set of true leaves). They are consumed mainly for their nutritional value. Some studies show that Microgreens are between 10 to 40 times more nutritious than their counterparts. In addition to this, they are also used as a visual and flavour component, especially in fine dining restaurants. Microgreens have common traits with both sprouts and baby greens, however, they are even smaller than baby greens and larger than sprouts.

How can people use microgreens in cooking or making meals?

Chefs use colourful microgreens to enhance the attractiveness and taste of their dishes with distinct delicate textures and unique flavours, varying from sweet to spicy. House wives are getting more familiar with microgreens nowadays and they are using them mainly in salads and sandwiches.

What kind of plants can be grown as microgreens?

There are many types of seeds that can be grown as microgreens - some are easy and some are more challenging. We grow most of them here, at Green Thumb Farm. The most common ones are broccoli, cabbage, pak choi, lettuce, mustard, kohlrabi, kale, collard greens, basil and many more.

Besides the tasteful variety of colours and texture, how are they beneficial? And what are the most nutritious microgreens?

Microgreens are hands down the healthiest vegetables on the planet. Some are even healthier than others. Studies found that broccoli is the most nutritious microgreen of all, as it is packed with Vitamin A, B, C and K. In addition to all these vitamins, it also has a significant amount of iron, magnesium and phosphorus. Kale has even more vitamin B, just as much vitamin C, but less vitamin A than broccoli.

For more information about microgreens, edible flowers and garnishes, visit greenthumbfarm.com.mt or call on 7946884. They also offer free delivery for orders over Eur20 !

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CHEF *HATS OFF*



Bradley Borg

We catch up with the Definitive(ly) Good Guide's July, August and September winners, Bradley Borg Head Chef at il-Pirata, Mellieha, Francisco Carrasco Head Chef at Hammett's Macina, Senglea and Karen Cutajar Head Chef at Rickshaw

Bradley Borg

What is your favourite ingredient to work with?

One of the ingredients, which is a must in each and every dish prepared, is salt. Having said that, it is of utmost importance to use the right quantities. When this seasoning is used well, the flavours of the dish prepared will be enhanced.

What advice would you give to someone who aspires to be a chef?

Becoming a chef is not just about getting inside a kitchen and following a recipe through. It is a demanding career, thus it is all about passion and vocation to work within a community and getting creative with the ingredients at hand. Dedication is also key in order to do your best at all times.

What is your favourite dish on the menu at your restaurant and why?

After creating the current menu, I can satisfyingly say that most dishes are close to my heart. However, if I had to choose one dish to claim as my favourite this would have to be the Risotto Molluschi e Crostacei. This is because of the authenticity of the Black Venus Rice, bringing with it a fine taste and texture. Additionally, as the name implies, it is paired up with a seafood variety, making it the ideal dish to eat by the seaside.

Francisco Carrasco

Did you always want to be a chef or did you dream of being something else? What made you decide to become a chef?

Since I was very young, I always knew that I would end up in the kitchen. My very first memories are in the kitchen of my dad's restaurant. As a third generation chef in the family, cooking is in my blood so it was a natural decision for me to take up a culinary career.

What is your food philosophy?

I always have as a priority in mind, to use as many local and seasonal products as I can. Keep the freshness of the food without overcooking or overthinking about





Francisco Carrasco



Karen Cutajar

how to execute it. I have always stated that the most important thing is taste, taste and after... taste.

What do you still want to achieve in your career?

As a chef, I have been extremely lucky to work among some of the best chefs in the world and in prestigious restaurants in Europe. However, my dream is to strike out on my own and open my own restaurant.

Which kitchen gadget / utensil can you not live without?

I can't start off my day without a pen in my hand. I won't be lying if I tell you I lose around 10-15 pens on a daily basis. I am a bit old school in this regard and I won't start cooking or begin service without a pen in my chef jacket.

Karen Cutajar

Which is your favourite city for eating?

For me it's Barcelona, where food always comes first. Order one of the city's most famous dishes, paella or go for tapas with Sangria pretty much anywhere in the Catalunya capital and you will be in for a treat.

Who is the most famous person you have ever cooked for?

The most famous person I cooked for is our Prime Minister Joseph Muscat with his family along with their friends.

What advice would you give to someone who aspires to be a Chef?

Keep your head down, ears open, stay focused, have fun, never ever stop learning, be humble, be flexible and love what you are doing..

What is your favourite dish on the menu at your restaurant and Why?

My favourite is the Thai Green Curry Chicken because it's spicy, sweet, a little tangy and full of so much flavour. It's a kind of comfort food.

Chef of the Month Competition

The Definitive(ly) Good Guide to Restaurants Chef of the Month Competition supported by The Catering Centre and Gourmet Today aims to recognise the chefs who make the restaurant the success that it is. Every month, two chefs are featured on www.restaurantsmalta.com and diners are asked to vote for who they think is the best, based on presentation of the food, variety of ingredients used and creativity in their use. To find out the best survey rated restaurants for 2019 and how they ranked, get your copy of The Definitive(ly) Good Guide 2019 from **www.restaurantsmalta.com**

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IF YOU CAN'T
LOOK UP
FROM YOUR SCREEN
TO EAT



GENKI
ASIAN CAFÉ

GENKI
ASIAN CAFÉ

THEN AT LEAST
YOU SHOULD
TASTE WHAT YOU SEE

MSIDA & THE CAROB TREE (ST.JULIANS)

NEXT-LEVEL Asian







Long gone are the days of boring, tired and MSG laced Asian food. Welcome to Genki, an Asian experience like no other.

Genki Asian Café opened its doors in 2017, after the owners' eye-opening experience whilst travelling through South East Asia and Japan. They developed a love for freshly made, palate rich food, whilst also exploring the rich variety of sushi available from small boutique restaurants in Tokyo and Osaka. This is the juncture where Genki sits in the Asian restaurant world; on the cross roads of South East Asian cuisine and Japanese culture.

Genki can also proudly state that it supports local produce, with more than 75% of their fresh produce coming directly from Maltese farmers, fishermen and meat suppliers. This local approach to procuring produce results in a combination of native and infused flavours, providing their product with the ultimate blend of taste and quality.

The team is made up of specialised members who are dedicated to the art of sushi, and constantly seeking to spice up the 'normal' and heavily westernised world of sushi by creating unique dishes, such as Sushi Doughnuts and a first in Malta, completely non-fish sushi. Their rich background together with the team's flair for the innovative, provide a complete picture of the concept behind Genki, and the direction which they have adopted.

Genki is working closely with the artistic community and local partners and will soon be announcing some exciting projects, including a full blown local delivery service that will be launched later this year.

Genki • Ta' Xbiex Seafront, Msida • +35621336572

MORE THAN A GASTROPUB

Words by Philippa Zammit

It's five o'clock on a Monday evening, and all I can think of is getting out of my office and getting rid of these Monday blues. A drink in hand and something to feast on was what I had been envisioning all day long. As the clock struck six o'clock, Amy and I raced out of the door and made our way to The Lucky Goose.

Operating from mornings until late at night, The Lucky Goose boasts a range of wines, beers and spirits as well as a vast menu with full-fledged dishes and tapas. The best thing about tapas is that you can have a snack or a feast, and the menu is flexible enough to suit everybody... a menu that places heavy emphasis on fresh, seasonal and locally sourced ingredients (a specials boards that changed frequently also features.)

Expect tapas-style dishes like tender, meaty octopus boiled in a mixture of herbs and spices, a speciality that everyone's been raving about since the opening of the gastro bar earlier this year. Simply divine.

I felt like nibbling and sharing a selection of small dishes available on the menu; the octopus as well as the smoked rib Carpaccio with the chef's homemade BBQ sauce, which went down nicely with my gin and tonic. I did say I felt like nibbling on small dishes, but that doesn't mean I did just that. Monday is the worst day of the week so Amy thought it would be a good idea to order as much food as possible... drowning your sorrows in food is never a bad idea, huh? Linguine with Maltese sausage, broad beans, confit of cherry tomatoes and garlic, topped with aged Gozitano cheeslets... need I say more? I think not.

Oh, and if you're counting your calories, they also





serve salads. The burrata anchovy salad is served with lemon oil, rucola and tomatoes. Good for your diet, yet surprisingly still totally satisfying.

Not counting calories? Australian striploin, rib on the bone, aged picanha, Uruguayan fillet, Uruguayan ribeye, USDA wagyu rib-eye... at the Lucky Goose you're spoilt for choice with the wide selection of meat to choose from, which you can see on display in one of the restaurant's main attractions.

A couple of G&Ts later and after having caught up with some friends we happened to run into, it was time to head home with a smile on our faces. It was a hectic nine-to-five, and I now felt all geared up and ready to face the following day at work.

We don't know what their intentions are, but what we do know for sure is that Matthew and Andrew have elevated the notion of a gastropub to the next level.

Whether you're looking to impress an old friend with a scrumptious lunch, sweep a loved one off of their feet with a dinner date or you're simply after an evening of eating and drinking with friends, this trendy gastropub goes the whole hog.





The Lucky Goose • Ta' Xbiex Sea Front, Msida • Tel: +356 9925 9871

CASUAL, COSMOPOLITAN CAFÉ IN THE CITY



Words by Amy Micallef Decesare

Just a stone's throw away from the Tritons' Fountain is the casual, cosmopolitan Café Phoenicia.

Though I usually tend to avoid the commotion of Valletta, especially during working hours, I must admit that this gem of a café has changed my perspective.

Sitting outside on the terrace, with a raging appetite and an Aperol Spritz in hand, admiring the undeniable beauty of our capital, but from a respectable distance, I felt completely at ease.

With a cheeky grin, Executive Chef Daniel Debattista and Junior Sous Chef Alessandro Gravino brought over three of their favourites to get us started.

Firstly, the selection of Charcuterie. Note: this platter can be found under 'to share' on the menu but I can guarantee that that's the last thing you'll want to do.

Featuring the most delectable of items, including smoked duck, pork rillettes, home-made chicken liver pate, parma ham, finnochiona salami, grilled sour dough and cornichons, does any part of you think you'd like to be sharing any of that?

Next up: the chickpea salad and Vegan club, both of which can be found on the complete opposite end of the scale. Both excellent vegan options, the former was distinguishable from most other salads due to the presence of crunchy green apple, contrasted with soft

aubergines, which elevated it to another level.

The latter was not a dish for the faint-hearted or the only slightly peckish. Loaded with Portobello mushrooms the size of my head, rucola, tomatoes and coriander pesto, the vegan club is, simply put, a work of art, even for the least vegan of you out there.

Another three dishes followed and we were certainly not complaining. Pasta riccioli with veal and rabbit ragout, pizza ta' l-Istagun and pan roasted grey meager.

The pasta dish was delicious, with an extremely generous helping of veal and rabbit ragout, the meagre just as delicious, fresh, crispy and perfect for that mid-week lunch with colleagues you were meant to plan.

What about the pizza, I hear you ask? Picture this: pizza bianca, lightly drizzled with oil, sprinkled with capers, onions, tomatoes, marrows and basil. The star of the show: Lampuki. Having never tried anything like it before, we couldn't have been more excited. Having exceeded all of our pizza expectations, we couldn't recommend this dish enough. And though it is subject to change once the season does, if the Lampuki edition is anything to go by, you'll be raving about it for weeks to come.

Inspired by Mediterranean, French, as well as local cuisine and ingredients, Debattista spoke to us about how crucial it was for him to get his hands on the very best, as well as the freshest local ingredients to work with.

With intense passion, he spoke of Café Phoenicia as being the ideal in-between as it's simple, easy and accessible, offering foreigners and locals alike a taste of dishes that they are accustomed to, but on an elevated level and not to mention, all for reasonable prices.

Café Phoenicia is a prime example of what a café should have: great food, a superb location, platters worth going back for and a team of driven, passionate chefs.

Business meeting coming up? Catch-up with old friends? Want to treat your grandmother to an afternoon bite after walking around Valletta? We have two words for you: Café Phoenicia.

Café Phoenicia • The Mall, Il-Furjana • Tel: +356 2122 5241



Photos: Zak Farrugia





NINE LIVES ONE STANDARD



Words by Philippa Zammit

Nine Lives features an excellent combination of great food and scenery, offering quality waterfront dining in a calm and relaxing yet sophisticated atmosphere. When I received the invitation for lunch on a beautiful warm day, to say I was a little excited would be an understatement.

Despite the fascinating view, my attention was quickly stolen by the extensive and inviting menu; a menu that offers an inspired array of selections that made it hard for me and my guest to choose from, so we left it up to the Executive Chef as well as his team, who prepared a wonderful variety of dishes for all tastes... even the most discerning.

We were told that the menu changes seasonally to

showcase top quality meat, seafood and veggies. Here, they don't limit themselves to a particular cuisine, but choose to work with inspirations taken from across the globe. After trying out several dishes, from Mediterranean to Asian fusion to Peruvian flavours, I can tell you that they master them all. The grilled octopus, one of their Peruvian dishes to die for, and is cooked in anticucho sauce and served on foamy potato puree and chimichurri sauce... and let me tell you, it just can't get any better.

The sushi is easily the restaurant's biggest selling point. Each bite is a symphony of colour, texture, presentation, and taste. After finding out that the sushi chefs have a wealth of experience in prestigious world renowned Japanese restaurants, I wasn't surprised at all. If you're looking for your sushi fix; a sashimi platter, mixed platter or single rolls, Nine Lives has got you covered... and you won't be disappointed.

Although we did indeed overeat, it is unheard of not to end the meal on a sweet note. Chocolate and lemongrass in filo pastry with a side of vanilla ice-cream wasn't a bad way to end what had been a fiery feast.

The perfect music played whilst we dined, setting the stage for my ideal experience; getting comfortable and hesitating to leave. In my experience, most restaurants play the wrong sort of music. While a lot of thought is normally given to the menu, the wine list, and the service, none whatsoever is given to the music. Things are different at Nine Lives. Open for all-day dining, the music sets the mood for the day; a calm relaxing atmosphere during breakfast hours which is livened up as the day goes along.

I reckon this winter will be even better, as they were only getting started in the summer... so stay tuned. Discover flavours to float your boat whilst looking out at the spectacular views of St. Paul's Islands and Xemxija. We know we'll be returning. Oh, and did I mention the free parking?









Nine Lives • Perched Beach St Paul's Bay • Tel: +356 21579658

LUSCIOUS SOPHISTICATION

In the heart of Paceville



Words by Isabelle Sammut

In the midst of one of the main side roads of St Julian's stands OIA gastro bar, a gastronomical delight which brings that something extra to the hustle and bustle of the nearby clubbing district of Malta.

OIA gastro bar, which opened its doors just over a month ago manages to pull off the right balance between the buzzy vibe of its surroundings with a more subtle and classier atmosphere...which is why it was the perfect location for my weekly date night with my significant other.

OIA easily catches your eye with its urban décor. It is semi-industrial with its tall chairs and hard wood tables; but also tropical with very warm undertones.

As we walked in, we were immediately greeted by the lovely staff who made us feel welcome from our very first drink to the last bite of dessert. We opted for a table outside on their terrace, since the weather permitted us to sit outside in the breeze as we enjoyed the background music and ogled at the menu. Their drinks selection is phenomenal, apart from the selection of over 30 beers to choose from, ranging from Belgian, German and Italian- their cocktails are definitely superior to most in terms of quality. As a

cocktail-enthusiast, I found myself marveling at the list of original cocktails that all include spirits which are infused in house. Inspired by the traditional cocktails, OIA's drinks add an experimental but flavorful twist. I opted for the Chilly Rita, which (as the menu rightly points out) is the hot and spicy sister of the Margarita. It is made from a chili-infused tequila, and it is not for the faint hearted. Other interesting cocktails on the menu and for those bacon-loving people out there- included the Bacon Bloody Mary, made from home-made Bacon infused vodka. For the more moderate drinkers (like my boyfriend) there are milder cocktails such as the original Cosmo OIA which is like the normal Cosmo but with a raspberry twist, as well as homemade lemonades.

When it came to the main act (ie: the food) we were equally in for a treat. For starters, we decided on having their famous scrocchiarella. It was extremely hard to choose from the different toppings, as they all sounded glorious- but finally the truffle and cheese option won. As a whiff of tartufo came wafting in our direction, and the serving board with its generous portion of scrocchiarella with its melted stracciatella di bufola, crispy fresh rucola and cherry tomatoes was placed on our table, we gave each other a metaphoric pat on the back. The portions were very filling, and the crispy yet chewy focaccia base was definitely one of the best things that we have ever tasted. In fact, we couldn't help but feel that slightly bit sad when the last piece very quickly vanished off our plates.

The chef, Justin Schieda then served us with the most exquisite salad as a middle dish, which included home-made sun dried tomatoes and a fluffy and light basil sponge that melts in your mouth, leaving a taste of basil goodness.

For the main course, we took the opportunity to try the meaty options and since we both couldn't decide between the duck and the pork, we decided to share both plates. The duck tandoori is a sight to behold, with tandoori spices, mango puree, raisins and a touch of edible flowers. The duck was warm and melted instantly our mouth, leaving a sweet yet savoury taste. The pork, also an artistic dish, included cauliflower puree, shavings of cauliflower and cauliflower couscous along with home-made Kimchi. As the chef enthusiastically explained to us, the pork is first cured and then soused in house, a
process that takes approximately 60 hours.

Full to the brim, and satisfied with our dining experience, we shared a coffee-cake with a chocolate glaze, which was the perfect ending to the perfect evening.

OIA takes you on an artistic journey, right from the aesthetics of its décor to the food and drinks that are not just beautiful to look at, but also divine in taste. To top it off they also offer free parking, which is a blessing in a place where finding parking is usually a nightmare.

For exceptional food and drinks, great vibe and welcoming atmosphere OIA is definitely the place to go to. Make sure to head there also on a Friday, when they host live bands with different music every week. Oh, and it just keeps getting better: apart from showing live sports, they've recently introduced a 40% happy hour (from 6.30-8.30) on all drinks and bar bites! OIA is open all day, everyday.



OIA • Paceville Street, St. Julian's • Tel: +356 79006679

A BUFFET TREAT

Words by Harley Mallia

There is no denying that I love summer...lazy days at the beach, cocktail in one hand, book in the other. My Sundays are spent moving from one beach to the next, because let's face it, what else is there to do on a hot, humid day in Malta? We are, however, reaching the end of the beach period, and for me, that means one thing – instead of moving from one beach to another on a Sunday, I now begin what I call Foodie Sundays. Winter body – I'm coming for you.



The very first restaurant I chose had to be a special one. It was the opening Sunday; I had to raise the bar for many Sundays yet to come. And trust me – it really did. I had been to Urban Valley Resort a few times during the Summer for a day by the pool. Tucked away in a quiet residential street in Kappara, the resort really knows how to give its residents and customers what they want. The second I saw their Sunday Lunch advert I knew I had to be there for the opening Sunday.

We've all been to buffets, and while I appreciate the abundancy, I will not be impressed simply because there are 100 chafing dishes filled to the brim with food. I want to eat good food from a varied menu, and Urban Valley Resort offers just that and more. Urban Valley Resort offers beautifully set tables, an outdoor play area for the little ones, delicious and varied food options, and to top it off, they will also change the theme of their buffet every Sunday. The 'Taste the Continents' concept will not only give patrons the wow factor for lunch, but a reason to return again the



following Sunday to taste more of what the Resort can offer.

This week's continent was America. From smoked pork ribs to spicy buffalo wings to the juiciest brisket I have ever had, Urban Valley Resort managed to surpass all my expectations. The live pasta station was also a hit – there's something about seeing your food being prepared that makes it taste ten times better. What surprised me the most about the pasta station was the out-of-the-ordinary choices. A rich and creamy seafood lasagna and pillowy potato gnocchi were two of the options. I'll take that over the Bolognese any day.

Much to my dismay, there were some items which I had to miss out on. There's only so much I can eat. Or so I thought.

The dessert table. What a table. Words cannot possibly express how happy I was to see all those delicious cakes, tarts, fruits, and creams laid out neatly, just waiting for me to devour. What I missed out on savoury, I really made up for when it came to sweet. My absolute favourite item was the sweet and sticky pecan pie, which is an item not often found in Maltese restaurants and cafes. Urban Valley Resort went out of their way to ensure that the menu really does pay a great tribute to the continent in question.

Just as I was nodding off happily at table (as I usually do) after lunch, we were invited for a drink at the newly opened Viento, right next to the beautiful pool. The outdoor gin and rum bar is one of the latest additions at the Resort. I wish I could try the food, but I had to stick to a glass (or three) of gin and tonic, which were the perfect ending to the first edition of my Foodie Sundays.Urban Valley Resort, you'll be seeing me again.

Urban Valley Resort & Spa • Triq Wied Għollieqa, San Ġwann • Tel: +356 2138 5926


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Savour our three-course meals inspired by the flavours of your destination along with your choice from our full range of complimentary drinks.
YOU GET SO MUCH MORE IN EMIRATES ECONOMY
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Italian-Inspired Eatery Ticks All Boxes

Words by Amy Micallef Decesare

May we finally bid farewell to our bathing suits and t-shirts?Well, hold your horses! Though we can't deny that the merciless Maltese summer has backed down somewhat, it certainly still allows for a blissful lunch on the terrace in the warm sun.

Where better to indulge in that polipo in padella all'aglio or that costate di vitello you've been craving, than at Da Marina restaurant at the Marina Hotel? Amidst all the commotion in the buzzing town of St Julians, you will find this gem of an eatery, which not only offers stunning views, but also dishes you've only dreamt of.

Immediately settling into our favourite activity; that of sipping chilled wine on the terrace, overlooking the sea, we felt right at home. We excitedly (and greedily) ordered an array of dishes, including carciofi con pomodori, pesce spade and fusilli, as well as a couple of desserts too, out of fear that we hadn't already ordered enough. As we eagerly awaited our meals, we couldn't help but appreciate the view of the crystal blue water, as well as the fact that Malta allows for al fresco dining in Autumn.

First up: the carciofi con pomodori secchi and zucchini alla griglia con salsa verde. For the non-Italian speaking folk, that's artichokes with sundried tomatoes and grilled courgettes, drizzled with a basil dressing.

Both were the epitome of fresh, overflowing with delicious vegetables, seasoned to a tee. What more could you ask for, really? That's right... the mains. We adopted the 'fresh is best' mentality, and opted for the pesce spade alla messinese and the fusilli alla verdure as our main dishes. Just for good measure, we also ordered a pizza di Formaggi and a Maltese. Disclaimer: prepare to be disappointed when you realise that you're physically incapable of ordering and consuming another 6 dishes!

One more time for the English speakers, we ordered the grilled swordfish, accompanied by tomatoes, olives and onions, and the fusilli with an eclectic mix of veggies, including asparagus, tomatoes and a touch of basil. The former could only have been more fresh if we had reached down and grabbed one out of the sea that second, and the fusilli was a beautiful blend of colours and textures, all of which excited our eyes, palettes and stomachs. The pizzas: soft, delicious, indulgent, oh and expertly cooked in a stone-baked oven (in case you were wondering).

Moving on to the final course: dessert. We ordered one of my personal favourites – a warm almond tart, topped with vanilla ice cream. Delectable, soft, warm and as satisfying as ever, the tart was the cherry on top of the superb Da Marina cake.And just like that, our dream-like lunch came to a sweet end.

With a heavy heart, we made our way back to our vehicles, but not before being informed that we had 3 hours worth of free parking. Yet another pro to add to the bunch! If you've gotten through this entire review without picking up the phone and booking a table, I'll assume it's just because your phone is disconnected because really, where would you rather be tomorrow afternoon, than on Da Marina's terrace indulging in all things Italiano?

Da Marina • St George's Bay, St Julians • Tel: +356 2370 2000

REDISCOVERING *THE CULINARY* SOUL OF MALTA



Words by Liam Gauci

Birgu is an ancient town that has been the heartbeat of Malta for centuries. The castle at the tip of the peninsula is home to two museums embarking on a new journey of discovery, a journey through the history of food of the island. The Maltese kitchen has become the protagonist for these two museums, and a pantry of ingredients, recipes and dishes has been brought to life through artifacts, documents and modern farming methods of the past, giving visitors an opportunity to 'taste history'.

The Malta Maritime Museum and the Inquisitor's Palace have a unique position in the heart of Malta's Grand Harbour. Studying what was being brought into the island over the centuries and what was being cooked both for the foreigners living on the island and for the locals; the curatorial team of both museums have initially chosen the 18th century as the starting point for this investigation. Patrons have been regaled with 18th century recipes and dishes, some of which had been forgotten for years.

Visitors are delighted to find pop-up workshops and food tasting sessions. It all starts with a few nibbles. Typically, guests enjoy local sheep ricotta salted with sea water, Maltese pecorino aged for three months , air-dried sausages, wild foraged rucola, Maltese olive oil and handmade ship's biscuit. On cold winter days, the recipes at the museums will sometimes also include soups. These warm chowders owe their history to magic spells found in Inquistion court cases. Anna Segond was accused in front of the Inquistor of preparing chick pea and broccoli soup for her husband for weeks on end. This was not because she had nothing else to cook, but because a slave had told her that it was the only way to blind her husband to the advances of their neighbour's wife.

Later, guests sometimes are offered hot chocolate, a warm beverage enjoyed in Malta since 1590. Chocolate from the newly discovered South American continent was so popular that it was the law aboard ship to provide all slaves with a mug of coco every evening.

Sweets and coffee are also found on the menus at every Taste History event. Even before refrigeration, Malta enjoyed ice creams and sorbets. Ice blocks were imported daily from Mount Etna in Sicily. This ice was prized by the many foreign and local chefs. The ice was the key ingredient to prepare chocolate ice cream, pistachio ice cream, cinnamon ice cream and strangely enough Parmesan ice cream, too!

Understanding the history and culture of an island by simply tasting its long lost dishes is a new approach being spearheaded by Heritage Malta the Maltese national agency for museums.

Heritage Malta

Taste History



WWW.TASTEHISTORY.ORG
DINNERS@HERITAGEMALTA.ORG

HM taste history adv 291x210.indd 1 16/09/2019 1:36 PM

How to Survive Life on the Go







As technology continues to grow at a rapid pace and businesses boom around us, it always feels like we are rushing from one place to another. How often have you felt like time was not on your side?

Do you find yourself in a situation where, although a healthy lifestyle is a prerogative, you never seem to find the time to exercise or prepare meals which are tasty, yet nutritious?

When always on the go, one struggles to prepare a home-made weekly menu, which not only is the source of natural goodness, but also brings the whole family together after a long day.

The Maggi's So Tender® and So Juicy® range can provide you with an instant and effortless solution, adding an instant burst of flavour to your meal.

Our **So Tender Range** consists of seasoned cooking papers with the perfect blend of herbs and spices to infuse your chicken or salmon by placing it on a frying pan and letting it cook for minutes. The paper keeps the meat tender and there is no need to add oil.

The **So Juicy range**, on the other hand, comes with a special cooking bag which allows the meat to cook in its own juice. It's so easy to use! Simply pop in the ingredients, sprinkle in the seasoning and place in the oven for delicious, juicy meat every time.

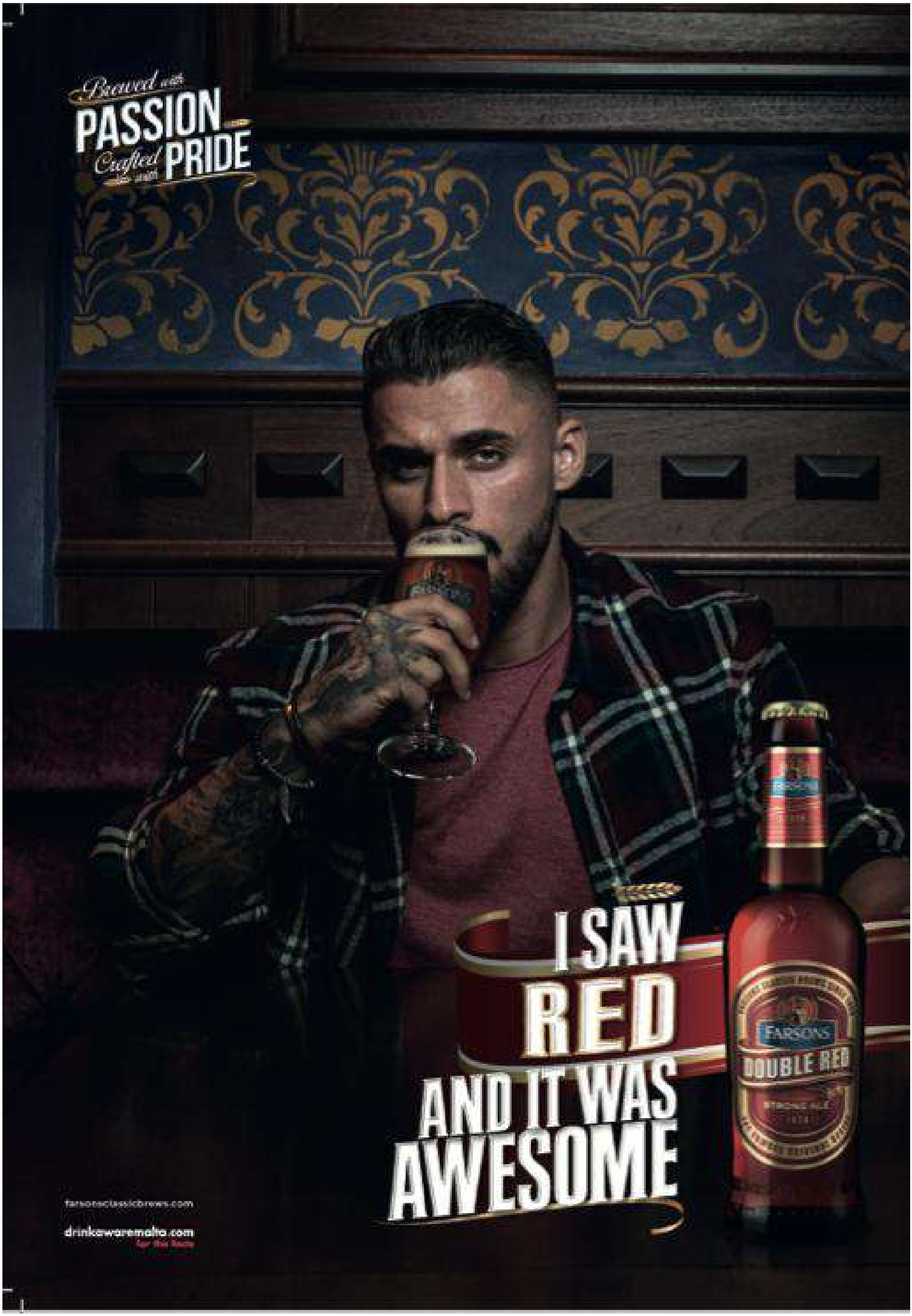
Whether it's Italian Herbs Chicken or Lemon Dill Salmon, all you have to do is follow the simple instructions on the back of the packet, throw some veg in boiling water and you'll be serving your family a savoury delight in no time at all.

As we all move on from task to task in our daily lives, time management is key. So why not make life a bit easier and add an easy solution to part of your weekly routine? Maggi's So Tender® and So Juicy® range can be found in leading supermarkets and stores.

For further information visit the Maggi Facebook Page on https://www.facebook.com/MaggiMalta/


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