

THE GROCER'S Seasonal Newsletter 2005

Autumn

NEW BEGINNINGS

According to Chinese Astrology, events happen in cycles of 12 years. Well, after 12 years under the steady guidance of Philippa and Graham Baws, The Grocer has been handed over to new owners, Louise and Andrew Miller.

Following the Chinese belief, children born twelve years ago (and those born in 2005) are born under the sign of the rooster. Roosters are said to be courageous, hardworking and reckless, if not a bit eccentric. Roosters will apparently be happy as restaurant owners or world travellers. Hmmm... doesn't sound too bad for a distributor with fine food from all over the world! Here's hoping that our courage and hard work doesn't lead us to be too reckless or eccentric!

We've got a few plans up our sleeve for the place. Look out for the new website coming up in a month or two. And Easter (the best time for new beginnings) sees a few changes in the showroom.

We're also going to find as many excuses as possible to search for new foods from far horizons. By the time you receive this, Melbourne will already have been scoured for new products with South Australia and New Zealand next on the travel agenda.

With my life long passion for all things food related and Andy's love of wine, we hope to carry on at The Grocer where Philippa and Graham left off - for another 12 years at least!

We also hope to see you at our first ever Tasting Event on Thursday 7th April (details below). If not, we look forward to seeing you in the showroom, or at one of our retail partners enjoying good food.

Tastefully Yours
Louise Miller

SAME FACES

Luckily, the faces you'll see at The Grocer are all very familiar. Emma, who worked with us a couple of years ago before moving to David Jones to help them set up shop (food-wise that is), is back armed with even more helpful hints about cooking just about any ingredient you can think of.

Tracey, our Sales Manager who started with us nearly 12 months ago, can be seen lurking at our retailer partners, enthusing over her favourite Grocer products

and helping them keep their shelves full of Grocer products. (Incidentally, Tracey's favourite is the Toscana Lemon pressed olive oil - and I don't think she's alone on that one.)

JOIN US FOR A TASTY EVENING

We know that anyone with a love of good food, loves tasting new things. Join us on Thursday 7th April anytime between 4pm and 7pm for our inaugural Tasting Night.

For the first time we'll have salmon caviar, Spanish jamon, quail eggs, our favourite Goan and Rangoon Racket curries and much, much more all available for tasting. We'll also have all our old favourites (like the Pyengana cheddar) along with the newest additions to our range, including those listed below. And of course hints on how to prepare them at home. Don't miss it.

Tasting Night

The Grocer
145 Stirling Hwy
Thursday 7 April
Anytime between 4pm - 7pm

NEW PRODUCTS

As always, we've been tasting new things, some of which we thought tasty enough to share. Look out for the following:

Pure Pistachio oil. This French pure pistachio oil has a very toasty flavour that would marry well with a roasted vegetable salad or drizzled over a stir fry. This is the closest thing to toasted sesame oil I've tasted (toasted sesame oil is my now not-so-secret ingredient for the perfect fried kway tao and seems to be difficult to get in Australia).

Arnaud Soubeyran Cocoa Rolled Almonds. These decadent almonds really taste like they've just been picked off the tree, before being lightly coated in dark chocolate and then rolled in bitter dark cocoa. They must be tasted to be believed. One of the few chocolate coated nut products to achieve the right proportion of nuts to chocolate. Very French and very delicious.

Seafood stock. My long search for a ready made fish stock is over. As a fisherman's daughter, a good fish stock is an essential pantry item for me. Martin's, from NSW, is made from wild fish heads and skeletons (mostly blue eye and snapper) and lasts for

12 months without refrigeration.

Alice Langton's Chocolate Fudge Dipping Sauce. This *really* is good – buttery soft dark chocolate sauce that can be eaten straight from the tub (I recently caught my dad using a piece of bread to scoop it out of the tub – really!) or used as a quick and easy icing on a mud cake. Great to take to picnics with pieces of fruit for dipping. Strawberries will never be the same again.

The Rangoon Racket Club Sauces. If you haven't tasted any of the RRC sauces, now is the time. They have just been snapped up by Harvey Nicholls' Food Hall in London (Mecca for foodies in the UK) and have also added a couple of new sauces to the range.

We love them because they make it so easy to make a great Indian curry in a hurry – faster than picking up take away on the way home.

Billington Sugars. Well, they aren't new, but we're pleased to let you know we have finally tracked some down, and hope to keep stocks on hand for those of you who appreciate great sugar.

Rustichella Trofie and Egg Lasagne – Trofie (small thin spirals) is the traditional pasta shape used in Pasta Genovese – that famous pasta dish with basil pesto. We now also have an Egg lasagne in stock.

NEW OUTLETS

A number of great new fine food outlets have opened throughout WA recently, particularly in the South West of the state. Look out for the following who have chosen to stock or use The Grocer's products:

Retailers

- Jeremys' Exclusive Butchers, Claremont Ave, Swanbourne. (Try the Moroccan marinated lamb leg fillet)
- Food Fetish, Bonnefoi Boulevard, Bunbury.
- Temptable Gourmet, Mandurah Terrace, Mandurah.
- Tastefully Yours, Stirling Centre, Bunbury.
- Jones Fine Foods, Bussell Hwy, Margaret River.
- The Hills Gourmet, 123 Canning Rd, Kalamunda.
- Coco Loco, 24a Napolean St, Cottesloe.

Cafes & Restaurants

- Lemon Espresso, St Quentin's Ave, Claremont.
- Verve, St Georges Tce, Perth.

I WAS WONDERING...

We love that we receive a myriad of unusual food related questions from you. It certainly keeps us on our toes and up to date with everything food related. We thought it would be helpful to share with you the answers we've uncovered.

Why is leaf gelatine better than gelatine powder?

A good panna cotta should melt in the mouth! Gelatine leaf makes it possible to make foods such as panna cotta with a lighter set. Gelatine powder doesn't always have as much tolerance when used to achieve a lighter set – that is, if you don't use enough, it won't set at all. In addition, the flavour of the leaf is milder than the powder, ensuring the full flavour of whatever you are setting comes through.

What is sumac?

Sumac powder comes from the berry of a plant native to the Mediterranean region and Middle East. In the Middle East it is used extensively as a souring agent instead of lemon juice or vinegar. It's great on fish and in salad dressings.

What is the difference between vanilla extract and natural vanilla flavour?

Vanilla extract is made by percolating or macerating chopped vanilla beans with ethyl alcohol and water. The process takes about 48 hours after which the extracts mellow in tanks with the beans from days to weeks, before being bottled.

The Federal Food and Drug Administration in the US has specific regulations regarding commercial extract manufacturing. For instance, the FDA requires a minimum of 35% alcohol to 65% water mixture. Premium vanilla extracts often contain a higher percentage of alcohol in order to extract more flavour from the beans. More alcohol is okay with the FDA; less than 35% is not.

People who prefer not to use an alcohol-based extract can substitute natural vanilla flavour. It usually is made with a glycerine or a propylene glycol base. Although the flavour comes from vanilla beans, it doesn't fit the FDA profile for extracts (i.e. have 35% alcohol), so it must legally be called natural vanilla flavour.

The texture of natural vanilla - especially in a glycerin base - is viscous and a little darker than vanilla extract. It also smells different. In uncooked foods and beverages it tastes fairly similar but with a slight aftertaste; in cooked or baked foods, it's more similar to extract.

Vanilla Essence usually is another name for imitation vanilla. (for more info, see www.vanilla.com.au)

UPCOMING EVENTS

As distributors of fine foods, we hear about a number of great food events happening in Perth. Check out the following:

Must Wine Bar - Sunday Afternoons

Sunday sessions at Must Winebar are all about the bubbles. Fabulous French Champagnes, Australian Sparklings and Spanish Cava, available by the glass. And French Champagne is at cellar prices. The music's chilled-out, the service impeccable and the bar food delicious. It's decadent, it's divine, it's a Must. For all their other events, go to www.must.com.au

Must
519 Beaufort St, Highgate

Matters of Taste – Gluten Free Cooking Classes

Matters of Taste, the fabulous cooking school, fine grocer and kitchenware store in Bicton, will soon have classes available with Jan Purser, co-author of the sell-out book Detox.

If you are interested in a class focusing on either Gluten Free cooking, Fat Free cooking or for a Detox Program, contact Matters of Taste on 9319 1097. They will only run the classes on demand and will release dates as classes fill.

Check out their website for all the other great Autumn classes they have available. www.mattersoftaste.com.au

Matters of Taste
103 Harris Road, Bicton

EMMA'S KITCHEN

If you're a regular in the showroom, you'll know that Emma has a wealth of cooking experience and loves sharing cooking suggestions and ideas. We've convinced her (well, it didn't take too much convincing!) to part with one of her favourite recipes. I hope you enjoy it as much as we did.

Pomegranate Lamb Fillets on Saffron Couscous

Emma E. Pears

Lamb
10 lamb fillets
1/3 cup Cortas
Pomegranate concentrated juice
1/4 cup York olive oil
1 tsp Ras El Hanout

½ lemon, juiced
Horizon Salt flakes
1 lge sweet potato, diced
½ cup pine nuts, toasted

Combine all ingredients except sweet potato and pine nuts in a bowl. Mix to coat all fillets and leave overnight if possible or 2 hours. Heat

Pomegranate Lamb Fillets on Saffron Couscous Cont...

oven to 170°C. Coat sweet potato in olive oil, and then bake in a roasting pan for 15 minutes. Take the pan from the oven, move the sweet potato to the side and lay the lamb fillets in the centre and sprinkle with Horizon salt. Return the pan to the oven and bake for 15 minutes or until the lamb is cooked to your liking.

While the lamb is roasting prepare and cook the couscous.

Israeli Couscous

2 cups Israeli couscous
3 tbsl York olive oil
1 onion, finely diced
2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tbsl Marigold Bouillon vegetable stock powder
4 cups water, boiled
pinch Krokos saffron pepper, ground

Steep the saffron in two tablespoons of cool water; set to the side. In a 2 litre saucepan sauté the onion in oil until just soft. Toss in garlic and fry gently, do not brown. Pour 4 cups of boiling water into a heatproof jug, stirring in the stock powder.

Roll the couscous around in the saucepan, with the onion, and cook until lightly browned. Stir in the stock, saffron and ground pepper, then cover and simmer for 8-10 minutes. Lift lid and check to determine if the couscous is al dente. Remove lamb and sweet potato from the oven and rest in a warm spot while you finish the couscous. Slice the lamb fillets on an angle. Place a hearty serving of couscous on the centre of a plate and lightly pile the lamb and sweet potato on top. Drizzle any juices from the lamb over and scatter with torn flat leaf parsley and pine nuts. Serve with a rocket and green leaf salad.

Serves four.

RUSTICHELLA PASTA – TIPS FROM THE MAKERS

For many years The Grocer has worked closely with Enoteca Sileno, importer of fine Italian food and wine since 1953. One of the most popular of these products is the handmade pasta from Rustichella d'abruzzo. This small Italian company have been hand making pasta for generations. Below they share with us their advice on selecting and cooking pasta.

There are three significant differences in the way artisan pastas are made from those manufactured industrially – they could be called the 3d's.

1. Durham Semola - the quality of the semola or flour used to make the pasta.
2. Drying time – the length of time the pasta is left to cure or dry.
3. Dies - the templates through which the pasta is pushed/extruded to create the shape.

Durham Wheat

Rustichella select a hard durham wheat grain high in protein levels (14% or more) which gives the pasta more tolerance to cooking – that is it will remain al dente. Always try to use dried pasta made

from 100% durham wheat (the packet may say semola di grano).

Drying

Traditionally made pastas such as Rustichella are dried for up to 56 hours at a very low temperature. This compares to industrial pasta which is often dried in just a few hours at over twice the temperature. The slower drying process allows the pasta to develop a much more complex and desirable flavour.

Dies

Industrial pasta makers usually use dies coated in Teflon to help the pasta form the various shapes as its extruded or pushed through the die. The bronze dies used by artisan pasta makers ensures the pasta is rough, making it more porous, and ultimately, more able to absorb the flavour of the condiment/sauce you are adding to the dish. Pastas made using bronze dies will be lighter in colour than industrial made.

Cooking tips

- Don't add oil to the water when cooking pasta as it will prevent the pasta from absorbing the sauce.
- Do make sure you have enough water. 1L of water for every 100g of pasta is recommended.

- Do reserve some cooking water when draining the pasta as this can be added to help loosen the sauce if required.

DON'T FORGET THE TASTING NIGHT - 7 APRIL - ANYTIME FROM 4PM TO 7PM