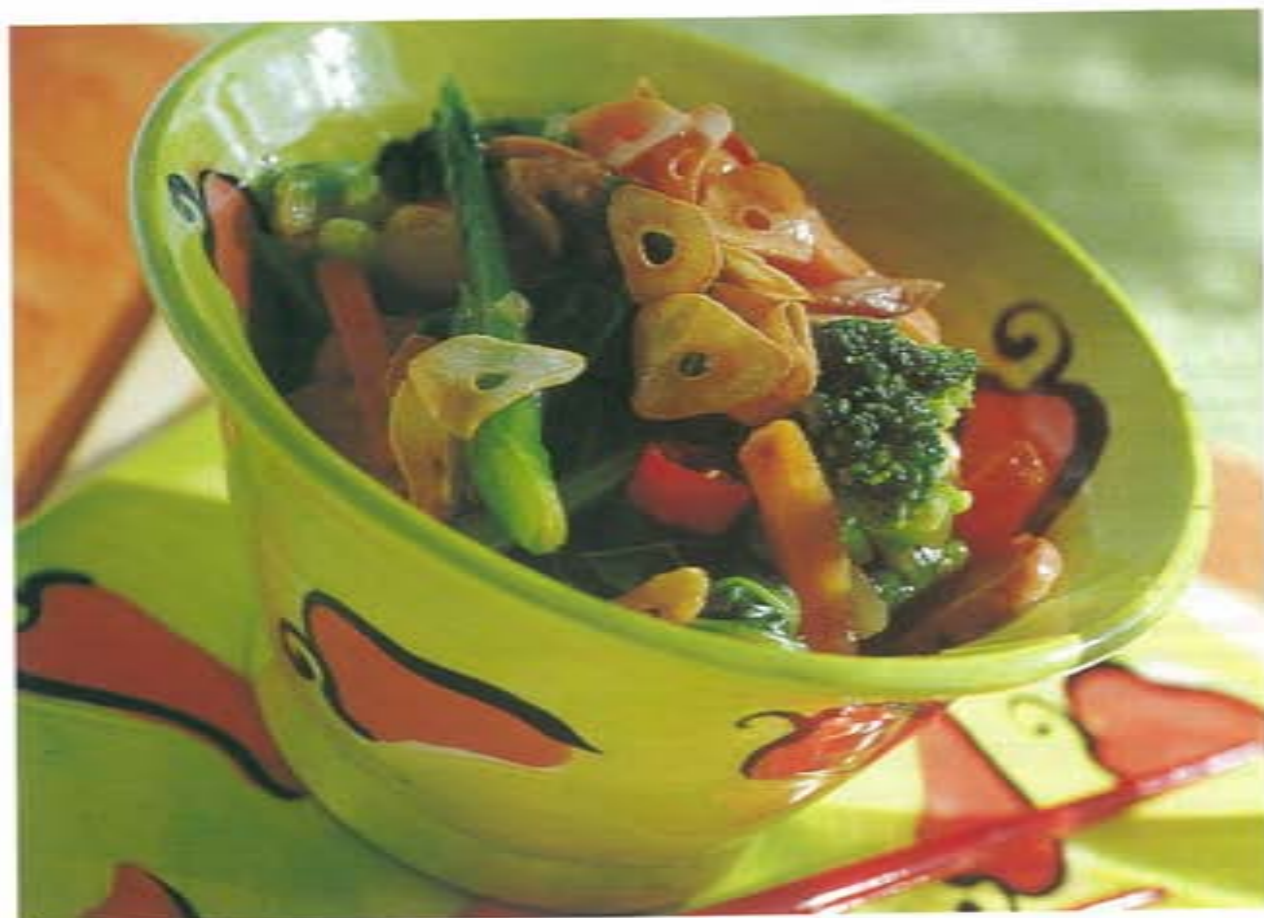


Food flash

Elise Pascoe presents holiday ideas high in flavour and low in fuss.



Stir-fried Oriental Vegetables on Rice with Fried Garlic Slices. Lime green Christopher Vine Design artsilk rag \$82.50, Common As Mud chilli sushi plate \$36, and chilli serving bowl \$24.50, Lily Gilders orange bread board \$49.95, all from Generosity, Military Road, Mosman, NSW, (02) 9968 4129.

During the summer holidays, whether at home or away, it's good to have a host of dishes oven-ready or ready-to-eat. Make the most of favourite stand-bys that you know work for you and that you can whiz up in a few minutes. But try to take the time to make the most of these food flash ideas or to create a few dishes of your own.

● **Stir-Fried Oriental Vegetables on Rice with Fried Garlic Slices.** Serves 2. Heat a wok. Add 2 tablespoons vegetable oil and fry the garlic slices until they begin to colour. Remove with a skimmer to

a plate. Add a 400g packet frozen oriental vegetables and stir-fry over medium/high heat for 2-3 minutes. Add a shake of oyster sauce, a shake of soy sauce and a few tablespoons of stock and stir until almost reduced. Season and stir in 1 teaspoon of cornflour mixed with 4 tablespoons stock and stir until juices thicken slightly. When vegetables are just cooked but still a little crisp, serve over boiled rice. Top with fried garlic slices and serve dish with sweet chilli sauce.

● **Orange - Pistachio Meringues.** Makes 50-60. A big basket of fabulous meringues will

gladden any sweet-tooth's heart. Make it the table centrepiece for all fresco dining. Glacé orange pieces and chopped pistachios folded through this mixture lift the meringues into another realm. Beat 3 large egg whites with a pinch of salt until peaky. Gradually add 165g (¾ cup) caster sugar and beat until stiff and glossy. Fold in vanilla, 75g (½ cup) chopped pistachios and 30g (¼ cup) finely chopped glacé orange. Butter 2 baking sheets and drop the mixture by the teaspoon onto the sheets, leaving room between the meringues. Bake either side of the centre of the oven at 120°C for 45 minutes. Change



English Muffins with Fresh Pecorino and Slow-Roasted Tomatoes. Christopher Vine Design blue snicers and lime green daisy cups \$21.50 a setting, fishing book \$8.50, Provençal napkin \$15.50, all from Generosity, Mosman, NSW.

the trays around and bake a further 45 minutes or until meringues are crisp, which may take another 30 minutes. Close oven door, turn off oven and leave meringues until cool. Serve with hulled strawberries macerated in fresh orange juice with a few drops of vanilla.

● **Valentine's Heart-Shaped Sponge with Strawberries and Cream.** Separate 4 eggs and beat the whites with a pinch of salt until peaky. Add 150g caster sugar, 2 tablespoons at a time, and beat until mixture stands in shiny stiff peaks. Add yolks one at a time, beating until thick and creamy. Sift 150g self-raising flour over the top and fold in with 3 tablespoons warm milk. Butter and flour a 22-24cm heart-shaped cake pan. Pour mixture into prepared pan and bake in the centre of a 200°C oven for 25-30 minutes or until golden on top and receding from the sides. Cool and turn out onto a cake cooler. Beat 300ml thickened cream to soft peaks. Hull a 250g punnet of strawberries and halve them. Cut the cake in half and fill

with cream and strawberries. Dust the top with icing sugar.

● **English Muffins with Fresh Pecorino and Slow-Roasted Tomatoes.** To slow-roast tomatoes, halve Roma tomatoes lengthwise and sit cut-side up in a roasting pan sprayed with olive oil and a drizzle of olive oil over the top, a sprinkling of sea salt and some freshly ground black pepper. Roast in the lower third of the oven at 130°C for about 3 hours. Remove tomatoes when they are shrivelled but still juicy and the juices have caramelised in the bottom of the pan. Cool. Split muffins and either toast or heat through. Top with thinly sliced fresh pecorino, slow-roasted tomatoes, sprigs of rocket and green and black olives.

● Other ideas

– **Think Thai** when cooking shellfish. Wok cook in a little oil with ginger, garlic and chilli, some pounded lemongrass and coriander root, fish sauce, a little sugar (palm sugar for preference) and a squeeze of lime juice. Toss over hot noodles and top with wisps of crisp coriander and shredded kaffir lime leaves. Pass around extra chilli for those who like their Thai fiery.

– **Redfish fillets**, quickly pan-cooked and layered between sheets of pre-cooked lasagne with a creamy velouté sauce (bechamel made with fish stock instead of milk) and a light sprinkling of parmesan on top, can be ready to pop into a hot oven to heat through for last-minute entertaining.

– Good **dried pasta** can be bought anywhere. Barilla is my favourite because it has a great texture and flavour. Made in northern Italy from the right wheat grown in the right climate, it's hard to ruin. Follow the cooking time on the packet and you won't be disappointed. Serve with a goat cheese and walnut sauce.

Watercress Soup. Serves 6. A gorgeous creamy green watercress soup which can be served chilled or heated is a saviour for busy holiday entertaining. Bring 1.25 litres (5 cups) de-fatted veal or chicken stock to the boil. Add 2 bunches washed and dried watercress, roughly chopped, and return to the boil. Cook uncovered over high heat for 3 minutes. In another large pot, cook 1 chopped brown onion over medium/low heat for about 12-15 minutes until beginning to brown. Add 2 large potatoes, peeled and roughly chopped, and the boiling stock and watercress. Bring to the boil and simmer uncovered for 45 minutes. Season and cool soup over a sink of iced water. Blend the soup in batches until silky smooth. Refrigerate for 1-2 days to gather flavour. You can thin the soup with extra stock if too thick or thicken by reducing it. Or it may be enriched with thickened cream. Serve with very finely sliced red radishes floating on the top and snipped chives.



Valentine's Heart-Shaped Sponge with Strawberries and Cream.

Super finds

Robert Carmack checks out the supermarket shelves.



CURRYING FLAVOUR

Sharwood's Curry Paste, in the larger 275g to 290g jars, now comes in a medium strength to complement the existing hot and mild varieties. Meanwhile, Balti is Sharwood's new addition to the existing, but recently reformulated, range of Tikka Masala, Tandoori and Vindaloo curry pastes.



SNACK-TIME

New to the shopping basket: Throw the tape measures away when eating Betty Crocker Sweet Rewards range of muffin and cake mixes. Low in fat, the range consists of Wild Blueberry and Apple Cinnamon muffin mixes and Devil's Food Cake. Mix with water and egg whites, then bake; the mixes cost between \$3.20 and \$3.40. Guilt-free biscuits under Arnott's SnackRight label offer between 30 and 40 per cent less fat than similar products and cost \$2.05. Riviana Barbecue Rice Snacks are produced in Japan from Australian rice. Baked and not fried, these gluten-free snacks cost \$2.65 for 100g, foil-packed. Kraft Quick Pasta is a single-serve snack, ideal for kids after school. A 75g box costs 99 cents and the pasta comes in Mild Curry, Creamy Chicken, Tangy BBQ, Cheese and Herb and Mild Mexican flavours.

PRAISE INDEED

Praise has launched new variants to its range of dressings and mayonnaises. Praise Caesar Dressing makes it easy to prepare this salad at home, while Praise Herb Dressing adds a herb flavour to green salads, or it can even be used as a marinade. Praise Cholesterol Free Mayonnaise and Praise Light Mayonnaise have been introduced for the health-conscious. The former contains just 15 per cent fat and is free of cholesterol. The dressings, in 250ml bottles, cost about \$2.20, while the mayonnaises, in 370g jars, are about \$2.25.



DRESSING UP

Olive Grove has launched a new range for salad lovers: Sun Dried Tomato, Caesar and Pesto dressings, and Mayonnaise. While the Sun Dried Tomato and Pesto dressings boast pure olive oil, the Caesar Dressing and Mayonnaise are blends. They all cost \$2.50 for 250ml.



JIFFY JELLIES

Sunnyboy Jelly is Australia's first chill 'n' eat jelly. Available in Zap Lime, Razz Raspberry, Glog Cola and Ozzie Orange, it is sold (for 59 cents) from the shelf, but it improves with refrigeration.



BAMBOO BONUS

Bamboo Pot is a new brand of fresh noodles, available in Hokkien (Singapore-style), Chow Mein, Japanese Ramen and Rice varieties, in both 600g and 1kg packaging from the refrigerated cabinet. Unlike other fresh pastas, these noodles require merely a quick stir-fry to prepare. Complementary Peanut Satay, Honey Soy, and Sweet & Sour sauces are also available; about \$2.95.



GLAD TIDINGS

A free booklet with practical tips for around the home and garden has been released by Glad. It's available by writing to Glad Handy Household Hints Collection, 36 Gow Street, Padstow, NSW 2211. Also look for Glad's new Jumbo Sandwich Bags in packs of 40 for \$1.49.



SWEET INDULGENCE

Coffee and Marsala-flavoured Tiramisu is the latest Pure Indulgence experience from White Wings. Just add an egg, milk and top with whipping cream to recreate this classic Italian Dessert, which sells for \$4.09.



QUICK DIP

From Dairy Farmers this season come two dips made with fresh milk and cream - Sun Dried Tomato & Capsicum Dairy Dip and Creamy Pesto Dairy Dip. They are available from dairy cabinets in NSW stores for \$1.68.

SOUPS ON

New, even-better condensed soups from Heinz include Creamy Pumpkin, Creamy Chicken, Creamy Asparagus, Creamy Celery, Big Red Tomato, and Tomato and Bacon. Just add water or milk and heat; the 425g tins cost about \$1.47.



FURTHER EAST

The Nazari range of Asian products has grown again, this time with the introduction of Fresh Mince Ginger, Fresh Mince Garlic and Crushed Chilli, in 375ml jars, for between \$2.60 and \$2.90.

NATURAL FIBRE

Extra Fibre cereal is Kellogg's highest fibre cereal product ever. Rich in wheat bran, a single bowl provides more than 65 per cent of daily fibre needs. Available in 550ml.



MANGO MAGIC

For a limited period this summer, Golden Circle offers Fresh Mango in Natural Juice. Ripe North Queensland mangoes are peeled and sliced, then packed in plastic tubs and sold refrigerated with a strict eight-day shelf-life. The mangoes are available in 400g plastic tubs from \$4 to \$4.50.



1

Gather all ingredients.



2

Proof the yeast in the warm water for 15 minutes. Place milk, flour, egg yolks, salt, sugar and yeast mixture in the bowl of a food processor. Process for 1-3 minutes until smooth. Pour mixture into a large mixing bowl, cover with a clean tea towel and leave to rise for 1-1½ hours. Dough will almost double in bulk.



3

Beat egg whites until stiff and fold into dough mixture.



4

Melt butter in a heavy-based frying-pan and drop mixture by teaspoonfuls into hot pan. Turn blinis only once and cook until golden on each side.



WOK WONDERS

Celebrate the Chinese New Year with Oriental taste teasers prepared by Rosemary Mellish.

SHRIMP TOAST

6-8 slices thick white toasting bread, preferably a few days old
500g medium green prawns, peeled and deveined
2 spring onions, finely chopped
2 tablespoons finely chopped canned water chestnuts
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 teaspoon grated fresh ginger
1 egg white, lightly beaten

2 teaspoons cornflour
2 tablespoons sesame seeds
oil, for deep-frying
sweet chilli sauce, to serve

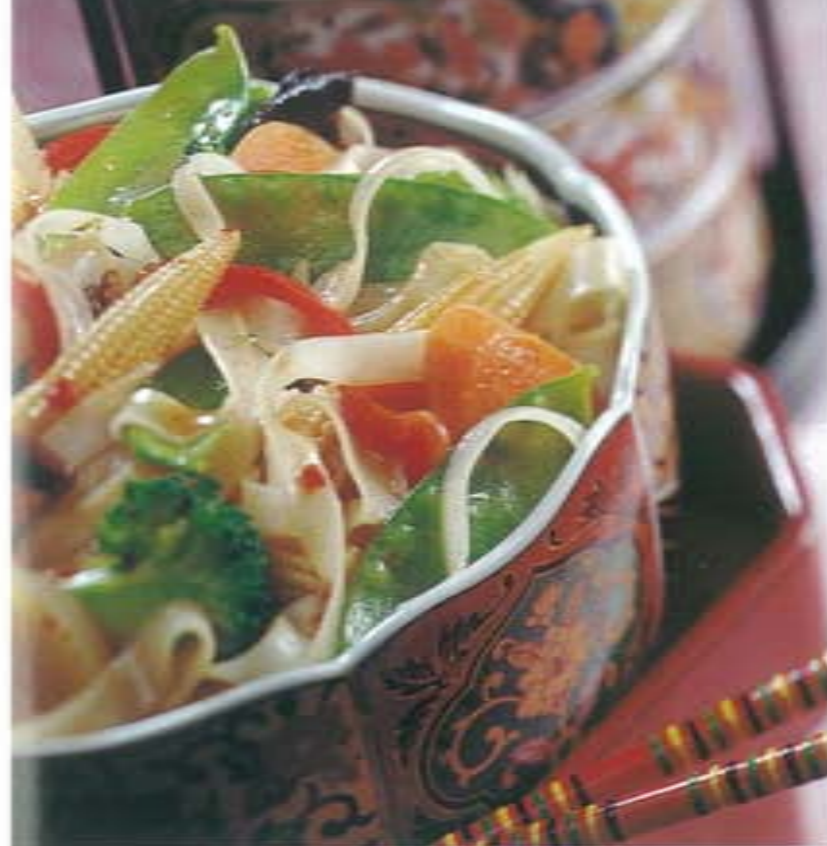
Remove crusts from thick white toasting bread and cut each slice into 3 even lengths. Roughly chop peeled and deveined green prawns and place in a food processor with spring onions, water chestnuts, sesame oil, ginger, egg white and

cornflour. Process until mixture forms a smooth paste. Using a wet knife, spread the mixture thickly over each piece of bread, smoothing the edges. Sprinkle with sesame seeds. Slide the bread into hot oil, filling side down, and fry until golden. Remove and drain on absorbent paper. Repeat with remaining ingredients. Serve immediately accompanied by sweet chilli sauce. **Serves 4-6.**

PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART SCOTT



Shrimp Toast. Black glass sushi plate, \$45, toothpicks in holder, \$15 pair. Oriental settings from Made in Japan, Paddington, NSW, (02) 9360 6978. Banded chopsticks privately owned.



Cellophane Noodle Vegetable Stir-Fry. Imari ceramic bowl, \$90, Imari ceramic three-tier obento on stand, \$110, red lacquer tray on legs, \$45, all from Made in Japan.

CELLOPHANE NOODLE VEGETABLE STIR-FRY

250g broccoli, cut into florets
100g snow peas, trimmed
2 medium carrots, peeled and sliced diagonally
200g rice stick noodles
6 dried Chinese mushrooms, soaked in warm water for 20 minutes
1 tablespoon vegetable oil
1 tablespoon sesame oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
1 small red chilli, seeded and finely chopped
1 large onion, cut into wedges
1 medium red capsicum, sliced
425g can baby corn, drained
½ cup pineapple juice
½ cup chicken stock
1 tablespoon oyster sauce
1 teaspoon chilli sauce
2 tablespoons soy sauce
1 teaspoon cornflour

Place noodles into a bowl, pour over warm water and allow to stand 20 minutes. Drain. Boil, steam or microwave broccoli, snow peas and

carrots until just tender. Drain, refresh in cold water and re-drain. Drain mushrooms and squeeze dry. Discard stalks and slice caps. Heat oils in a wok; when hot add garlic, chilli, onion and capsicum and fry 2-3 minutes. Add mushrooms, broccoli, snow peas, carrots and baby corn and stir-fry 1-2 minutes. Whisk juice, stock, sauces and cornflour together. Pour into wok, bring to the boil, reduce heat, stir in noodles and simmer for 2-3 minutes, until heated through. **Serves 4.**

SAUTÉED SCALLOPS AND JUMBO PRAWNS WITH STRAW MUSHROOMS

1kg large scallops, washed and cleaned
500g green king prawns, peeled and deveined, tails intact
2 bunches fine asparagus spears, cut into 4cm lengths
2 tablespoons peanut oil
4cm piece fresh ginger, cut into fine strips
2 tablespoons rice wine
230g can bamboo shoots, drained

WOK WONDERS

425g can straw mushrooms, drained
½ cup chicken stock
salt and white pepper, to taste
½ teaspoon cornflour
2 spring onions, finely sliced on the diagonal

Drop the scallops and prawns into a large saucepan of boiling water and cook until water comes back to the boil. Remove seafood with a slotted spoon and set aside. Plunge asparagus into boiling water, cook 20-30 seconds, drain, refresh in cold water and re-drain. Heat oil in a wok; when hot, add ginger and sauté 1 minute, stirring constantly. Add the scallops and prawns to wok and stir-fry over high heat for 30 seconds. Sprinkle over rice wine, then add bamboo shoots, straw mushrooms and asparagus and toss quickly to combine. Whisk stock, seasoning and cornflour together and add to wok; heat, stirring for 2-3 minutes or until sauce thickens. Serve immediately garnished with spring onion. **Serves 3-4.**



Mongolian Chicken, top, Sautéed Scallops and Jumbo Prawns with Straw Mushrooms, below. Lacquer bowls, \$17.50 each, timber soap dish, \$30, all from Made in Japan.

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

Combine your most elegant crystal and silver with luscious fine chocolates for an especially elegant get-together.

EDITOR: LISA HILTON
PHOTOGRAPHY: STEUART SCOTT

SERVED IN STYLE

From left to right (anti-clockwise): Limoges porcelain Patra entrée plate, \$200, from Christofle. Fairfax & Roberts cake/sandwich tray, with handle, \$75, from Mosman Antiques Centre, filled with chocolate biscuit and pastries from Darting's Treat Patisserie, on Cornucopia bone china sandwich tray, \$195, from Wedgwood. Silver-plated Chippendale oblong gallery tray, \$325, by Whitehall Silver & Plate Co, from David Jones and speciality shops. Kahlua- and milk-filled crystal liqueur glass, \$6, from The Bay Tree and Belgian dark chocolate crown from Vandervee. Lalique Nogent crystal glass bowl, \$615, from David Jones, filled with Vandervee imported Belgian dark chocolates (including chocolate lips). Block of Callebaut luxury couverture chocolate from Deimur International, Christofle small silver-plate Leaf bowl, \$150, filled with Vandervee Belgian chocolates and, below, Guylian's new Canasta white and dark Belgian chocolates, \$5.50, resembling playing cards. Saint Louis crystal Bourbon bowl, \$511, from Christofle, filled with Guylian's luxury Belgian chocolate, from the Opus collection, \$12.95, and Canasta chocolates (to the right), from leading department stores and speciality shops. Limoges porcelain coffee cup and saucer, \$165, on Marrow glaze teacup and saucer, \$195, on Limoges porcelain entrée plates from Limoges Australia. Beauharnais silver-plate coffee pot, \$1333, with timber handle from Christofle. Moundust Tempaper wallpaper in background from South Pacific Fabrics. Details, last pages.

STAND-OUT STAND-UPS



Lift your engagement party out of the ordinary with these delicious suggestions.

FOOD: KATIE HIGHFIELD PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART SCOTT

CHARGRILLED CHILLI PRAWNS

40 medium-size green king prawns, shelled and deveined, but retain tails
 ¼ cup Thai-style sweet chilli sauce
 2 tablespoons olive oil
 juice of 1 lemon
 chillies and thyme sprigs for garnish

Pre-heat chargrill. Place the shelled and deveined green prawns in a mixing bowl and add the chilli sauce and olive oil. Toss well to combine and thread onto bamboo skewers. Place prawns on grill and cook for 4-5 minutes until prawns are golden brown. Arrange on serving platters, drizzle with lemon juice and garnish with fresh chillies and thyme sprigs.

CHICKEN AND CHILLI SKEWERS

2kg chicken breast fillet, cut into 3-4cm cubes
 ¼ cup Thai-style sweet chilli sauce
 4 tablespoons light soy sauce
 juice and zest of 1 lemon
 1 tablespoon light olive oil
 coriander for garnish

Pre-heat chargrill. In a mixing bowl combine chicken with all other ingredients, reserving 2 tablespoons of soy sauce. Allow to marinate for 15 minutes before threading onto bamboo skewers. Place chicken skewers, 5-6 at a time, in grill and cook 8-10 minutes until golden brown. Remove from heat and sprinkle with reserved soy sauce. Garnish and serve immediately.

TOMATO TARTLETS

40 shortcrust pastry cases 5cm in diameter
 8 vine-ripened tomatoes, finely sliced
 200g semi-dried tomatoes, roughly chopped
 ½ cup finely chopped basil, plus extra whole leaves for garnish
 2 tablespoons virgin olive oil
 sea salt
 freshly ground black pepper
 ½ teaspoon sugar

In a mixing bowl, combine finely sliced tomatoes with roughly chopped, semi-dried tomatoes, chopped basil, olive oil, sea salt, fresh pepper and sugar and toss well to combine. Spoon tomato mixture into shortcrust pastry cases and serve the tartlets within 30 minutes.

CUCUMBER AND CHEVRE DISKS

2 telegraph cucumbers
 200g chèvre
 2 tablespoons sour cream
 1 bunch chives, finely chopped
 freshly ground black pepper
 125g sundried tomatoes, drained and finely sliced

Peel telegraph cucumbers, cut into slices about 1cm thick and set aside. Combine chèvre with sour cream, finely chopped chives and a good grinding of black pepper and beat with a fork until smooth. Spoon a little chèvre mixture onto each slice of cucumber and top with finely sliced, drained sundried tomato. **Makes about 40.**

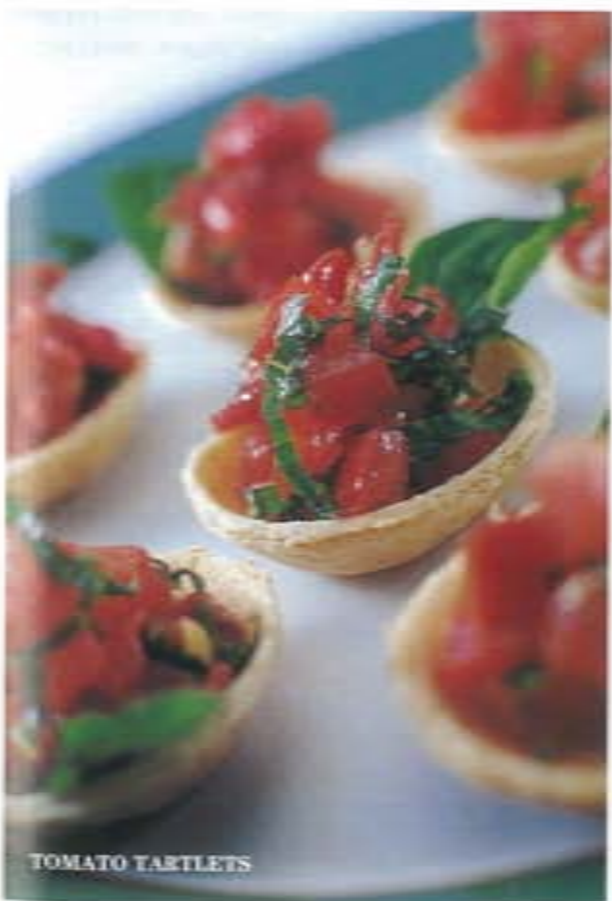
All plates from *Limoges Australia, Bay Street, Double Bay, NSW, (02) 9328 6876. Damask from Ozzie Mozzie Nuts, Barrenjoey Road, North Avalon, NSW, (02) 9918 0414.*



CHARGRILLED CHILLI



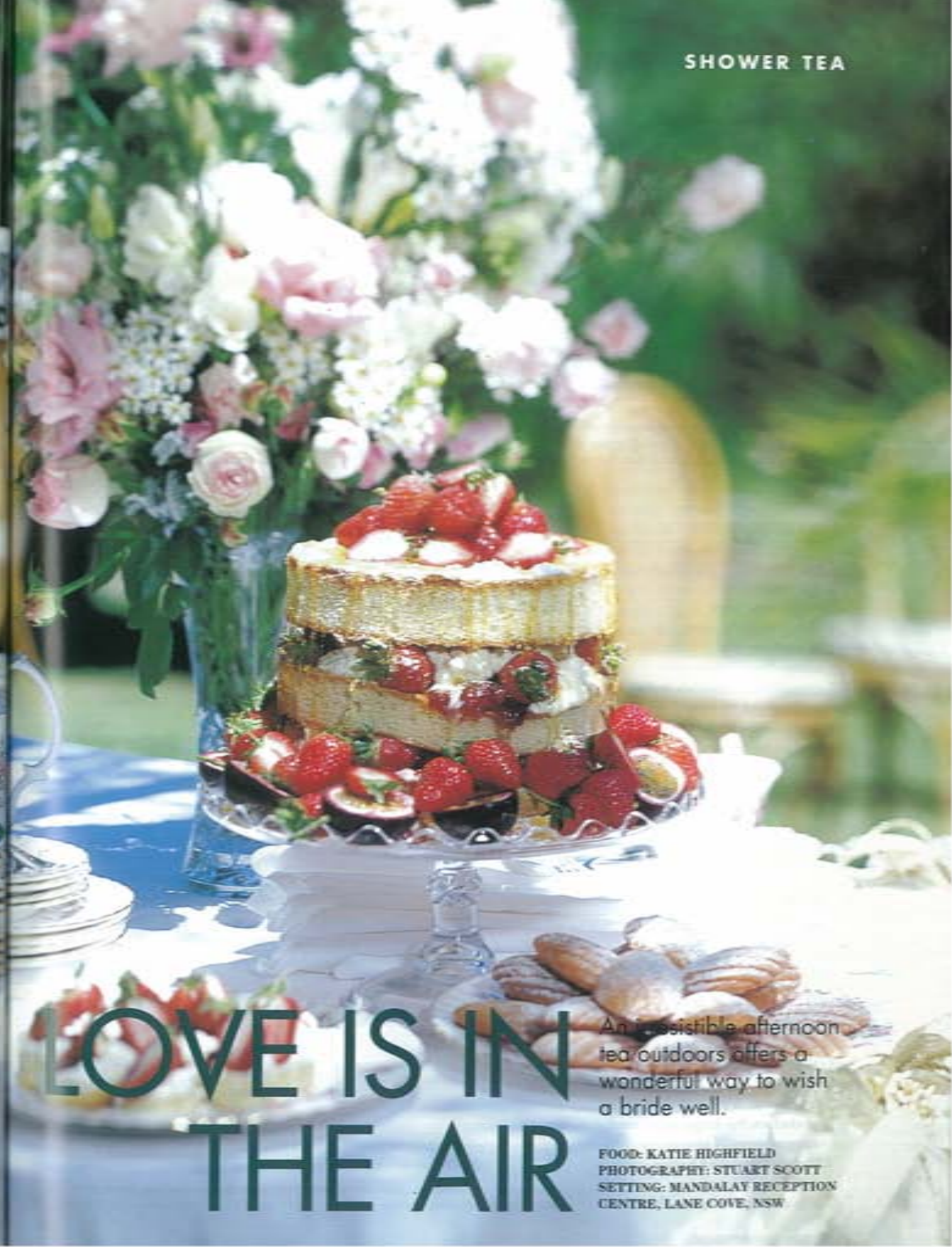
CHICKEN AND CHILLI SKEWERS



TOMATO TARTLETS



CUCUMBER AND CHEVRE DISKS



LOVE IS IN THE AIR

An irresistible afternoon tea outdoors offers a wonderful way to wish a bride well.

FOOD: KATIE HIGHFIELD
PHOTOGRAPHY: STUART SCOTT
SETTING: MANDALAY RECEPTION CENTRE, LANE COVE, NSW

QUICK KITCHEN

Big on taste, short on cooking time. By Katie Highfield.



PRAWN AND TOMATO SALAD

Preparation time:
25 minutes

1kg medium-size cooked king prawns, shelled and deveined
4 vine-ripened tomatoes, roughly chopped
½ punnet cherry tomatoes, cut in half
½ bunch mizuna, or

basil, leaves removed from stems
1 tablespoon tarragon vinegar
3 tablespoons virgin olive oil
1 clove garlic, crushed
pinch sugar

sea salt and freshly ground black pepper

In a mixing bowl toss together the vine-ripened tomatoes, cherry tomatoes and basil. Divide tomato mixture between four

serving plates. Top each serving with cooked prawns. Combine vinegar with all remaining ingredients in a screw top jar, shake well and spoon over salads. Serve with hot crusty bread. **Serves 4.**



SALAD OF ASPARAGUS AND GREEN BEANS

Preparation time:
20 minutes

2 bunches asparagus, trimmed and blanched
250g baby green beans, topped, tailed and blanched
1 red capsicum, cut into strips and blanched
½ cup walnut halves, lightly toasted
1 tablespoon white wine vinegar
2 tablespoons walnut oil
freshly ground black pepper

Arrange asparagus, beans and capsicum on four serving plates. Scatter each plate with walnuts. Combine vinegar, oil and pepper in a screw top jar, shake well and spoon dressing over salads. **Serves 4.**

Opposite: Marine plate, \$29.95 for 20-piece dinner set, from Freedom, all enquiries (02) 9951 9000. Mat from Ozzie Mozzie Nets, Barrenjoey Road, North Avalon NSW, (02) 9918 0414. Left: Horizon plate, \$6.95, from Freedom.

SALMON KEBABS WITH ROSEMARY

Preparation time:
15 minutes

750g Atlantic salmon, cut into 3-4cm cubes
2 tablespoons virgin olive oil
2 tablespoons fresh rosemary leaves
freshly ground black pepper

Pre-heat chargrill. In a mixing bowl combine salmon with remaining ingredients. Toss gently with a wooden spoon to coat. Thread salmon onto skewers and place in grill, cook 2-3 minutes on each side, until golden and just cooked. Serving suggestion: garlic potato wedges, with salad of green leaves. **Serves 4.**

TIP

To peel stone fruit: Make a small cross (x) with the tip of a sharp knife at top of fruit. Plunge into boiling water for 2-3 minutes. Remove fruit from water and allow to cool. When cool, slip skin off with fingers.



1

EYES:

Use the eyes to determine colour shades, which vary from wine to wine and change gradually with maturity. Depth of colour will describe various intensities as well as degrees of clarity in all wines.



2

NOSE:

Notes are lifted to just above the opening of the glass. Smell for layers of cleanliness, grape variety, youth or maturity. Discern strawberries for pinot noir, blackcurrant for cabernet sauvignon or lemon and honey for riesling. Every grape variety has a description.



3

MOUTH:

The sign of fine wine is when all its components – fruit sugars, acid, tannin and alcohol – are balanced on the tongue and within the mouth. You can experience this by taking a small portion into your mouth, holding then rinsing gently from side to side before swallowing. Take a few seconds to suck on your tongue and savour flavours, textures and their persistence on the back of the tongue. The ultimate reward!



4

EARS:

The appreciation of wine is the subjectiveness of perfect ambience.

