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- * CHICKEN STUFFING SAUSAGE ROLLS
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- * ALLA WOLF-TASKER'S DAIRY FLAT FARM

+ DELICIOUS. HARVEY NORMAN PRODUCE AWARDS



MATT MORAN
Cheese and Vegemite scones



OTTOLENGHI
Pistachio and raspberry tart



DANIELLE ALVAREZ
Easy spring menu

ALLA WOLF-TASKER.

Freshly Picked

Not content with steering the ship at the iconic Lake House Daylesford, **Alla Wolf-Tasker** has set her sights on becoming a producer, having acquired and cultivated an abundant farm just down the road. She takes *delicious.* behind the scenes for a first look at her latest project.

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FOOD PHOTOGRAPHY CHRIS COURT FOOD STYLING KIRSTEN JENKINS



Farro 'risotto' with
spring greens (recipe
p 89). **OPPOSITE:**
Dalry Flat Farm.





Alla with the Dairy Flat Farm and Lake House teams. **BELOW:** some of the exotic fare harvested at the farm.



FOR THE PAST year, Dairy Flat Farm in Victoria's bucolic Daylesford has been a hive of activity. Workers have been planting and harvesting 175 varieties of plants, fruits and vegetables, from pumpkin and eggplant to more exotic fare such as yuca, celtuce and shark fin melon. They have been resurrecting a vineyard, bottling olive oil and dehydrating herbs for tea. And they are converting an existing lodge and barn into luxury digs in time for guests this season. In short, it's flat-chat at Dairy Flat.

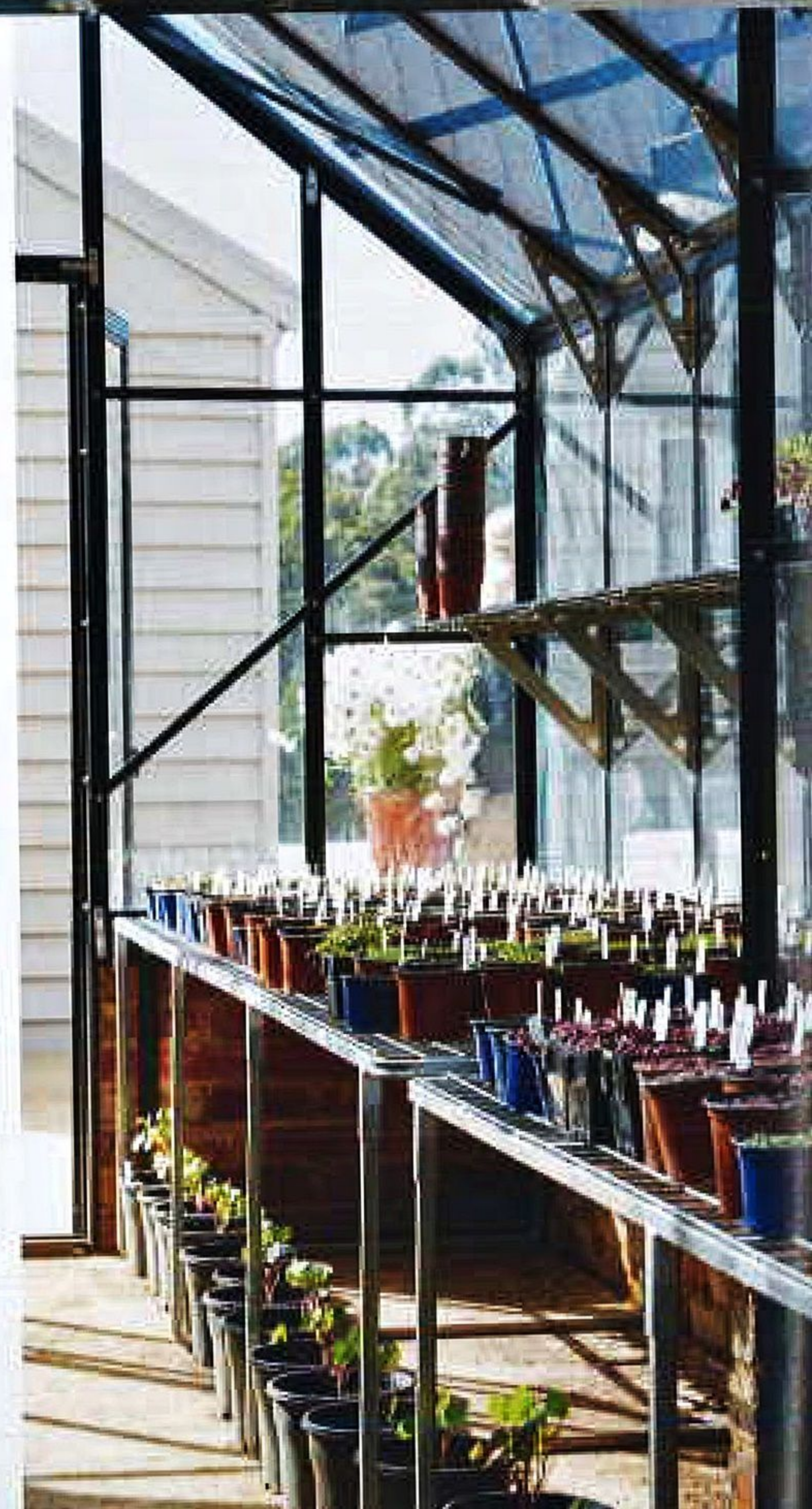
At the centre of it all, conducting the boisterous scene with poise and pluck, is Alla Wolf-Tasker. For 35 years, the chef, hotelier and tastemaker has steered Lake House Daylesford into one of the country's most appealing regional retreats. "It takes a village to deliver this kind of undertaking," she says of her latest project, the fledgling farm she acquired last year. It is a seven-minute drive from the hotel. The venture already supplies Lake House with streams of produce, a bakery in collaboration with Michael James (ex Tivoli Road Bakery) is preparing sourdough loaves, and a flower garden is blooming.

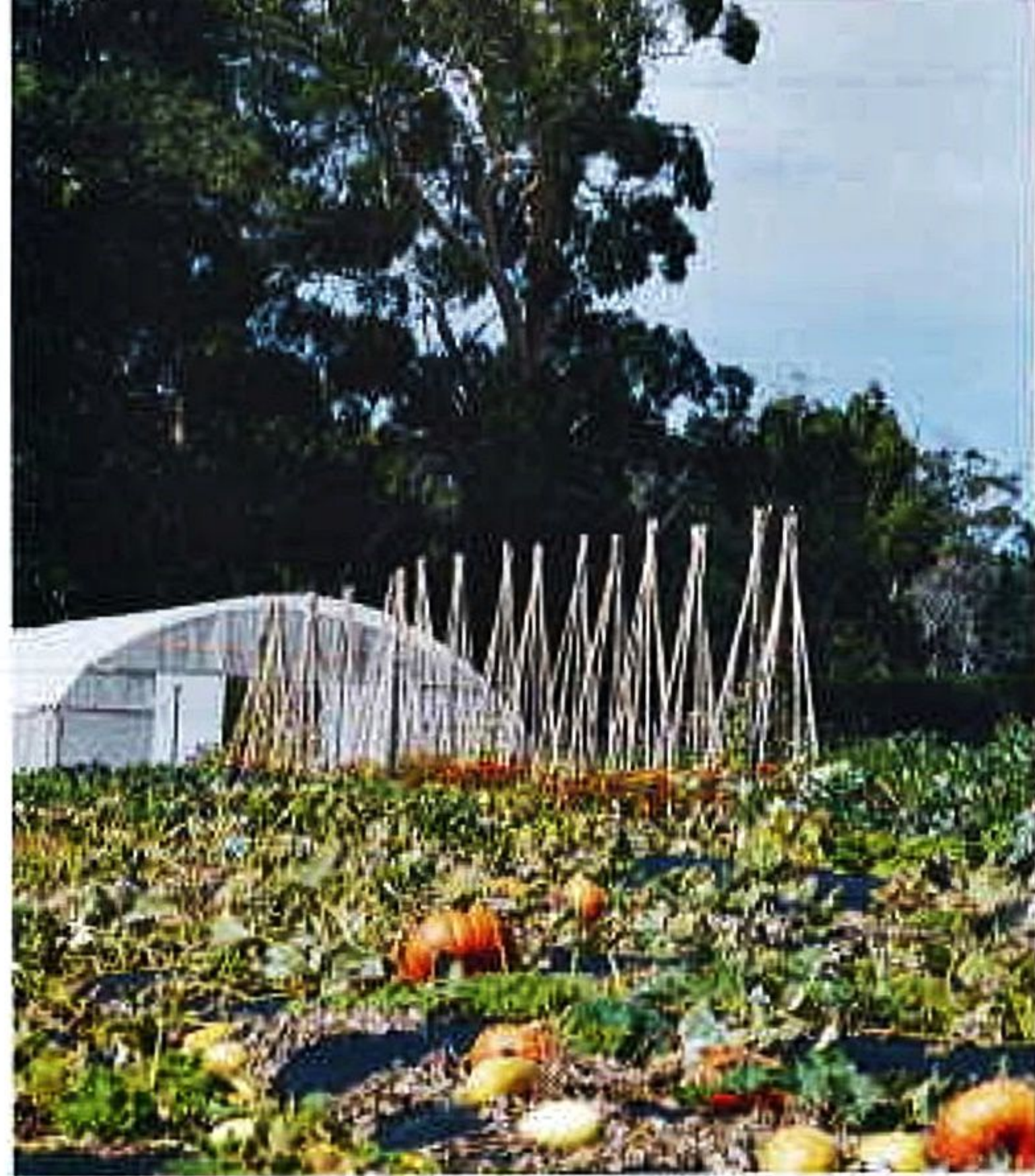
Naturally, all of the recipes on these pages spotlight vegetables. "It's very much the way my cook's head has gone," says Wolf-Tasker, a longtime national judge of the *delicious* Harvey Norman Produce Awards. Clearly, she is relishing being a producer herself. Once the lodge is open, guests will be able to immerse themselves in wine tasting, sourdough baking, gardening workshops and floristry classes. "There will be an onsite concierge," she adds, "an open bar and snacks during aperitivo hour and shared farm feasts."

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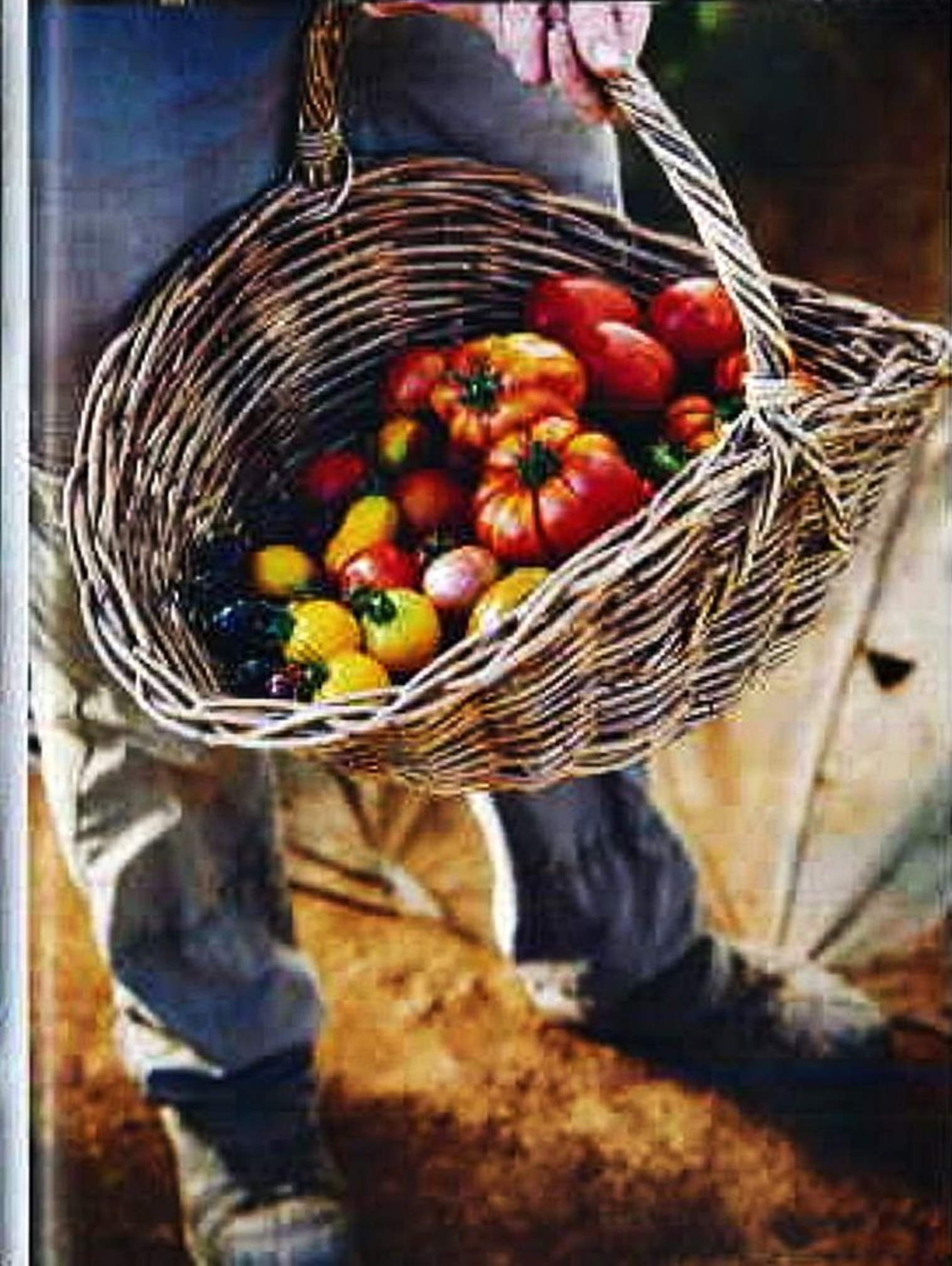
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For more recipes that
celebrate farm fresh produce.





ALLA WOLF-TASKER.

CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: Alla and staff check on the day's top pick; the abundance of Dairy Flat Farm.



Heirloom carrots with black barley and carrot top pesto (recipe p 86).

ALLA WOLF-TASKER.

HEIRLOOM CARROTS WITH BLACK BARLEY AND CARROT TOP PESTO

SERVES 4

Begin this recipe 1 day ahead.

12 baby heirloom carrots, trimmed, tops reserved (3 per serve)
100g unsalted butter, cut into 4 pieces
4 garlic cloves, sliced
8 thyme sprigs

BLACK BARLEY

200g black barley, soaked overnight
200ml chicken or vegetable stock
60g unsalted butter
10g dried crushed porcini mushrooms

CARROT TOP PESTO

60g reserved carrot tops, washed, stems removed, roughly chopped
1/4 bunch basil, leaves picked
1/4 bunch flat-leaf parsley
1/3 cup (50g) toasted pine nuts
2 garlic cloves, crushed
Juice of 1 lemon
1/4 cup (20g) finely grated parmesan
1/2 cup (125ml) extra virgin olive oil

For the pesto, place the carrot tops in a saucepan of boiling water and blanch for 30 seconds to 1 minute or until wilted. Refresh in iced water, drain and squeeze out any excess water. Place in a blender with the remaining ingredients except for the oil. Pulse until roughly chopped.

Gradually pour in the oil, scraping sides occasionally until combined. Season. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

For the black barley, drain the barley from the soaking water, discard water. Heat a saucepan three-quarters full with water over high heat and bring to the boil. Add the barley and cook, stirring occasionally, for 35-40 minutes or until tender. Rinse under cold running water and drain.

Meanwhile, preheat oven to 160°C. Cut 4 rectangular pieces of baking paper large enough to wrap the carrots like a parcel. Divide carrots between baking paper and top with butter, garlic and thyme, season. Wrap carrots up, sealing tightly. Place on a large oven tray and bake for 40-45 minutes or until carrots are cooked.

Place stock in a saucepan over high heat and bring to the boil. Stir in the barley, butter and porcini. Reduce heat to medium-low and cook for 12 minutes, stirring occasionally or until barley is warmed through and stock has thickened. Season. When carrots are cooked, remove from oven and open parcels.

Divide barley among bowls, top with carrots and spoon over pesto, to serve.

PUMPKIN & FETA SNACKS

SERVES 4-6 (MAKES APPROX 30)

Begin this recipe 1 day ahead.

"I've adapted this from a Greg Malouf recipe for pumpkin kibbeh in which he uses burghul to bind balls of pumpkin puree in order to fry them. These can also be stuffed with wilted spinach and meltable cheese."

800g butternut pumpkin, peeled, seeds removed, cut into small chunks
Extra virgin olive oil, to drizzle
120g burghul, soaked, drained
2 eschalots, finely chopped
1 tbs tahini
1/2 cup (75g) plain flour
100g feta, drained, crumbled
Vegetable oil, to fry
Dill sprigs, flat-leaf parsley leaves and lemon wedges, to serve
Greek-style yoghurt, to serve

Preheat oven to 180°C. Place pumpkin into a bowl, drizzle with olive oil, season and toss to combine. Place in a roasting pan, cover with foil and roast for 45-50 minutes or until cooked. Cool slightly, then mash in a bowl. Place mashed pumpkin in a sieve lined with a clean Chux cloth and refrigerate overnight to drain. The next day, transfer pumpkin to a clean tea towel and squeeze out as much liquid as possible. Place pumpkin in a large bowl.

Meanwhile, place the burghul in a clean tea towel. Wring out as much excess water as possible. Transfer burghul to a bowl with cooked pumpkin (you will need approx 600g cooked pumpkin) and mix until combined. Add the eschalot, tahini, flour and feta. Season and mix to combine. Refrigerate for 1 hour.

Grease 2 large oven trays and line with baking paper. Divide pumpkin mixture into 30 rough balls and place on prepared trays (you could also make smaller balls so you have more – they'll also take less time to cook). Chill for 1 hour before cooking.





Roman gnocchi with caponata.
RIGHT: Alla with son-in-law Robin, daughter Larissa, husband Allan, and twin granddaughters Alexei and Maya.



Fill a large saucepan three-quarters full with vegetable oil and heat over high heat until you reach 180°C (a cube of bread will turn golden in 45 seconds when the oil is hot enough). Fry pumpkin balls in batches, stirring gently, for 2-3 minutes or until browned all over. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.

Arrange on a serving platter, scatter with herbs and serve with yoghurt and lemon wedges alongside.

FARRO 'RISOTTO' WITH SPRING GREENS

SERVES 4

- 1/2 cup (125ml) extra virgin olive oil
- 2 brown onions, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 300g farro (from delis and gourmet food shops)
- 1/2 cup (125ml) white wine
- 1.25L vegetable or chicken stock
- Finely grated zest and juice of 1 lemon
- 1 bunch each broccolini and asparagus, blanched and refreshed, halved
- 1/2 bunch rainbow chard, trimmed, torn into 6cm pieces
- Shaved parmesan, to serve

FENNEL SAUCE

- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 60g unsalted butter
- 1 fennel bulb, finely chopped
- 2 tbs finely chopped dill
- 1/2 cup (125ml) pure (thin) cream

For the fennel sauce, heat oil and butter in a saucepan over medium heat. Add fennel and cook, stirring occasionally, for 25 minutes or until fennel begins to soften but not colour. Transfer to a blender with

the dill and 1/4 cup warm water and whiz until smooth. Add cream and pulse to combine. Season and whiz until pureed. Keep warm until needed.

Heat oil in a deep heavy-based frypan over high heat. Add onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally for 4-5 minutes or until softened. Add farro and cook, stirring, for 3-4 minutes or until farro is coated in oil. Stir in wine and cook until evaporated and absorbed by the farro. Reduce heat to medium-low and gradually add stock, a ladleful at a time, while stirring gently. Keep adding stock and stirring until rice is cooked. This will take about 1 hour.

Stir fennel sauce through the farro with lemon zest and juice and vegetables. Scatter with shaved parmesan to serve.

ROMAN GNOCCHI WITH CAPONATA

SERVES 4

- 2 eggs
- 165g fine semolina flour
- 2 cups (500ml) milk
- 1 tbs finely chopped thyme leaves, plus extra to serve
- 1 cup (80g) finely grated parmesan, plus extra to scatter
- Vegetable oil, to fry
- 1/4 cup (60ml) thickened cream
- Basil leaves, to serve

CAPONATA

- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 1/2 red capsicum, finely chopped
- 1 eschalot, finely chopped
- 1 1/2 tbs red wine vinegar
- 1 small eggplant, peeled, finely chopped
- 2 trussed tomatoes, very ripe, finely chopped
- 1 tbs raisins
- 1 tsp caster sugar
- 1 tsp sherry vinegar
- 1 tbs pine nuts, toasted, plus extra to serve

Grease the base and sides of a 20cm x 30cm deep heatproof tray and line with baking paper. To make the gnocchi, place the eggs and flour together in a non-stick saucepan. Add the milk and whisk until smooth. Place pan over medium-low heat and cook, stirring frequently, for 13-15 minutes or until thick and smooth. Remove from heat and whisk in thyme and parmesan. Season. Pour mixture into prepared tray and set in fridge.

Meanwhile, for the caponata, heat the oil in a saucepan over medium heat. Add capsicum and eschalot and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5-6 minutes or until vegetables are softened. Add the red wine vinegar and scrape the bottom of the pan with a wooden spoon to deglaze. Add eggplant and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10-12 minutes or until eggplant is soft. Stir in the tomato, raisins, sugar, sherry vinegar and pine nuts. Reduce heat to low and cook gently for 25-30 minutes or until caponata is soft. Season.

Preheat oven to 200°C. When pasta is set, cut out 5cm rectangles and place on a tray. Heat a large non-stick frypan with 2cm vegetable oil over medium-high heat. Cook gnocchi in batches for 2 minutes, turn, then cook for a further 2 minutes or until golden. Remove with a slotted spoon and drain on paper towel.

Place gnocchi in a single layer, slightly overlapping, in the base of a large deep ovenproof dish. Drizzle cream over the top and scatter with extra parmesan. Bake for 8-10 minutes or until parmesan is golden and cream has thickened. Season.

Spoon the caponata over the gnocchi and scatter with extra pine nuts, thyme leaves, parmesan and basil to serve. ✂