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## Open Sauce! - Recipes from the Triangle area

Georgina Adamson

Recently I was heading off to visit family 'way out west', and there's no gift more appreciated inland than fresh seafood from Bermagui. So I loaded the raky with carefully packaged fish fillets, squid tubes, prawns and oysters, and made sure I had enough freezer bricks to last the journey.

Happy cooking!

Recipes taken from *Marmalade, and other stories from la Cucina Dotta* by Georgina Adamson.

As I had 'bits and pieces', I decided the best thing to make was my **Seafood Marinara Sauce**.

That, served with *il Passaggio* pasta, would stretch to feed a mob and give everyone a taste of the sea.

This recipe will serve 4-6.



1. Start with a good tomato base. Soften 4 cloves of garlic, crushed, and a diced medium onion in a generous amount of olive oil. Then add one tin (or 3 fresh diced) tomatoes, three tablespoons of tomato paste, ½ cup of white wine, a bouquet of fresh or dried herbs (rosemary, thyme, oregano), a couple of bay leaves, salt, black pepper and a teaspoon of sugar.
2. Add 2 cups of liquid - stock or water - and let it all cook down slowly for quite a while with the lid off, the longer the better as you end up with a rich sauce. Keep an eye on it and add more liquid if required. Don't forget to remove the bouquet.
3. Now for the seafood - approximately 1kg. Start with the squid cut into rings or shanks, add to the sauce and cook slowly for about 15 minutes till tender. The sauce can be turned off and left at this point because the remaining seafood is best cooked not long before serving so as not to overcook it. Use any combination of fish fillets and prawns, and finish with half a kilo of mussels, allowing them to open in the sauce.
4. Cook four cups of fresh pasta in plenty of boiling salted water - it won't take long. Drain and gently combine with the Marinara Sauce. Lovely to serve in a large bowl, topped with a generous handful of finely chopped parsley and lemon zest sprinkled over.

### Something sweet

There are still plenty of lemons around so make sure you put away some jars of lemon butter for delicious desserts: a filling for a sponge or tart, in a cheesecake, or simply over ice cream. Here's my basic recipe for Lemon Butter (or curd).

1. Melt 250g unsalted butter in a large heat-proof bowl over a saucpan of simmering water.
2. Add 3 cups sugar and stir till the sugar is dissolved.
3. Add the grated rind of 6 lemons and the juice of 4, and stir till well combined with the butter sugar mixture.
4. Add 6 well beaten eggs and whisk beat this mixture till it thickens. This may take half hour (make sure there is still water in the saucpan!)
5. Pour into sterilised jars with lids, and when cool keep



in the fridge.

I also like to put down a bottle or two of Limoncello. We've put Ilagga's Limoncello recipe on this page before, but just as you don't need to look it up ...

1. Wash and dry 4-8 lemons and peel the rind off in strips, being careful not to take too much of the white pith. Divide a bottle of vodka into two bottles and stuff the peel down the neck until each bottle is full. Seal and set this aside for a week.
2. After this time make a syrup. Bring 4 cups of water to the boil, add 3 cups sugar. Stir till sugar is dissolved then simmer gently for 10 minutes.
3. When cooled, combine this syrup with the lemon flavoured vodka (discard the peel). Decant into smaller bottles using a funnel, and seal each bottle.
4. Set aside for two weeks (if you can wait that long!). It makes a beautiful summer drink, served well chilled over ice with a touch of tonic. Or a nice gift.

With these two basics you can make one of my signature desserts ...

### Limoncello Tiramisu

(Apologies to Francesca at the gelato clinic!)

As well as lemon butter and limoncello you'll need a packet of Italian Savoiardi biscuits, 600g thickened cream or 2 tubs mascarpone, and a little icing sugar.

1. Beat the cream or mascarpone with 1 tablespoon of icing sugar and stir in half a jar (or to taste) of lemon butter.
2. Brush each biscuit with the limoncello and line a dish with these. Spread a layer of the lemon cream mixture over these and repeat these layers until all ingredients are used.
3. Finish with a layer of whipped cream, cover and refrigerate until needed. Best made the day before needed for the flavours to develop.

## Gardening Gabble

Keith Mandy

Gardeners will always tell you they have certain favourites in the plant world, and nurserymen, although apish for choice, will also have a group of plants that appeal to them. Without a doubt, some of my favourites are salvias, with their extraordinary diversity of colour and habit—over 1800 species alone, without new varieties that are added almost all the time. Already this year there have been several new varieties released, and they are truly a gardener's delight, providing rich and interesting rewards for every garden.

This spellbinding genus has hues to rival the colours of the ocean and sky, as well as rich reds, pinks, yellow, and white, along with every combination of these dominant colours. Their diversity in leaf colour and shape is second to none, from those that feel like velvets, to long and narrow in varying colours. Many varieties are used for culinary purposes, having delightful scents that can be used to flavour food of all kinds.

Most salvia species are adaptable to an extensive range of soil types, from clay to open and sandy. Where soils might need improvement, it makes sense to add organic matter like animal manure or compost. Good drainage, however, is generally advisable, and without it there is greater risk of less-hardy varieties not surviving a long, wet winter. In gardens where soil is wet for long periods, it is advisable to slightly raise the planting area to allow better drainage.

When preparing to plant salvia, refrain from adding excess nitrogen to soil, as it will give lush foliage at the expense of

flowers. Soil acidity or alkalinity play no great part in the placement of the plants, although many of the species are derived from locations where limestone is dominant. Nearly all varieties prefer a full sun position, except for those that grow in and tolerate shade. From time to time throughout the year, salvia 'Yamagata' becomes available, and should be sought out from nurseries.

Some taller varieties have a brittle branching habit and should be planted in a location free of strong winds. Many of the lower-growing forms are excellent in a seaside garden.

Like all perennials, salvias should be pruned on a regular basis to keep the plant in a compact form, and to promote several periods of flowering throughout the year. They are generally pest- and disease-free, with aphids and powdery mildew being a problem in the summer months. They are great to grow in a container for those who have difficult locations, or to brighten up paving where other plants might have failed. Due to their ability to handle periods of dryness, they are an ideal pot plant.

Often overlooked these days are the extensive range of annual forms available to brighten up the flower garden, where seasonal change is required. Colours of reds, white, blues, and purple are available, and should be planted at the rear of the garden. Low-growing annuals like petunias, marigold, lobelia, and other summer flowering annuals are a great companion planting to salvia.

Check out your local nursery for the exciting range of salvia, both perennial and annual, that are now available, and brighten up your garden with these rewarding plants.



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