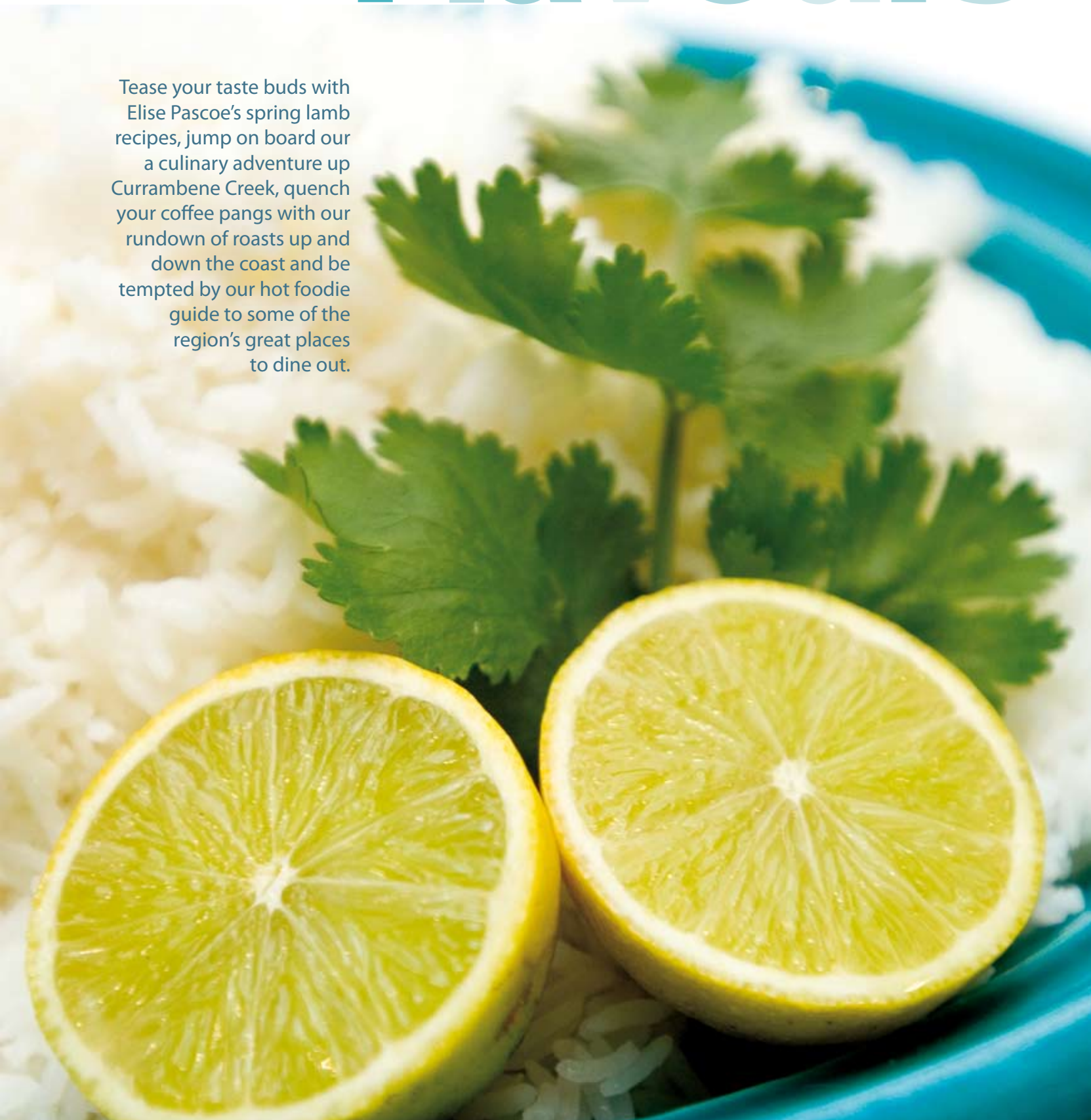


# Flavours

Tease your taste buds with Elise Pascoe's spring lamb recipes, jump on board our a culinary adventure up Currambene Creek, quench your coffee pangs with our rundown of roasts up and down the coast and be tempted by our hot foodie guide to some of the region's great places to dine out.





# Three Easy Spring Lamb Dishes

For many, the promise of spring brings thoughts of tasty, tender lamb and, to mark the new season, Elise Pascoe has come up with two delicious recipes to create for friends and family.

RECIPES **ELISE PASCOE**  
FOOD STYLED BY **MAREE CAMILLERI**  
PHOTOGRAPHY **NICKY GORDON**

Lamb in spring is sweet, succulent and smaller than during later seasons when it has been fed on lush summer pastures. This means it doesn't need a lot of cooking. The message is to keep it simple and let the lamb flavours shine through, without the addition of too many other ingredients.

I like to make the Italian favourite, chicken cacciatore (hunter's chicken) with spring lamb instead of using traditional chicken. It's a wonderful dish to have on standby for a couple of days if you are entertaining and don't need the last minute hassle of cooking three courses on the same day. Simply undercook the lamb the first time, and then finish cooking the dish when it is needed, but be sure you don't let it dry out too much.

As an alternative, the Thai lamb is very refreshing. It could be served as an entrée or as a main course or it could even be served as one of a series of dishes at an Asian meal – when everyone helps themselves from the different dishes on the table. Once the ingredients are assembled and prepared for the pan, the dish must be cooked very quickly, no more than 10 minutes.

I love the elegance and simplicity of the three-grain mustard lamb. It's a special party dish because backstraps tend to be expensive and you will probably need to order them ahead.



**THAI LAMB WITH CHILLI AND MINT**

**Serves 4 or 6 as part of a Thai meal**

- |                                       |   |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| 4 – 5 tablespoons vegetable oil       | 1 tablespoon finely sliced, fresh long chilli |
| 800 g lean lamb, cut into fine strips | 1/2 bunch fresh mint leaves, shredded         |
| 4 cloves garlic, finely chopped       | 8 coriander sprigs                            |
| 4 tablespoons oyster sauce            | 2 – 3 limes, halved                           |
| 4 tablespoons Thai fish sauce         |   |
| 3/4 teaspoon sugar                    |   |

Heat a wok or frypan until hot. Add the oil and half the lamb and stir-fry for several minutes until almost cooked. Remove lamb with a slotted spoon to a plate. Add extra oil if necessary and cook the remaining lamb. Stir fry until almost cooked. Return the original lamb to the pan, add the garlic, oyster and fish sauces, sugar and chilli and cook until sauce is well reduced and lamb is just coated with a lovely glossy brown sauce. Have a taste to see if extra seasonings are required; more chilli, sugar or either of the sauces.

Stir the mint leaves through lamb and remove from heat. Serve with steamed jasmine rice, coriander sprigs and lime halves.

**FILLET OF LAMB WITH THREE MUSTARDS**

**Serves 6**

- |   |                                  |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 45 g unsalted butter  | 60 ml dry red wine               |
| 1 tablespoon light olive oil  | 1 tablespoon dijon-style mustard |
| 6 x 200 g young lamb tenderloins/lamb backstraps with silver skins removed. | 1 tablespoon lemon mustard       |
| Salt and freshly ground black pepper  | 1 tablespoon wholegrain mustard  |
|   | 250 ml cream                     |

Heat the butter and oil in a heavy frying pan, large enough to hold all the lamb in a single layer, without crowding. Cook over medium/high heat for three to five minutes each side or until done the way you like them. Season, place on a warm plate, cover loosely and keep warm.

Remove the fat from the cooking pan using a spoon. Deglaze the pan with the wine, collecting up the caramelised juices, using a whisk. Stir in the three mustards and cream. Simmer until a good consistency. Taste and adjust seasonings.

To serve, cut the lamb into 2 cm thick, juicy medallions. Spoon the sauce onto warmed plates. Heap the lamb on top of the sauce. Garlic infused, stewed English spinach goes particularly well with this lamb dish.

**LAMB HUNTER-STYLE**

**Serves 4**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil                              | Salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper  |
| 3 tablespoons freshly squeezed lemon juice                        | 2 pinches ground savoury                     |
| 1 kg lamb leg meat, in 3 cm pieces                                | 100 ml dry red wine                          |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil, extra                                    | 400 g can roma tomatoes, crushed with a fork |
| 2 garlic cloves in their skin, flattened with the side of a knife | 250 g frozen baby peas                       |
| 2 small sprigs rosemary   |  |

Stir the oil and lemon juice together. Add the lamb and mix it through thoroughly. Cover and marinate for 2 hours.

Heat a large heavy frying pan, add the extra oil and the garlic. Brown the lamb in batches, on all sides. Lift out with a slotted spoon and reserve on a plate while browning the remaining lamb. Do not crowd the pan or the lamb will not brown but stew. Italians grill the lamb in a double-sided wire grill over hot charcoal before proceeding with the cooking. If you can barbecue the lamb first, it will have infinitely more flavour than if you simply cook it in a frying pan.

Return all the lamb to the pan with the herbs and seasonings. Add the wine and simmer until almost evaporated. Add the tomatoes and simmer until the sauce is almost evaporated and the lamb is tender. Boiling water or stock may be added if necessary. Add the frozen peas and cook until tender. Adjust seasoning and serve with creamed potatoes, polenta or crusty ciabatta.



The Wine

**Kladis Estate Reserve Cabernet Merlot 2003**

Lamb pairs beautifully with this cabernet softened with merlot. It is viscous making lots of 'church windows' in the glass. It has good depth of colour and wonderful black cherry flavours which complement the lamb dishes well.

It will mature for years to come if properly cellared, but drinks well now.

**Kladis Estate Wines  
D2580 Princes Highway  
Wandandian, NSW  
Price \$36.00**

