

## November – Spring, glorious spring

Spring on the Granite Belt always feels like a time of renewal. Green replaces the browns of winter, there is bud burst in the vineyards, and our gardens sport an almost unbelievable first flush of roses. But best of all, we see the arrival of the first of the spring/summer fruits and vegetables.

### Fresh Granite Belt Asparagus with Egg Ravioli, Extra Virgin Olive Oil, hand shaved Prosciutto and Reggiano Parmesan

*For many years we have featured our favourite dish using fresh asparagus at this time of year. It is simple to prepare but to work well relies on every ingredient being the best quality you can get. Team it up with the fresh, clean citrus flavours of [Symphony Hill Wines Pinot Gris](#) and you'll be wondering what those less fortunate are doing.*

#### Ingredients:

Fresh Asparagus – allow 4 to 6 spears per serve depending on size.  
2 x 8cm squares of fresh pasta per serve, rolled to the thinnest extent possible.  
1 egg per serve  
Mt Stirling Extra Virgin Olive Oil  
Prosciutto  
Reggiano Parmesan  
Black Peppercorns

#### Method:

Blanch the asparagus for approximately 5 minutes until just tender. Arrange in criss-cross fashion on a hot plate. Brush one of the pasta squares with egg wash and place an egg yolk in the centre. Top with the other pasta square and press the edges together to seal. Slip into simmering water and cook for 1 minute exactly. Place the egg ravioli on the asparagus, drizzle with olive oil, and top with shavings of Prosciutto then Parmesan. Coarsely grind black pepper over the whole and serve immediately. The crusty olive oil and herb bread makes an ideal accompaniment.

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### Crusty Olive Oil and Herb Bread

*The Bread you have all been waiting for.*

#### Ingredients:

400g good quality bread flour  
1 ½ teaspoons dried yeast  
Fresh chopped herbs – we use sage but basil is also good  
1 teaspoon salt  
a pinch of sugar  
125 ml hand warm water  
Extra virgin olive oil

#### Method:

Mix the flour, yeast, herbs, salt, and sugar in the bowl of a food processor if using or in a large mixing bowl. Add the warm water all at once and process until well amalgamated. Turn out onto a floured bench and knead until elastic. Place the dough in a covered bowl with plenty of room to rise and cover with plastic wrap. Leave in a warm place to rise until doubled in size. Turn out onto a

floured bench and divide into 2 to 4 portions, depending on the size you wish your finished loaves to be. Knead each portion well and form into an oval shape. Pour some extra virgin olive oil into a heavy baking tray and roll the loaves to coat well with the oil. Sprinkle the tops with with a gourmet salt such as Maldon flakes and leave to rise again.

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## Strawberry Mille Feuille

*Another old favourite that goes right back to our beginnings when we had the dessert trolley and did huge lunches. Peter loved displaying a trolley full of wonderful looking desserts and this one certainly added to the visual feast. Fabulous with tender, flaky home-made puff pastry but if you can't be bothered or can't get a puff pastry of excellent quality, try substituting disks of almond shortbread biscuit and assemble as individual serves.*

### Ingredients

Classic puff pastry  
Crème patissiere  
Strawberry Sauce  
Fresh Strawberries

### Classic Puff Pastry

#### Ingredients:

420g plain bread making flour  
90g cold unsalted butter, cut into cubes  
2 tsp salt  
250ml chilled water

Cut the butter into the flour and add the salt and water all at once. Mix until just blended, wrap in plastic film and refrigerate for 1 hour.

350g chilled unsalted butter  
additional flour

Sprinkle the butter with a good quantity of flour and work the flour into the butter with the heel of your hand.

Place the rested dough on a lightly floured bench and roll out to a circle 40cm in diameter. Place the butter in the centre and fold the dough over the butter and press to seal. Keeping you bench well floured, roll the dough out to a long rectangle approx. 40cm x 20cm. Fold the dough as you would letter paper to form 3 layers. Turn the dough and roll and fold again in the same manner. Wrap again in plastic film and refrigerate for at least 1 hour to allow the dough to rest.

Repeat the rolling and folding 2 more times and again refrigerate.

Repeat the rolling and folding 2 more times and refrigerate for at least 2 hours.

Roll the dough out to the desired thickness (about ½ cm is good for the purposes of this recipe). Trim the edges and cut with a sharp knife into strips 8 to 10cm in width. Place on a baking sheet

and refrigerate for at least ½ hour before baking but you may still get some shrinkage of the dough at this stage. I prefer to leave it for at least an hour if I can.

Brush the dough with egg wash and bake in a hot oven (220C) for 15 to 20 minutes.

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## Crème Patisserie

### Ingredients:

4 egg yolks

75g caster sugar

30g plain flour

300ml milk, heated

½ tsp good quality vanilla essence

250ml thickened cream, whipped.

Beat the egg yolks and sugar until pale. Mix in the flour and then the hot milk in a steady stream while still beating. Place in a saucepan and whisk over a moderate heat until very thick. Cover and chill then beat in the whipped cream.

## Strawberry Sauce

300g strawberries, hulled

200g caster sugar

juice of 1 lemon

Puree all ingredients and taste.

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## TO ASSEMBLE MILLE FEUILLE

Slice the puff pastry horizontally with a serrated knife. Place the bottom section on a cutting board and spread liberally with crème patisserie. Cover with sliced strawberries. Repeat with another layer of pastry, crème patisserie and strawberries. Top with a top section of pastry. Slice crosswise into serving portions using a good serrated knife. Sprinkle with icing sugar and top each serve with a fanned strawberry. Serve with the Strawberry Sauce