

## Festive greetings and welcome to my postcard for Christmas 2010.



What a busy year it has been! I am looking forward to some downtime with family and friends over the next few weeks and I hope you are planning some relaxing too. I love Christmas and everything to do with it. Our large family of 4 generations likes a traditional Christmas dinner. We include 'waifs and strays' so it is a really big table - just as it was in my parents' day. We share the load from preparation to cooking and cleaning up. The afternoon and evening are enjoyed by all. It occurred me that I should share with you my top tips for making Christmas easy *and* special:

Looking for a **different way** to cook **turkey** or **chicken**? Here are two of my favourites:

★ Try **brining** ... to infuse the meat with both flavor and moisture. In a large stock pot combine 2 cups salt, 1 cup sugar, herbs and spices of your choice eg bay leaves, thyme, garlic, juniper etc with water and stir to dissolve. Add turkey or chicken, weight down with a plate and refrigerate for up to 24 hours. Drain, rinse under cold running water, pat dry and roast in the normal manner.

★ For smaller families, **braise** turkey breast in milk. Firstly brown the breasts with onion and garlic in butter, add milk to cover and simmer (not boil) for 15 minutes. Turn off the heat, cover and set aside for 3 hours. Serve the breasts sliced, remembering to use the reserved braising milk to make bread sauce. Works for chicken too.

Rather than make lots of different salads and vegetable dishes to please all tastes, I put together a couple of **platters** with an assortment of family favourites such as roasted baby beetroots, asparagus spears wrapped in prosciutto, chunks of marinated feta and cauliflower with a spiced crumb topping.

Take the **heat out of the kitchen** and use your barbecue - see note re turkey above. As well as turkey the barbecue does some of its best work with seafood. Try **this** easy yet impressive salmon recipe, or **this** yummy lemony baste for prawns or other seafood.

Most of our family love a traditional **pudding** and we always do a sago one too which I prefer. A lighter dessert is bowl of **seasonal stone fruit** - finished with a splash of moscato. Don't forget the cherries!

Don't stress! The greatest compliment you can pay anyone is to cook for them, so if it isn't perfect don't worry, embrace the Christmas spirit, channel your inner angel and relax and enjoy plenty of seasonal cheer!

## Looking for the perfect Christmas gift for food loving friends?



Earlier this year I launched my **Brilliant Cut Knife**, where state-of-the-art technology meets design. I use this knife every single day - I love that it is lightweight yet incredibly sharp and precise. The world-leading blade is a titanium alloy, also known as the **space age metal**. Combined with silver, ceramic and embedded with diamonds the **Brilliant Cut Knife** is as different from a traditional steel knife as a typewriter is from a laptop!



**SPECIAL  
CHRISTMAS  
OFFER FOR  
LYNDEY MILAN  
SUBSCRIBERS**

Purchase the Brilliant Cut Knife (normally priced at \$249.00 including diamond sharpener) and receive my DVD with five step-by-step fast and fabulous recipes plus handy tips on how to get the best from your Brilliant Cut Knife (normally \$29.95) as well as free postage and handling anywhere in Australia for **\$199.00**.



Visit [www.lyndeymilan.com](http://www.lyndeymilan.com), and click **Order the Brilliant Cut Knife now**, proceed to the shopping cart and insert **LMPREF** as your coupon code.



Your **Brilliant Cut Knife** and **DVD** will be despatched within two days.

**My books** *Just Add Spice* \$49.95, *Best Collection* \$49.95 and *Balance. Matching Food and Wine.*

*What Works and Why* \$35 would also make great Christmas gifts for food loving family and friends.



**2010** has been a huge year for me, here are my highlights:

For the third year I hosted the **Lyndey Milan Regional Producers' Market** at the Melbourne, Sydney and Brisbane Good Food & Wine Shows. I am absolutely delighted that nearly 50 food and wine producers participated, some for the second and third time, at these massive consumer shows. I also put together a group of 12 champion producers for Restaurant, the industry show for trade and food service. I am thrilled to be able to showcase smaller, boutique and artisan producers. Click the link to my blog for a full list of producers at the **Melbourne**, **Sydney** and **Brisbane** shows and the **Restaurant** show. Next time you are shopping for food and wine seek out these great Australian products.



I had great fun this year cooking each Thursday on Kerri-Anne on the Nine Network. I made Easter eggs with my great-nephews, turned great seasonal produce in delicious recipes (**Pineapple lime upside down cake** and **Pasta primavera**), celebrated Hunter Valley Wine & Food month in July by creating **Spatchcock stuffed with brie, olives, sourdough and chutney** from the best Hunter Valley produce and cooked some of my favourite recipes - **Chocolate almond fondant pudding**, **My ultimate four cheese macaroni** and **Slow cooked beef and Guinness**. I'll be back in late January 2011.



I celebrated Australian beef and lamb producers with **Meat & Livestock Australia** twice this year. Beef was first up in June - I presented four videos featuring different cuts and cooking methods, then in September I went **Glamb** with spring lamb. There was even a fashion parade campaign launch themed *Lamb-alicious: the coolest cuts this spring*.

2010 was the year of the food and wine festival and event. I was lucky to be involved with many of them and, apart from the Good Food and Wine Shows, my favourites were **Savour Tasmania**, **Brisbane Masterclass**, **McGuigan Seasonal Market** days at the Barossa and the Hunter Valley, The Rocks **Vintage Dinner** as well as a **fantastic lunch** held during the Sydney International Food Festival hosted by Jennice and Ray Kersh, formerly of Edna's Table. I also loved meeting many of you at my many cooking classes, especially my quarterly class at the **Sydney Seafood School**.

In March I sourced some kitchen implements to immortalise in the form of an **ArtyBra®**. This bra, conceived by me and made by my artist friend Bruno Grasswill, code named *Doing it for the girls*, joined over 100 other artistically designed bras on show at various Sydney and Blue Mountains galleries. In late March they were auctioned, with all funds going to support **Blue Mountains Cancer Help** - an organisation that facilitates support groups and provides a large range of complementary therapies such as massage, reflexology, art and music therapy, reiki, counselling and meditation. Mine fetched the second highest price!



All things **Greek** featured heavily for me this year. I travelled there twice (once with my son Blair to film a new TV series - more about that soon!) and spent many hours reading about the history, culture and of course food and wine of Greece. I also did a fair amount of Greek influenced cooking: **duo of Greek dips**, **Greek mezze plate** and **Pork souvlaki with skordalia**. Yum.

I launched another book this year, co-written with my great friend, Ian 'Herbie' Hemphill. **Just Add Spice** contains 100 recipes to show you how to spice up simple dishes using enticing herbs and spices, all with wine matching notes. This book also debunks the myth that it is difficult to match wine with spiced food. For a first-hand account, click [here](#) to read about the spiced food and wine matching extravaganza at the launch event!



**My top seasonal cheer** suggestions for your drinking pleasure are:

**Champagne** does it best and my picks are **Taittinger Brut Reserve NV** and **Bollinger Special Cuvee NV**

### **Sparkling**

**Sparkling Shiraz** is the wine of my heart and such a versatile drink for Christmas where it goes with everything from **ham**, **turkey** and **pork** to **pudding**. Not only that, sparkling shiraz makers are a special breed. My favourites are **2006 Peter Lehmann Black Queen Sparking Shiraz** and **2005 Majella Sparkling Shiraz** from my co-Libran Peter Rumball who has a whole range but has released his 1997 vintage. For white sparkling, try the **2006 Clover Hill Blanc de Blanc**, produced when there is an exceptionally high quality chardonnay vintage, this blend of six cuvees, was only disgorged this year. An amazingly rich yet elegant with beautiful honey and brioche characteristics.

## Something new

- ★ the [Great Wave Sparkling Pinot Grigio](#) went really well at my 10<sup>th</sup> annual Seafood and Bubbles class at the Sydney Seafood School
- ★ [Charles Melton Brut Peche](#)- you've loved the Rose of Virginia, now there's a sparkler rose!

## Chardonnay

2009 [Paxton Thomas Block Chardonnay](#) - this block is in a valley and bounded north and south by ancient sand hills, which allow cold air to settle in the valley most evenings creating a more continental effect than usual in the region. Longer ripening period means greater length of flavour at lower alcohol.

## Sauvignon Blanc

2010 [Angullong Wines](#) continues to offer amazing value for money (\$17), earning itself a place in the Top 40 in the 2010 NSW wine Awards.

## Riesling

2010 [Grosset Off-dry Riesling](#) In Grosset's 30<sup>th</sup> year of making wine, this is a new release following two trial years. It has a whisper of sweetness, with all the lemon and acidity of a classic riesling. Fantastic food wine but not only for the rather predictable Asian flavours but for other fuller bodied foods too like salmon. There is also the option to buy it in a case of ten, which addresses the problems of weight (with 12 packs) and waste of packaging in a 6 pack.

## Semillon

2003 [Tempus Two Copper Zenith Semillon](#) won the 2010 NSW Wine of the Year and Trophy for the Best Mature White. A wine which shows the magic of the Hunter Valley as a home for world class semillon.

**Pinot Noir** is a terrific wine style and so versatile for so many styles of food and flavours. When the weather is hot, you can even chill it as desired. Some favourites this year were:

2009 [Goaty Hill Pinot Noir](#) From the cool climes of Tasmania from an ultra low yielding single block estate, this wine is savoury with soft tannins and oh so drinkable!

2008 [Cloudy Bay](#) has all the characteristics of a classic Marlborough pinot with some complexity from barrel aging. Think mushroom risotto or splash out for truffles.

**Tempranillo** is a variety I'm loving in Australia, as well as the more modern styles in Spain.

2008 [Mount Majura vineyard TSG](#) (tempranillo, shiraz, graciano) is a wine to watch from the Canberra region, also making it into the Top 40 of the 2010 NSW Wine Awards

**Shiraz** Anything from Mount Langi Ghiran - they have shiraz at several different price points, but all are terrific in what they offer.

## Sticky

2010 [Mount Horrocks Cordon Cut Riesling](#) is a perennial favourite

## Something new

★ [Bulmer's Pear Cider](#) launched in August is just the drink for a hot day with all the characteristics of cider but with an underlying pear character. It is 4.7% alcohol.

Wishing you a fabulous holiday season full of family, friends and good food and wine.

See you in 2011.

*Lyndey Milan*