

HOME schooled

Fiona and Matteo Carboni's South Australian cooking school, Casa Carboni, is inspired by their time living in Parma in northern Italy and the Barossa's wealth of produce.

Ricotta gnudi with rocket pesto and slow-roasted cherry tomatoes.
Opposite: Fiona and Matteo Carboni.

cooking school.



cooking school.

ALL IT TOOK WAS A CHANCE MEETING at a wine vintage dinner in 2005. Fiona was the wine exporter, an Aussie girl from Wagga Wagga, NSW, and Matteo the Italian chef on a working-holiday in the Victorian Pyrenees. They talked all night and soon were living together in Parma, Italy, where Matteo worked at the Academia Barilla. Fast forward nine years and the husband-and-wife duo, along with their two children, Sofia, 4, and Filippo, 2, now call the Barossa home.

We're greeted with a loud 'Ciao!' as they welcome us to Casa Carboni, their authentic Italian cooking school, cafe and winebar in the small town of Angaston. Established in 2012, the school is built on the extensive food and wine experience of both Fiona and Matteo, with recipes inspired by Matteo's beloved nonna, Pia.

"Matteo is a wonderful chef and teacher," says Fiona. "Our idea for the cooking school was to bring Italian culture to the Barossa using Matteo's northern Italian background, while showcasing the Barossa, the farmers' market and the amazing produce available." The couple, who started with a small stall at the weekly farmers' market selling everything from pasta to biscotti, are passionate about fresh, local produce, and Saturday classes start with a tour of the market.

The cooking school has the ease and comfort of a home kitchen, giving it a relaxed atmosphere – casa, Italian for 'home', it certainly is. "We want students to feel like they're coming into the home of the Carbonis," says Fiona.

"Our idea was to showcase Italian culture, using the Barossa's amazing produce."

Shopping list

THE BOTTLE SHOP

Marsala, Sicilian fortified wine.

THE BUTCHER

Lamb bones, ask your butcher to cut them for you.

GOURMET FOOD SHOP

Natural almond extract, made from the oil of bitter almonds. Adds a strong, sweet flavour.

THE GREENGROCER & FARMERS' MARKETS

Nettles, have an earthy 'green' flavour, similar to spinach. Wear thick rubber gloves when handling and wilt in boiling water – this removes the sting.

Rainbow chard, a variety of silverbeet with coloured, ribbed stalks.

ricotta gnudi with rocket pesto and slow-roasted cherry tomatoes

Serves 4

400g fresh ricotta, well drained
2/3 cup (100g) plain flour, plus extra to dust
1/2 cup (40g) finely grated parmesan
1 egg, lightly beaten
Pinch of freshly ground nutmeg

Rocket pesto

100g rocket leaves
1/2 garlic clove
100ml extra virgin olive oil
2 tbs slivered almonds
1/2 cup (40g) finely grated parmesan

Slow-roasted cherry tomatoes

1 garlic clove, thinly sliced
2 thyme sprigs, leaves chopped
250g punnet cherry tomatoes, halved
Extra virgin olive oil, to drizzle

Preheat oven to 90°C. For the tomatoes, place garlic, thyme and tomato in a bowl.

WHERE 67 Murray St, Angaston, Barossa, SA.

Visit: casacarboni.com.au.

OWNERS Husband-and-wife team, Matteo and Fiona Carboni.

WHAT Cooking with Matteo in the open kitchen at the back of the cafe, you'll master authentic Italian recipes in a relaxed, friendly atmosphere, while Fiona runs the light and bright dining room for the lunch after the class.

WHERE TO STAY

Visit: barossa.com for options.

UPCOMING CLASSES

Tuscan Long Lunch:

Sept 6, 13, 20, 27. \$185/person.

Sicilian Long Lunch:

Oct 4, 11, 18, 25. \$185/person.

Express class (fresh pasta and dessert): Oct 2, 9; \$125/person.



Clockwise from above: Casa Carboni in Angaston, SA; cooking classes are hands on; the gnudi is gently pressed with a fork to create small indents; piadina romagnola (flatbreads with antipasti – recipe p 62).



WORDS HEIDI FINNANE RECIPES CASA CARBONI PHOTOGRAPHY MARK ROPER

cooking school.

nettle fettuccine with lamb ragu

Serves 4

You will need a pasta machine.

70g nettles (see Shopping list, p 58),
or baby spinach leaves,
blanched, drained
2 eggs, lightly beaten
2 cups (300g) plain flour
Lamb ragu (recipe follows, p 62),
to serve

Whiz the nettle and egg in a small food processor until smooth. Place the flour in a mound on a clean work surface and make a well in the centre. Pour in the nettle mixture and, using your hands, incorporate the flour and form into a soft dough. Knead for 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Enclose in plastic wrap and chill for 30 minutes.

Divide the dough into 3, then enclose 2 portions in plastic wrap and set aside. Start on the thickest setting of your pasta machine. Run dough through 2-3 times, folding it in half each time, until elastic. Keep rolling the dough through settings, reducing the thickness each time, until 2mm thick. Place pasta on a flour-dusted tray and cover with a tea towel while you roll remaining pieces.

Dust each piece of pasta with flour, then gently roll into a coil. Using a sharp knife, slice each pasta coil into 1cm-thick ribbons. Loosen ribbons by gently tossing with your hands, then lightly dust in flour.

Cook the fettuccine in a large saucepan of boiling salted water for 2 minutes or until al dente. Drain, then toss with the lamb ragu. Alternatively, cover fettuccine with a clean tea towel and set aside until ready to cook.



1



2



4



3

1. Using your hands, form mixture into a soft dough, then knead for 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic.
2. Run the dough through your pasta machine 2-3 times, folding it in half each time, until smooth and elastic. Keep rolling the dough down through settings until 2mm thick.
3. Dust each piece of pasta with flour, then gently roll into a coil. Using a sharp knife, slice each into 1cm-thick ribbons.
4. Loosen pasta ribbons by gently tossing with your hands.

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lamb ragu

Serves 4-6

- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 400g lamb bones, cut into 4cm pieces* (see Shopping list, p 58)
- 1 garlic clove, crushed
- 1 each small onion, celery stalk and carrot, chopped
- 1 bay leaf
- 1/3 bunch each rosemary, thyme and sage
- 100ml white wine
- 1 tbs tomato paste
- 400g boneless lamb shoulder, cut into 1cm pieces
- 1 quantity cooked nettle fettuccine or 400g regular store-bought fettuccine
- 1/2 cup (40g) finely grated parmesan

Heat 1 tbs oil in a pan over medium-high heat. Add bones and cook for 8-10 minutes until golden. Remove and set aside.

Reduce heat to medium and add garlic, onion, celery and carrot. Cook, stirring, for 8 minutes or until softened. Increase heat to medium-high. Return bones to pan with bay, herbs and wine. Cook, scraping bottom of pan with a spoon, for 2 minutes or until reduced. Stir through tomato paste, then cover with 1.5L (6 cups) water or enough water to cover bones. Bring to a simmer and cook for 30 minutes or until reduced by half. Remove from heat and strain, discarding solids. Set aside.

Heat remaining 1 tbs oil in a deep frypan over medium-high heat. Season the lamb and cook, turning, for 8-10 minutes until browned. Reduce heat to medium-low and add stock. Cook, stirring occasionally, for 1 hour or until tender and reduced. Add cooked fettuccine to pan, season, then toss to warm through.

Divide among plates and top with parmesan to serve.

piadina romagnola (flatbread with antipasti)

Serves 4 as a starter

- 3 1/3 cups (500g) plain flour, sifted
- 1 cup (250ml) milk
- 100g softened lard

3 tsp baking powder

Antipasti (we used goat's cheese, salami, sobrasada and green olives), to serve

Place flour, milk, lard and baking powder with 1/2 tbs salt in a bowl, then use your hands to form a soft dough. Turn out onto a lightly floured work surface and knead for 5 minutes or until smooth and elastic. Enclose in plastic wrap and chill for 1 hour.

Divide dough into 4 equal portions. Roll out on a lightly floured surface into an oval 3mm thick. Heat a frypan over medium heat and cook, turning, for 2 minutes or until golden. Serve warm with antipasti.

rosa di parma (prosciutto-stuffed beef fillet)

Serves 4-6

You will need kitchen string for this recipe.

1kg beef fillet or beef tenderloin, butterflied (ask your butcher to do this)

- 100g thinly sliced prosciutto
- 50g parmesan, thinly sliced
- 20g unsalted butter
- 2 tsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 each rosemary and sage sprig
- 3 garlic cloves
- 1 cup (250ml) red wine
- 1/2 cup (125ml) Marsala* (see Shopping list, p 58) or port
- 1 bunch rainbow chard* (see Shopping list, p 58), blanched

Preheat the oven to 190°C. Place the beef on a chopping board. Cover with plastic wrap and lightly beat with a rolling pin to flatten slightly. Season, then place slices of prosciutto and parmesan down the centre of the beef, leaving a 1cm border. Roll up beef tightly and tie with kitchen string.

Heat butter and oil in a frypan over medium heat. Season beef, then cook, turning for 3-4 minutes until browned. Transfer to a roasting pan and tuck herbs and garlic around the meat. Roast for 25 minutes for medium-rare. Remove beef from roasting tray and rest, loosely covered with foil, for 10 minutes.

Meanwhile, return the roasting pan to medium-high heat. Add the wine and Marsala and cook, scraping the bottom of the pan with a spoon, for 3 minutes or until reduced by half. Season, then strain jus, discarding solids.

Thickly slice the beef and divide among plates. Drizzle with warm jus and serve with blanched rainbow chard.

bonet (chocolate pudding with amaretti and rosemary syrup)

Serves 4

- 1 cup (250ml) milk
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup (75g) caster sugar
- 20g cocoa powder
- 1 tsp rum
- 3 drops natural almond extract* (see Shopping list, p 58)
- Crumbled amaretti biscuits, to serve

Rosemary syrup

- 1/2 cup (110g) caster sugar
- 4 rosemary sprigs

Preheat oven to 160°C. Grease four 1/2 cup (125ml) dariole moulds.

Place milk in a saucepan over medium heat and bring to just below boiling point. Whisk eggs, sugar, cocoa, rum and almond extract in a heatproof bowl until combined. Pour in hot milk, whisking constantly until combined. Divide mixture evenly among moulds, then place in a roasting pan and fill pan with enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of moulds. Bake for 30 minutes or until set. Remove moulds from water and cool completely.

Meanwhile, for the syrup, combine the sugar and 1/4 cup (60ml) water in a small pan and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low, add rosemary, and cook, stirring, for 5 minutes or until thickened and infused. Remove from heat and discard rosemary.

Dip the base of each mould briefly in hot water, then, using a palette knife, carefully remove pudding from mould. Invert onto plates and serve with amaretti and syrup.



Clockwise from above: rosa di parma (prosciutto-stuffed beef fillet); students enjoy an Italian lunch after class in the dining room; bonet (chocolate pudding with amaretti and rosemary syrup); bonet are cooked in dariole moulds in a water bath.



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baked asparagus custards with hot-smoked salmon salad

Serves 4

3 bunches asparagus, trimmed
1/2 cup (40g) finely grated parmesan
2 eggs, lightly beaten
1/2 cup (125ml) pure (thin) cream
200g hot-smoked salmon, flaked
50g mixed salad leaves
Extra virgin olive oil, to drizzle
Balsamic vinegar (optional), to serve

Preheat the oven to 160°C. Grease and line the base and sides of four 180ml ramekins with baking paper.

Blanch asparagus in a saucepan of boiling salted water for 3 minutes or until tender. Drain and refresh in a bowl of cold water. Roughly chop two-thirds of the asparagus and set the remainder aside.

Transfer the chopped asparagus to a food processor with the parmesan, eggs and cream. Season, then whiz until smooth. Divide mixture evenly among ramekins and place in a roasting pan. Fill the pan with enough boiling water to come halfway up the sides of the ramekins. Bake for 30 minutes or until set.

Meanwhile, combine the flaked salmon, salad leaves and reserved asparagus in a bowl. Drizzle with oil, then season and toss to combine.

Remove custards from ramekins, discarding baking paper. Divide among plates with salad, then drizzle with balsamic vinegar, if using, to serve. **d.**

