



a Potter's Lunch

Gourmet cook, Felicity Potter and partner, David Schlapobersky, make pots that are functional and decorative, each one being a work of art. They have recently relocated and are now re-establishing themselves in Swellendam where Felicity serves delicious food in beautiful handmade pots

Produced by AVRIL DE JONGH,
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HOW MANY of us haven't had our lives changed by circumstances? Felicity Potter and partner, David Schlapobersky, are two such people.

When Felicity's son, James, was almost four years old, he was knocked down by a car and severely disabled. Because of James, Felicity and David went to work as house-parents at Cresset House, a Camphill School for handicapped children near Johannesburg. It was their friend and mentor, the late Tim Morris, who helped them set up a pottery studio at Cresset House to equip the disabled residents to develop skills so they could become self-supporting.

Their real training and subsequent skills came through constant practise and repetition. This enabled them eventually to put their own stamp on their work.

It was tough at the beginning, and David fondly recalls Tim's philosophy: 'Make mugs and you'll make money'. "We took his advice, but there was much to learn and there were many disasters," but they were committed.

Felicity recalls, "Everything in our first firing came out almost molten. We had over-fired the kiln, which subsequently had to be completely re-lined." Not deterred, they put all the items on exhibition and to their utter astonishment, everything was sold.

Over the years, Felicity had to spend a lot of time at home with James, so she had time to explore and develop her great love for food. "Cooking is very much part of my creativity and that's why I never find it dull. The more I tried, the more I discovered," she adds.

Felicity feels that the making of pots and the preparation of food stimulate very similar impulses in her. Both are creative, both are functional, both are shared. To her they go together and are extensions of her personality. "When I cook and when I decorate pots, I am inspired by what I see around me and by the respective ingredients or materials that are available. I take an idea, thought or inspiration and expand on it."

Just as the decorations on her pots make them distinct, she believes a good sauce can add distinction to ➤

LEEK & MUSHROOM ROLL

a Potter's Lunch

SOUFFLÉ WITH GORGONZOLA, FONTINA AND HAZELNUTS

everyday food and her fridge is never devoid of things like home-made tomato sauce, chilli paste and the trendiest of all sauces, pesto. "Sauces," she says, "are such reliable stand bys. I make a large batch when the ingredients are in season." When friends pop in unexpectedly at lunchtime, all Felicity has to do is cook something easy like pasta, and serve it with one of her pre-made sauces.

After 19 years in their Johannesburg home studio, Felicity and David, accompanied by James and Felicity's mother, Ruth Wolff, moved into a turn-of-the-century Victorian house next door to the Mayville Museum, which is part of the Drostdy, in Swellendam. Ruth has had a monumental influence on their work.

She studied architecture in Germany and was one of Johannesburg's earliest interior designers specializing in conversions. Ruth's talents and experience are an integral part of the Swellendam property where Felicity and David hope to continue making their pots in a new and different environment. Perhaps their style and orientation will change in their new surroundings. New environments, different vistas, unusual characters, all of these create inspiration, which will surely influence their creative destiny.

Felicity also plans to serve splendid meals to selected people in a very special setting. Swellendam is where they are embarking on the next phase of an already full and eventful life. ■

SMOKED TROUT TAGLIATELLE (Serves 4)

- 1/2 small onion, finely grated
- 50g unsalted butter
- 1 clove garlic, peeled and crushed
- 3 eggs
- 200ml fresh cream
- 500g green tagliatelle
- 2 smoked trout fillets, cut into small cubes
- ±60ml chopped parsley (or 45ml chopped fresh basil)
- salt and pepper

Grilled Red Pepper Sauce

- 2-3 red peppers
- 1-2 cloves garlic
- 300ml sunflower oil
- lemon juice to taste
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Basil Pesto Sauce

- 1 generous bunch fresh basil
- ± 2 cloves garlic
- extra virgin olive oil
- 15-30ml Parmesan cheese, grated
- 15-30ml pine nuts, lightly browned in a dry pan to bring out the flavour
- salt and freshly ground black pepper

Cook onion in butter over medium low heat until soft and transparent ● Add garlic and cook one minute longer, set aside and keep warm ● Beat eggs with cream ● Cook pasta in boiling salted water until cooked, drain in a colander. ● Mix into warm sauce until well-coated ● Return to low heat and add egg mixture ● Toss lightly using two forks, be careful not to coddle eggs ● Add trout and parsley, reserving some for the top

● Season lightly ● Serve immediately with grilled red pepper sauce, fresh bread and a leaf salad ● To prepare pepper sauce, grill peppers under a hot grill, turning to char skin in places ● Transfer to a plastic bag, close tightly and leave for 15 minutes. This aids peeling ● Peel and de-seed peppers ● Place in a food processor together with garlic and blend until smooth ● Slowly add oil then lemon juice to taste ● Adjust seasoning, store in refrigerator until required ● Alternatively, serve with Basil Pesto Sauce ● There are no absolutes with basil pesto, so process all the ingredients together in a liquidizer and add a little more of this or less of that as desired.

FELICITY'S FOCACCIA (Makes 1 loaf)

- 5ml instant dry yeast
- 5ml sugar
- 300ml lukewarm water
- 30ml Extra virgin olive oil
- 5ml salt
- 500g bread flour

Topping

- 2 cloves garlic, peeled and crushed
- ±7ml salt
- 30ml extra virgin olive oil
- 25g sundried tomatoes in oil

Combine yeast, sugar and water in a bowl and allow to stand in a warm place for ± 5 minutes until foamy ● Stir in oil and salt, mix in flour and knead lightly until soft and smooth but firm ● Cover with a damp cloth and allow to rise in a warm place until doubled in bulk ● Punch down and form into a ball ● Place dough in a well-oiled 20cm cake tin ● Slash top of dough ● To prepare topping, crush garlic and salt together, add olive oil and tomatoes and sprinkle over dough, allowing olive oil to run into the slits ● Allow dough to rise again for ± 50 minutes then bake at 190°C for 25-30 minutes.

POTTER'S WHOLEWHEAT BREAD with ANISEED and FENNEL (Makes one 30cm or two 20cm loaves)

- 25g fresh yeast
- 5ml sugar
- 65ml warm water
- 1250ml (5 cups) flour
- 125ml skim milk powder

5ml salt
65ml sunflower seeds
5ml aniseed
5ml fennel seeds
30-45ml sunflower oil
60ml molasses
500ml warm water
egg yolk beaten with a drop of water
sesame seeds for sprinkling

Dissolve yeast and sugar in warm water in a small bowl and set aside for 10-15 minutes or until mixture starts to foam

● Place flour, skim milk powder, salt, sunflower seeds, aniseed and fennel into a large bowl and mix well ● Pour oil into another bowl and using an oiled spoon, add the molasses, warm water and yeast mixture and mix well ● Make a well in the centre of the flour mixture and add this mixture, stirring with a wooden spoon until well incorporated ● Spoon into prepared pan/s, cover with a damp cloth and leave in a warm draught-free place to rise for 30-40 minutes ● When well risen, brush with beaten egg yolk and sprinkle with sesame seeds ● Bake at 200°C for ±40 minutes. ➤



Wine Suggestions from Phyllis Hands

SMOKED TROUT TAGLIATELLE WITH GRILLED RED PEPPER SAUCE: This mouth-watering recipe needs a wine that will also make a statement, my suggestion is a Mulderbosch Sauvignon Blanc.

LEEK AND MUSHROOM ROLL: Vergelegen Vin de Florence, an interesting blended white wine which is off-dry, will enhance this vegetarian dish.

SOUFFLÉ WITH GORGONZOLA, FONTINA AND HAZELNUTS: With eggs and cheese, especially gorgonzola, a fruity and well-structured red wine is required to ensure that it complements the cheese and is not dominated by it - Blaauwklippen Zinfandel would be ideal.

SMOKED TROUT TAGLIATELLE

