It Tastes Better
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Extract

Introduction

My commitment to ethical eating and sustainable living stems from my mother's wisdom about respecting the earth and each other. From a very early age, she taught me the importance of the people who produce the food we eat – and now, as a restaurateur, I know that I am only as good as the produce I am able to put on the plates.

In 2004 I took what seemed like an obvious step and shifted the menu in my restaurant Billy Kwong from conventional to locally grown, organic and biodynamic produce. The close contact with food producers this has entailed has put me more in touch with what is happening on the land and in the ocean. This book is a celebration of all the growers, farmers, fishermen, artisans and food providores I have met through this process – a tribute to the people behind the food I serve at Billy Kwong and the food I eat at home.

Having met these people and heard their stories, I firmly believe that the food and wine they produce literally tastes better due to the purity of their intention, and the energy, history and love behind what they do. Now, when I pick up a carrot, it is not just an ordinary carrot, it is Rob Bauer's devastatingly sweet, crunchy, wholesome carrot, which he has mindfully grown and harvested. The way Rob chooses to grow his carrots is a result of deeply personal experiences in his life – and because of this I, as the cook, have the deepest respect for Rob and his produce.

When I hold, smell and touch a loaf of Sonoma's naturally leavened sourdough bread, I sense so much depth and substance – which can be traced back to owner Andrew Connole's open-mindedness and willingness to learn everything he possibly could about traditional bread-making. I feel so privileged to be able to offer Vanya Cullen's superbly crafted wines in my restaurant, because I have literally walked through her magical vineyards with her. I have felt and smelt the very soil and precious vines these grapes grew from. I have learnt how her pioneering parents founded the winery all those years ago, and therefore I understand that every drop of Cullen wine is imbued with their spirit.

Everywhere I went in my journey for this book, I kept hearing the same thing over and over. Sustainable food producers are doing things the way their forefathers did. They respect the natural timing of things, allowing animals and plants to develop at their own pace. As slow food artisans, they strive to produce food that is wholesome and flavoursome, sustainably created and fairly traded within the community. It is all about integrity and doing things properly.

All the farmers and growers in this book (whether they are organically certified or not), have a belief system and set of values I share – they all understand that we are merely caretakers of this precious planet. With humility and a keen intelligence heightened by years of careful observation
and experience of the natural cycles of the physical environment and the interplanetary
movements, they fully appreciate the crucial importance of soil and water. With good-quality soil
and water, we can grow good-quality food – and when we eat good-quality food we feel healthy,
fulfilled and nourished, and are able to realise our full potential.

I'll never forget what I learnt from viticulturalist Tony Scherer and avocado growers Liz and Vin
Farrell. They helped me to understand that a tree is not really an individual organism with a
separate existence, but rather is part of an intricate web of subtle, ever-changing relationships –
the rain, the wind, the moonlight, the starlight, the sunlight, the soil and the animals all form part
of this tree. Everything and everyone is profoundly interconnected and interdependent, and this is
why it is so important to respect and preserve the natural environment: in preserving it, we are
preserving ourselves.

Every time we buy and prepare food for our family and friends we must do so with the greatest
awareness and clarity, because through supporting our country's sustainable farmers, growers,
fishermen, artisans and food providores, we are making an enormous contribution to protecting
the earth – our home.

Several times, growers of sustainable food told me that they instinctively know when something is
wrong – and sure enough, when they go down to the fields or paddocks to check, something is
amiss. This intimate relationship these farmers have with their land, animals and plants is the very
reason why their produce tastes so much better. Not only is it free of chemicals, hormones and
artificial fertilisers, but there is this ongoing attention that is given to the cow or the fish or the
chooks or the crop. Just like us, when plants and animals are fed and watered properly, when they
are understood, they are able to thrive.

Such sustainably grown and harvested produce embodies a vitality that we can see, smell and
taste, for it has grown as nature intended. As a cook, I see it as my duty to honour these people
who have re-humanised the food chain. The way I do this is by cooking their produce simply and
mindfully, in order to harness this quality and bring it out on the plate.

I hope you will enjoy reading the stories of the dedicated people behind the sustainable food that I
love – and, through the recipes their produce has inspired me to create, that you will discover for
yourself just how much better it tastes!
It tastes fresh and pure...much better than tap and better than other bottled waters. My worst bottled water is Arrow Head. It tastes worst than well water contaminated with sewage. How do you know if evaporated milk is bad? Smells bad and tastes bad. Then it turns out it tastes better because it was because it was laced with LSD. In the Little Princess episode "I Want Baked Beans", Princess sees a plate of baked beans and exclaims, "They look like rabbit poos!" before eating them and deciding she likes them.Â However, it doesn't taste good either; it actually has no taste at all. In an episode of My Little Pony: Friendship Is Magic, the buffalo served Rainbow Dash and Pinkie Pie bowls of vile-looking green mush, perhaps a stew. Dash is revulsed at the look of it.