

Love...

THE RECIPE FOR LIFE



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JUST THE RECIPE NAMES ARE ENOUGH TO SEND YOU spinning back to the past. Apricot chicken, bangers and mash with onion gravy, tuna dish (tuna mornay), choc ripple cake (made from Choc Ripple biscuits), passionfruit cream, sultana slice, lemon meringue pie.

Even the more modern recipes in a new cookbook, *and the love is free*, will transport readers back to the comfort of a mother's or grandmother's kitchen. This is exactly the effect these tried-and-true recipes have on author Jules Clancy, who compiled her mother June's recipes as a tribute to her after she died two years ago.

Jules, a chocolate biscuit designer at Arnott's who grew up on a sheep farm in Gunning, was blessed with a mother who excelled at cooking. "Mum was entirely self-taught," says Jules, who holds degrees in food science and winemaking. "Her mother was a terrible cook so she started cooking from an early age and took that over in the family."

It wasn't until Jules went to boarding school at Marian College in Goulburn that she realised how amazing her mother's cooking was. Roast leg of lamb was a favourite, and living on a sheep farm where sheep are "grass fed and raised with love" made it even better. She also adored her mother's lamb and vegie soup. "Lamingtons are also up there because mum and I used to make them together. Before I went back to boarding school after the holidays she'd make the cakes. We'd hang out in the kitchen and she'd do the icing and I'd do the coconut and we'd have a chat, so they always remind me of good times."

Although Jules works in the food industry and runs a food blog, www.thestonesoup.com, she didn't intend to write a book when she started recording her mother's recipes. After her mother



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died from breast cancer Jules inherited a little spiral-bound book in which June had written her favourite recipes.

"I wanted to transcribe it to keep it because it was starting to fall apart. But when I was going through the recipes I thought, we don't have this one, or she didn't put in how to roast a leg of lamb. Quite a few things weren't there. I was talking to my three sisters and one said, 'I've got her spag bol recipe' and another had the pasta and one had the Christmas cake.

"As I started to write them down, I began to see it as something that other people might value. So I decided to bite the bullet and self publish it for other people to share."

Jules describes the dishes as "simple, no-fuss, basic Australian family food" which are ideal for "people who weren't lucky enough to have a mum to show them how to cook. It's



JULES CLANCY ON THE FARM AT GUNNING AND (FACING PAGE) HER LATE MOTHER JUNE CLANCY.



really good quality food, but there are no fancy ingredients or anything like that.”

The book includes stories about June and the family history of the recipes. “It’s really a celebration of mums – my mum in particular – so I think it appeals to people on an emotional level.

“I have an Irish friend whose mum died a year before my mother died. She bought a copy and sent me an email the next day saying she’d read it cover to cover and, despite our mums living in different parts of the world, how similar they were. Her mum was also into gardening and knitting and used to make lemon meringue pie.

“In the introduction I describe how the time I feel closest to mum since she died is when I’m in the kitchen cooking these things, and my friend said the same thing. So it was lovely to share that with her. It was sad but celebrational as well.”

While June never worked in the food industry, her daughter’s passion for food has moulded her career. For the past two years, Jules has worked in Sydney in the product development department at Arnott’s, working mostly on chocolate biscuits, in particular, Tim Tams.

“We launch (new Tim Tams) once a year, usually in January. This year five new Tim Tams came out, three normal ones and two called Tim Tam Crush. But this year is special – we have two new products coming out in October.”

And they would be...

“I can’t tell you that!” she says, laughing. “I’d have to kill you.”

It sounds like too much fun to be a real job, but no, says Jules, it’s actually very involved. “It requires sourcing ingredients, coming up with formulations, coming up with prototypes in our test kitchens, and once we have something we’re happy with we have to convert that from something we can make on a small scale to something we can make in a factory. Then we do consumer testing and it takes about a month to get the results back. But it is good fun – I love my job.”

In her spare time, Jules adds to her stonesoup blog, a mix of recipes and stories. She started it four years ago, “mostly to record what I’m cooking. I’m like my mum, I cook different things all the time and then six months later, I’ll think, I made that beautiful mushroom soup – what was in it? And I’ll have no idea.

“I’d always been interested in photography, so the blog was a good reason to get a camera and work on it.” She loves food photography and did all the photos for the book.

Jules is the eldest of five and got her book title from something her mum said to her sister Kate when Kate was living at home and commuting to Canberra. Kate wanted to pay board but her mother wouldn’t hear of it, saying she loved having her daughter around.

“Kate argued that mum cooked for her and sometimes did her washing and that she really needed to contribute something. Mum finally agreed but insisted that the love would always be for free. As soon as I heard it, I knew I had my book title.”

Jules says her mother loved living in the country. She grew up near Crookwell, travelled overseas in her early 20s, returned to live in Bowral, where she worked at the telephone exchange, and moved to Gunning after meeting her grazier husband Ken at a country dance.

“She was really adventurous – going travelling when she was so young. Not many people did that back then. She left school early and when she saved enough money she caught the boat to London. There’s a great photo of her on the boat in Circular Quay waving goodbye and the Opera House is only half built in the background.

“I’ve travelled quite a bit, but I was always inspired by mum when I was little, hearing stories of her time in Europe and in Canada.”

Living on the land, June loved her garden, looking after the family, her chickens, her strawberry patch – and cooking.

“There must have been times when she was a bit over it, but she really loved it. She enjoyed the nurturing, looking after her family, side of it. We’d always come home from school and there’d be cupcakes or lamingtons or biscuits.

“She was beautiful,” Jules adds. “And we really miss her.”

and the love is free, \$29.95, is available from www.thestonesoup.com or phone 0439 586 188. Postage free in Australia.

