



RECIPE SEARCH

Every week we receive emails from clients requesting recipes of dishes they enjoyed in the restaurant.

Our new website will offer a Recipe Database where clients can search for Spirit House recipes, chef's tips, ingredient information. Already there are over 200 recipes on this database.

Though still in beta testing mode, you can currently search our database and find some great recipes, tips and tricks.

If you type in **pork** you will find cooking classes with pork recipes in them, hot tips for dealing with pork and, most importantly, pork recipes.

As more recipe requests come in, we keep adding to the database so it is constantly growing and evolving. You can check it out here: spirithouse.com.au/search.php

WORLD'S FATTEST MAN

In 1892 Chauncy Morlan, made a living as a side show fat man. He and his wife were part of the Barnum and Bailey Circus and toured Europe billed as 'the world's fattest couple'.



Since 1892 two things have changed: Chauncy wouldn't even turn a head if he was spotted in the street today but his first name would raise a few eyebrows. Obesity was considered an oddity back in 1890s whereas today it's the norm.

A quick google of 'chauncy morlan' reveals something interesting about Chauncy, especially in the images results: Chauncy didn't mind doing nude work either - you've been warned. You can find Chauncy's story and other great stuff on our blog www.spirithouse.com.au/funstuff.



QR Codes

Early next year our factory will be releasing some great new stir fry sauces made under a new brand, Wok Shots. The challenge was to show people how to use these products either while they're in the store or at home.

Thanks to the advent of modern smart phones and a great piece of technology called QR Codes, we can place a code on our packaging and turn your phone into a recipe book or an instructional video.

QR codes are big in Japan, where they were invented for storing information about automotive parts during vehicle assembly and soon escaped into the world of advertising and marketing because, and this is important, the inventor allows people to generate the codes for FREE.

In Australia, we're starting to see more marketers using QR codes. You can find them on movie posters, billboards and even Kylie Minogue used QR codes in her single *All the Lovers*

to display the word LOVE on her fans' phones.

A QR code could be used to show some content from a website on your phone, or a phone number, text message or even contact details for you to add to your address book.

To get a FREE QR Code reader try NEOREADER - type get.neoreader.com into your phone's web browser and follow the prompts.

To view QR codes, you simply open the app, point your phone's camera at the code and press the button. Your phone will then display the message or open a website etc. You can try it out with the Spirit House QR code above.



NEW WEBSITE

It's time for our website to get a fresh coat of paint and a makeover. Part of this means swapping out static images with video plus new font technology which should make the website more visually interesting. And in a secret lab we are also testing a way to book our restaurant tables online.

spirithouse.com.au

TAG-ALONG TALES

Our September tag-along tour saw us staying in a boutique resort in a small rice farming village. This email from one of our tag-alongers sums up the small events that make a memorable trip.

... One of my favourite unplanned memories (we have some great photos of this time) are ... walking through the rice paddy fields with Annette, Shelley, Gav & yourself and stumbling upon a beautifully tarred road (to nowhere) then along this quiet road (to nowhere) comes the ice-cream boy on his red bicycle selling delicious home-made ice cream

I'm sure he was very happy running into a few hungry foreigners. Then a walk passed the crazy "spirit house graveyard" to finish with a lift in the back of ute from a very friendly local... what a great afternoon followed by an awesome dinner at the markets.

Thanks again for a great time.

Tania and Gavin

The pictures are from our restaurant manager Shelly who took over the role of official photographer and elephant charmer.

For more information and dates on our upcoming tagalong tours, visit spirithouse.com.au/tours



Startled icecream vendor



Spirithouse graveyard



Lift Home with friendly local



Vendor at the night market



D.I.Y. Cook Book - we show you how?

Technology and food come together . . . Page 2

Gift Vouchers - buy them online.

Inspiring people to cook Page 6

Do you have a lucky tree in your yard?

The secret life of a sour fruit Page 7

TECHNOLOGY AND TRADITION

Who would have thought that your phone would change the way we do business. Thanks to modern devices like smart phones and iPads, at SpiritHouse we're constantly looking at how we can use this technology to better interact with our customers.

The iPad was the big IT gadget this year and some restaurants used it with much fanfare to replace their menus - which we think will probably raise stealing restaurant menus to a new level!

For us, the challenge is how to design our website for more friendly interaction with these new devices.

With most people owning a smart phone we are also looking at ways you can use your phones while in the restaurant to enhance your dining experience.

QR codes (QR stands for Quick Response) are going to become a part of our lives and we're exploring ways to use this innovative phone technology which is all the rage in Japan. QR codes will change the way you and your phone interact with the world and you can try them for yourself on the back page.

And while much of this newsletter explores the future, we will explore the past too. Our recent Thai tag-along tours took us back hundreds of years looking at the influence early traders had on Thai food. While staying at a resort in a Thai rice farming village we discovered the ancient mythology surrounding some fruit trees and how important they are in Thai life.

The world is constantly changing, so in this issue we'd like to explore the future and retell some of the past.

SPIRIT HOUSE BBQ BOOK

Very early on in Spirit House history we printed a small spiral bound book called Hot Plate. It wasn't the prettiest publication on the planet but it had great BBQ recipes and people loved it.

But times have changed, food is the new porn so we decided to retire Hot Plate and replace her with a prettier, sexier model - but still keep her cheap too.

Our three cooking school chefs and restaurant head chef have created a unique style of Asian inspired BBQ recipes which are perfect for outdoor

summer entertaining. Each chef has put his or her own stamp and style on the recipes and there are some truly unique gems to be discovered such as: laab burgers, tasting salts, crostini with sugar cured trout - plus great marinades, rubs and dipping sauces. There's even a recipe for making your own Thai style sausages.

We're publishing this book ourselves, working with a great printer in Brisbane and although it won't be available in book stores you can buy it from our website or from the Cooking School or Restaurant when you next visit.

COOKING SCHOOL

Hands-on cooking classes are held everyday from 9.30AM to 2.00PM.

Evening classes are held most Fridays & Saturdays from 4.30PM to 9.00PM.

Classes can be booked online at www.spirithouse.com.au

Phone: (07) 5446 8977 (ext. 1)

RESTAURANT

Open every day for lunch

Dinner - Wednesday to Saturday

Fully Licensed, Bookings essential.

Call: (07) 5446 8994 (ext. 2)

GIFT VOUCHERS

Spirit House Gift Vouchers make the perfect present. Vouchers can be used in the restaurant, cooking school or shop. Go to spirithouse.com.au/vouchers to order your voucher online or call the office on 07 5446 8977.

Address:
20 Ninderry Rd, Yandina, Qld 4561

THE WWW OF FOOD

☞ THE INTERNET IS CHANGING THE GAME FOR CELEBRITY CHEFS AND COOK BOOK PUBLISHERS

Meet the folks setting the food world on fire.

It seems the web loves food and there's some stunning food blogs out there that give high end food magazines a run for their money - without the ads too. What's more, most of these bloggers started out simply cooking a recipe, taking a photo of the dish and posting it to their website.

The results from many of these bloggers are stunning. Even though most have never had formal food photography training, the internet has more than enough tutorials out there to help these folks produce some amazing results.

Which brings me around to a new piece of technology that turns all these blogs into a magazine which you can read without being tethered to a keyboard or mouse - Apple's iPad. The iPad has a fantastic app called PULSE which let's you bring all your favourite blogs together to create a virtual magazine. You even flip pages like you would a magazine.

So whether you have an iPad or you simply love great recipes and stunning food photography, here are our favourite food blogs that you should check out.



The iPad is a unique platform that, thanks to some great apps, allows you to customise the way you view your favourite things on the internet.

It's easy to dismiss the iPad as a fad but after selling 300,000 units on the first day of release, Apple sells nearly 4.5 million iPads a quarter. When DVD players were first released they sold 350,000 units in the first year.

steamykitchen.com/skblog

What started out as a way to write down recipes has led Jaden Hair into teaching cooking classes, developing recipes and photographing food. Most of her recipes have an Asian inspiration.

austinbushphotography.com/category/foodblog

Austin lives in Bangkok and has a passion for authentic Thai food experiences. His blog is packed with reviews on street food vendors along with maps on how to find them - plus great photos of the dishes too.

whatkatieate.blogspot.com

Sydney based photographer and food stylist, Katie's blog is packed with recipes and stunning photos plus articles on wineries, restaurants, and gourmet stores.

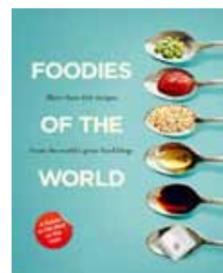
cannelle-vanille.blogspot.com

Aran Goyoaga is a food writer, stylist and photographer from Spain who started experimenting with gluten free recipes. Her blog is now a great source of recipes and photos that have the added bonus of being gluten free.

tastespotting.com

This is the motherload of great recipes from hundreds of home cooks and bloggers compiled by Sarah Gim into one very tasteful and easy to navigate site.

BLOG COOK BOOK



'Foodies of the World' is a collection of profiles and recipes from the best food bloggers around the world. The best part is this is an Australian publication edited by Slattery Media Group's Julia Gaw.

Containing stunning photography, styling and images, this is a high-quality cookbook with real food from real people.

This book demonstrates how food bloggers are becoming a force to reckon with. No longer is food the domain of celebrity chefs and their glossy cookbooks or slick tv shows.

'Foodies of the World' should be available at most good book stores.

D.I.Y: COOK BOOK PROJECT

Here's a great DIY project that results in a one-off hard cover cook book featuring your favourite recipes. A fun project for you, your family or friends. First of all, we need some ingredients:

Ingredients to make your own cook book.

- Food blogs and recipe books
- A kitchen
- Digital camera
- This photography tutorial - <http://mattikaarts.com/blog/technique/food-photography-2/>
- Free software: www.blurb.com

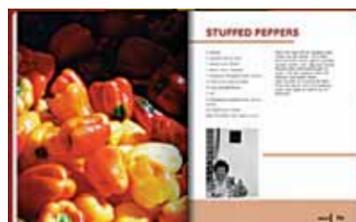
Download the free software from blurb.com. It's dead easy to use, simply choose the size of your book and they have plenty of pretty layouts to select from in the software, so you don't have to be that creative.

Our advice is to have the recipe on one page and a photo on the opposite - this will help pad your book. 40 recipes and photos makes an 80 page book which is

quite a nice, impressively thick tome.

You can add all the text to your recipes in your blurb book and add photos when you get around to cooking the dishes. Which leads us to photography. Today's modern digital cameras are more than capable for this project. The tutorial we gave in the ingredients list is more than enough to get you started.

Blurb books are too expensive to print for commercial quantities but as far as making beautiful one-off or a handful of editions, it's the perfect way to get started. We use blurb at Spirit House to produce concept books and to create media releases for visiting journalists.



A simply layout from a blurb recipe book.

The Magic Sour Tree of Thailand



This face doesn't even begin to describe how sour this fruit is.

Too much knowledge can be a dangerous and, it must be said, a boring thing. This article possibly falls in to the latter category but I'll give you 400 words to make up your own mind. Most great discoveries begin with a question and sometimes, as in this case, they start out with simply trying to prove someone wrong. Which is why you are now reading about the Star Gooseberry.

The first thing to say about the Star Gooseberry (*Phyllanthus acidus*) is 'I'm telling you, it's *not* a Brazillian Cherry' (*Eugenia uniflora*). You can see the motivation behind this article now. The second thing to say is this thing is *SOUR*.

But sour is not a bad thing.

In Thai, this fruit/tree is called *mayom* which rhymes with the Thai word for fame/fortune *ni yom* - actually the *yom* bit is the only thing that rhymes. Here's the culture bit, most Thai people will plant this tree in front of their houses believing that the tree will bring the occupants fame and success.

That covers the front of the house; for the back of the house Thais plant the jackfruit tree which is called *khanoon* in Thai and sounds similar to the word for support - *granoon*.

On our tag-along tour the guard at the small boutique countryside resort where we stay in Ayudhdhaya would give us handfuls of mayom fruit from the tree in front of the gates. He found out that some of our tag-alongers loved the fruit and showed us how to eat them with a little salt and chilli.

Some of the tagalongers showed him how to eat them with a touch of gin and soda!

It's experiences like this you just don't find at hotels in towns. Chatting with the guard and passing villagers, I learned that fruit starting with *ma* usually means they're sour:

Ma krut - Kaffir Lime

Ma nao - lime

Ma kham - Tamarind

Ma meuang - mango (most mango in Thailand is eaten slightly green)

Back to *mayom*, the Star Gooseberry. Thai monks will use the branches of the tree to dip into consecrated water and sprinkle it on people or objects as a way of purification. More interestingly, nearly every house in Thailand has a spirit house and under the spirit house should be the wood from nine holy/lucky trees and, you guessed it, one of the pieces should be from the mayom tree.

You'd think the *mayom* fruit should be easy to buy in Bangkok but it's becoming harder and harder to find. The two reasons for this are that major orchard areas of this tree are



The fruit of the mayom tree grows on the branches

being carved up into factory land and housing estates and, secondly, big orchards now tend to specialise in one or more commercially viable fruit such as rambutans, custard apples and mangosteens whereas in the old days they'd have mixed orchard crops.

What's interesting (assuming those readers who are bored by this have flipped to another page) is some boutique restaurants, chefs are making a name for themselves by using fruits like *mayom* and other ye-olde fruits in traditional Thai dishes.

Chote Chitr restaurant is famous for its mee krob, crispy noodles, because they use *som sa* fruit whose skin or zest is essential to a number of Thai dishes. Most other chefs substitute lime, which just isn't the same.

A new restaurant in Bangkok using these more esoteric ingredients is Bo.lan (www.bolan.co.th). Chefs and owners, Bo and Dylan, worked for David Thompson at Nahm in London and are avid collectors of old recipe books from Thai palaces etc and are strongly supportive of boutique growers.

Now that Michelin starred Nahm is opening a branch in Bangkok, hopefully we should see a revival of these traditional recipes and ingredients.



A Great Sauce Created by Accident

GO ON, TASTE IT! - IT MIGHT MAKE YOUR RICH

There's a reason Indian food is popular in England and not the other way around - England's national dishes are terrible in comparison. Even the names are terrible: *Spotted dick*, *toad in the hole* etc.

So when - and this is just one version of the story - the ex-governor of Bengal, Lord Marcus Sandys, returned home to Worcestershire from bringing democracy to India in the 1830s, he brought with him a craving for tasty food and a recipe for an exotic sauce.

He hired two chemists by the names of Lee & Perrins to recreate the recipe. The result was a foul smelling liquid that tasted equally as bad. It must have been too foul to pour down the drain so they put a lid on the jar and stuck it in the cellar - and then forgot about it.

Until two years later, whereupon there must have been a conversation that went something like, "I'll give you £5 if you drink some." To their amazement, the

two years fermenting away had created something delicious. Rather than waste time coming up with a fancy name they registered a company called: Lee & Perrins. It would seem that Lord Marcus lacked an intellectual property lawyer.

One of the exotic ingredient in Worcestershire sauce is Tamarind - which is a sour flavour used in many Thai and Asian dishes. There was a factory in Taringa, Brisbane that also made Worcestershire sauce under the Lionel Brand.

King Prawns in Tamarind Sauce

The sourness of the tamarind is balanced with the addition of palm sugar. Serve with steamed jasmine rice to mop up all the mouth watering tamarind sauce

- 20 green king prawns, peeled and deveined, leave head and tail intact
- 1 onion, finely sliced
- 2 tbsps finely chopped garlic
- 1-2 red chillies, seeded and sliced
- 1/4 cup tamarind water
- 2 tbsps palm sugar
- 2 tbsps fish sauce
- 2 spring onions, sliced for garnish

fresh coriander leaves for garnish

Transfer to serving plate and garnish with spring onions and coriander leaves. Serve with jasmine rice.

A simple yet tasty dish and, if you've read our article on DIY cook books, a perfect addition to your list of recipes.



Heat 2 tablespoons vegetable oil in wok until smoking. Add onion and chilli, stir fry 30 seconds, add prawns and garlic, stir fry until prawns are just starting to colour. Add tamarind water, palm sugar and fish sauce, stir fry until prawns are cooked and sauce is thick. Only takes a few minutes.



Spice Island Salt

This is one of the most asked for recipes at the moment and is a small side dish on the Coconut Braised Duck - which you can learn to make in Ben's 'Chop Chop' cooking class.

- 10 gms Star Anise
- 10 gms Cinnamon Bark
- 10 Cardamon Pods
- 100 gms Flaked Salt



Small storage jars from Ikea or any kitchen shop not only are a great way to store your salts but with some labels, a colour printer and a bit of time, you can create some cool gift ideas as well.

Lightly roast all the spices until fragrant in 180 degree oven. Cool, then mix with the Flaked salt before using.

CHOP CHOP

Restaurant head chef, Ben Bertei, has created a fantastic cooking class that we try to run once a month on a Friday night.

The focus of Ben's *Chop Chop* class is knife skills and resembling something like a Masterchef cooking episode, the pressure is on to slice and dice with finesse.

Ben has selected four dishes from his menus each involving different knife techniques.

The class is limited to just 12 people because Ben takes the time to make sure everyone is using their knife correctly.

The emphasis is on fine knife work not just being able to cut. Ben will illustrate the necessary skills and techniques if you want to cut it in a professional kitchen.

So, if you want to hone your knife skills (*oh the puns!*) and create some restaurant quality food, check out our website for Ben's *Chop Chop* class.



GIFT VOUCHERS

It seems that gift vouchers are turning reluctant cooks into budding chefs, judging by the feedback we've been getting at our cooking classes lately.

Kids as young as 12 to Grandparents have been introduced to Thai cooking for the first time - something they probably wouldn't have chosen to do if it wasn't for a gift voucher - and have gone home full of new enthusiasm for food.

It was just a year ago that we set up our website to enable you to have a voucher emailed to you and since then just over 50% of our vouchers are now delivered over electronically.

TECHNO CRITICS

How the internet is making marketing honest

One of the biggest expenses in making a movie is the marketing involved to get you to watch it. Stars are flown around the world for interviews, the voice over guy tells you how your life will never be the same after watching it ... and then you visit rottentomatoes.com and see that this blockbuster rates 13% and is a lemon. Thanks to this web movie review site, you've saved yourself \$16 for the movie ticket and an hour and half of your life you would never get back.

Could this be killing the movie industry?

Websites that allow peer reviews of movies are seriously affecting the opening weekend take of blockbuster movies. In the past, a movie company would get a few months of good sales before the word spread that their movie was a dud. Now, thanks to the web, the word spreads globally the day after opening night. While it's easy for the movie industry to blame piracy for their declining attendances, maybe they should also look at online review sites creating better-informed customers and - and this is going to hurt - maybe they should start producing better movies!

Restaurants are no strangers to being reviewed in newspapers by professionals - and sites like urbanspoon and tripadvisor are the 'go to' source for reviews from everyday customers. Sadly, sites like tripadvisor are being abused by business owners getting their friends to write bad reviews of competitors. Something which tripadvisor investigates and takes very seriously. As I heard it said: 'Accuracy is sometimes the price we're paying for convenience of information on the web'. Thankfully, unlike in a newspaper review, business owners can often reply to web reviews giving readers their side of the story.

Interestingly, consumer fueled review sites are covering all sorts of businesses and professions. In America sites like ratemyprofessors.com allow students to investigate the qualities of professors and other academic staff. From our perspective it makes total sense. If you're about to invest a large amount of money in your education, wouldn't you want the best professors? Now you can read what other students are saying about professors from colleges all across the USA.

Before you think that won't spread to Australia, the site is already covering Canada and the UK and there's no reason why it shouldn't extend to Australia either. After all, this is a website and the reviewers are anyone with an internet connection. So therefore any college or uni in the world is fair game for a site like this.

Armed with nothing more than an internet connection and a few dollars it would be easy for anyone to set up a critic site of your industry - myhairdressersucks.com or perhaps shonkybuilders.com and possibly my personal favourite: ratemydoctor.com.

With more businesses turning to facebook, twitter or a blog for marketing opportunities, they're finding the rules are changing. Unlike traditional marketing, the conversation in this new media goes both ways; you can say how great you are on facebook and your clients can equally tell you how you're not so great. What's more, the whole world is

CHEMISTRY in the Kitchen

The Maillard reaction is a brilliant thing - it's what gives colour and flavour to roast meat, crusty bread, whiskey and coffee. Basically when you apply heat to an amino acid and a sugar you're going to create flavour and browning, non-enzymatic browning to be exact. Enzymatic browning is what happens when you cut an apple or avocado and leave it out on your bench for a while.

We were discussing this in between shooting photos for the new BBQ cook book and eventually the conversation came around to how to make meat tender. Tenderness is a major quality in a perfect steak but it's the hardest thing to get right consistently - or is it?

Heat does something else quite wonderful to food, especially meat. It unfolds long chains of amino acids that make up protein and in doing so, makes the meat tender. And we're not talking a lot of heat.

Enter the world of *sous vide* (under vacuum) where, for example, a steak is placed in a vacuum sealed bag and held in a water bath at 54°C until the whole piece reaches that temperature.

In the past, this involved expensive laboratory equipment that only top restaurants could afford and you'd be surprised at how many restaurants use these machines. Many of Sydney's three hatted chefs have been using this technique for years and now that domestic models are available, it may not be long before you find a *sous vide* machine next to that other space-age cooking gadget, the microwave.

Besides the tenderness and flavour advantages, cooking *a la sous vide* means you can cook a dish 1,000 times and never stuff it up. The problem with meat that's been cooked *a la sous vide* is there's no delicious crust or aroma. No Maillard reaction has taken place. A quick sear on a barbecue hot plate or a blast from a blow torch will take care of that.



Chicken is cooking in sealed vacuum bags in a sous vide machine. The vacuum bags help seal in the flavours and removes any gaps that may come between the meat and the cooking process of the water bath.