

THE RADICAL NURTURE OF COOKING UTENSILS

An invitation by the Reeds to Heide invariably came with strings attached. In exchange for idyllic scenes, impassioned company, creative stimulus, critique and intelligent conversation came the expectation of work. To sustain and contribute to the Heide lifestyle, one must cook, garden, plant trees, milk cows or clean to earn one's keep. Jobs that were typically seen as 'women's work' were simply tasks that needed to be done by anyone. While John and Sunday didn't ask explicitly, the overwhelming inference was that one got busy between the regimented meal times.

Ultimately, each of these tasks busied the hands and engaged the circle in a communal purpose; conversations or art, music, food and politics bubbled throughout. Such a purpose led to relationships one can only make through hard graft.

In this spirit, guests are invited to restore one of their cooking implements (wooden spoon, wooden chopping board, enamel pan, copper pan). The pursuit is one of communal labour, and a commitment to the 'domestic aesthetic'.

LONG PRAWN

Long Prawn is an online and offline platform for spaghetti gazing, food research, events and ideas around eating. A cross-cultural boil that hopes to preserve food knowledge by reviving historical ideas and bringing them to the surface of the pot again.

CHEF SEASONAL SIMONE

Simone is a Melbourne-based pastry chef currently working at Bistra in Carlton. Her work is often described as whimsical and feminine, drawing on vintage classics and old cookbooks. Alongside her work in the kitchen, she is a food writer, telling stories on her Substack, Second Helpings, where she explores recipes, process, and the culture around food through personal anecdotes.

UTENSIL NURTURE PROCESS

WOODEN SPOON

1. Sandpaper rough (120)
2. Sandpaper fine (220)
3. Wipe
4. Sniff
5. Lemon bi-carb
6. Beeswax polish

WOODEN CHOPPING BOARD

1. Sandpaper rough (120)
2. Sandpaper fine (220)
3. Wipe
4. Sniff
5. Lemon bi-carb
6. Timber oil
7. Beeswax polish

CAST IRON POT OR PAN

1. Vinegar/water soak
2. Steel wool
3. Dry
4. Flax oil
5. Rub
6. Season at home (thin flax, 260°C oven for one hour upside down, cool, repeat)

COPPER POT OR PAN

1. Vinegar/bicarb paste
2. Scrub
3. Rinse, repeat
4. Heavy-duty green pad
5. Copper cream
6. Wipe
7. Polish cloth

STAINLESS STEEL POT OR PAN

1. Vinegar/bicarb paste
2. Scrub
3. Rinse, repeat
4. Heavy-duty green pad
5. Steel cream
6. Wipe
7. Polish cloth



RECIPE: EARL GREY MADELEINES

- 185g unsalted butter
(plus 1 tbsp extra for greasing)
- 40g honey
- 4 eggs
- 170g caster sugar
- 2 tbsp loose-leaf Earl Grey tea
- 1 tsp vanilla bean paste
- 185g plain flour
- Pinch of salt
- 10g baking powder



- Melt the butter in a saucepan and continue heating until it turns brown and smells nutty. Stir in the honey and set aside to cool slightly.
- In a mortar, grind the tea leaves into a fine powder. Combine with the caster sugar and, using your fingertips, rub until the sugar is fragrant.
- Put the eggs into the bowl of a stand mixer or a large mixing bowl and beat for about 2 minutes at medium speed using the whisk attachment or a hand-held electric whisk.
- Add the Earl Grey sugar and the vanilla and beat at medium-high speed for about 5 minutes, until thick and frothy.
- Meanwhile, sift the flour, salt and baking powder together into a separate bowl.
- Beat the honey-brown butter into the egg mixture at a slow speed. Fold in the flour mixture in three batches, using a whisk to fold to minimise lumps. Transfer the batter to a container and chill in the fridge for at least 2 hours, preferably overnight.
- Preheat the oven to 180°C fan (200°C conventional). Generously butter a Madeleine tray and dust lightly with flour. Spoon about 1 tablespoon of batter into each mould and bake for 8–12 minutes, until a small bump forms in the centre and the cakes spring back when pressed.
- Tap the tray on the bench to release the madeleines and serve warm.

SUN, 22 MARCH 2026

RADICAL NURTURE, @LONG_PRAWN GARDEN PICNIC
AT HEIDE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

The intuitive cook flies by the seat of their pants. Ingredients, swept off their feet, join an orgy of utensils, time and heat – a cook's tools – reliable, indispensable and always within reach. Hosted by Heide Museum of Modern Art with Long Prawn and Seasonal Simone.



FOOD AND MENU

3:00 PM – Guest arrival
Under the Algerian Oak tree

- As if John were handing you a glass himself
- Jus à la table, freshly squeezed OJ on ice

3:15 PM – Introduction
Radical Nurture

- Words from Tim Sligo, Lily and Fred (Long Prawn)
- 'Arvo tea christened with champagne poured into soup (Crème Ninon)

3:30 PM – arvo tea
Time to eat

- Crème Ninon
- Wholemeal bread and butter

3:30 PM – arvo tea
On the lawn

- Wildblume 'tomme aux fleurs' cheese
- Babas au rum, roaming rum pram
- Earl Grey madeleines

4:30PM – Workshop
Nurturing

- Guests who have brought items for restoration, commence at stainless steel prep benches
- Other guests invited to view Radical Nurture exhibition inside Heide

6:00 PM – Guests depart
Take home item from LP

- Illustrated lavender bags
- Fill with some Heide lavender on the way out



The intuitive cook flies by the seat of their pants. Ingredients, swept off their feet, join an orgy of utensils, time and heat – a cook's tools– reliable, indispensable and always within reach.

Here, a certain radical nurture extends beyond the cook's offspring and is expressed through the maintenance of ones handy kitchen arsenal. Like parental love, maintaining the 'domestic aesthetic,' as Barbara Blackman coined it, requires a somewhat regimented, tough love; a brisk sanding down, an acidic and bubbly once over, a tall drink of wax or oil. To love and share the domestic work (both men and women) amongst pots and pans, is a language defined by the Reeds and their willing co-collaborators, in breakfast, lunch, 'arvo tea and dinners. Each Heide cook, despite their austere palettes, often corrupted by the whispers of their wooden spoons, to add more brandy, to pop the onion in whole, to flip a rosti in front of an audience, to stuff a chicken with Sunday's roses, to lather fresh cream or cook peas very simply.

Long Prawn offers an afternoon of implemental Radical Nurture, where cooking tools see the soul-embedding restoration of wooden spoons, copper pots, scarred chopping boards and scraped pans.

Guests are invited to bring one of these items for convivial repair alongside a simple meal cooked from Mirka's own copper pots and pans.

"TO SEE SUNDAY IN THE KITCHEN WAS LIKE WATCHING A DANCER, SHE WAS INCREDIBLY ACTIVE AND IMMENSELY TRAINED, AS IT WERE ... NOTHING WAS TOO MUCH TROUBLE, AND ALL WAS FAST"



• NOTES ON: FOOD, HOSTING AND HOUSEWORK

Visitors to Heide were buoyed by a well-stocked library and larder, both of which were made available to guests. Life at Heide followed a regimented schedule of meals, often four per day.

- 7am: Freshly squeezed orange juice, delivered to all in bed by John Reed.
- 8am breakfast: eggs and Heide butter, wholemeal bread, jams, marmalade, tea.
- 1pm: Minimal offering of cheese and fruit with a glass of milk or apple juice, or alternatively a platter of a 'cold collation', salad of seasonal leaves, garden produce, fruit and nuts. Mayonnaise, vinaigrette, cheese, yoghurt and herb butter, wholemeal bread.
- 4pm 'arvo tea: scones, rum baba, Madelaines, tea always, brewed for service at 4pm, late comers were not provided with fresh brews or favour.
- Evening: Dinner a communal instruction led by Sunday, French tilt, simple, visual, leading into late nights of talking, cigarette smoking, whisky or brandy and strong coffee and chocolates. Was always planned early in the day to ensure those responsible were ready to perform.

At Heide, eating takes place on the front lawn or in the sunroom adjacent to the kitchen. Or at times eating in the library with plates balanced on knees, accounts shared..

John wrote to Sidney Nolan (after a fallout), 12 Oct 1964:

"EACH MADE HIS OWN CONTRIBUTIONS TO THIS LIFE WE ALL LED TOGETHER, AND YOUR PAINTINGS WERE PART OF YOUR CONTRIBUTION, EVEN THOUGH YOU SAID SUNDAY PAINTED AS MUCH AS YOU DID. THESE PAINTINGS BECAME IN THEIR OWN WAY AS MUCH A PART OF THE TOTAL LIFE WE LIVED AS SUNDAY'S COOKING, AS THE TREES I PLANTED, AS THE BOOKS WE ALL READ"

• NOTES ON: CREME NINON

Mirka recounts Georges making a fresh pea soup at Aspendale. An unforgettable meal for her, as on the way to the table, she dropped the pot on the ground. One can only imagine the colour and laughter.

NINON DE L'ENCLOS:

17th-century courtesan and author. Ninon was a regular visitor at Versailles, and it was there that she met a man who offered her homemade moisturiser for the face, the secret of her everlasting youth. The recipe was first published in a French pamphlet written by her long-time assistant Jeanne Sauval in 1719. Ingredients were listed as almond, lard, spermaceti (whale sperm), onion juice and rose water. It must have worked well, as she became potently influential. On one occasion, one of her marquis lovers fell sick after she left him. To console him, she lopped off some of her curly locks, which started a vogue for curly bobbed hair à la Ninon.

Louis XIV called her 'the marvel of his reign', and men in their twenties often called upon her even though she could have been their grandmother. Beyond her allure was her literary impact; her salon's milieu was that of deep discussion and fervent consumption of the library arts, reminiscent of the Reeds' library. Known for her beauty, wit and generosity, she was a significant influence on a young Molière. When Ninon died, she left money for the son of her notary, a nine-year-old named François-Marie Arouet, later to become known as Voltaire, so he could buy books.

CRÈME NINON:

A soup named in L'enclos' honour, fresh garden peas, flavorful stock, and before serving, a cold champagne poured in from a height. A soup and an icon of whom we are almost certain Sunday and Mirka would have approved.

• NOTES ON: ORANGE JUICE

At Heide, fresh fruit and vegetables formed a sort of currency. Oranges and orange juice were a non-negotiable. At times, people sent or brought the Reeds a box of oranges. Each morning, John would juice them freshly and bring a glass to all staying guests at 7am. Bleary-eyed guests, most often still in bed, were immediately reminded not only that the bounty of Heide awaits them in the form of fresh produce, but also that work was to be done and sleeping in was not part of the contract.

JUS À LA TABLE:

Visits with Mirka were often around her kitchen table, miraculous implements for breakfast or morning tea would be pulled from behind stacks of books, antique furniture, dolls and teddies: double-spouted tea pots, toast racks, cloches hiding butter, and a tall rustic orange juicer. A task often given to the children, streams of juice would flow everywhere. The thing had a particularly concerning patina; the juice was always wonderful, but warm.

JUICE IN AUSTRALIA:

While the ritual of freshly squeezed oranges each morning may have been suggested by Dr Hay (Sunday's coveted dietitian), it was also partly a necessity. Until 1955, all other orange juice in Australia was canned and sweetened, a process that would see the juice heated for sealing and tasting very little of the fresh stuff.

In addition, advertisements distributed by the initiative of the chairman of the Victorian Railways Commissioners, Harold Clapp, promoted the benefits of the freshly squeezed juice as early as the 1920s. More oranges, more freight, more trains. In 1926, the Victorian Railways Refreshment Branch opened a stall selling freshly squeezed orange and lemon juice drinks at Flinders Street Station. Clapp believed it was the first in the Commonwealth.

It would be some 75 years later before the next big 'innovation' in juice, when Viva and Boost both popped up with a particular naughtiness flair. Blended drinks, with the offer of 'cosmeceuticals' such as ginseng, wheatgrass and vitamins, all served in a polystyrene cup! Both franchises, along with many imitators, spread nationally. Similarly, it all happened in front of you, fresh. As the pulp of the next decade settled, in the 2010s a second wave of cafe culture reached cultural significance.

Sourdough, micro herbs, poached eggs, single-origin coffee and, without exception, freshly squeezed orange juice. For a brief period, cartoned blood-orange 'Rosso' juice was the vogue drop, with freshness traded for international flair.

At Heide, the orange remained a valued currency, with good ones not as easy to come by. Frequently, as an act of love, Danila Vassilieff was known to send or bring with him a brimming box of Mildura oranges, ripe for juicing.

• NOTES ON: FRENCH CHEESE

Excerpt from Radical Nurture:

"HEAD OF RIMBAUD WAS NOLAN'S CONTRIBUTION TO THE INAUGURAL CONTEMPORARY ART SOCIETY EXHIBITION OF 1939. NAMED AFTER THE REVOLUTIONARY FRENCH POET ARTHUR RIMBAUD, WHOSE WRITING NOLAN REVERED, THE WORK IS LESS A PORTRAIT THAN A SYMBOLIC HOMAGE. ITS ROUGH, ABSTRACTED FORMS, RUBBED WITH LAYERS OF BOOT POLISH, WERE A DELIBERATE AFFRONT TO CONVENTION. THE PICTURE CREATED IMMEDIATE CONTROVERSY; CAS SECRETARY ADRIAN LAWLOR REPORTEDLY DISMISSED IT AS LOOKING LIKE 'A FRENCH CHEESE' AND ATTEMPTED TO REMOVE IT FROM DISPLAY."

One must wonder if the Heide set would take such a remark as an insult or an honour. Cheese is often revered as a staple among fruit, nuts and salad come lunchtime. A wheel of cheese is an utter luxury. As soon as it is cut, the cheese changes; it breathes for the first time in a long time. Encrusted in wild flowers and rose petals, it is a garden breath and a welcome sight at the picnic.



NOTES ON: SCENT AND LAVENDER

Barrett Reid interview with Richard Hease in 1981:

"THE HOUSE ALWAYS SMELLED BEAUTIFUL. THERE WAS ... A VERY LARGE LAVENDER HEDGE FROM THE GATES RIGHT AROUND THE DRIVE TO THE FRONT DOOR. ONE TENDED TO BRUSH ONE'S HAND ALONG THIS AS ONE WALKED TO THE HOUSE. THE HOUSE ITSELF HAD THIS LAVENDER SCENT, SMELL OF FRESH LAVENDER IN IT, BUT WAS ALWAYS MIXED WITH LINSEED OIL AND THE SMELL OF RIPOLIN, AND FRESH COOKING, USUALLY BAKING SCONES, SOMETHING LIKE THAT, COMING FROM THE KITCHEN, HERBS. SO THE HOUSE WAS ALWAYS FULL OF DELICIOUS, AIRY SMELLS. I'VE NEVER, RIGHT ALL THESE YEARS LATER, SMELLED A HOUSE AS BEAUTIFUL AS THAT SMELL AT HEIDE"

TAKE HOME: LP LAVENDER BAGS

Lavender is a symbol of love and chastity, and an aphrodisiac. At the conclusion of the event, guests are given small sewn and illustrated slips.

Guests are encouraged to fill the slips with some of Heide's own lavender, then add interest to underwear drawers or rest them on lively that want to keep dancing.