



GLENMORE HOUSE

with Mickey Robertson

— Fireplaces, soups, fennel fronds and calendula petals... winter is a time of magic at Glenmore House, both inside and out. Here, Mickey Robertson shares what she's looking forward to this season.

PHOTOGRAPHY *Ben Dearnley* STYLING *Emma Knowles* STORY *Corinne Parkes*



Fennel & spelt bread (p 60) with fennel frond pistou (p 63)

"I keep a jar of this fennel frond pistou on hand always...it's so useful to spread quickly onto a sandwich, stir through pasta or dollop into an omelette, but it is delicious spread on a slice of fennel & spelt bread that has first been generously spread with a slather of cow's curd, chevre or labneh!"



“Winter comfort is gentle flames flickering in the kitchen’s slow-combustion fireplace, and the aroma of good and nourishing things cooking,” says Mickey Robertson, an interior designer who, over the last few decades, has transformed the once dilapidated Glenmore House in Camden, NSW, into an oasis of restored colonial buildings and sprawling gardens. But while the cooler months may signal cosy mornings by the fire, things don’t slow down outside.

“Our winter gardening season is just as busy, if not more so, as the summer months,” Robertson says. “It’s time to prune fruit trees, roses and deciduous shrubs, and cut back perennials. In the kitchen garden, you’ll find me tying peas to their wigwams, making sure the broad beans are growing inside their frames and checking all is tickety-boo following the big autumn rotation.” This presents ample opportunity for gathering things to use in the kitchen. “The garden yields an abundance of special ingredients that no money can buy... Petals picked on a whim add pure joy. Calendula and nasturtiums are cool-season petals I like to add, and perhaps a viola here and there. Early winter sees self-sown seedlings proliferate... fennel, parsley, spinach and amaranth, seedlings to scatter over everything!”

But despite all this activity, Robertson is looking forward to a change in routine once the temperature drops. “Watering after breakfast in the morning sunlight to warm me through,” she says. “And collecting kindling to light the evening fire. I love the crisp, clear light. We’re more likely to take the time to go for a walk out in the paddocks or down in the creek, and to invite friends to call in. In that respect, winter does slow us down, in a beautiful kind of way.”

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AT HOME WITH...

Winter salad of fennel, clementine & radicchio with calendula petals (p 59)

RECIPE NOTE: “As I grow all the ingredients in the garden, I’m inclined to whip this up at the drop of a hat for a ‘fresh’ winter’s lunch on its own. You could also add little cubes of fried bread, or even a few strips of prosciutto, to make a more substantial dish.”



Pumpkin, apple & ginger soup

"This is another Glenmore House staple – a delicious, velvety winter warmer that delights the eyes as much as the tastebuds... and gobbles up our glut of romping pumpkins!"

"To drink, add a GOOD SLUG to a large glass of water. It's such a refreshing pick-me-up and so easily made. If you know someone with an elderflower shrub, they're bound to have enough to share!"

WINTER SALAD OF FENNEL, CLEMENTINE & RADICCHIO WITH CALENDULA PETALS

SERVE 8

- 300g radicchio leaves
- 3 clementines (or mandarins)
- 2 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp Dijon mustard
- 1 large (or 2 small) fennel bulbs, halved, thinly sliced
- Calendula flowers and small fennel sprouts, to serve (optional)

Tear radicchio leaves and soak in a large basin of iced water for 10 minutes, then drain and lay out on a clean tea towel to dry. Segment citrus over a bowl to catch the juice. Set segments aside, and squeeze the remaining fruit membrane over the bowl to get the maximum juice.

Measure out 2 tbs juice in a large bowl. Add oil and mustard. Season and stir to combine. Add radicchio leaves, fennel slices and citrus segments. Gently toss to coat.

Serve scattered with calendula petals and fennel sprouts, if using.

ELDERFLOWER CORDIAL

MAKES 2.1L

Begin this recipe a day ahead. You'll need sterilised bottles.

- 24 (approx.) large elderflower heads (from specialty greengrocers)
- Pared rind and juice of 3 unwaxed lemons
- 6 cups (1.5L) boiling water
- 900g white sugar
- 55g citric acid

Trim the flower heads from their stalks and place in a very large heatproof bowl with the lemon rind and juice. Pour over the boiling water and press down with a wooden spoon to submerge. Cover with a cloth and set aside for 24 hours.

The next day, strain liquid into a large saucepan, discarding the flowers and rind.



Elderflower cordial

Add the sugar and citric acid and stir over medium heat until the sugar dissolves.

Use a funnel to pour into sterilised bottles. Store in fridge for up to 2 months.

PUMPKIN, APPLE & GINGER SOUP

SERVES 6

- 1kg butternut pumpkin
- 50g unsalted butter
- 1 onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 4cm piece fresh ginger (20g), finely grated
- 1/2 tsp ground allspice
- 5 small (600g total) red apples, 3 peeled, cored, roughly chopped; 2 thinly sliced across the core
- 6 cups (1.5L) chicken stock
- Flat-leaf parsley leaves, to serve

Preheat oven to 200°C/180°C fan-forced. Place whole pumpkin on a baking tray and roast for 1 hour. Set aside to cool. Discard

skin and seeds, and cut flesh into chunks.

Melt 30g butter in a large saucepan over medium heat. Add the onion and garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, for 5 minutes or until soft and translucent. Season with salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper. Add the ginger and allspice and cook, stirring, for 1 minute.

Add the pumpkin and chopped apple and give a good stir again to coat. Cover and cook for 5 minutes. Add the stock, increase heat to high and bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low and simmer for 15 minutes or until pumpkin and apple are completely soft. Cool slightly and puree with a stick blender.

Close to serving, melt the remaining 20g butter in a large frypan over low heat and cook the apple slices, in batches, for 5 minutes on each side until slightly caramelised and just tender.

To serve, top bowls of soup with a slice or two of apple, and scatter with parsley.

AT HOME WITH...



MICKEY'S DECONSTRUCTED RHUBARB CRUMBLE

SERVES 6-8

You'll need a deep-sided baking dish.

12 (850g total) thick stalks rhubarb
Finely grated zest and juice of 1 orange
2 star anise
6 cardamom pods
2 tbs rapadura sugar

CRUMBLE

1/2 cup (75g) plain flour (or spelt flour)
40g caster sugar
1/4 cup (25g) almond meal
40g unsalted butter, softened
15g flaked almonds

Preheat oven to 190°C/170°C fan-forced.

Trim, wash and pat rhubarb dry, then cut into 4cm lengths and add to a deep-sided baking dish. Top with zest and juice. Add star anise, cardamom and sugar, then give a good stir to coat well.

Bake for 10-15 minutes until the rhubarb 'gives' when you push it gently with the base of a spoon. Remove star anise and cardamom pods and discard.

Meanwhile, to make the crumble, mix the flour, sugar and almond meal in a large bowl. With your fingers, rub the softened butter into the dry ingredients until the mixture forms a light breadcrumb texture. Transfer to a baking tray lined with baking paper, arranging the mixture in an even single layer. Bake for 5 minutes. Give a good shake, or swirl with a wooden spoon, and bake for another 5 minutes. Add the flaked almonds and bake for another 5 minutes until golden brown, but do not allow to burn.

To serve, spoon rhubarb into individual bowls and scatter generously with crumble.

FENNEL & SPELT BREAD

MAKES 1 LOAF

You'll need a 20cm cake pan.

320g spelt flour, plus extra, to dust
1 cup (160g) wholemeal flour
120g light rye flour
1 tbs fennel seeds
1 1/2 tsp instant dried yeast

Soft goat's cheese and fennel frond pistou (see recipe, p 63), to serve

Combine the flours, seeds, yeast and 2 tsp fine salt in the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the dough hook. Add 450ml water and stir until combined. Knead the dough on medium speed for 10 minutes. Cover the bowl with a tea towel and stand in a warm place for 1 hour.

Using a spatula, turn the dough onto a floured surface. Sprinkle with flour and knead with floured hands to form a ball. Line a 20cm cake pan with baking paper and place dough in prepared pan. Cover with the tea towel and stand in a warm place for 30 minutes.

Place a deep baking dish on the lower shelf of the oven and preheat oven to 240°C/220°C fan-forced.

Using a sharp knife, score dough several times. Place the pan on a shelf above the baking dish. Pour 2 cups (500ml) water into the hot baking dish. Bake bread for 45 minutes until well browned and crusty. Turn out and cool on a wire rack for at least 15 minutes. Serve thinly sliced, topped with cheese and pistou.



Mickey's deconstructed rhubarb crumble

RECIPE NOTE: *"The rhubarb is best served straight away, warm from the oven. The exquisite aroma will have filled the kitchen, making you impatient to dig straight in! But any leftovers are delicious with yoghurt for breakfast. I often make the crumble in advance and store it in a glass jar in the fridge. It keeps well and then only needs to be warmed before serving."*

AT HOME WITH...



**Chestnut flour, rosemary,
raisin & pine nut cake**

"Although I think of this as an ideal autumn/winter cake, I'm inclined to whip it up at short notice throughout the year. Moreish, it's perfect with a cuppa after a big gardening day."

FENNEL FROND PISTOU
MAKES 2 CUPS (460G)

300g roughly chopped fresh fennel fronds
3 small garlic cloves
1/4 cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil
1/3 cup (80ml) lemon juice

Roughly chop the fennel fronds (including stalks) and place in a food processor. Crush the garlic using the blade of a heavy knife and add to the processor with some salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper and the oil. Pulse until roughly chopped, then add the lemon juice and pulse a few times to combine (the consistency should be more wet than dry – not runny, but thick and luscious). Store in the fridge for up to 1 week.

**CHESTNUT FLOUR, ROSEMARY,
RAISIN & PINE NUT CAKE**

SERVES 14

You'll need a 20cm x 30cm slice pan

70g raisins
155g chestnut flour (from health food stores)
155g self-raising flour (or spelt flour, and add 2 tsp baking powder)
185g cold unsalted butter, chopped
300g rapadura or demerara sugar
1 1/4 cups (310ml) milk
1 egg
1 egg yolk
1 1/4 tsp bicarb soda
1 tbs rosemary leaves, or to taste
1/3 cup (50g) pine nuts

Soak the raisins in a small bowl, covered with warm water, for 30 minutes. Drain and lay out over paper towel to absorb excess moisture.

Preheat oven to 180°C/160°C fan-forced. Grease a 20cm x 30cm slice pan and line with baking paper.

Place flours, butter and 1/4 tsp salt flakes in a food processor and whiz until mixture looks like fine sand (if using spelt flour, add the baking powder at this stage). Add sugar and whiz until just combined. Add half the mixture to the prepared pan and press out evenly to edges, to form base of cake.



**Herbal tisane from
the garden**

"Sometimes, if a repeat flowering damask rose throws a late bloom at this time of year, I add one into the mix, just as I do when they're in spring flight!"

Whisk milk, egg, yolk and bicarb in a large bowl until well combined. Add remaining flour mixture and continue to whisk until incorporated. Stir through raisins. Pour over the base. Scatter with rosemary and pine nuts. Bake for 50 minutes or until a skewer inserted at centre comes out clean, loosely covering cake after 30 minutes with a sheet of baking paper to avoid over-browning. Cool in pan on a wire rack before serving.

**HERBAL TISANE
FROM THE GARDEN**

MAKES 1

2 stems lemon balm (from greengrocers)
2 sprigs thyme
Unsprayed damask rose petals (optional),
to serve

Boil a kettle and pour steaming water over herbs. Allow to infuse for 5-6 minutes, then strain into a cup. Top with rose petals, if using.

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