

A person wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark jeans with a studded belt is holding a bunch of rhubarb stalks. The stalks are dark red and have some small pink flowers at the top. The large green leaves of the rhubarb are at the bottom. The background is a blurred garden.

Scarvellli

Our Paddock to Plate

Clare Voitin

SCARVELLI

Our Paddock to Plate

Clare Voitin





CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	9
OUR FARM	15
The Farm	16
The Garden	21
Grow Your Own	23
Companion Planting	27
Clare's Five Top Tips	42
Home Remedies	46
The Field	51
The Meat	52
The Chooks	63
The Bees	75
OUR CAFE	85
The Cafe	86
The People	90
The Coffee	97
Maja's Top Tips	104
The Food	107
A Day in the Life of Josh	109
The Baking	121
OUR PHILOSOPHY	129
Sustainability	130
Eliminating Waste	132
Supporting Local	136
Preserves	147
10 Ways You Can Make a Difference	150
Our Message	155
Thank You	157
Index	158



A row of glass bottles sits on a wooden surface. The bottle in the foreground has a blue label that reads "RINSE & RETURN" and "BRITISH MADE". The background is a wall covered in a dense, sketchy pattern of many faces. The word "INTRODUCTION" is written in a bold, black, serif font across the middle of the image.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction

Coming up to 14 years ago, my husband, John, suggested that we take a trip to the Bellarine Peninsula. I've lived in Melbourne all my life, yet was in unfamiliar territory much past Geelong. The weather was perfect – the sort of day you love to embrace during winter.

Having crossed the West Gate Bridge and navigated busy traffic on the highway that connects Melbourne to Geelong, John offered to buy me a new pair of shoes – boots in fact. How could I say no?! He knew of a place that sold heaps of boots, he said.

We finally reach this 'shoe shop', which seemed to be in the middle of nowhere – it was called 'Mitre 10'. I thought he was joking! Without a word, he took me in and led me straight to the back of the store to the shoe section. John was right. They did sell boots – shelves of them. One style, two colours, and many different sizes.

John asked me to find the size that fit best and felt most comfortable. If you've ever owned gumboots, you would know that comfort is not the first thing you think of when wearing them. Whilst style, shape or heel height was not an option, I did have a choice of colour – green or black.

I chose black.

With my new boots in hand, and no idea where we were going, our next stop was Drysdale. I had barely heard of Drysdale, let alone knew anything about the area or what it had to offer. Taking day trips into the country wasn't something I did often (after all, I'm a city girl), so I had few expectations.

If you asked me to describe Drysdale I would have to say it's how you might perceive a gorgeous

sleepy hollow to be. There were a few shops, a handful of people in the streets that seemed to be in no rush, and the stock standard fire station and local watering hole. At the main roundabout in the middle of town were street signs directing traffic to boutique wineries, olive groves and other towns. The one thing that really caught my eye about Drysdale was the vast open rural spaces as far as the eye could see, stretching out to the other side of town.

Fortunately, John headed in that direction with the signs telling me that we were driving towards 'Swan Bay'. Gumboots in the back and still no idea where we were headed, we finally reached our destination. If I thought Drysdale was a sleepy hollow, Swan Bay appeared to be in hibernation.

Swan Bay, as I first saw it, was made up of open country space – green paddocks everywhere and established tree rows that I now know act as windbreaks and sheltered areas for animals. These green rural expanses had only a few dirt roads running through them, that I have since learned are not sealed because hardly anyone ever uses them.

John stopped at a farm gate, which appeared as though it hadn't been opened in years. The hinges were rusty, the gate crooked and the lock broken. To this day, I have no idea how he found this gate as there was no street signage or number to let us know where we were.

New boots on, jumping my first farm fence, we set off to explore.

My first impressions were lasting. I was in a place that was totally foreign to me but blew me away. We spent an hour or so walking around the block,

taking in every detail and noticing things that I would normally never take the time to observe; a palm tree in the middle of a paddock, surrounded by old, dead gums; a broken down shearing shed with a crooked hayshed to match and incredible water views looking out to the Heads. There was also an amazing old farmhouse, falling down around itself, that gave the place an extra bit of charm. Despite the weeds, overgrown grass and broken buildings, this felt like a small patch of paradise.

Looking back on that day, I can see that John had a plan. His idea was to build a farm and recreate his own childhood memories for the children that we didn't yet have. His hope was that I might find something romantic and appealing about the idea and that, with some luck, I would see the same vision as he and follow his dream.

John was raised in Melbourne, but has always had farming in his family and therefore in his heart and soul. The sum of my own farming endeavours consisted of two family holidays as a young kid. Whilst those holidays happened nearly four decades ago, they are, without a doubt, some of my most vivid and treasured memories with my family. Little did I know all those years ago that, one day, I would have my own flock of sheep, herds of cows, alpacas, horses, peacocks and become obsessed with different chook breeds.

Not only that, I am also the proud owner of farm boots, in my own choice of colour.

In the time that we've owned Swan Bay Farm, we've created a place that bears little resemblance to the place we bought all those years ago. We have created our own rural paradise that we visit on the weekends when we can sneak away from the city, and during the holidays. We've experienced great uplifting moments, and also endured many of the challenges most farmers face.

Our first major project was to plant out our driveway when I was 6 months pregnant with Nick, our first son. Never will I forget how amazing our hard work looked late Sunday afternoon when our tubestock trees were bagged up and complete. Almost 13 years later, those trees are over 20 metres tall, not one loss and lining up beautifully on either side to create the warmest welcome. Our driveway is still, to this day, one of my favourite features at Swan Bay Farm.

We love our eclectic mix of farm animals, and our family has played an active role in the rearing of our stock. Our boys have helped ewes deliver their newborns and successfully reared orphaned lambs. As we are not down at Swan Bay Farm full time, some of these orphaned lambs have spent the first few weeks of their lives raised in our suburban backyard in Balwyn.

John has a wealth of experience in farming practices and the boys and I have all embraced this learning with great enthusiasm. In fact, our family has learned many life lessons about hardship on the farm and we have learned to gratefully accept the good fortune as well as the bad.

I couldn't possibly trade this part of my life for anything. It has, without a doubt, become the foundation of our family and we are incredibly blessed to have Swan Bay Farm in our world.

Watching our boys embrace the teachings of the farm and nature, I've always felt the need to share their experiences with others. The city offers so much, yet I believe that we have a responsibility to teach the next generation the importance of embracing some rural values. It is crucial to encourage kids to learn more about the rural part of our country and, most importantly, helping to create a greater awareness about where our food actually comes from.

After my children were born, it seemed imperative that I find a way to combine the city and country. More importantly, I wanted to share these experiences with others that were potentially oblivious to another, simpler existence.

Two years ago, an opportunity came up that seemed to be fated. A way of combining my two loves and making them a part of my everyday world. Better still, there was a chance to share this passion of mine (and our family's) with others.

It was then that the seed of an idea was born in the form of Scarvelli.

Like nature, the concept didn't appear overnight – plant the seed, water it and see the fully established product next light. Scarvelli was one of those 'meant-to-be' plans that has successfully allowed us to create the connection between our Farm and the city, showcase some of our own grown food and share the experience of flavours, quality and freshness with our local community.

Every time we reach the front gate at Swan Bay Farm, I feel an overwhelming sense of 'coming home'. It was this same feeling that I was keen to create at Scarvelli – combining the mix of rural and urban – farming and suburbia – from paddock to plate.

Scarvelli was opened in 2013 with a strong focus on 'real' food and a commitment to outstanding coffee. Since this time, with the help of a dedicated young team, the Cafe has come along in leaps and bounds. We have expanded to create a beautiful courtyard area, perfect for all year round dining, and giving us the space to showcase some simple gardening principles, as well as create our own little kitchen garden. We are also now showcasing a homemade retail food range, with many of the ingredients grown down at Swan Bay Farm.

There seems to be a movement, quickly gathering

momentum, to create a greater awareness about where our food comes from. The reality of our world is that too much of our 'fresh' food is grown overseas in conditions that would appall even the most forgiving of people. Yet we are actively supporting this industry, simply because it appears that we have no other option.

At Scarvelli, our plan is to help reinforce this awareness within our community, and help others to embrace the concept of growing your own by serving up fresh, simple food in an everyday setting.

In this new age of information, more and more people are becoming enlightened through various media platforms about the below-standard international food growing practices. It has generated a desire for people to have a greater understanding and awareness of how and where our food is actually grown.

Many of us think that most of our fresh produce is local. Until recently, I certainly did. We are one of the most fertile, successful food growing countries in the world, with limitless expanses of land to grow food and grow it well. Unfortunately, for reasons that don't make a huge amount of practical sense, we export most of our own fresh produce for other countries to enjoy and import a sub-standard version of the same thing into Australia. For the life of me, I cannot understand why, nor can I quietly sit back and graciously accept this as something that 'just is'.

To change the world is never impossible, although for a suburban mother of three, it seems a little overwhelming at this point in my life. However, what does seem very feasible is to help create a strong awareness about real food, what it is and how we can all readily grow our own.

Whilst many may dream of their own acreage space, it's not necessary. A backyard, large or small,

is enough. Even a balcony or windowsill is a good place to start.

Consider this...

If every household in Australia grew just one fresh food item consistently all year round, how do you think that would impact on our big chain supermarkets? Further, if you shared the one fresh food item that you grew prolifically with your neighbours, who also had one fresh food item to share in return, what would that do to your food bill, to your health and to your relationship with your community?

If we then expand just a little on that one fresh food item in every backyard, windowsill or balcony, the possibilities become almost limitless. What about one fruit tree in every backyard in Australia? Imagine having ten different fruit trees growing in ten backyards within 50 metres from your home, all producing fresh, organic produce in quantities that would exceed the needs of those ten households? What would that do to your food bill? How would that impact on your health? Do you think you would enjoy a different, more positive sense of community connection as a result?

Think food swap...

There has never been a better time for us to really think about our food. We should stop settling for the fact that our beautiful Australian-grown ingredients are ending up overseas. We need to start making small changes at home to ensure that you and your family get easy, affordable access to the produce that you deserve.

I hope my journey can inspire you, the reader, to consider the foods you buy and consume and maybe even start to grow a few simple foods of your own. Who knows, you may just find a new passion in food growing, sharing and embracing your community.

Through this process, you may also find your food tastes better, your supermarket bill is just a little cheaper and you find the need to include gumboots in your shoe collection.





Our Message

Of all the sections in this book that I have had the pleasure of writing, this one was the most challenging. I know wholeheartedly what our message is, where our values lie and why we created Scarvelli in the first place. It wasn't until I sat back and re-read the collective efforts of our team that I realised everything had already been said. Our philosophy had successfully penetrated the wonderful minds of our core team at Scarvelli and one of the main functions of this book was to share that message with our wider community.

So let me paint a more concise picture of what makes us tick ...

What drives us at Scarvelli is building a strong sense of community – a community that believes our world is precious, and that we have an obligation to ensure we leave it in a better state for future generations. We can help achieve this by learning to become more sustainable and encouraging others to do the same.

We are also passionate about encouraging people to develop a greater awareness about where their food comes from. Our family has made this discovery through Swan Bay Farm and we believe that this message can be shared with our local community through Scarvelli, our real food cafe. Food is our fuel and good food is essential for our health and wellbeing. We believe that one of the most basic, yet fundamental ways you can become more in tune with the foods that you eat is to start growing your own. There are many benefits, and enjoying the fruits of your own labour will have a positive impact on you, your family and the environment.

Every time you walk through our door at Scarvelli, our focus is to create the ideal 'coming home' experience - a place where you can see for yourself that we do more than just serve food and coffee. I am very proud of our team – through their combined efforts, they have taken on and supported my own passion each day, to help deliver a positive experience for our customers.

As for my boys, I am grateful that you have shown me how important all of this is to you. Your enthusiasm has encouraged me to share this message beyond our own family. I am eternally thankful for that, simply because it is an idea that I believe is worth sharing...



Thank You

This book has taken me on an incredible journey. Never did I realise the magnitude of this project until the writing began. It has been a huge learning curve for me and could not have happened without the collective efforts of many special people.

First and foremost, my family – John, Nick, Matt and Jack – thank you for being sensational human beings. You keep life light-hearted for me and I am eternally grateful that we all love Swan Bay Farm as much as we do. As a ‘grown-up’, I know that these family experiences we are building together will become some of your fondest childhood memories. I couldn’t think of a better way to grow up.

Julie, Tim and your wonderful team – you have blown me away with this book. Your patience and support has been above and beyond and your friendship is golden. I look forward to working with you on book number two and beyond!

Andrew Griffiths – my self-appointed mentor. You are a true gentleman, a most generous giver and a superb human being. My deepest thanks to you for showing me what can be achieved through writing and persistence, and the art of saving every. single. thing.

I honestly believe I have the greatest ‘dream team’ working at Scarvelli. Not only have they been through the thick and thin of hospitality, they are all consummate professionals and I am proud to have them working with me.

Dannielle, you are why the place keeps ticking every day. Without you at the helm, Scarvelli’s door would not open as seamlessly as it does, 7 days a week. Thank you for all of your hard work.

Joshua, my genuine thanks to you for joining our team, embracing our paddock to plate ethos with

such enthusiasm, and graciously receiving my boxes of farm goodies with an open and creative mind.

Maja - the greatest barista in town! You put your heart and soul into your craft and there is never a moment you don’t make the perfect coffee. Every customer that walks through our door and staff member needing their regular fix appreciates your dedication – thank you.

Carlos, our favourite Colombian design and marketing guru – your loyalty, respect and professionalism always shines through in everything you do. My deepest thanks.

Caroline, without a doubt, this book would not exist without your 150% commitment, expertise and absolute insistence that this book be the best it can be. You have taught me so much through our work together on this project – my heartfelt thanks.

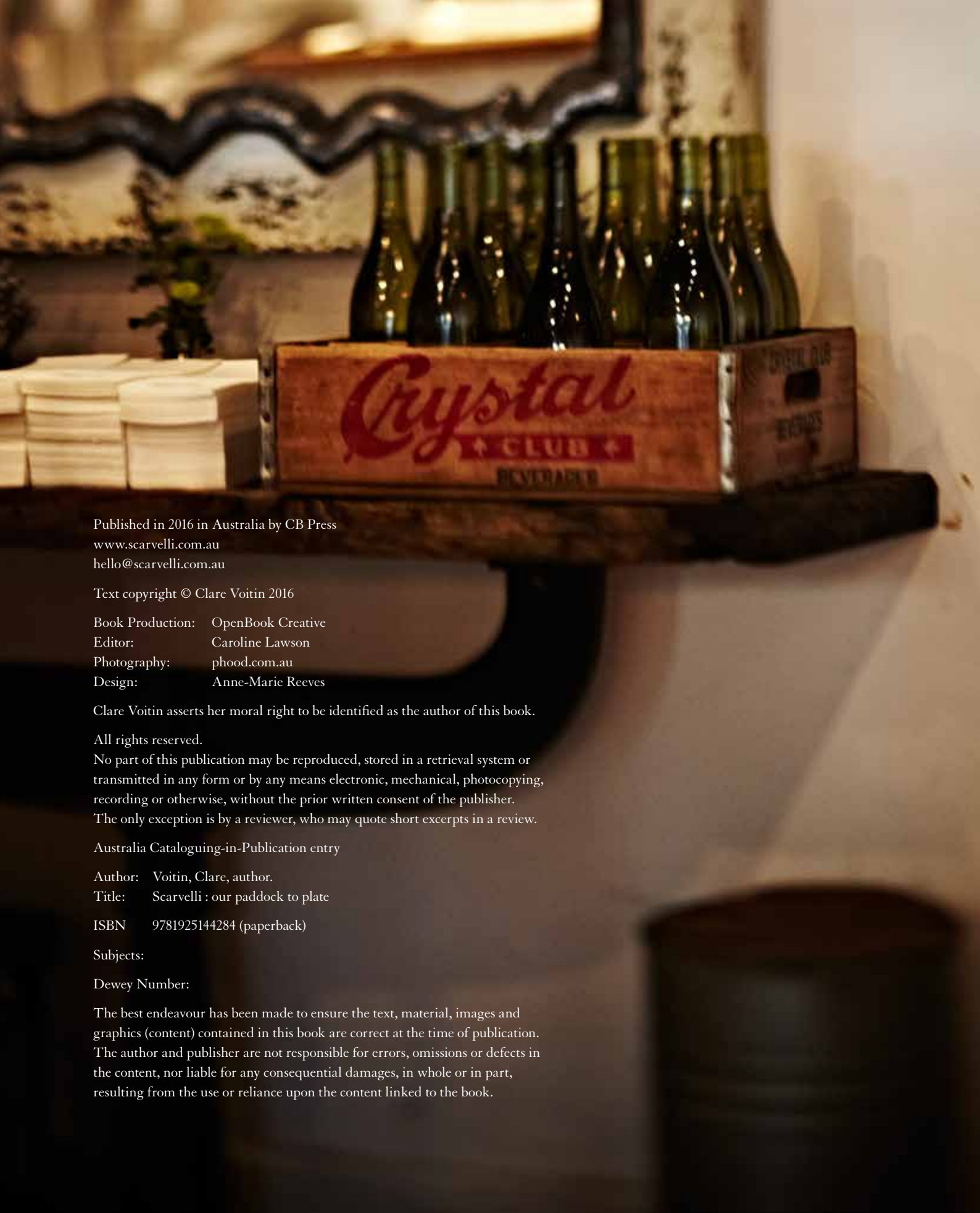
To all of our other loyal Scarvellians – Shiva (the Rock), Brittany (way too gorgeous!), Courtney (Dancing Queen), Sagar, Harry and Vishal – I think you’re all positively great.

Finally, to our wonderful customers – you are the reason why we are here. We love to hear your stories and share in your dramas. We know your families and consider you to be part of ours. The place cannot be successful without you. Genuine thanks for your ongoing support.

Clare x

Index

A						
Anything Goes' Pesto	31	Honey and Lime Rice Pudding	83	Pickled Cauliflower	149	
		Honey Glazed Carrots	82	Pickled Red Cabbage	149	
B		I		Pickled Zucchini	149	
Baking, The	122	Iced Frappe	103	Poached Fruit	40-41	
Basic Pickle Liquor	148	Instagram, Clare Voitin	72-73	Preserves	147	
Bees, The	76-78	Instagram, Scarvelli Cafe	144-145	R		
Blackened Chicken		Introduction	10-13	Reuben Sandwich	124	
with Quinoa and Herb Salad	67	J		Roasted Tomato Sauce	33	
Braised Lamb Shoulder	115	Josh's Pikelets with Raspberry		Russian Dressing	125	
C		Parfait and Chocolate Crumb		118-119	S	
Cafe, The	86-87	K		ShivaraJ's Mugu (Ko Daal)	93	
Chicken Stock	68	Ko Daal		93	Soda Bread	124
Chooks, The	63-64	L		Souvlaki	142	
Clare's Five Tips	42	Lamb and Potato Pie		143	Spiced Yoghurt Marinade	61
Classic Steak Marinade	61	Lamb with Roasted Root Vegetables			Spicy Tomato and Lentil Soup	35
Coffee and Fig Compote	102	and Fresh Green Leaves			Supporting Local	136-137
Coffee Grounds	134	Leftovers, Using		139	Sweet Potato, Spinach and	
Coffee, The	98-99	Lemon and Rosemary Marinade		60	Fetta Frittata	37
Companion Planting	27-29	Lemons in Home Remedies		48	Sustainability	130-131
E		M		T		
Eliminating Waste	132-133	Maja's Top Tips		104	10 Ways to Make a Difference	
F		Meat Marinades		60-61	and Be Sustainable	150-151
Farm, The	16-17	Meat, The		52-53	Thank You	157
Four Amazing Preserves	148-149	Medjool Date and Prana Chai Loaf		126	Tomatoes	32-35
G		O				
Garden Vegetable Slaw	30	Orange Peel		135		
Grow Your Own	23-25	Our Message		155		
H		Oven Dried Tomatoes		32		
Helen's Beef Curry	56	P				
Herb Crusted Rack of Lamb	55	Peanut Butter Cookies		127		
Homemade Mayonnaise	69	People, The		90-91		
Home Remedies	46-47	Pickled Beetroot		149		
Honeycomb	80					



Published in 2016 in Australia by CB Press
www.scarvelli.com.au
hello@scarvelli.com.au

Text copyright © Clare Voitin 2016

Book Production: OpenBook Creative
Editor: Caroline Lawson
Photography: phood.com.au
Design: Anne-Marie Reeves

Clare Voitin asserts her moral right to be identified as the author of this book.

All rights reserved.

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

The only exception is by a reviewer, who may quote short excerpts in a review.

Australia Cataloguing-in-Publication entry

Author: Voitin, Clare, author.
Title: Scarvelli : our paddock to plate

ISBN 9781925144284 (paperback)

Subjects:

Dewey Number:

The best endeavour has been made to ensure the text, material, images and graphics (content) contained in this book are correct at the time of publication. The author and publisher are not responsible for errors, omissions or defects in the content, nor liable for any consequential damages, in whole or in part, resulting from the use or reliance upon the content linked to the book.



‘All we ever really wanted was to master growing tomatoes... Once the tomatoes came, then we knew we wanted pumpkins... Now we’re trying to grow enough food to supply our suburban Melbourne cafe and deliver a seasonal menu, seven days a week.’

This book is a window into the world of sustainable farming, and a sneak peak into Melbourne cafe culture via our cafe Scarvelli. You will meet our Belted Galloways, our Dorper lambs and our Silky Bantams. You will get to know our staff, our patrons and our families. We want to share with you the pleasures of ethically grown, seasonal produce, and show you how Swan Bay Farm has come to mean so much for us. It is sacred to us. It is home.

From watching my Dad nurture a vegetable garden as a child, to raising orphaned lambs in our own Balwyn backyard, *Scarvelli: Our Paddock to Plate* is an insight into our adventure. In an attempt to change the way that we think about our food, this book is packed full of useful hints and innovative recipes designed to show you that fresh, local, and affordable produce can be right at your fingertips.

You don’t need your own farm or vast acreage. You don’t even need a backyard. All you need is a windowsill, a compost bin, and a desire to really get to know your food.

cbpress

RRP \$39.95

