



# THE HEALTHY CHER

PURELY DELICIOUS



My Ciocia and Wujek: Polish aunty and uncle

## MY PASSION FOR COOKING

I started learning how to cook with my Polish aunt (Ciocia) when I was about three or four. Ciocia and my uncle (Wujek) were my inspiration – through them, I began to find out about food in all its glory. They came to Australia from Poland, to set up a new life in Western Australia. Ciocia worked long hours at the local hospital but still managed to cook every day. Her food was quick, simple and nourishing and that no-fuss style of cooking has stayed with me ever since.

Wujek built a massive kitchen garden at the back of their property. The garden had a constant supply of fresh fruit and vegetables that would nourish them all year round. They also had a chook pen and the chickens provided fresh free-range eggs and meat for their chicken soups as well as fertiliser for their fruit and vegetable garden.

As well as being a great cook, Ciocia was an incredible baker. She would be mixing cakes by hand with a wooden spoon and churning out babka and sernik to feed our family and friends on a weekly basis. I can still remember watching with excitement and helping out in the kitchen. She would get me to sift flour, prepare all the ingredients and shape piroshki with my little fingers. In Ciocia's kitchen, I truly fell in love with cooking and there began my passion for delicious wholefoods made with love and care.

On my website **www.thehealthychef.com** I always talk about making food yourself and knowing what's in the food you eat. Still, to this day, cooking to me is about the essence of the ingredients that will nourish your body and be lovingly prepared by you, or someone who loves you.

I remember Ciocia used to make the best raw sauerkraut in town. The Polish community would flock from everywhere just to get a jar of this fermented miracle. She used to feed it to me regularly, to help build up my immune system and to make me stronger.

Wujek worked as a station-master on the railways and I often woke up super early to catch him making his breakfast before he started work. He would tear up a European style of rye bread into his enamel bowl, pour over freshly made espresso and steaming hot milk, then sweeten with a little honey. It was sort of like a hot porridge and I remember it tasted really good, especially on cold, frosty mornings.

Ciocia and Wujek bought me my first bike and taught me how to ride. They encouraged me to go riding with them after school – it was the best exercise. They had never owned a car and used to ride their bikes or walk everywhere. Both of them were still riding around in their late eighties. Their example inspired my love of bicycles and all things cycling.

Mum had come from Poland to live in Australia when she was 21 and was brought out by Ciocia and Wujek. Three months later she married my dad who is also Polish but came to Australia from Persia when he was eight years old. My mum was an artist back in Poland and she taught me how to paint and use colour, but in Australia she used to work at a nearby hotel and would always bring back recipes and cooking tips from the chefs who worked there. Mum would often test out the new recipes on our family, to see if we enjoyed them, and she gave me many cooking tips as she was cooking our dinner.

My dad was a MAD-keen fisherman. He taught me how to use a handline and fish for tailor and catch whiting with a rod off the beach, I knew how to scale and gut a fish and peel blue mannas before I was 10, and most weeknights I helped dad catch king prawns from the estuary with the drag net.

At 14, my first after-school and weekend part-time job was at a hot bread shop and it was awesome! I served customers and got to do the fun things like spreading the icing on the fresh-baked cinnamon buns, filling the doughnuts with jam and whipped cream and help make pumpkin scones and sausage rolls. The bakers would give me

all kinds of tips so I could go home and experiment. Baking came naturally to me. I was hooked and I loved it!

After finishing Year 12 at high school, I started my hospitality career working as a waiter at a newly built hotel. I had thoughts of being an artist like my mum but soon realised my career was in the kitchen cooking purely delicious food. And so, my hobby and my passion became my career.

I was quick and eager to learn as much as I could when I started my apprenticeship working in the fine-dining section of the five-star hotel. My job consisted of cooking all the hot and cold entrees, as well as designing the palate teaser for the night and assisting the sous chef with the plating of mains during service. I was also in charge of making some of the French-style sauces like hollandaise, béarnaise and beurre blanc.

The first six months were tough – actually the whole profession was tough! Most of the chefs were French and the (swear) word "Merde!" was commonly bounced off the walls, but I adored my job. Service was exciting and I would start my shifts super early just to get ahead and so I could watch the other chefs in action and learn as much as I could.

My passion for patisserie goods, baking and desserts was soon recognised and I was given the opportunity to run the fine-dining dessert kitchen where I would make all my own icecreams, truffles and desserts. I still remember my favourite strawberry shortcake. It was made of fine wafers of pâté sablée, layered with fresh strawberries and Chantilly cream and served with delicious coulis made from strawberries and a hint of raspberry, for that ruby-red finish.

The hard work paid off and I ended up winning Apprentice of the Year several times as well as a gold medal in the prestigious cooking competition, Salon Culinaire. I was very fortunate to have trained with some great chefs who were equally great teachers. Everything was made from scratch – nothing pre-prepared or brought in – the true essence of cooking in all its glory.

I have fond memories of the time I was working as a pastry chef at a newly built beachfront hotel in Perth. It was the best pastry kitchen you could ever imagine.

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# **IMMUNE BOOSTER**

Here's a simple immune-boosting smoothie to help revitalise the body when you're feeling stressed or run down. Carrots are packed full of vitamin A to promote healthy vision and support a happy immune system. Adding a hint of ginger and a little turmeric enhances the anti-inflammatory and immune-boosting properties of this drink.

1 small carrot, washed

1 orange, peeled

½ lemon, juiced

handful of ice

1 small slice of fresh ginger

1 cup water

1/4 teaspoon turmeric (powder or freshly grated) **COMBINE** all the ingredients in a high-performance blender.

**BLEND** until lovely, creamy and orange.

**SERVE** and enjoy.

Serves 2.

+ Notes and Inspiration

To mix it up, replace the carrot in this recipe with pineapple for a fruity twist.











## **GREEN POWER**

The power of leafy greens and chia combined with the aromatics of orange, lime and lemon. This smoothie boosts antioxidants, vitamins, minerals and omega-3. Green Power is rich in soluble fibre for healthy digestion. It also alkalises and energises the body and mind.

2 oranges, peeled

1 lime, peeled

½ lemon, peeled

large handful of baby spinach

small sprig of parsley

1 teaspoon chia seeds

2 cups water

 $\label{lem:combine} \textbf{COMBINE} \ \mbox{all the ingredients in a high-performance blender}.$ 

**BLEND** until smooth.

**SERVE** in glasses and enjoy.

Serves 2.

+ Notes and Inspiration

Add 1 teaspoon wheatgrass juice powder or matcha green tea.













## **MANGO LASSI**

This is a power-packed smoothie rich in probiotics, antioxidants and amino acids. Rich in branched chain amino acids (BCAAs) that can reduce fatigue and improve exercise performance, reduce muscle breakdown and facilitate healing.

1 mango, chopped

½ cup freshly squeezed orange juice

1 cup natural yoghurt

¼ teaspoon ground turmeric

1 teaspoon bee pollen handful of ice, to blend **COMBINE** all the ingredients in a high-performance blender.

**BLEND** until smooth, lush and creamy.

**ADD** a little water if necessary to adjust consistency.

**GARNISH** with a dusting of crushed pistachios and a little turmeric.

Serves 2.

## + Notes and Inspiration

I also love drinking this lassi with a frozen ripe banana in place of the mango. Enjoy topped with Healthy Chef Granola (see page 172) and fresh blueberry or pineapple for a purely delicious breakfast.











# BROCCOLI, SPINACH + QUINOA HASH WITH SUNNY-SIDE EGG

Scented with lime, chia and ginger aromatics, this yummy breakfast is full of superfood goodness. It's rich in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals for optimum health and vitality.

1 broccoli head, roughly chopped

1 tablespoon fresh ginger, grated

2 tablespoons olive oil

2 large handfuls of baby spinach

50 g (1 ¾ oz) quinoa, cooked pinch of sea salt

freshly cracked pepper

1 tablespoon lime juice

2 spring onions, finely sliced small bunch coriander (cilantro) leaves, chopped

1 teaspoon chia seeds

2 free-range/organic eggs

**SAUTÉ** the broccoli and ginger in a large pan for 2 minutes with olive oil.

**ADD** the spinach and toss through until just wilted.

ADD quinoa, season and heat through.

**SQUEEZE** over the lime juice and toss through spring onion, coriander and chia. Season to taste.

**REMOVE** from the heat and serve in bowls

**FRY** eggs, sunny-side up, until crisp and place over the top of each serve.

Serves 2.

+ Notes and Inspiration

Add 1 teaspoon of finely grated turmeric when sautéing the ginger.

Add a little sliced green chilli.











## BROWN RICE PORRIDGE + CHAI AROMATICS

This is a nourishing breakfast that helps promote energy and vitality. This porridge will keep you warm and cozy through cold winter months. Warming aromatics such as cinnamon and ginger make it absolutely irresistible.

1 cup cooked short-grain brown rice

1 cup milk (your choice – I like a combination of rice and coconut milk)

1 cinnamon stick

thin slice of fresh ginger

1 vanilla bean, split and seeds scraped or ½ teaspoon vanilla paste

1 teaspoon ground flaxseed/ linseed (optional)

a little honey, to serve

**COMBINE** brown rice, milk, cinnamon, ginger and vanilla in a pot.

**HEAT** gently and simmer for 10 minutes, adding a little extra milk if necessary. Your porridge should be creamy.

**SERVE** alone or topped with flaxseed, stewed fruits, honey and extra hot milk.

Serves 2.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Add 1–2 star anise cloves if making larger quantities.

Serve with hot milk on the side.

Top with poached pear or poached Persian figs.











## GLUTEN-FREE BANANA BREAD

This gluten-free version is yummy on its own or topped with a little ricotta and honey. You'll find this version to be a nice change from typical store-bought and café-style banana breads that are generally high in refined white flour, sugar and saturated fats. I love using macadamia nut oil when baking. It's a delicious source of monounsaturated fats that help support good health.

 $300 g (10 \frac{1}{2} oz)$  ripe banana, smashed

*3 free-range eggs* 

60 g (2 oz) honey or organic maple syrup

60 ml (2 fl oz) macadamia nut oil

1 teaspoon vanilla essence

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

½ teaspoon bicarbonate of soda (baking soda)

1 tablespoon lemon juice

200 g (7 oz) almond meal

25 g (4/5 oz) ground flaxseed (linseed)

**PREHEAT** your oven to 160°C (320°F).

**COMBINE** smashed banana, eggs, honey, oil, vanilla, cinnamon, bicarbonate of soda and lemon juice (the lemon activates the bicarb).

ADD the almond meal and flaxseed and mix well.

**LINE** a loaf tin 26 x 10  $\frac{1}{2}$  cm (10 x 4 inches).

**SPOON** banana bread mixture into the tin.

**BAKE** for 45 minutes to 1 hour (a skewer inserted into the centre should come out dry when cooked through).

Note: Cover the tin with foil if bread is over-browning while baking.

**REMOVE** from the oven and allow to cool before turning out the loaf. Keeps in the fridge, covered, for up to 1 week.

Makes 1 loaf.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Serve with ricotta and honey.

Serve simply toasted and enjoy with a cup of lemon tea.

I like to decorate the top of my banana bread before baking with sliced banana or a handful of chopped walnuts and a light sprinkle of cinnamon.













## SPELT + HONEY SCONES

Here is a wonderful and healthy scone recipe that is simple to bake and really delicious. I love using 100 per cent wholemeal spelt flour in this recipe as it gives a devine crumb and delightful wholesome flavour when you bite into it. The rolled oats add another layer of texture and goodness and are perfect married with the honey, cinnamon and vanilla. Spelt has a lower gluten content than wheat flour so it's kinder to the digestive system for people with sensitivities to wheat. It's a good source of protein and has around 20 per cent more protein and up to 65 per cent more amino acids than traditional wheat flours.

240 g (8 ½ oz / 2 cups) wholemeal spelt flour

3 teaspoons baking powder

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

100 g (3 ½ oz) butter

1 teaspoon vanilla bean paste

1 tablespoon raw honey or maple

125 ml (4 fl oz / ½ cup) your choice of milk (dairy, nut, oat or rice)

100 g (3 ½ oz / 1 cup) fresh-pitted dates cut into chunks

100 g (3 ½ oz / 1 cup) rolled oats

**PREHEAT** your oven to 180°C fan-forced (360°F).

**COMBINE** spelt flour, baking powder and cinnamon.

**RUB** in the butter gently using your fingertips or a food processor.

**COMBINE** vanilla, honey and milk in a separate bowl, then pour into the dry ingredients.

**ADD** the dates.

MIX lightly to form a soft dough.

**SPRINKLE** with oats so that it coats the entire scone dough.

**FLATTEN** the dough onto a working surface lightly dusted with spelt flour if needed.

**CUT** into rounds and place onto a baking tray.

**BRUSH** tops with a little extra milk or egg wash.

**BAKE** for 20 – 25 minutes until golden.

**SERVE** warm or at room temperature and enjoy.

Makes 12 scones.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Serve with Strawberry + Vanilla Jam (see page 486).









## GREEN MINESTRONE

I absolutely love eating this vegetable minestrone, not only because it tastes so fantastic, but because I can instantly feel the greeny goodness and the body benefits. I enjoy it straight from the pot and often top it with chopped avocado and a generous drizzle of salsa verde.

1 large leek, sliced

2 celery stalks, cut into small chunks

1 litre (35 fl oz) vegetable stock

2 zucchinis (courgette), cut into small chunks

1 large green capsicum (bell pepper), cut into chunks

100 g (3 ½ oz) flat-leaf cavolo nero or kale, finely chopped

250 g (8 oz) peas

Basic Pesto (see page 483), to serve

**SAUTÉ** the leek and celery in a large saucepan over a low heat for 2 minutes until soft.

**ADD** the stock, zucchini, capsicum and cavolo nero.

**SIMMER** over a gentle heat for 10 minutes.

**ADD** the peas.

**SIMMER** for another 3 minutes.

**SEASON** with freshly ground white pepper if required.

**LADLE** the green minestrone into serving bowls.

**SERVE** with pesto and generous amounts of parmesan.

Serves 4.

+ Notes and Inspiration

Minestrone will keep in the refrigerator for up to 3 days.











## SUPERFOOD GREEN TABOULI

The health benefits of this tabouli rock! The broccoli is full of an alkalising, anti-inflammatory and anti-cancer phytonutrient called sulforaphane, that works to support optimum health and protect against disease. Pistachios are high in the minerals potassium and magnesium which help nourish the nervous system when under stress. Avocado is heart-healthy, anti-inflammatory to the body, can nourish the immune system and reduce symptoms of arthritis and depression. The lime and black pepper help aid digestion and the goji berries add extra antioxidants and a lovely hint of sweetness that I relish in this salad.

 $350 g (11 \frac{1}{2} oz)$  raw broccoli (1 large head)

6 spring onions, finely diced

100 g (3 ½ oz) parsley (1 large bunch), chopped

100 g (3 ½ oz) mint (1 large bunch), chopped

½ avocado, chopped

20 g (¾ oz) pumpkin seeds

50 g (1 ¾ oz) pistachios, roughly chopped

100 g (3 ½ oz) baby spinach leaves

juice from 3 limes or 2 lemons

1 tablespoon cold-pressed olive oil or flaxseed (linseed) oil

30 g (1 oz) goji berries

generous amount of black pepper

pinch of sea salt

**CHOP** the raw broccoli as fine as you can with a large knife. I also use the stalks of the broccoli, but trim the tough outer layer before I chop. You can also do this quickly in a food processor.

**COMBINE** the raw broccoli with the spring onions, parsley, mint, avocado, pumpkin seeds, pistachios, spinach, lime juice, olive oil, goji, black pepper and sea salt in a large bowl.

MIX well until combined.

**TASTE** and adjust if necessary.

**DIVIDE** between serving bowls and enjoy.

Serves 4.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Add 1–2 tablespoons of pomegranate molasses to the dressing.

Add a few handfuls of raw green sprouts.

Toss in 1–2 teaspoons chia seeds for added omega-3 and fibre benefits.













## SALMON BURGERS

A salmon burger is probably one of my favourite meals to make at home, mainly because it's simple to prepare and can be accompanied by a quick salad or steamed or roasted vegetables after I finish work. I often serve my burgers with smashed green peas or roasted carrot and parsnip chips.

500 g (16 oz) fresh skinless and boneless salmon fillet, chopped

2 spring onions (scallions), sliced

small bunch of parsley, chopped

1 lemon, juice and zest

1 free-range egg

pinch of sea salt

 $50 g (1 \frac{3}{4} \text{ oz}) \text{ almond meal}$  to coat (optional)

**COMBINE** the salmon, spring onion, parsley, lemon juice and zest, egg and salt in a food processor.

**PROCESS** until just combined.

**REMOVE** and shape into 8 burger patties then coat with almond meal.

**REST** in the fridge for 15 minutes.

**COOK** the burgers in a pan over a low to medium heat with a splash of olive oil until crisp, golden and cooked through.

**SERVE** and enjoy.

Serves 4.

+ Notes and Inspiration \_\_\_

Serve with roasted parsnip and carrot chips.











## **ZUCCHINI LINGUINI** + SUPER GREEN PESTO

What I love about this dish is that you can enjoy zucchini linguini raw or lightly heated through. The pesto slightly softens the zucchini as the aromatics penetrate right through and you end up with a glorious plate of deliciousness that is irresistible.

#### PESTO

2 parsley bunches, roughly chopped

2 basil bunches, r oughly chopped

1 raw garlic clove

40 g (1 ½ oz) roasted pine nuts

2–3 tablespoons lemon juice

generous amount of ground black pepper

generous pinch of sea salt

15 g (3/5 oz) parmesan, grated (optional)

4 tablespoons cold-pressed olive oil

#### LINGUINI

1 kg (32 oz) zucchini (courgette)

100 g (3 ½ oz) baby spinach leaves

#### To make pesto:

**COMBINE** the parsley, basil and garlic in a food processor.

**PROCESS** until the herbs have been roughly chopped.

ADD the pine nuts, lemon juice, pepper, salt, parmesan and olive oil.

**PROCESS** again until your mixture forms a lovely chunky green paste.

#### To make linguini:

**SLICE** the zucchini into linguini using a mandoline.

**PLACE** into a large mixing bowl. Add the pesto and lightly mix making sure all the zucchini linguini are covered by the pesto. The zucchini will soften slightly and taste amazing. Mix in spinach leaves.

**SERVE** topped with finely grated parmesan and enjoy.

Serves 4.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Store pesto in a glass jar in the refrigerator and use as needed for up to 1 week.

Saute linguini in a pan for 1 minute if you want to devour this dish warm.

Top with slow-cooked bolognese or organic meatballs.











## KALE, SPINACH + FETA PIE

This is a delicious meal that I often make for my weekday dinner or as a portable healthy lunch. Preparation is effortless and the final result is beautiful – the fresh subtle flavours of green dance in your mouth. I like to serve mine with a large garden salad made simply of leaves from a variety of lettuce types, tossed by hand ever so lightly and drizzled with French-style dressing just before serving.

2 leeks, washed and finely sliced

1 tablespoon olive oil

1 bunch kale or cavolo nero, washed, trimmed and finely shredded

200 g (7 oz) baby spinach leaves

generous pinch of black pepper

zest of 1 lemon

1 parsley bunch, chopped

6 free-range eggs

80 g (2 ¾ oz) quality feta small handful of pine nuts COMBINE PREHEAT oven to 180°C (360°F).

**SAUTÉ** leeks in oil in a large heavy-based pot until softened.

**ADD** shredded kale and cook through for 5 minutes until soft and wilted.

**ADD** baby spinach leaves. You may need to add this in two lots and cook through until just wilted.

**SEASON** with black pepper and add lemon zest and parsley.

**SPOON** the kale and spinach mixture into a 22 cm (9 inch) pie dish.

BREAK eggs into a bowl and whisk lightly until combined.

**POUR** the eggs over the greens and gently incorporate through the mix of green goodness.

**CRUMBLE** the feta and sprinkle pine nuts over the top.

**BAKE** for 40–45 minutes or until firm to touch and golden.

**REMOVE** from the oven and rest for 5 minutes before serving.

Serves 2.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Use ricotta in place of feta.









## APPLE CRUMBLE

I adore apple-based desserts and this is one of my favourites. Make sure to use lovely naturally sweet apples in this recipe. My favourites are Golden Delicious or good sweet red apple varieties.

6 medium-sized apples (approximately 1 kg) – Pink Lady, Fuji apple or Golden Delicious are great choices

1 cup 100 per cent apple juice

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

1/4 teaspoon ground cinnamon

**CRUMBLE TOPPING** 

150 g (5 ¼ oz) rolled organic oats

50 g (1 ¾ oz) organic desiccated or flaked coconut

½ teaspoon ground cinnamon

1 teaspoon vanilla extract or paste

3 tablespoons butter

3 tablespoons organic maple syrup

**WASH** the apples and cut into wedges, leaving the skin on. Make sure to remove the core.

**PLACE** the apples into a large heavy-based pot and combine with the apple juice, vanilla and cinnamon.

**COOK** over a medium to low heat for about 20–30 minutes, stirring occasionally until the apples have completely softened and collapsed. I like to cover the pot for the first 10 minutes of cooking, which allows for more liquid to be released from the apples and helps to keep them moist.

**REMOVE** the lid for the last 10 minutes of cooking – it will help some of the excess moisture evaporate. Your apples are now ready.

#### To make crumble topping:

**COMBINE** rolled oats, coconut, cinnamon, vanilla and butter and rub through.

**ADD** maple syrup and combine until mixed through and crumbly.

**PREHEAT** your oven to 160°C (315°F).

**PILE** your apple mixture into a suitably sized pie or baking dish.

**SCATTER** the crumble over the top.

**BAKE** for 30 minutes or until the crumble is golden.

**REMOVE** from the oven and serve alone or with your choice of custard, yoghurt or cream.

Serves 6.

#### + Notes and Inspiration

Add a handful of raspberries or blueberries to the apple before filling your pie dish.

Swap apples with pears.









## HEALTHY CARROT CAKE

When baking gluten-free cakes, I find ground almonds are great. They make everything so yummy and moist, plus they are packed with protein and vitamin E. I've used a cold-pressed macadamia nut oil in this recipe as it gives this cake a luxurious flavour.

CARROT CAKE

500 g (16 oz) raw carrots, grated

*3 free-range eggs* 

2 teaspoons vanilla extract

2 teaspoons cinnamon

½ teaspoon nutmeg

300 g (10 ½ oz) almond meal

60 ml (2 fl oz) macadamia nut or olive oil

160 g (5 2/3 oz) organic maple syrup or honey

1 cup raisins

2 teaspoons gluten-free baking powder

VANILLA FROSTING

250 g (8 oz) quark, homemade labna or traditional cream cheese

2 tablespoons honey

1 teaspoon vanilla paste

#### To make cake:

**PREHEAT** your oven to 160°C (320°F).

**COMBINE** carrot, eggs, vanilla, cinnamon, nutmeg, almond meal, oil, honey, raisins and baking powder in a large bowl.

MIX well by hand until combined.

**POUR** into a prepared 20 cm (9 inch) baking tin.

**BAKE** for 1–1½ hours or until cooked through. Cover if necessary with foil.

**REMOVE** from the oven and allow to cool completely in the tin then turn out.

#### To make vanilla frosting:

**COMBINE** quark, honey and vanilla in a bowl and mix with a whisk or wooden spoon into a smooth delicious frosting.

**SPREAD** over cake and enjoy.

Serves 16.

### + Notes and Inspiration

Thick Greek-style yoghurt is also a lovely topping for this cake – drizzle with honey and garnish with roasted walnuts.

Keeps in the refrigerator for up to 4 days.













## THANK YOU

I'm so excited to finally bring out the cookbook I've always wanted to create! This healthy cookbook is full of my favorite recipes that I love to cook and that make me feel nourished every day. Whether you're gluten free, sugar free, vegetarian or just want to eat pure natural whole food that's good for you – there is something here for everyone.

This book has been years in the making and I could not have done it without the support of my darling husband, Paul. Every recipe you see in this book has been taste-tested and photographed by him. Paul, your photography is beautiful – you give life to my food and your passion and creativity shines through the pages.

Huge thanks to Crystal Dempsey our project manager and food aficionado who keeps me on track and organised as well as bringing endless inspiration into our office every morning! This book would not have been written without your support, dedication and hard work.

Thank you to Laura Bollen, our Healthy Chef dietitian, who was instrumental in the nutritional research of the health benefits in this book. I love your sensible and realistic approach to health and wellness that helps so many people.

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I'm so lucky to have a great team on board to bring my vision and inspiration to life. Thanks to everyone.

Teresa Cutter

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