

# Luscious Port to Plate

## Local seafood recipe book

BY TINA IRVING

FROM a rare place in the world where seafood connects families and community, *Port to Plate Port Stephens* brings so much more to the table than just a satisfying taste of the sea.

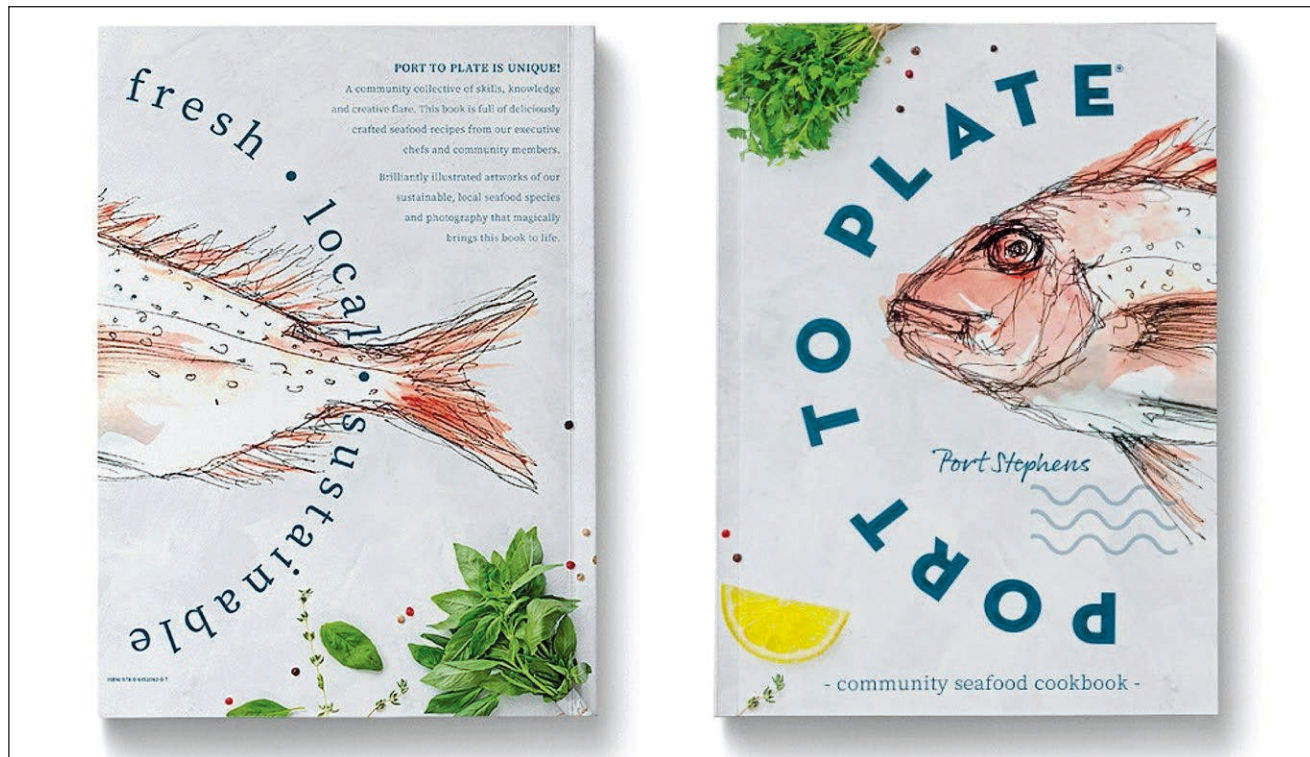
This extraordinarily beautiful, one-of-a-kind compilation of recipes and stories shared represents one coastal community's journey home together, to the heritage of fresh local seafood that runs deep in local fishing families, gifted artists and celebrated chefs, down the generations.

Lynda Sloan is the local powerhouse at the heart of the project. Her chats with customers over the counter of the portside seafood shop she worked in, birthed a whole new publishing career, "because people hunger to know more about local fish species and crave an authentic taste of coastal village culture while indulging their appetites for the fresh local catch."

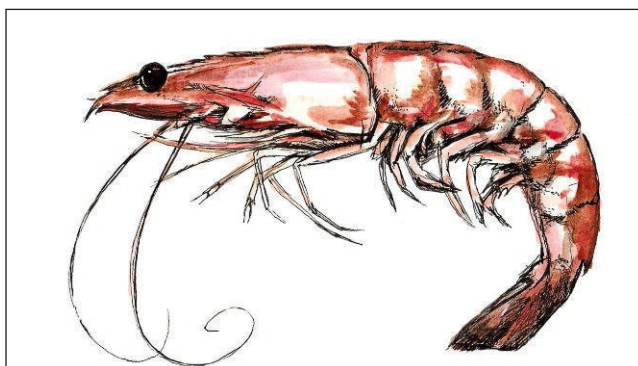
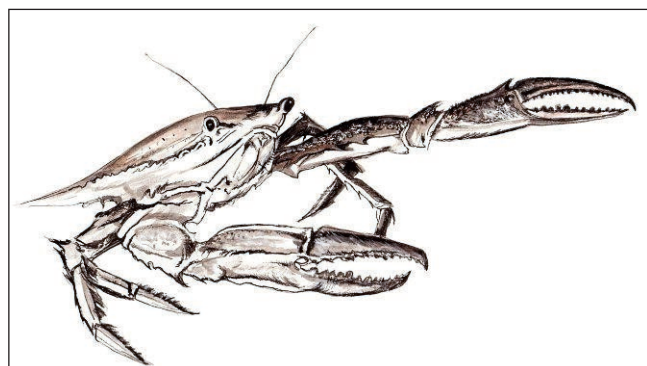
In Lynda's experience, food source and sustainability matter to people and every customer wants to know what's been fished from the Port that morning.

"I found myself educating them on the seasonal nature of various fish species to help them understand why the local catch will vary from day to day," Lynda says.

"While people like the idea of fresh caught local



The front and back cover of Port to Plate Port Stephens and below, some of the illustrations inside of it.



species, most stick to familiar fish like salmon, barra or flathead, simply because they don't know what to do with anything else."

This was Lynda's motivation for sounding out local fishers and oyster growers for local industry knowledge.

"My vision was for *Port to Plate* is open people's eyes to the absolute abundance in our oceans and whet their appetite for experiencing more of that for themselves, by sharing local knowledge."

*Port to Plate Port Stephens* celebrates the fascinating

nature, and natural flavours, of local fish species, crustaceans and molluscs. Locals who live and breathe fresh seafood walk the home cook through taking it from port to plate without a rubbery result. Recipes (there are more than 40 to try), don't set out to replicate the perfection the region's passionate chefs plate up. As reflected in the simply styled food photography, the focus is appreciating the delicious simplicity of home-style seafood, with minimal prep-time once you have a handle on how.

The pleasures of seafood done simply have a fond place in Lynda's childhood memories of family life in a tiny New Zealand fishing town.

"We'd nag Mum for a snack and she'd send us down to the beach to fill a bucket with Tua Tua, like large pipis. Plunged into piping hot water and splashed with vinegar, we couldn't have been happier slurping them straight from the shell."

It was love at first sight when she stopped in at Port Stephens on a drive up

the NSW North Coast from country Victoria.

"Seeing all the fishing families come in on their trawlers, I felt I'd come home. Before I'd even finished the drive back to Victoria I'd bought a place here and I've never looked back."

The 24 trawlers that once fished Port Stephens have diminished to just three, and preserving that food heritage is an important aspect of what Lynda has set out to do with her book. A focus on lesser known sustainable local species like ocean

jacket, mullet and luderick will get you thinking about new ways to enjoy more fresh local seafood.

"Our amazing local chefs have loved sharing their love affair with the local catch," Lynda says.

"I'm working my way through every recipe from cover to cover and my current favourite is the Steamed Green King Prawns with Hot Ginger Oil shared by Renee from the Chinese restaurant at Salamander Bay. You can throw it together in just 15 minutes and it's oh so delicious! I've tried it successfully with a few different fish. I can also vouch for the Butter Cream and Yellow Curry Mud Crab sauce being simply used over crisp veggies or blue swimmer crab."

An arsenal of local artists have happily given their time to the project. Ileana Clark contributed delicate water-colours, surfer-turned-artist Kerrie Tobin brings fish species to life with a wonderful sense of movement, colour bursts by Megan Barass are composite paintings of multiple perspectives captured photographically, and Linda Greedy's love of local environment shines through in detail sketches that introduce each species.

Lynda's hope is that the online shopfront will evolve into a platform for local artisans who have a synergy with the brand, alongside Port to Plate linens and other merchandise. Charities will benefit from the proceeds, such as Stay Afloat, who support the mental health of local fishers, and Ocean Watch, dedicated to seeing that Australia's marine environment is valued.

Buy the book online for \$64.95 softcover or \$89.95 hardcover at [porttoplate.com.au](http://porttoplate.com.au)

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