

# OPEN MIKE

The kitchen garden comes to the dining table at Sydney's Kitchen by Mike. Let chef Mike McEneaney give you a taste of his philosophy with this lush spring lunch.

RECIPES MIKE McENEANEY WORDS MAYA KERTHYASA PHOTOGRAPHY WILLIAM MEPPEN  
FOOD STYLING EMMA KNOWLES STYLING KIRSTEN BOOKALLIL & EMMA KNOWLES



## TABLE SETTING

Breadboard, vintage green glasses, green olive bowl and blue tumbler all from The Bay Tree. Grey carafe from Chee Soon & Fitzgerald. Stack of grey plates from Mud Australia. Vintage Jar from Doug Up

on Bourke. Villeroy & Boch cutlery from David Jones. Champagne flutes from Becker Minty. Concrete pots (with succulents) from Sweet Pea Floral Design. Linen runner from Crave Wares. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p207

## GARDEN PARTY

Mike McEneaney in the garden at Kitchen by Mike in Sydney's Rosebery.

**M**ike McEneaney wants you to eat more oregano. “It’ll rid your stomach of parasites,” he says, “but most people wouldn’t know that.” In fact, he wants you to eat more medicinal herbs on the whole, which is why he’s planted a whole garden of them at Kitchen by Mike, the canteen-restaurant he runs at Rosebery in Sydney’s inner south. “A lot of these herbs are in everyday life,” he says, “but what people don’t realise is there are actually benefits in these things.”

McEneaney’s interest in herbs was sparked when he moved to the UK in 2009 – around about the same time he decided to swap a career in fine-dining (he headed the kitchen at Rockpool and a slew of London’s top restaurants over a period of two decades) for a simpler life in the countryside. He switched his focus to baking, hand-kneading 30 kilos of sourdough twice a week and baking it in a handmade brick oven on his mother-in-law’s organic farm. The herbs, meanwhile, came into the picture via the neighbourhood white witch (of course!) and her Hippocratic garden, which was organised by the sanguine, melancholic, choleric and phlegmatic humours of the body.

“I got to know this garden and I thought, wow, this is great, I know all these herbs, they’re all culinary herbs with medicinal benefit, this is amazing.”

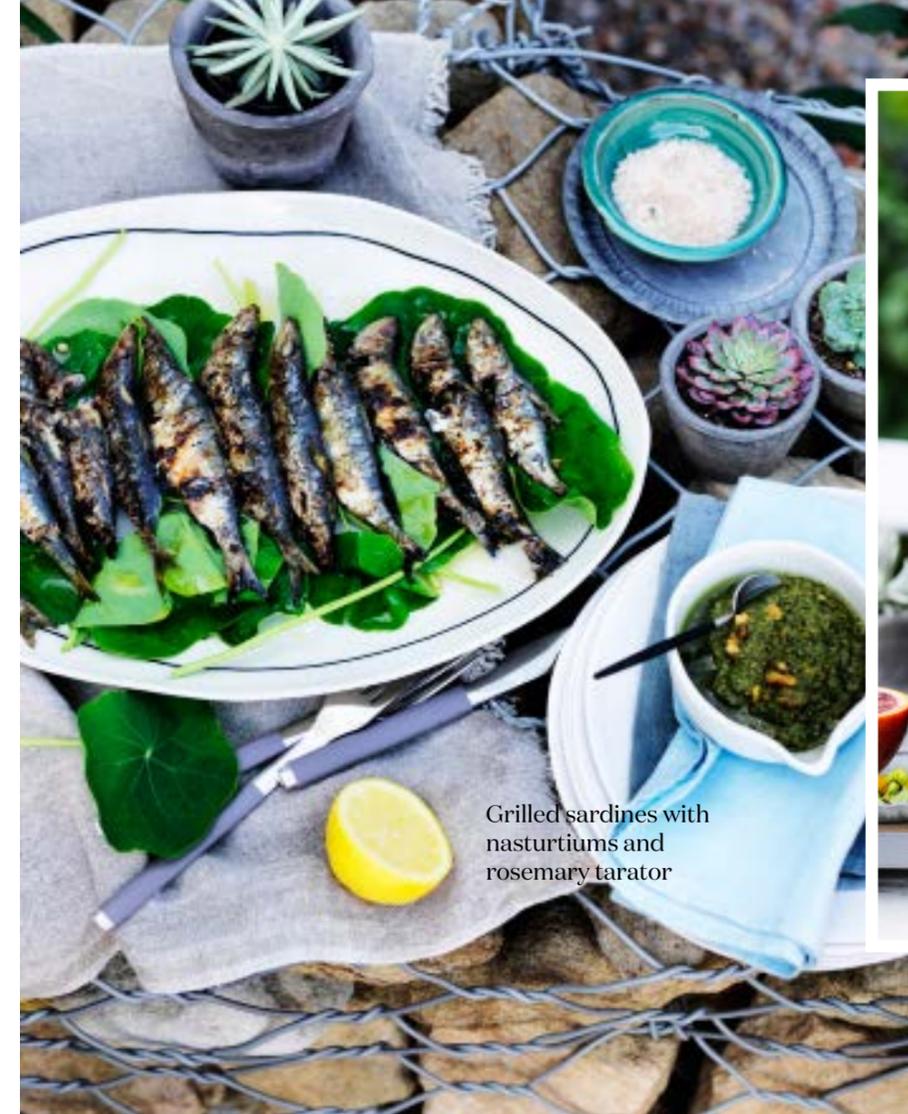
McEneaney returned to Sydney a changed chef. “What I realised is that my 20-odd years of cooking was not about how I put it on a plate, it’s not about the fancy cutlery, it’s not about the tablecloths or the waiters dressed up in fancy outfits – it’s about the food.”

In 2012 he opened Kitchen by Mike which, much to his surprise, was an instant smash. “I never thought it would be this busy,” he says, “Rosebery is a place where, not so long ago, you used to do your learner’s parking tests, and practise reverse-parking and three-point turns.”

Today, people come from all parts of the city for a taste of McEneaney’s bright, honest food. This month he’s written for us a menu of easy, breezy party recipes designed to be savoured in the great outdoors. He keeps it simple – “my whole thing is whole food, seasonal, fresh and cooked minutes before eating it” – and he wants you to make the most of your garden’s bounty, too. “Try and use something from the garden as a focal point,” he says. “People like to think that they can relate to what they’re eating.”

Rest assured, he’s thrown plenty of healing herbs in for good measure. “I’m not trying to preach to the converted; I’m just letting people know that everyday food is healthy.” *Kitchen by Mike, 1/85 Dunning Ave, Rosebery, NSW, (02) 9045 0910, kitchenbymike.com.au*

**SARDINES** Joscelyn Best platter and small jug. Succulent pots from Sweet Pea Floral Design. Green bowl and linen runner from The Bay Tree. Stack of white plates from White Home. Villeroy & Boch cutlery from David Jones.  
**FIREBALL** Grey painted board and small blue glass from The Bay Tree. Blue tumblers (stacked) from Crave Wares. Clear tumbler from Chefs’ Warehouse. All other props stylist’s own. Stockists p207.



Grilled sardines with nasturtiums and rosemary tarator



Citrus, Oregano and Habanero Fireball

## MIKE’S ALFRESCO LUNCH

### + Citrus, Oregano and Habanero Fireball

### + Grilled sardines with nasturtiums and rosemary tarator

### + Baked artichokes with citrus and herb salad

### + Slow-roast duck with quinoa, saffron and olives

### + Baked ricotta with asparagus, pea and chamomile salad

### + Pot-set yoghurt with lemon verbena and blueberries

### + Pineapple, kombucha and mint ices

### Citrus, Oregano and Habanero Fireball

“This drink is very versatile,” says McEneaney. “Served at room temperature first thing, it’s a morning kick-start. The chilli is great for circulation and digestion. Use different kinds of citrus in season. At Kitchen by Mike, we use a cold-press juicer, because the juice doesn’t heat up and separate, but a regular juicer will do.”

**Prep time 5 mins**

**Serves 6-8**

- 4 blood oranges, coarsely chopped
- 2 tbsp (firmly packed) oregano
- ½ habanero chilli

**1** Juice all the ingredients in a juicer, pour into a jug and serve over ice

### Grilled sardines with nasturtiums and rosemary tarator

“Rosemary will aid poor concentration and memory, headaches and anxiety,” says McEneaney. “Walnuts are high in fibre, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory. I soak all nuts in water before I use them to make them more digestible.”

**Prep time 30 mins, cook 5 mins (plus softening)**

**Serves 6-8 as a starter**

- 12 whole sardines
- 65 gm preserved lemon rind, rinsed and diced
- 60 gm raisins, coarsely chopped

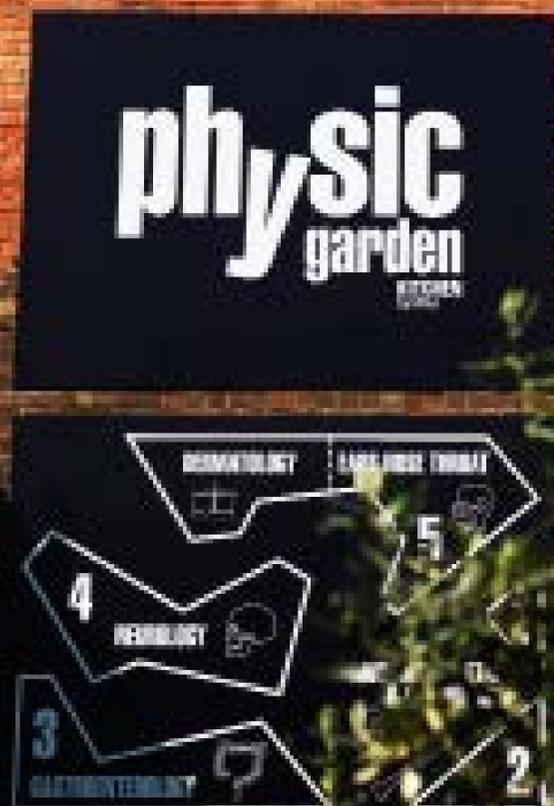
- ½ cup each (firmly packed) mint, flat-leaf parsley and dill, finely chopped
- Olive oil, for brushing
- Nasturtium leaves, to serve (see note)

### Rosemary tarator

- 50 gm sourdough bread, crusts removed, coarsely torn
- 20 gm walnuts
- 50 ml milk
- 1 hard-boiled egg, coarsely crumbled
- ½ cup each (firmly packed) rosemary, mint and flat-leaf parsley
- ½ cup coarsely chopped chives
- ¼ cup (firmly packed) tarragon
- 2 tsp baby salted capers, rinsed and drained well
- 4 anchovy fillets
- 200 ml olive oil
- 2 tsp lemon juice
- Lemon dressing**
- 50 ml extra-virgin olive oil
- Juice of 1½ lemons

**1** For rosemary tarator, soak bread and walnuts in to soften (4-5 minutes). Squeeze excess milk from bread and transfer to a blender with walnuts. Add egg, herbs, capers and anchovies, blend to combine, then add oil in a thin stream to form a rustic sauce. Add lemon juice, season to taste and set aside. Tarator will keep refrigerated in an airtight container for up to a week.

**2** For lemon dressing, whisk ingredients in a bowl, season to taste and set aside.>



**3** Snip the sardine backbones at both ends of the cavity and remove ribs with your fingers (they lift out very easily). Combine preserved rind, raisins and herbs in a bowl, season to taste, then stuff into sardine cavities. Season to taste with a little salt and refrigerate until required.

**4** Heat a barbecue to high heat (McEneaney grills over charcoal), brush sardines with olive oil and grill to just char and cook through (1-2 minutes each side). Transfer to a platter lined with nasturtium leaves, spoon lemon dressing over and serve with rosemary tarator.

**Note** Nasturtium leaves are available from select greengrocers.

### Baked artichokes with citrus and herb salad

*"I love the acidity of the citrus salad," says McEneaney. "It balances the bitterness of the artichokes and gives a huge boost to your immune system."*

**Prep time 40 mins, cook 2 hrs (plus straining)**

**Serves 6-8 as a starter or side**

- 16 small globe artichokes
- Juice of 1 lemon
- 2 fresh bay leaves
- ½ tsp white peppercorns

¾ cup each (firmly packed) mint and flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped, parsley stalks reserved

40 gm salted baby capers, rinsed, drained well, finely chopped

3 garlic cloves, finely chopped

400 ml dry white wine

250 ml (1 cup) olive oil

1 each orange, ruby grapefruit and lemon, segmented

Mint, basil, dill sprigs and salad burnet, to serve

#### Mint oil

125 ml (½ cup) grapeseed oil

½ cup (firmly packed) mint leaves

½ small handful baby spinach leaves

**1** Preheat oven to 120C. Working with an artichoke at a time, trim the top third, trim centre leaves and remove hairy choke with a teaspoon. Trim stems, peel off thick outer leaves to reveal the bright tender flesh, then place in a bowl of cold water with lemon juice added to prevent discoloration.

**2** Place bay leaves, peppercorns and parsley stalks in the base of a non-reactive baking dish (see cook's notes p208) large enough to hold artichokes

snugly in a single layer. Combine mint, parsley, capers and garlic in a bowl, season to taste and mix well. Drain artichokes, stuff each with a little herb mixture and arrange in baking dish on their bases, packed tightly so they remain upright. Pour wine over and 300ml cold water, season to taste with sea salt, drizzle with olive oil and cover closely with baking paper. Cover tightly with foil and braise in oven until tender (1½-2 hours).

**3** Meanwhile, for mint oil, warm oil in a small saucepan over medium heat to 80C. Transfer to a blender with remaining ingredients and blitz until very finely puréed (3-4 minutes). Transfer to a sieve placed over a bowl and lined with 3 layers of muslin and set aside to strain (don't press on solids – even a tiny speck of leaf in the oil will turn it brown). Season to taste.

**4** To serve, drain artichokes from cooking liquid and arrange on a platter. Scatter with citrus segments and herbs, drizzle with mint oil to taste and serve warm or at room temperature.

### Slow-roast duck with quinoa, saffron and olives

*"Pot-roast duck happens to be one of my all-time favourites," says McEneaney. "Duck is high in linoleic acid, an antioxidant, quinoa is high in protein, saffron is antioxidant and olives are anti-inflammatory."*

**Prep time 35 mins, cook 3 hrs 15 mins (plus infusing, cooling, resting)**

**Serves 6-8**

- 2 pinches of saffron threads
- 1 Spanish onion, diced
- 3 garlic cloves, finely chopped
- 90 ml extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve
- 300 gm (1½ cups) red quinoa
- 1 tsp ground allspice
- ½ tsp each ground cinnamon and sumac
- Juice of ½ lemon
- 1 duck (about 1.9kg)
- 200 gm mixed olives (such as wild and green)
- Rocket, to serve

**1** Preheat oven to 100C. Place saffron in a bowl with 125ml warm water and a pinch of sea salt, and set aside to infuse (30 minutes).

**2** Meanwhile, sauté onion and garlic in 60ml olive oil with a pinch of salt over medium heat until tender and translucent (5-6 minutes). Add quinoa and spices and stir to toast (1 minute). Remove from heat, add lemon juice, season to taste and set aside to cool, then stuff quinoa mixture into duck cavity and stand for 30 minutes.

**3** Heat remaining oil in a large flameproof casserole over medium-high heat and cook duck breast-side down until well-browned (4-5 minutes). Pour saffron and its liquid over duck, add olives to pan, cover with a lid and braise in oven until duck is very tender (2¾-3 hours). Rest for 15 minutes, then drain pan juices into a sauce boat to use as gravy and reserve olives separately. Carve duck and serve with olives and stuffing spooned out. When everyone is nearly finished, serve rocket to help mop up the juices and cleanse the palate.>



Baked artichokes with citrus and herb salad



Slow-roast duck with quinoa, saffron and olives

Baked ricotta with asparagus, pea and chamomile salad

(RECIPE P112)

**DUCK** Falconware roasting pan and chopping board from Koskela. Bowl from The Bay Tree.

**ARTICHOKES** Stack of plates (in background) from Mud Australia. Green tumblers and olive bowl from The Bay Tree. Joscelyn Best large bowl. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p207.

Pot-set yoghurt with lemon verbena and blueberries



### Baked ricotta with asparagus, pea and chamomile salad

"At Kitchen by Mike, we make our own ricotta," says McEneaney, "but you could use a good shop-bought basket ricotta. The chamomile dressing is good to relax the nerves and honey helps with allergies."

**Prep time 30 mins, cook 45 mins (plus draining)**

**Serve 6-8 (pictured p111)**

60 ml (¼ cup) extra-virgin olive oil, plus extra to serve

½ lemon, thinly sliced

4-5 thyme sprigs

#### Ricotta

3 litres milk

200 ml double cream

Juice of 5 lemons, strained

#### Chamomile dressing

190 ml grapeseed oil

1½ tbs loose-leaf chamomile tea

2 tsp honey

Juice of 1 small lemon, or to taste

#### Asparagus, pea and chamomile salad

40 asparagus spears (about 3 bunches), trimmed

100 gm podded peas (200gm unpodded)

2 handfuls snow pea tendrils

Chamomile flowers and chamomile greens (optional), to serve

**1** For ricotta, combine milk and cream in a large saucepan, add 2 tsp salt and warm over low heat to 85C on a thermometer (5-6 minutes). Stir in three-quarters of the lemon juice, then gradually

add more until the milk splits (you may not need all the juice). Adjust the heat to maintain the temperature of the curds and whey at 85C for 5 minutes, then ladle the curds into a ricotta basket, colander or sieve set over a bowl to catch the whey. Stand at room temperature to drain (3 hours), then refrigerate until required. Makes about 1.4kg ricotta. Best used within a day or two of making.

**2** Preheat oven to 230C. Carefully turn out ricotta into an ovenproof frying pan or baking tray lined with baking paper, keeping the shape intact. Drizzle with olive oil, scatter with lemon slices and thyme, season to taste and bake until golden brown (20-25 minutes).

**3** Meanwhile, for chamomile dressing, warm oil, tea and honey in a small saucepan to 60C on a thermometer, then blend in a blender for 1 minute. Strain through a sieve lined with muslin, add lemon juice for acidity and season to taste.

**4** For asparagus, pea and chamomile salad, heat a char-grill pan over high heat. Drizzle a third of the asparagus with oil and char-grill until tender and beginning to blister (3-4 minutes). Set aside. Blanch peas and half the remaining asparagus until tender and bright green (2-3 minutes), then drain, refresh, drain again and combine with grilled asparagus in a large bowl. Thinly slice remaining asparagus lengthways on a mandolin into bowl, add snow pea tendrils, chamomile flowers and chamomile greens, and season to taste. Drizzle with chamomile dressing to taste and serve with baked ricotta, drizzled with a little extra-virgin olive oil.



**ICE-POPS** Joscelyn Best white shallow dish. Linen napkins from Crave Wares.

**YOGHURT** Small plates from The Bay Tree Joscelyn Best white bowl. Spoons from White Home. All other props stylist's own. Stockists p207.

### Pot-set yoghurt with lemon verbena and blueberries

"Besides the wonderful probiotic benefits of yoghurt, this recipe incorporates the calming benefits of lemon verbena and a side of blueberries, which have the highest capacity of antioxidants of any fruit," says McEneaney. Start this recipe two days ahead to incubate and chill the yoghurt.

**Prep time 10 mins, cook 10 mins (plus incubation, chilling)**

**Serves 6-8**

1 litre (4 cups) skim milk

1 cup (loosely packed) lemon verbena, leaves and stalks bruised by squeezing, plus extra leaves to serve

50 gm natural yoghurt

200 gm (about 2 punnets) blueberries

**1** Warm milk and lemon verbena in a saucepan over low heat to 92C to kill bacteria, then cool to 37C, add yoghurt and whisk to combine. Strain through a fine sieve and place in 8-10 sterilised jars of 150ml-200ml capacity (or any small jars). Insert a leaf of lemon verbena in each jar so that it peeks out at the top, seal jars with lids and place in a deep container. Place container in an Eskey or large container with a tight lid. Fill halfway up the sides with 37C-40C water and seal. Stand to incubate, changing water regularly to maintain the warm temperature (15-20 hours). Refrigerate for a day before using. Yoghurt will keep for 2-3 days. Serve with blueberries.

### Pineapple, kombucha and mint ices

"We make our own kombucha, but it's also available from many health-food shops," says McEneaney.

"Such a refreshing way to cool down on a sunny day."

**Prep time 5 mins (plus freezing)**

**Serves 6-8**

1 pineapple (about 1.2kg), coarsely chopped

1 cup (firmly packed) mint

200 ml kombucha (see note)

**1** Juice the pineapple and mint in a cold-press juicer or blender (strain if blending and discard solids), add kombucha and pour mixture into 100ml moulds, half-freeze (1-2 hours), then insert ice-pop sticks. Freeze completely (2-3 hours). To serve, dip moulds briefly in hot water to unmould. You can also pour mixture over a shallow tray to make granita; allow to semi-set in the freezer then scrape with a fork every 30 minutes to form ice crystals.

**Note** Kombucha is a fermented tea usually served chilled. ●



Pineapple, kombucha and mint ices



### MORE ONLINE

Set the table outdoors and gather a crowd – there's plenty more inspiration online for alfresco dining, from kebabs to spiced chicken and potato salad with a twist: [gourmettraveller.com.au](http://gourmettraveller.com.au)