

FROM THE EARTH.

# Fields *of* gold

Beyond the bounty of its fertile soil, The Farm at Byron Bay is also a place of rich personal rewards and precious memories. Join **Tom** and **Emma Lane**, together with family and friends, as they nurture something truly special.

INTERVIEW **GEORGE EPAMINONDAS** PHOTOGRAPHY **ALAN BENSON** STYLING **KRISTINE DURAN-THIESSEN**



**CLOCKWISE:** Scottish Highland cattle are among the breeds on The Farm; the farmhouse sits on 80 acres; Lulu, the Lanes' youngest daughter, and a four-legged friend; The Farm is a highly bee-friendly environment; Tom feeds the chickens; fresh honeycomb; (inset) honey pikelets (recipe p 65). **OPPOSITE:** the Lanes' farm is very much a family affair.



**FROM THE EARTH.**



**FROM LEFT:** Emma and Tom Lane; macadamia nut & shredded pork salad; Emma, Tom and children Matilda (8), Charlie (13), Lulu (6) and George (10). **BELOW:** an old tractor is part of the scenery.



**IF YOU'VE VISITED** the Northern Rivers in NSW, there's every chance you've dropped in on The Farm in Byron Bay. It's home to a collective of growers, producers and eateries, including Three Blue Ducks, as well as some of the happiest chickens, pigs and cattle you've ever encountered. The bucolic venture, which is predicated on sustainable, chemical-free farming, is the handiwork of founders Tom and Emma Lane, who will also soon open The Beach House overlooking Angels Beach.

Inspired by their own rural childhoods, and holidays spent on a 30-acre farm in Federal bought after the birth of their last child, Lulu, Tom and Emma made the decision to leave the Sydney rat race to give their four children a life of more freedom. This led them in 2013 to a neglected 80-acre farm outside Byron that has evolved into The Farm and the resulting Growers' Collective.


The intrepid couple has now penned a luminous book, *The Farm Community*. In addition to profiles of their like-minded peers and vegetable-centric recipes, such as those extracted here, the volume reads like a manifesto. "It's all about a connection to food, real food, that is as close to nature as possible," says Emma.

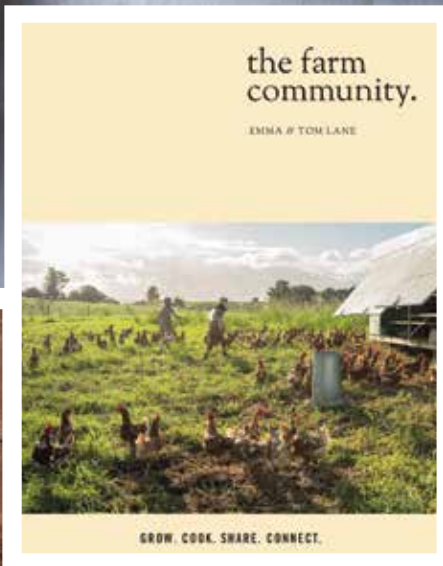
The Lane's approach to entertaining follows a similar vein. "We try to eat as close to organic as possible," she says. You can't get more hyperlocal than the Lanes, who pluck ingredients from outside of

their door. A macadamia nut and pork salad showcases the region's favourite nut, avocado salad is topped with a nutritious seed sprinkle, and hearty lentils are enlivened with a zesty lemon dressing. Honey pikelets, meanwhile, are a lighthearted way to educate kids about pasture-raised eggs and beehives.

Are they ever tempted to order in from Three Blue Ducks? "Yes, all the time!" says Emma. "Sometimes, if we can't get a table, one of the gorgeous staff members will run an order across to our office, out the back of the kitchen."

*This is an edited extract from The Farm Community (Hardie Grant Books, \$39.99). Available where all good books are sold.*

 @emmalane @thefarmbyronbay



**MACADAMIA NUT & SHREDDED PORK SALAD**

**SERVES 6**

*By Pam Brook, Brookfarm*

*Pam and Martin Brook, inspired by a passion for quality, healthy food, transformed a rundown dairy in the Byron Bay hinterland into a working macadamia farm. When macadamia prices suffered a downturn in the 1990s, they decided to add value to their harvest. The result was Brookfarm, an award-winning, family-owned business that is now one of Australia's leading producers of premium-quality macadamia products.*

**FOOD MILES NOTE**

*We prefer Bangalow Sweet Pork; you can also substitute chicken. We use Brookfarm lemon myrtle-infused macadamia oil, but any other macadamia oil will also work.*

- 800g pork tenderloins
- 1/2 cup (125ml) rice wine vinegar
- 1/4 cup (55g) raw sugar

- 1 red onion, thinly sliced
- 250g Chinese cabbage (wombok), thinly sliced
- 1 large carrot, peeled, sliced into long, thin matchsticks (we used a julienne peeler)
- 2 tbs lemon myrtle-infused macadamia oil (substitute macadamia oil or extra virgin olive oil)
- 2 tbs chopped macadamia nuts
- 1 tbs macadamia oil
- 1 tbs Vietnamese hot mint (substitute 2 tsp shredded mint leaves and 2 tsp shredded rocket), chopped
- 1 tbs fried Asian shallots (from Asian food shops)
- Prawn crackers (optional), to serve

**DIPPING SAUCE**

- 1/4 cup (60ml) fish sauce
- Juice of 1/2 lime
- 1/2 tsp raw sugar
- 1 long red chilli, seeds removed, thinly sliced

Bring a saucepan of salted water to the boil. Add pork, reduce heat to a simmer and cook for 20 minutes or until pork is just cooked through. Drain. Set aside to cool.

Combine vinegar, sugar, onion and 1/2 tsp each salt flakes and freshly ground black pepper in a bowl and stand for 30 minutes to pickle slightly.

Combine cabbage and carrot in a large bowl. Using your fingers, coarsely shred pork and add to cabbage mixture. Add pickled onion, pickling liquid and lemon myrtle macadamia oil, and toss well. Transfer to a serving platter.

Cook the macadamia nuts in the macadamia oil in a frypan over low heat, stirring gently, for 3 minutes or until just brown. Drain on paper towel.

For the dipping sauce, combine all the ingredients in a small serving bowl. Stir until the sugar is dissolved.

Scatter salad with fried macadamias, hot mint and fried Asian shallots. Serve with the dipping sauce and prawn crackers, if using.

FROM THE EARTH .

“The Farm is not certified organic, but we refer to the food grown here as ‘beyond organic’ – it’s all grown without the use of artificial fertilisers or chemicals.” – Emma

Avocado salad with Emma’s nut & seed sprinkle; (top right) Matilda and Lulu join Emma in the fields and (bottom right) pick flowers.



## SET THE SCENE

### STYLE

When entertaining, the Lane clan prefer dining al fresco. “We have a large timber table that we dress with a linen table cloth and contrasting linen napkins,” says Emma. They add handcrafted ceramics from The Clay Barn in Bangalow, or pieces made by their children, as well as antique brass cutlery, foraged blooms and wild flowers. “Or even just a sprig of herbs placed on the napkins,” adds Emma.

### DRINKS

Emma likes to serve her signature “gin and sonic” in an oversized brandy glass. “That’s gin, half tonic, half soda, a large ice cube, a sprig of rosemary and a slice of orange.” The couple is also fond of biodynamic, preservative-free red wines and rosés. Teetotallers can enjoy sparkling water with berries, lime and mint.

### PLAYLIST

“Sometimes it’s just Mother Nature’s playlist,” says Emma. “The sounds of birds, the wind in the trees, the crackle of an open fire or rain on the veranda roof.” If an iPod is involved, it’s usually jazz ace Stan Getz or bossa nova great João Gilberto. “The kids might even pick up a guitar and have a little jam,” Emma adds.



## AVOCADO SALAD WITH EMMA’S NUT & SEED SPRINKLE

SERVES 6-8

By Tom Silver (‘Avocado Tom’)

Avocado Tom is one of the region’s most likeable and bountiful avocado producers. The family farm, Laurel Park, is the mothership for the operation, where they have been growing avocados for the past 30 years. The farm’s combination of deep, free-draining krasnozem soils, high rainfall and subtropical climate provide the ideal environment to produce delicious avocados. Their varieties are

predominantly Hass, but also Shepard and their favourite – the Sharwil. Sharwil avocados have rough green skin that does not turn black as it ripens. They contain a much smaller seed than other varieties, which means there’s plenty of buttery flesh inside each fruit.

Says Emma: “I always have some of this sprinkle on hand in the fridge. It is so easy to make and is great on any salad – in particular this salad from Avocado Tom. The sprinkle also works well in a savoury porridge, or you can add it to home-made fried rice with an omelette of pasture-raised eggs, loads of farm-fresh vegetables and an extra splash of tamari or soy sauce.”

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1 butternut pumpkin, peeled, cut into 3cm pieces  
1/3 cup (80ml) extra virgin olive oil  
2 tsp ground cumin  
200g green beans, trimmed, blanched, refreshed  
100g baby spinach leaves  
2 avocados, chopped  
100g feta, chopped

### HONEY-SOY DRESSING

1 tbs runny honey  
2 tbs soy sauce  
1/4 cup (60ml) extra virgin olive oil

### NUT & SEED SPRINKLE

120g almonds, chopped, toasted  
75g pumpkin seeds (pepitas), toasted  
60g pine nuts, toasted  
45g sunflower seeds, toasted  
60g white sesame seeds, toasted  
1 tsp tamari or soy sauce

Preheat oven to 200°C. Grease a large baking tray and line with baking paper.

Toss pumpkin, 2 tbs oil and cumin on prepared tray and roast, turning halfway, for 25 minutes or until tender. Set aside.

Meanwhile, for the sprinkle, combine all ingredients in a bowl and set aside (sprinkle can be stored, chilled in an airtight container, for up to 2 weeks).

Place pumpkin and remaining salad ingredients in a serving bowl and season.

For the dressing, whisk all ingredients in a bowl until well combined. Pour over the salad before serving, along with a generous topping of the sprinkle.

## HONEY PIKELETS

SERVES 4 (MAKES 16)

By Farm Kids, The Farm

During Farm Kids workshops, the kids make these simple pikelets using fresh pasture-raised eggs from The Farm served with cultured butter and sweet local honey.

3/4 cup (185ml) milk  
1 egg  
1 tsp vanilla extract  
1 cup (150g) self-raising flour  
Melted cultured butter (substitute butter), to grease, plus extra softened to serve  
Runny honey, to serve

### GLUTEN-FREE/GRAIN-FREE OPTION (MAKES 22)

1/2 cup (55g) almond meal  
1/2 cup (60g) tapioca flour (arrowroot)  
2 tbs coconut flour  
170ml milk (you can substitute with a non-dairy alternative)  
2 tsp gluten-free baking powder  
2 eggs  
1 tsp white vinegar  
1 tbs runny honey

Whisk milk, egg and vanilla together in a bowl until well combined.

Sift flour and a pinch of salt flakes into another bowl. Add milk mixture to flour mixture and whisk until smooth.

Heat a non-stick frypan over medium heat and brush with a little melted butter.



Spicy herby  
lemon lentils

Drop 1 tbs pikelet mixture into pan and cook for 30 seconds or until bubbles appear on the surface. Using a spatula, flip pikelets and cook for 1 minute or until golden.

Serve with extra butter and honey.

For the gluten-free/grain-free option, mix all the ingredients together in a bowl (the vinegar is to help the baking powder; you won't taste it) and allow to sit for 5 minutes. Cook as above.

#### SPICY HERBY LEMON LENTILS

SERVES 4-6 AS A SIDE DISH

By Byron Bay Herb Nursery,  
The Farm Community

*This easy vegan recipe using hearty lentils is as nourishing as it is delicious.*

- 1 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, crushed
- 1 tsp finely grated ginger
- 1 tsp finely grated turmeric
- 2 long red chillies (seeds removed – optional), chopped
- 400g can crushed tomatoes
- 1 tbs tomato paste
- 2 x 400g cans brown lentils, drained, rinsed
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1/2 cup coriander leaves, chopped

- 1/2 cup fresh lemon balm leaves (substitute mint leaves), chopped
- 1/2 cup garlic chives (substitute chives), chopped

Steamed rice and warm flatbread, to serve

Heat the oil in saucepan over medium-low heat. Add onion and cook, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until soft. Add garlic, ginger, turmeric and chilli, and cook, stirring occasionally, for a further 5 minutes for flavours to develop.

Add tomatoes and tomato paste, and simmer, stirring occasionally, for 10 minutes or until thickened slightly. Stir through lentils, lemon juice, coriander, lemon balm and garlic chives. Once the lentils are warmed through, serve with rice and warm flatbread.

#### GRANNY LANE'S FAMOUS APPLE CRUMBLE

SERVES 8

*Says Tom: "No one makes an apple crumble like my mum. She still bakes the crumble for us almost every time we visit. It's typically served after a family roast and while telling a few stories about growing up. It wasn't easy convincing Mum to hand over the recipe. Not because it was a secret, but because it had been committed*

*to memory and she cooked it instinctively. She knew the measurements and method by heart. After some time, Mum brought out her old cooking scrapbook. There, on a faintly written bit of paper buried in the book, was the handwritten recipe that she had probably penned 40 years ago. So, from my mum to you, here is Granny Lane's famous apple crumble."*

- 130g unsalted butter, chopped, softened, plus extra to grease
- 6 Granny Smith apples, peeled, cores removed, thinly sliced
- 95g brown sugar, plus extra to sprinkle
- 1/2 cup (75g) self-raising flour
- 1/2 cup (45g) rolled oats
- 1/2 cup (45g) desiccated coconut
- 1/2 cup (75g) roasted macadamia nuts, chopped
- Vanilla ice cream or cream, to serve

Preheat oven to 180°C.

Grease a 23cm pie dish and layer the sliced apples to fill the dish.

Cover apples with 1 tbs sugar and scatter across 30g butter pieces.

Place flour and remaining 100g butter in a bowl and, using your fingertips, combine until mixture resembles coarse breadcrumbs. Stir through the oats, coconut, macadamia nuts and remaining 75g sugar.

Sprinkle crumble mixture over apples and gently pat down. Bake for 40-45 minutes or until brown and apples are tender (cover with aluminium foil if browning too quickly).

Serve crumble with vanilla ice cream or cream. ✂

**d.** [delicious.com.au/recipes](https://delicious.com.au/recipes)  
For more nutritious feelgood fare perfect for entertaining.

Granny Lane's famous  
apple crumble

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**"Tom says this is the best apple crumble in the world. We literally had it last week when we went to Longflat, the family farm where his love of farming began." – Emma**