

Dining & Leisure

Be a glutton and

By HELEN PERRY

WHEN former Pakuranga residents Neville and Judy Green moved into a new Pukekohe home three years ago they decided their new garden would be food bearing.

Consequently, with the exception of a small flower bed near the front door, their property is ringed by pristine, raised beds packed with vegetables and fruit of every description.

From this food bowl, the couple pickle and preserve, bottle and bake, freeze and freeze-dry – virtually nothing is wasted.

But not content to stock their own larder, over the years these culinary gurus have experimented with all types of recipes and these days are focused on gluten-free cooking that tastes fantastic.

As the principals of Gluten Free Made Easy, they run one day, five-hour workshops where one of the most popular items are bite-size crackers which are crispy, full of flavour and, of course, gluten-free. And you could say they are just the icing on the cake – so to speak!

Students can expect feather-weight, melt-in the-mouth, chocolate chip cookies, light and fluffy scones, comfort-packed muffins, breads of all description, perfect pasta (some egg-free) and much more.

Budding masterchef or not, Neville and Judy say anyone can



LIFETIME OF COOKING: Judy and Neville Green – passing on their skills.

Time photo Wayne Martin

learn to prepare and cook mouth-watering, inexpensive, gluten-free food simply by attending one of their information-packed, fun-filled “Gluten-Free Made Easy” workshops.

It’s all about small groups

gathering around the kitchen bench and watching them go to work. During the course of the workshop their team-work is the key to students learning how to easily make delicious, gluten-free food without resort-

ing to expensive premises. And, at the end of the day, everyone goes home armed with scores of recipes, a list of retailers who sell ingredients at the right price and the confidence to tackle a huge variety of easy, gluten-free dishes that will taste fantastic.

Attendees can also opt to receive a regular newsletter with new recipes, cooking tips and fresh ideas.

With more than 65 years combined experience in the catering and hospitality industry, the Greens know what makes a good kitchen tick. For many years Neville was an executive chef in top hotels and restaurants and also spent 15 years at Air New Zealand, catering for first class passengers on a variety of airlines.

Judy has also worked as a hotel restaurant manager and later maintained her avid interest in ‘healthy’ food by developing her preserving, freeze-drying and other culinary skills.

Between them, Neville and Judy also operated the award-winning Meet in the Sandwich lunch bar and café in East Tamaki, which among its many accolades, won Customers’ Choice in the 2002 Westpac Manukau Business Excellence Awards.

“It was while we had the café that we became interested in gluten-free cooking,” Neville says. “A customer who regularly popped by for coffee finally asked if we did gluten-free.

ditch the gluten!

“At the time we didn’t but immediately began looking for recipes to cater for gluten intolerances and those suffering from coeliac disease. We weren’t impressed so started experimenting with our own ideas.”

Those who have tasted Neville and Judy’s gluten-free cooking have tried to persuade the couple to set up shop. But the Green’s interest lies in empowering people to look after themselves for the rest of their lives rather than just enjoying five minutes of quick gratification.

“After 10 years of working with gluten-free flours from many sources we have come to the conclusion that this field of cooking has a long way to evolve and with the current high cost of many gluten-free commercial products we want to give people the ability to make delicious food at a fraction of the price,” Judy says.

And delicious it is – pizza bases, fresh pasta, many different breads, even pickles and relishes; ideas for thickening sauce and casseroles using gluten-free flours and suggestions as to how to convert old family favourites into gluten-free winners.

Workshops are generally held at weekends – Saturday or Sunday, 9am to 2pm – finishing early enough for people to get home to families or evening plans. However, the couple will run weekday workshops if the numbers stack up – six to 10 people.



HOMEM ADE: Clockwise from top left, gluten-free cheese scones, tomato relish, gluten-free hot cross buns and bottled from the garden.

Times photo Wayne Martin



At \$95 per person these almost full day sessions have been pronounced ‘fantastic value’ by past attendees.

For example Delia from Epsom wrote: “Loved it – a thousand thank-yous. This has been amazing and life-changing.”

Another couple attended a workshop after hearing that a gluten-free diet might help improve life for their autistic son.

“They later told us that after

just two weeks on a gluten-free diet they had seen positive changes in their son,” Neville says.

“What’s more they wrote to us to say how delighted they were at being given the skills and means to bake gluten-free treats that everyone really enjoyed.”

Many other letters of praise have boosted the Green’s determination to keep experimenting and developing new recipes to make gluten-free food not just

palatable but truly appetising.

“We are thoroughly enjoying this new direction,” they agree. “Making the most of our vegetable garden, together with the cooking classes not only gives us pleasure but keeps our pantry full too!”

To find out more about Gluten-Free Made Easy workshops visit www.glutenfreemadeeasy.co.nz or call Judy or Neville on (09) 238 0610, mobile 021 395 593. E: glutenfreemadeeasy@gmail.com