

A taste for the know-how

THE recent demise of homemaker magazine *Live This* after just four issues has many media people asking whether Australia's hunger for food and lifestyle information is finally sated.

It follows two other publishing casualties last year, *marie claire Lifestyle* and *Elle Cuisine*.

But local food writer and teacher Lisa Lintner, who has been working with food for 25 years, has seen no evidence that the foodie market is losing interest.

Lintner has written or collaborated on four food books including the latest, *G.I. Plus – The Glucose Revolution* by Jennie Brand-Miller and Kaye Foster-Powell, for which she compiled all the recipes.

She is also close to consumer trends through the cooking school she runs from her Bilgola home.

She says demand for lessons has not only grown as a result of the prominence of food and lifestyle products in the media, but they have delivered a more informed set of students.

"People know now what they want, they watch the programs on the television and they know what's around and what to do with it," she said.

"Certainly the classes are growing all the time because people are entertaining at home which they are encouraged to do by these television programs and they're reading the magazines."

The mainstream programming of food shows and the prominence of food in the many lifestyle programs and magazines also seems to be helping to break down the gender barrier that once kept men out of the kitchen.

"I am now being approached by a lot of men wanting to know how to cook because they now see it as an interesting thing to do," Lintner said.

"Ten or 20 years ago men were not involved, except in the barbecue classes and occasionally the Chinese classes, but that has changed and now men want to know more than that.

"They want to know how to make pastry or bread or a *creme brulee*."

Lintner believes the media jumped on the bandwagon of a big groundswell of interest in food which had its roots in the '80s.

That was when the move away from the classic French tradition of heavy rich sauces to lighter and Mediterranean-style food, which were much better suited to the Australian climate and lifestyle, began.

She thinks the driving influences in Australians' food habits have been the immigrant influence and ready availability of quality ingredients.

"We have such a wonderful multicultural society and there have been influences from



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Europe and Asia and Africa which we have really got a handle on now," she said.

"We don't really have a traditional cultural background apart from the Anglo-Saxon

meat and three veg and then suddenly along came a wonderful new group of influences.

"Also, the ingredients we have access to are exceptional and the variety is enormous."