



'Truly Tasty' recipe book makes renal diet attractive

Valerie Twomey from Crosshaven compiler of book

By LEO MCMAHON

TRULY Tasty should be called 'truly remarkable' because it was a groundbreaking achievement, said John McKenna of the Bridgestone Guide when officially launching what he described as 'world class', the book *Truly Tasty* compiled by kidney transplant recipient Valerie Twomey from Crosshaven at a marquee reception recently in Maryborough Hotel, Douglas. All proceeds from the sale of the book go to the Irish Kidney Association (IKA).

All 100 plus recipes, featuring starters, main courses and desserts in this unique publication have been created by 30 of Ireland's top chefs for adults living with kidney disease in Ireland and are easy to follow and coded.

Chefs featured are Rachel Allen, Derry Clarke, Clodagh McKenna, Rory O'Connell, Claire Nash, Ross Lewis, Catherine Fulvio, Brian Fallon, Catherine Leyden, David McCann, Domini Kemp, Eugene McSweeney, George Campbell, Kevin Dundon, Leylie Hayes, Liz Moore, Neven Maguire, Noel McMeel, Oliver Dunne, Patrick McLarnon, Paul Flynn, Paula McIntyre, Paula Mee, Peter Merrigan, Richie Wilson; vegetarian chefs Denis Cotter, Lorraine Fitzmaurice Deirdre McCafferty and Tony Keogh and restaurant chefs David Workowich, Stephen McAllister and Louise Lennox, all interviewed by journalist Brian Moore who himself is a person living with kidney disease, plus superb photographs by Hugh McElveen.

With the emphasis on simplicity and practicality, there is also a guide on how best to use the 298-page hardback from the Irish Nutrition and Dietetic Institute (INDI), a summary of

dietary allowances plus useful information on food safety, weight conversions, cooking potatoes and growing your own herbs, an index plus an organ donor card.

Launching the book, West Cork based food writer and expert, John McKenna, said *Truly Tasty* could also be called 'truly out the box' because it had achieved something as difficult as the renal diet. It was aesthetically beautiful, practical and life affirming and was 'a world class book' that would help people through a difficult journey. He also praised Brian Moore for the excellent articles and urged every reader to fill out the organ donor card at the back of every book.

Every speaker was glowing in praise for Valerie Twomey and made the point that *Truly Tasty* offered recipes for everyone and not just adults living with chronic kidney disease or on dialysis.

Rory O'Connell, brother of Darina Allen, chef and a founder of Ballymaloe Cookery School, said that on receiving an email the list of ingredients which had to be omitted for a renal diet, it made him realise how lucky he was to be able to eat unthinkingly every day. However, all the recipes in *Truly Tasty* were delightful, tasty and nutritious, adding it was all about the ingredients, most of which were obtainable from the markets and gardens of County Cork.

It was a huge achievement, he went on, to get all the top chefs in Ireland into one book but this was down to the graceful and dynamic Valerie Twomey, who was a pleasure to work with at all times.

Dr. Mike Clarkson, consultant nephrologist at Cork University Hospital said *Truly Tasty* was 'a wonderful book' that was practical and beautifully presented and would be a tremendous resource for patients but also carers.

Rosanna Kennedy MD, lecturer in medical education at UCC, described Valerie as 'a very special person', who along with IKA Cork branch secretary Michael Costello from Carrigaline, provided a very valuable service in the 'Patients as Teachers' project, a partnership which began in 2007 giving medical students an insight into what was a chronic disease and making them aware of the importance of organ donations.

BIBLE

Melissa Sheridan spoke on behalf of main sponsor Abbott Ireland and said the company, which has a facility in Carrigaline and other centres in Ireland employing almost 4,000 people, was delighted to support the project. She described *Truly Tasty* as 'an invaluable cookery bible for people living with kidney disease in Ireland' and predicted it would open up cookery evenings and make the renal diet much more pleasurable.

Barbara Gillman Clinical Specialist Renal Dietician at Mater Misericordiae Hospital, Dublin, said the renal diet was a difficult one that had to be balanced. All the recipes submitted were expertly analysed by six volunteers who are members of the INDI and she paid tribute to the chefs for their co-operation and contribution to what was a unique book that would lead to wonderful improvement in the quality of life because, for the first time, it made the renal diet attractive.

Cork journalist Brian Moore said he was amazed how different the backgrounds and approach to food and cooking was concerning each of the chefs he interviewed over the past 18 months. He specially thanked the inspirational Valerie, whom he met at the renal clinic in CUH, and his wife Caroline, and declared that *Truly Tasty* could truly take its place on any kitchen bookshelf of top recipe books.

Returning thanks, Valerie Twomey said she was for once 'lost for words'. She thanked all her team, the chefs, the INDI and all the dieticians and nutritionists who worked in their own free time, Lizzie Gore Grimes and the editorial team, designer Karen Carty, illustrator Orlagh Murphy, Cork University Press, Brian Moore, photographer Hugh McElveen, proof reader Orla Broderick, the very hard-working Breda Dooley in public relations, main sponsor Abbott Renal Care, Bosch (Niamh Donohoe), Shire Pharmaceutical, Amgen, the National Lottery, Shamrock Foods and other sponsors, Fiona Foley and Co. Solicitors, Maryborough Hotel, Mark Murphy and all her colleagues in the IKA, her parents Honor and Joseph Twomey, all the fantastic renal healthcare team led by Dr. Liam Plant at CUH as well

as Beaumont Hospital, Dublin, Dr. Mary Dunphy and all her pals in Crosshaven and Co. Cork, some of whom she would now have the time to play tennis with again.

Master of ceremonies was Mike Collins of Cork University Press and another speaker was Mark Murphy, chief executive of the IKA (see separate article).

Having been diagnosed with kidney disease in 2004 and on dialysis for two years before receiving a transplant, Valerie resolved to campaign tirelessly to promote organ donor awareness. She has addressed the European Parliament on the issue and has worked closely with UCC in the 'Patients as Teachers' project. She is also a member of the Cork branch of the IKA and has represented the Irish Transplant Team in tennis.

In compiling the book, said Valerie, she adopted a 'never give in' attitude and the Henry Ford motto that you can do anything if enthusiastic.

Truly Tasty, she added, was about giving something back to CUH, helping people who are going through dialysis and was also dedicated to the stranger that was her kidney donor and that person's family who were so generous at a most difficult time and gave her a second chance in life and made her determined to make the most of every day and to try and help others. Next on the list for the Crosshaven woman is helping Ireland host the European Transplant and Dialysis Games through the IKA in August.

Canopies from recipes in *Truly Tasty* were served in the marquee where wonderful musical entertainment was provided by Caroline Fraher and Andy Dunne, the latter of whom has release a CD *Living Proof* in aid of the IKA. Busy selling books on behalf of Cork University Press (CUP) were Mary O'Mahony, Mary White-Fitzpatrick, Marie O'Donovan and Ruth Collins.

The large attendance at the launch included Cork GAA hurling goalkeeper Donal O'Gusack, Margaret O'Leary, Michael and Stella Costello, Teddy and June O'Neill, John McCarthy, Catherine Murphy and John Leonard of the Cork branch of the IKA, Eileen Phelan, Phil O'Driscoll, Marie Sheehan and Fiona Byrne (CUH), Eva Long, Mary and Liz Dunphy, Barry and Norma Twomey, Vincent and Mairead O'Donovan, Caroline Lawlor and Paula Mulcahy (all Crosshaven), Bob and Anne Warren, Rochestown and Anne Marie Forrest.

There was also a Dublin

COOKERY

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launch of *Truly Tasty* at Fallon and Byrne, Exchequer Street. Published by Atrium, CUP, Cork, it is now on sale in all good bookshops, price €19.95 and can be purchased on line from www.corkuniversity-press.com.



Valerie Twomey from Cork with John McKenna from Bridgestone Guides and GAA star Donal Óg Cusack at the launch of her *Truly Tasty* cook book at Maryborough House.
(Photo: Billy macGill)