



ALLA WOLF-TASKER AM, CO-FOUNDER & CULINARY DIRECTOR LAKE HOUSE & DAIRY FLAT FARM DAYLESFORD, VICTORIA

In 1979, when Alla Wolf-Tasker and her husband Allan bought the land on which they would build the lauded Lake House boutique hotel in Daylesford, the then sleepy town in Victoria's Macedon Ranges was surrounded by a monoculture of potato farms. Now Daylesford, 110km (70 miles) northwest of Melbourne, is a thriving destination, drawing visitors to its mineral springs and its dynamic food scene. Whether you dine at Lake House's acclaimed restaurant or at one of the many excellent eateries in town, you have Alla to thank for the incredible variety of sustainably grown local produce on offer.

From her time in France working in restaurants deeply connected to their rural communities, Alla had a vision for the dining offering at Lake House: "My dream was to start a truly regional restaurant in Australia – one totally immersed in an ongoing relationship with producers, growers and eventually the makers of its community. There was no other like it in the country at the time," she says.

"We may have been early adopters here at Lake House, but fortunately interest in food provenance, sustainability and the search for the best, most caringly-grown small-scale artisan food continues to grow. Certainly savvy guests visiting us show increased evidence of that." Cue the creation of a community association to link local growers, chefs and retailers. "We started Daylesford Macedon Produce and it became chicken-and-egg: the more we created demand, the more people started growing things. It's a very productive food bowl now."

Never ones to stand still, the Wolf-Taskers decided to walk the walk themselves and bought Dairy Flat Farm, a 10-minute drive from Lake House. Along with creating a six-room lodge and a sourdough bakery, substantial acreage provides fields, hop houses and facilities for regenerative farming. They've added fruit trees and an extensive vegetable garden to go with the existing olive grove and two hectares (five acres) of pinot and chardonnay vines.

There's been much said about the goodness of 'local food' over the past decade. We all have a lot to gain from being able to understand the provenance of our food. What I've helped build over the past 30-plus years is this sense of the farmer being really critical and important to the community – and visible.

LAKE HOUSE
— DAYLESFORD —

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