



Herbie's Spices 4/25 Arizona Road, Charmhaven, NSW, 2263
Tel: 1800HERBIE (1800 437 243) Fax: (02) 4392 9477
Website: www.herbies.com.au e-mail: shop@herbies.com.au
Herbie's Spices is a division of Hemphill Pty Ltd ABN: 75 077 549 583

NEWSLETTER

Summer 2020-21

A world-wide *annus horribilis* is drawing to a close, and all we want for Christmas is a better year ahead. For many, time spent in confinement has been a time for reflection, communicating with loved ones, and cooking up a storm.

For over twenty years, we've been unable to find a decent dried **Epazote** (pronounced eep-a-sot-tay) for our **Mexican** food-loving customers. So you can imagine our delight to have finally found Epazote leaves that are of good enough for inclusion in the Herbie's range! This mint-like leafy herb has a strong, slightly disagreeable aroma, but after drying the aroma is appetising, with a mixed-herb pungency. Favoured in the cooking of the Yucatan peninsula, you'll find it listed in your Mexican cookbooks, and now – hurrah! – you'll find it at Herbie's Spices.

Umami ... you may have heard of it, you may not know what it means. Umami is a Japanese word which applies to a certain delicious tastiness, a moreishness, that cannot fit with any of the other flavour descriptors: sweet, sour, salty, or bitter. Think of a fresh ripe tomato, warm from the sun, or Vegemite, or a mouth-wateringly delicious barbecued field mushroom. Umami is naturally present in garlic, mushrooms, tomatoes, and capsicums, so it seemed a good idea for us to create a Umami blend, using, among other ingredients, black garlic powder, porcini powder, tomato powder and paprika. This is not a complete spice blend like a curry or a barbecue rub, where no other input is needed, but, just as you would add a squeeze of lemon, or a pinch of salt, so you would add a little Umami blend to whatever you are cooking. For instance, in an Italian-style chicken fry-up (onion, garlic, bacon, chicken, capsicum, olives, tomatoes), we added a tablespoon of Italian Seasoning (of course), then to go that extra bit further, we tossed in a teaspoon of Umami blend. Yum! And another way to introduce it:

BARLEY RISOTTO WITH TOMATO AND MUSHROOMS

100g barley	½ red onion, finely chopped
2 cloves garlic, finely chopped	1 Tablespoon each butter and oil
2 small tomatoes, chopped	2 field mushrooms, chopped
½ teaspoon Umami Seasoning	500ml chicken stock
2-3 pieces lemon skin	1 Tablespoon chopped dill

In a deep pan, heat butter and oil, and sauté onion and garlic gently for two minutes. Add tomatoes and mushrooms and stir to combine. Add barley, stock, Umami seasoning and dill, salt and pepper to taste. Stir, and bring to boiling point. Reduce to a simmer and cook, stirring frequently, for 45 minutes, until barley grains are tender and most of the liquid has been absorbed. Serves 2.

It's not unusual for us to receive phone calls or emails with **special requests**. Someone with a garlic intolerance might ask us to create, say, our Cajun blend without the garlic. Or someone on a salt-free diet might ask if we can make their favourite barbecue blend without the salt. We'd love to oblige, but it's just not a feasible operation. The people wanting their special blend wouldn't really fancy paying the hourly rate involved in fulfilling their requests! However, there's a really easy solution. In ***The Spice and Herb Bible – Third Edition***, Herbie has given away lots of his secrets, with the actual recipes for many of our most popular blends. So all you need to do, to have your own salt-chilli-garlic-free blend, is copy the recipe from the book and tailor it to your specific needs. You still have time to let Santa know that you need *The Spice and Herb Bible – Third Edition* by Ian Hemphill! Having been in print continuously since 2000, (originally as *Spice Notes* and *Spice Notes and Recipes*), it is truly a best-seller.

Of course, there are many blends that don't have salt, including our fabulous **Zalt – It's Not Salt**, to add a lovely bright tastiness to your food without sodium. You can find our salt-free blends on our website: [Blends Without Salt](#)

There's a saying: if you want something done, ask a busy person to do it. That rather applies to us here at Herbie's, as, amidst the busiest period we've ever experienced, we have disrupted our workplace in order to build a **retail shop** within our factory. We look forward to welcoming more visitors, and providing them with a better, more complete shopping experience. Each product has a tester jar so that you may smell, compare, investigate, and learn. Those of you who remember our store at Rozelle will find our new venture is true to our original vision; we're still doing our best to bring you **"the ultimate spice experience."** We're open Monday to Friday, 9.00 to 4.00, and Saturdays, 9.30 to 2.00. We're close to the Sydney-Newcastle expressway – pop our address in your GPS and come and visit us!

Anyone who drives the highways this year can't help but notice the number of camper-vans and caravans on the road, as we all take our domestic holidays. There's never been a more appropriate Christmas gift than our **Happy Campers Spice Kit**, a great way to ensure that your taste buds don't get homesick in remote areas. It's packed in a sturdy, off-road box in a variety of colours.

What's new at Herbie's? We love it when customers tell us what they're looking for, like the man who wanted the spices to make a raita to go with his Indian curries. Being very familiar with Indian cuisine, it was instinctive for Herbie to put the ingredients together into a convenient blend, and we're just loving it! One teaspoon of **Raita mix** to four tablespoons of plain yoghurt makes a delicious cooling condiment to serve with curries, cold cuts or grills. Add some fresh cucumber to suit your taste – it's truly that easy!

Also new is our seasonal **Box of Ideas ... Summer 2020-21**. Feeding friends and family during the summer months can be either a pleasure or a chore. Although the consommé here is time consuming, there's a kind of Zen satisfaction in letting it proceed at its own pace. Cook-ahead winners like the sage shortbread mean more time to relax with those you love. Fire up the barbecue, bring a gorgeous sorbet out of the freezer, and enjoy the holiday season! Contains five spices and spice blends with seven great recipes.

There have been many unwelcome COVID-related inconveniences during the year, and there are more to come. **Spice shortages** will occur, as rural workers in spice-producing countries have not planted and harvested in their usual way. Also, much-needed imports are held up on Australian wharves, so we have to think on our feet to keep as much as possible available for you.

Grains of Paradise are temporarily out of stock, so their place in our ever-popular **Ginspiration Kit** has been taken by Australian native pepperberries, which give the resulting gin a lovely pink hue. As pepperberries were originally in our **Ginspiration Plus** box, we've replaced them with wattleseed. Happily, we've found that a gin that includes three Australian natives - pepperberry, wattleseed and lemon myrtle - has a delicious dark allure, with elusive hints of coffee. It's one to have over ice.

When a group of male friends get together, the talk eventually comes around to barbecues, food, and who does it better. Our son-in-law, in a rural NSW community, took up the challenge with his tennis mates to see who could cook **the best ribs**. He came to us for a little inside knowledge, and we showed him our **Rib Spice** ... well, what do you know? His ribs won hands down!! (Not so surprised, really.) Now all his friends want to know his secret, and we're happy to share.

We have the ultimate gift for any spice-lover ... our classy new wooden boxes with 12 jars in each. The clear sliding lid lets you see what's what, with labels on the jar lids as well as the traditional wrap-around labels. A pepper freak will love the **Pepperer's Guild**, twelve varieties of pepper to add bite in different ways; or make your own curries from scratch using twelve essential ingredients in **Curry Essentials**. These are available from our new retail store, or online.

What's coming in 2021? In early 2021 you'll see some changes to our website that will make the Herbie's on-line experience even more informative. We have simplified some elements based on feedback we have received for you over the last few years. A major improvement will be our search facility, so instead of just searching for blends with chilli or garlic, you'll also be able to look for items with NO chilli or garlic. We always welcome your comments, as these help us to make your Ultimate Spice Experience with us even better. **We also love to see your cooking creations, so tag us in your foodie posts @herbiesspices.**

Here's hoping for a bright and positive new year! Happy spicing –

Herbie and Liz