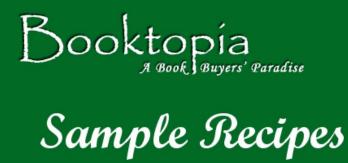## The Art of Pasta

Author: Lucio Galletto

Rigatoni With Calabrian Pesto

Free recipe from *The Art of Pasta* by Lucio Galletto, Rigatoni with Calabrian Pesto, page 82.

180 ml extra virgin olive oil

1/2 white onion, finely chopped

sea salt

2 red capsicums (peppers), seeds and white membranes removed, cut into strips

10 basil leaves

150 g ricotta

1 large ripe tomato, peeled and seeded (see page 51), then diced

2 small red chillies, chopped

1 teaspoon oregano leaves

1 clove garlic, peeled (optional)

150 g freshly grated pecorino

100 g freshly grated parmesan

400 g rigatoni

handful of baby purple perilla leaves, to serve (optional)

serves 4

Rigatoni Al Pesto Calabrese

In the southern Italian region of Calabria, they like it hot, and this fantastic version of pesto is fiery in both taste and colour, gaining its heat from red chillies and its intriguing orange colour from an unusual blend of capsicum and cheeses.

Traditionally, no garlic is used in this pesto, but if you like you can add a clove when the ingredients are in the blender.

Heat 4 tablespoons of olive oil in a heavy-based frying pan over medium heat. When hot, add the onion and a pinch of salt and sauté until the onion is soft and translucent, stirring with a wooden spoon.

Add the capsicum and basil, season with salt and stir well. Sauté gently for a further 20 minutes or until everything has softened and melted together.

Remove the pan from the heat and leave the capsicum mixture to cool for about 20 minutes.

Transfer the cooled capsicum mixture and its cooking oil to a blender. Add the ricotta, tomato, chilli, oregano and the garlic (if using), and the rest of the olive oil. Blend for about 20 seconds on medium speed. Stop the blender, add the pecorino and parmesan and blend again until the pesto is smooth and creamy. Transfer to a bowl big enough to hold the pasta.

Cook the rigatoni in plenty of boiling salted water until al dente. Drain and toss gently with the pesto. Garnish with the perilla leaves (if using), then serve immediately.