

Estonian First Lady Evelin Ilves marked the publication of her new cookbook *Kingitud maitsed / Gifts of Taste/* at a bookstore in the town of Abja today. It will be officially presented at a Helsinki book fair dedicated to Estonia on 28 October. The 272-page cookbook has been published in Estonian and English by Varrak and illustrated by English photographer Marksteen Adamson. The book has an initial print-run of 5000. It will also be released as an e-book by the end of the year.

“On the one hand, writing the book was like a hobby, and a real pleasure, but on the other hand a job as well, and one I really liked doing,” the First Lady said. “I’m so pleased that Varrak shares my view that tasty food you make yourself is something we should all contribute to. I’m sure the book conveys the joy of sharing and self-discovery that I’ve experienced.”

Describing her inspiration for the cookbook, the First Lady said: “In the years we’ve spent at Kadriorg we’ve presented heads of state and other people close to us with a lot of different Estonian flavours. There’s no simpler, quicker or more enjoyable way of expressing your country’s values or capturing the intricacies of its climate and moods and what they have to offer than through local food. That’s why I’m so happy to be able to share the flavours and dishes we’ve been so lucky to discover and enjoy with those who have a real love for food.”

Kingitud maitsed is a culinary journey with the presidential couple and their friends that looks at the rewarding experiences food made with love can provide, says the First Lady. “And anyone who tries making the dishes at home themselves by following the recipes will find they turn out perfectly, I can promise that! For the most part they’re all very straightforward, but even those that require a little more patience I’ve tried myself a number of times, and they’ve turned out beautifully. Some of the recipes I’ve changed a little or added to over time, since the ingredients you can get are never quite the same in one place as they are in another. So wherever I could I’ve offered alternatives.”

Priit Maide, the director of the Varrak publishing house, says that visually and in terms of its content *Kingitud maitsed* is very much a whole, reflecting the warmth of sharing good food and the enjoyment that comes with preparing it. “Publishing the cookbook has been an honour for us as much as it has been hard work!” he said. “We bought the rights to it because I’m convinced it will be a bestseller. It’s being published at a very reasonable price for books in its segment – €19.90. It really is a complete work that’s been written with a lot of dedication; you can see that in the enjoyment its recipes provide. It’s also a very personal work: the First Lady really brings it all to life even before you get to the recipes themselves. There’s just something very tempting

about it, and it spells good taste from cover to cover!"

The book's designer, Dan Mikkin, says that getting *Kingitud maitseed* to publication has been an international undertaking. "Everything works together so well – Evelin's simple, heartfelt recipes are matched perfectly by Marksteen's photos, which really give them a 'just out of the oven' feel," he said. "They couldn't be presented better. There's nothing over-the-top about it: it's how they taste that says everything that needs to be said about them. Photographing all the recipes was a fantastic experience in itself – the dishes were delicious!"

The man whose work illustrates the cookbook, English photographer Marksteen Adamson, is a highly respected brand strategist. He has developed and launched a raft of global identity programmes, including the brand identities in the mergers of PriceWaterHouseCoopers and Pharmacia & Upjohn Pharmaceuticals (for the latter of which he won a number of prestigious awards) and the Niceday brand for WH Smith (which was also showered with awards). More information about his work is available online at www.ashawebsite.co.uk .

Kingitud maitseed is being sold and delivered abroad by both Rahva Raamat and Apollo. See www.rahvaraamat.ee
and
www.apollo.ee
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The Varrak publishing house (www.varrak.ee) was founded in 1991. In its first year of operations it published just four brochures, while in its second it released 12 soft-cover publications. Since then it has grown steadily, publishing more than 200 books every year since the mid-2000s. Its library includes fiction, history books, reference works and children's books.

For further information please contact:

Priit Maide

Director, Varrak publishing house

Telephone: +372 646 1116

E-mail: priit@varrak.ee