

May 4, 2010

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L'atelier des Chefs

Did you ever wish that you could produce restaurant quality meals at home to enjoy for yourself and also to impress your friends? This month I went on a cookery course and got a few steps closer to making that wish come true. **L'atelier des Chefs** is a cookery school in central London that gives you the opportunity to work with a professional chef and to cook a meal that any restaurant would be proud to serve.



The courses are of differing lengths and cover both cooking and techniques, I did the 30 minute, lunchtime, **Cook, Eat and Run** and enjoyed a self-cooked two course meal. It was also incredible value at £15. To read the report on the class click [here...](#) or for more information go to www.atelierdeschefs.co.uk



The Malaysia Kitchen Dining Card

Lots of restaurant news this month, kicking off with a great scheme that has recently been launched by **Malaysia Kitchen**. This is an initiative to encourage visitors to try the pleasures of Malaysian food in a variety of restaurants. I have recently eaten at the **Rasa Sayang** in Soho (see review [here...](#)) and **Kiasu in Queensway** London, www.kiasu.co.uk, which I will be writing about during the month. Both restaurants are excellent

Malaysia Kitchen has launched a **Dining Card** that enables you to get a discount at selected Malaysian restaurants. It's free and all you have to do is register on their web site.. To apply for your card go to www.malaysiakitchen.co.uk

Tayyabs

It was my elder daughter's birthday during the month and she wanted to celebrate it at **Tayyabs**, a really great curry house in the East End. So six of us duly set off to Whitechapel, with bottles of Champagne and Chablis in eco bags, as the restaurant is bring your own booze (BYOB). We arrived at 7:00pm on a Monday night, the place was already mobbed and it is easy to taste why. Mountains of authentic Pakistani food, beautifully cooked, a buzzing atmosphere and fantastic value for money, important, as I was paying.



If you go, include the Tandoori lamb chops in the starters. They are tender and literally bursting with spicy flavour. A small word of warning, the food is quite hot so a jug of Lassi, a yoghurt based drink is recommended. By the time we left there were 50-60 people waiting for a table, but we had never felt rushed by the staff. For more information and to book go to www.tayyabs.co.uk

The Indian Dining Club

Keeping with the curry theme I tried a South London restaurant called the **Indian Dining Club** in Gypsy Hill recently. This was a much quieter experience than Tayyabs, serving some very elegant Indian Food. One of my dining companions asked for a dish not on the menu, Lamb with Apricots, which they cheerfully produced, so the service is top rate as well.

I was particularly impressed with my main course, Nilgiri Murgh, a chicken preparation cooked with fresh mint, nuts, coriander, onion and spinach in a coconut cream sauce, a speciality from the Nilgiris mountains. For more on the restaurant and to book go to www.indiandiningclub.com



It's White Asparagus Time at the Bavarian Beerhouse

Throughout May, the **Bavarian Beerhouse** in London will serve a special menu to celebrate the taste of German white asparagus. Still a novelty in the UK, white asparagus is highly prized in Germany, where the season is eagerly anticipated by growers and food lovers alike. The new season asparagus will be flown in especially from Germany and cooked to a German recipe.

Grown in the dark, the white stalks have a milder flavour than the green variety grown in the UK. In Germany, white asparagus is traditionally served as a soup, with Schnitzel (escalope) or with Black Forest cured ham, boiled potatoes

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and hollandaise sauce – all of which are on offer at the Bavarian Beerhouse. To read AMG's review of this restaurant click [here...](#) For more information go to www.bavarian-beerhouse.com

Lunch Club at Le Garrick

Le Garrick, the quintessentially French restaurant in Covent Garden, has recently launched a brand new, exclusive Lunch Club. The Lunch Club entitles members to be the first to hear about offers, events and best of all, members will receive a 10 per cent discount off their food and drinks bill. If you want to join just mention it to a member of staff when you are there.

Situated on Garrick Street in London's Theatreland, **Le Garrick Restaurant** is the rare mix of a local restaurant in the busy streets of central London. Le Garrick offers an intimate dining experience with personable service and excellent French fare. There is a Plat du Jour every day and many wines on the extensive list are available by the glass, carafe or bottle. For more and to book go to www.garrickrestaurantbar.co.uk

5 Alive – Longer Lasting than Buck's Fizz

5 Alive, the breakfast juice drink is back with a **brand new apple variant**. When 5 Alive first arrived in the UK, the Iron Lady lived at Downing Street, Buck's Fizz won the Eurovision Song Contest with 'Making Your Mind Up' and Diana and Charles tied the knot. Things have changed since 1981 but the light refreshing taste of 5 Alive has made it a favourite through the years.



The quirky new TV ad campaign, featuring a dancing dodo brought back to life by 5 Alive, has been set to Don Fardon's soul classic, I'm Alive. Check out www.dancingdodo.com for lots of ways to interact with the Dodo and to find out more about 5 Alive. New apple 5 Alive is available in 1 litre packs from selected supermarkets with an RRP of 99p.

The Real Food Festival

A quick reminder that the **Real Food Festival** is on at Earls Court from 7th – 9th May. This really is a foodie's paradise and is the event of the year for people who appreciate well sourced, ethically produced food. To buy tickets go to www.realfoodfestival.co.uk or call 0871 231 0827



JING Tea introduces the Healthy Infuser Mug Set

You probably remember when tea came loose rather than in bags, so if you still hanker after those days of a proper cuppa then this will be of interest. This month sees award-winning JING Tea launch a **Healthy Infuser Mug Set** (£27.65 for the set or £15.50 for the mug) which includes JING's best-selling antioxidant teas: Organic Dragon Well green tea, Organic Gunpowder Supreme green tea and Organic White Peony Supreme white tea. Be it in the office or on the move, you do not need to settle for a dusty tea bag or dried-out herbal infusion.

And when you are drinking Jing tea you are in very good company. Restaurants such as the Fat Duck, The Lanesborough, Brown's Hotel, Gordon Ramsay's Royal Hospital Road and the Boxwood Café all offer a Jing tea menu. JING's teas are beautifully packaged and available to buy online at www.jingtea.com

Spoonfed Suppers

And finally a quick mention of an excellent new web site started by Candy Delaney - Your Virtual 1950's Housewife. Called **Spoonfed Suppers**, the site will deliver you the recipe for a nutritious evening meal every day and on Friday will give you a shopping list for the following week's dishes. To register for your free recipes go to www.spoonfedsuppers.com

Next Month

A very busy month upcoming, I will be having afternoon tea at the Bentley Hotel in Kensington, reviewing the restaurant Canteen in Baker Street London, going to a barbeque featuring 'Newman's Own' marinades and dressings, having lunch at the Japanese restaurant Tsuru in the City, lunching with Aldo Zilli at the excellent Zilli Fish, going to the Real Food Festival to take a look at the latest trends in food, flying to Amsterdam for a Sushi course at the Okura Hotel and seeking out the famous Indonesian Rijsttafel or Rice Table that is a ubiquitous feast in the Dutch capital



Food Newz April 2010

Food Newz

Peter Morrell, Food and Drink Editor of AMG, reports on all things foodie he meets and hears about on his travels. Here is a roundup of the current news

1st April 2010

Philadelphia

This month has been another gastronomic adventure including a trip to Philadelphia where I discovered some great restaurants and the **Reading Terminal Market**, the City's answer to London's Borough Market, it's a real foodie's paradise. And, to dispel a myth, Philadelphia Cheese was invented in New York in 1880, it was just named after Philly, then an area known for high quality dairy products. To read a culinary tour of Philadelphia click [here...](#)

Lake House Table

Back in the UK I had a chance to sample a new ready prepared food range from Lake House Table, a venture started by two real food evangelists, **Ed Olphin and Trudie Styler**. The boxed ready meals contain everything you need to prepare a delicious dinner for two in just 20 minutes. These include two portions of British free-range organic meat (currently beef, pork or chicken), a potato side dish, seasonal greens and complementary sauce or gravy. There are detailed cooking instructions and the added option of logging on to the Lake House Table website for additional hints and tips.



I have met the team behind the venture and there is no doubting their enthusiasm and passion for good, responsibly produced food. Having tried the range it's clear that their commitment has paid off. There's all the advantages of convenience food - no preparation, no mess and no waste – but the quality is excellent and there are none of the usual preservatives. The ingredients are not just carefully sourced and organic but also seasonal. Spring lamb is just becoming available, so look out for this in the near future. The current range is available from Waitrose from £9.99. For more information go to www.lakehousetable.co.uk

Fresh food to your door

And while on the subject of good well sourced food, I recently came across a couple of West Country based suppliers who can deliver fresh food to your door. The first, **Fish for Thought**, is a specialist online retailer based in Cornwall, supplying fish and seafood direct to your door. Customers can simply specify on the order whether they want the fish to come whole, headed and gutted or filleted and portioned. Fish for Thought has its own day boats, The Manx Ranger and The Resolute and works closely with Cornwall's fish markets and fishermen to ensure its customers get fresh fish, of the highest quality and the best value for money. www.fishforthought.co.uk



The second supplier is **Pipers Farm** in Devon, past winners of the BBC Best Food Producer Award. They raise all the meat they sell allowing their animals to grow slowly, naturally and free from stress. Everything sold is produced

on their own 50 acre farm which includes an on-farm butchery and kitchen. And delivery to your door is fast. If you place your order by 4pm from Monday to Thursday it will be with you by midday the next day. There is a great range on offer from 28 day hung beef to lamb, pork, geese and turkeys. For more information and to order call 01392 881380 or online at www.pipersfarm.com

Great Little Ideas

Premier Foods, the people who bring you household names such as Branston Pickle, OXO, Bisto and Mr Kipling, have launched a web site to help you put a new twist on the food that you cook every day. Called www.greatlittleideas.com, it's packed with hints and tips on how to make your family meals more interesting. One of their new products is **Branston's 'Chakalaka'**, Relish with hot Peri Peri. Put this on your sausages and it will add a new dimension to breakfast or dinner.

Easter Food

Now for a quick round up of some Easter food ideas. Cheese maker, **Cathedral City** has launched its **Vintage 60**, Cheddar that has been slowly maturing for the last five years. This is an opportunity to taste one of the UK's oldest Cheddars. The flavour is very intense with an almost 'dark chocolate' element which gradually surrenders to creaminess. The depth and richness of flavour superbly complements the rugged texture. You need to hurry to get this as it's only available from Waitrose over Easter



If your taste is sweet rather than savoury then look out for Belgian chocolatier **Guylian's** latest range of Easter eggs, they are a feast for your eyes as well as your taste buds. Hazelnuts from the Mediterranean are gently roasted and caramelised before being blended with true Belgian chocolate and put into a lovely box to make the ideal gift for your loved one

Spring Food

Despite the weather, there are foodie signs that Spring is round the corner with tender and flavoursome **New Zealand Lamb** is now appearing in the shops. For recipes featuring this traditional Spring meat visit www.nzlambrecipes.info. And to go with the lamb, what better reminder of the warmer weather to come, than **Jersey Royal new potatoes**. Often referred to as the 'champagne of the potato world' the name Jersey Royals conjures up the sun soaked beaches of the Channel Islands, the fresh sea breezes and, in some cases, the 'Vraic', or seaweed, which is used by farmers as a natural fertiliser. www.jerseyroyals.co.uk

Thai New Year

Thai New Year, or Songkran as it is traditionally known, takes place between 13th and 15th April this year. During Songkran it is customary to celebrate with friends and family by throwing water on them, as it is believed that the water will wash away all kinds of evil and misfortune. Another key tradition is





to show generosity. So why not show your kindness by brushing up on your Thai cooking skills and invite your nearest and dearest over for a sumptuous Thai banquet.

To help you out, **Blue Dragon's** expert chefs, who have travelled the length and breadth of Thailand sourcing ingredients and authentic recipes, are want to share them with you. Click [here...](#) to see some delicious recipes to help you celebrate Songkran.

Restaurants

Mestizo Restaurant & Tequila Bar has just celebrated 5 years of serving Londoners with superior Mexican food. With Mexican owners, chefs and staff, Mestizo is perhaps the only authentic Mexican Restaurant in the capital to provide regional specialities to original recipes from all of Mexico. Mestizo is situated on the Hampstead Rd., five minutes from Warren Street tube station. www.mestizomx.com

And news that **El Pirata de Tapas** in Westbourne Grove, which offers flavour-packed Spanish cuisine has has launched its new Spring menu. Lunchtime features a 'Menu del Dia' (£9.95) and includes a choice of two tapas with bread and alioli, and a glass of house wine. The chef's tasting menu (£25pp) is a selection of nine dishes including: octopus carpaccio, clementine caviar, capers and paprika; pork cheeks, carrot puree and red wine shallots; seared scallops with artichoke hearts and Iberian bacon. www.elpirataдетapas.co.uk

I reviewed two superb London restaurants this month. The first, the **Rasa Sayang in China Town**, serves authentic Malaysian food, very reminiscent of street food sold in the night markets of Kuala Lumpur. To read the review click [here...](#) The second restaurant was the **Modern Pantry in Clerkenwell**, where chef Anna Hansen has created an inspired menu - a vision of where food is going, to read the review click [here...](#)



I also had lunch at a restaurant in Kings Cross called **Konstam**, www.konstam.co.uk based in a pub called the Prince Albert. The food was excellent with some very intense tastes, the wine, all from the **Fetzer vineyard** in California, were first class. www.fetzer.com

Next Month

Next month I will be reviewing the cookery school, L'Ateliers des Chefs, going to the opening of a new Japanese restaurant in the City, Tsuru, visiting the burlesque nightclub Volupte, sampling some Sri Lankan food, trying the very popular Chaser Inn, at Shipbourne in Kent and eating at the London Canal Museum.



Food Newz March 2010

Food Newz

Peter Morrell, Food and Drink Editor of AMG, reports on all things foodie he meets and hears about on his travels. Here is a roundup of the current news

2nd March 2010

It's a Great Day for the Irish

As many of you know, it's **St Patrick's Day on 17th March** and as well as having a few glasses of Guinness it's a good time to try some of the excellent food that comes from the Emerald Isle and here are a couple of suggestions. Ireland is well known for its dairy industry and a new range of products has just arrived in Selfridges.

Glenilen Farm (www.glenilenfarm.com) is run by husband and wife team, Alan and Valerie Kingston and they produce some amazing artisan dairy products like cheesecakes, yoghurts, cream cheese and more. So for an authentic taste of the farm, take a look in Selfridges Food Hall.



And if you want something to eat with your cream cheese, then try **Ditty's Oatcakes**, hailing from another family firm Castledawson, Co. Derry in Northern Ireland,. As well as the traditional oatcake other varieties available include Smoked Oatcakes, where the oats are smoked by Frank Hederman of Belvelly Smoke House in Co. Cork and Gubbeen Oatcakes made with Gubbeen cheese produced by Tom and Giana Ferguson of Gubbeen Farmhouse Products in Co. Cork. Look out for these in Waitrose, for more information visit www.dittysbakery.com.



Kara Dairy Free Milk

For one reason or another not everyone can tolerate milk in their diet but some of the alternatives are don't have the versatility to be used on breakfast cereal, and in cooking as well as in tea and coffee.

But now a viable alternative has arrived, **Kara** is totally dairy free and can be used in drinks and to make anything from a roux to a rice pudding. It is made from **freshly pressed**



coconuts from Kara managed plantations in Sumatra. There are no artificial colourings or flavourings and it's approved by the Vegetarian, Vegan and Coeliac Societies.

Even better it contains more Lauric Acid than any other type of milk, Lauric Acid in turn helps to control cholesterol. The

AMG team have all tried Kara and it got a universal thumbs up in terms of taste, texture and flexibility. It is pleasant to drink on its own but tastes just as good with porridge or in tea and coffee. Kara is available from Tesco Extras and Planet Organic for between £1.29 and £1.69
www.karadairyfree.com

Egg-stravaganza

As regular readers will know I am the proud owner of four hens. They are rescue chickens from a battery farm and, as they are in recovery, they are all named after celebs who have been in the rehab clinic. Our domestic egg production is one long round of feeding (chips, pasta and rice mainly), cleaning and keeping the South London foxes away. Quality eggs only come from pampered birds and to save you the hassle of keeping your own hens The **Happy Egg Company** does it for you. It makes a genuine effort to ensure that they source their eggs from well looked after chickens that have room to roam around.



Having gone to the effort of producing a good quality ingredient you want to make the most of it so The Happy Egg Company has come up with a whole range of inventive recipes that can be found at www.thehappyegg.co.uk/egg-recipes.html

A Couple of 'Weeks'

We are currently half way through **Fairtrade Fortnight** and Cafédirect is calling on Britons to "turn over a new leaf" by hosting a tea party and inspiring them to make the big swap over to Fairtrade. From women's institutes and community groups to front rooms and office canteens, it's all about bringing people together over a cuppa in a fun environment. To find out more and to get your hands on a tea party kit go to www.cafedirect.co.uk/teaparty

In the past AMG has met some of the **Cafedirect** growers and heard first-hand about the improvements that Fairtrade can make to the local community, so you can enjoy a great tasting cup of tea, coffee or cocoa and help to support the growers at the same time.



Don't tell John Prescott but this week is also **British Pie Week** and if you don't want to cook a pie at home then why not visit **Canteen**, who serve daily-changing pie specials on their classic British menu – from traditional favourites like Chicken and Mushrooms or Steak and Kidney to more unusual such as Pork, Cider and Mustard. There is always a tempting vegetarian option like Jerusalem Artichoke, Cashel Blue and Lemon. There are four branches in London to choose from. To find out more visit www.canteen.co.uk

And if you do want to cook your pie at home the winner of the 2010 British Pie Week Challenge is the **Wye Valley Pie** created by Chef Adam Pavey at The Goat Major in Cardiff,

Wales. This hearty pie is a mix of locally sourced chicken, asparagus, leeks and Tintern Abbey Cheese topped with mouth-wateringly flaky **JUS-ROL pastry**. For the recipe click [here...](#) and for more about British Pie Week visit www.britishpieweek.co.uk

Restaurants

AMG has done a couple of restaurant reviews this month that are as different as chalk and cheese. First was the **Bavarian Beerhouse** near Old Street tube. A Beer Cellar with a great range of imported German Beer and huge portions of genuine Bavarian fare. For the review click [here...](#)

The other restaurant was **Silk** in the now converted number one court of Great Marlborough Street Magistrates which is still complete with the bench, witness box and dock. This offers fusion food drawn from China, Thailand and India, a mouth-watering combination. Click [here...](#) to read the review.

Also a mention for **Dion**, a bar in St Pauls that serves some great food, and on Wednesday nights, hosts a really hot soul band called the AllStars. And finally if you have been out in the West End and want some cheap and cheerful noodles then try **Canton**, a Chinese eatery in Newport Place, just at the end of Gerrard Street, in Soho's China Town. Not to everyone's taste but I had the squid and pigs head mix, including some crunchy pigs ear. Sounds terrible but tastes wonderful. For the less adventurous the mixed seafood with crispy noodles is also a delight.

Next Month

Next month I am going to Philadelphia (BA Cabin Crew permitting) to track down the ubiquitous Philly Cheese Steak - a real comfort food. However, the real excitement will be provided by dining at the top rated La Croix in the Rittenhouse Hotel, Le Bec Fin one of America's top French restaurants and the City Tavern, the historic eatery that has been open since the late 1700s

There will also be a report on Mestizo, a Mexican Restaurant and Tequila Bar near Warren Street tube and I have also been recommended to Leon's Legend, a Taiwanese Dim Sum in Soho.

Bon Appetit



Food Newz

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4th February 2010

The Ministry of Food

I was recently going through some old papers at home and found my food ration book from the early 1950s, so I was interested to receive information about a major new exhibition being staged at the Imperial War Museum in London. Seventy years ago the wartime government announced the introduction of food rationing, a control that was to remain in force for the next fourteen years.

The Ministry of Food exhibition shows how the British public adapted to a world of food shortages by 'Lending a Hand on the Land', 'Digging for Victory', taking up the 'War on Waste', and being both frugal and inventive on the 'Kitchen Front'. Visitors will discover that growing your own food, eating seasonal fruit and vegetables, reducing imports, recycling and healthy nutrition were just as topical in 1940 as they are today. This fascinating exhibition will run between 12th February 2010 and 3rd January 2011. For admission prices, opening times and more information visit www.iwm.org.uk/food



The official book to accompany the exhibition, *The Ministry of Food* by Jane Fearnley Whittingstall (Hugh's mother), was published by Hodder & Stoughton on 4 February 2010

The True Taste Welsh Food Market

Now in its second year, the True Taste Welsh Food Market is back, bigger and better than before, bringing fresh produce from Wales's farm gates to Londoners' plates. The market will be held on Friday 26 February 2010 between 11am and 7pm at Golden Square, London, W1 (just off Regent's Street).

This year the market has moved to a larger location to allow Londoners to be able to sample and buy produce from twice as many stall holders. Up to 24 True Taste award-winning producers will be selling a plethora of food and drink from artisan cheeses and exquisite smoked meats and pâtés, to mouth-watering chocolate brownies and fresh fruit, vegetables and meat from local Welsh farm shops. For more information about this year's event visit: www.walesthetruetaste.co.uk



The Secret Life of Heinz Baked Beans

Thought that Heinz Baked Beans were only for having on toast as a snack or with the full English? Then you were wrong. Apparently, there is a huge number of inventive ways to enjoy the UK's favourite bean and Development Chef for Heinz Beanz, Adam Wilcock, and independent chef, Steve Scuffell, have compiled the list of '57 Ways to Eat Heinz Beanz' with some help from the British public.

Recipes include unusual creations such as Heinz Beanz Fondue, Heinz Beanz Jam and even Heinz Beanz Soufflé! The 57 recipes are available for Heinz Beanz fans to view on the online community site: www.goodtoknow.co.uk/heinz and there are plans to incorporate them into a new Heinz recipe book next year.

Old Winchester Cheese

I recently got the opportunity to sample a sensational cheese called Old Winchester that is made at Lyburn Farm, Hamptworth in the New Forest.

Also known as Old Smales, Old Winchester is an older version of Lyburn's Winchester, having been aged for about 16 months. This aging makes it a dryer and harder cheese, reminiscent of Grana Padano, with a distinctive nutty flavour and some very pleasant grassy notes. Old Winchester has that bit more versatility as it is made with a vegetarian rennet; so you can put it on your Quorn based Bolognese with confidence and still serve it as a table cheese.

For more information and to see the full range of Lyburn Cheeses visit www.lyburnfarm.co.uk

The Forge Restaurant - £20.10 in 2010

Set in the heart of Covent Garden, The Forge Restaurant is offering a fantastic value 3-course meal for only £20.10. This offer is available any Sunday or Monday and includes half a bottle of the house wine and a coffee. The menu features seared salmon with herb risotto, chargrilled feather steak with chips and Béarnaise sauce or caramelised cep and artichoke risotto. For dessert you can choose from a range of tempting dishes including chocolate tart with pistachio ice cream, white chocolate cheesecake with blackberries or apple and blackberry charlotte with custard.



With its exposed brickwork and large arched windows, the Forge has a rustic warmth, providing a welcome escape from the bustling streets of Covent Garden. Open from noon until midnight, 7 days a week, the restaurant also offers a pre or post theatre, 2-course set menu for £13.50. For bookings at The Forge call 020 7379 1531 or email info@theforgerestaurant.co.uk

Truffle season at El Faro Spanish restaurant



The critically acclaimed 'El Faro' (meaning Lighthouse) restaurant in London's Docklands has just announced its winter truffle menu. Head chef Javier Capella is renowned not only for his technical ability, but also his re-invention of Spanish classics and is always at the forefront when it comes to creating seasonal dishes. Truffle season is from mid December until February in Spain and El Faro has added some exciting dishes with truffles to their menu. The truffles come from 'Sarrions' in the Teurel Province and are of the 'Tuber Melanosporum' variety; the same as the French truffle.

Starters feature fried potatoes and eggs accompanied by black truffle from Teruel and green asparagus with truffle and gnocis with white butter sauce. And for the main course there is Spanish salty cod confit on a foam of potato and truffle and Iberian pork cheeks rolls, Jerusalem artichokes cream and truffle For more information and to book visit www.el-faro.co.uk

And finally I have just returned from a trip to Sharm El Sheikh in Egypt and if you are planning to go but worried about the food, don't be. Hygiene standards are good and the food is very healthy. Lots of chick peas, Tahini (sesame paste), aubergine dip and plenty of fresh fruit form the staple ingredients. I got hooked on the baby oranges, the size of a date, which you eat with the skin on. There will be more on this in an article this month.

In this coming month I will be visiting the Bavarian Beerhouse to try some traditional German cuisine and reviewing Silk, the restaurant in the Courthouse Hotel in London's Great Marlborough Street. Also if the schedule permits, I will be taking a look at Tayyabs, a well-established and popular curry house in London's East End

Bon Appetit



Food Newz

Food Newz

Judging by the viewing figures, many of you are regular readers of my Booze Newz column, which is a monthly round up all of all the various alcoholic drinks that seem to ambush me as I go about my daily life. Well just recently there seems to have been a plethora of stories about non alcoholic drinks, food, restaurants and food festivals, so here is a monthly column that is a round-up of all things foodie, Food Newz.



Food Newz January 2010

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8th January 2009

Heinz Steak and Guinness Casserole Soup

Surprisingly it's been a relatively quiet month on Food Newz probably because most people retreat to more traditional fare at this time of year. But here goes with what is new, and first up is a limited edition soup from Heinz. It's the Steak and Guinness casserole soup and is the ultimate winter warmer. It's crammed full of hearty ingredients, including tender steak, flavoursome Guinness gravy and chunky vegetables and the great thing is that it takes less than 3 minutes to cook in the microwave. Retailing at £1.69, you can buy it now in Sainsbury's ASDA, Morrison's, Tesco and other good retailers. But be quick as it's only available until March.



Florida Grapefruit

If your thoughts are turning towards how you can dump those extra pounds that always seem to magically appear after Christmas, then look out for Florida grapefruit to eat as part of your calorie controlled diet. Fresh Florida grapefruit came into season in November and will be available until May so you have got a chance to get back into shape in time for the beach this summer. Why not make a grapefruit smoothie, or add pink grapefruit segments to a smoked mackerel salad? There are several ways to enjoy the fruit, and some nice ideas can be found at www.floridajuice.com that will help you make it easier to shed those pounds.

Laya'Lina



And speaking of fresh things, I tried a superb Lebanese restaurant recently in Beauchamp Place, Knightsbridge called Laya'Lina. Done well Lebanese food is amongst the best in the World. It's light, healthy and full of flavour and, believe me, Laya'Lina does it well. The highlight for me was Baba Ghannuge, a rich smoked aubergine dip served with homemade puffed bread delicious. I have tried to re-create the dish at home but didn't



even come close to the real version. To read the full review of Laya'Lina click [here...](#)

The Gaucho's Divine Bovine Dinner

Calling all carnivores, Monday January the 18th will see one of AMG's favourite restaurants the Gaucho, in Swallow Street London W1, hosting its inaugural Divine Bovine Dinner. This is an eight-course dinner to celebrate all the deliciousness and versatility of Argentina's Aberdeen Angus beef. Guests will have a chance to briefly chew the cud over a sparkling wine reception before being ushered to the first floor to watch the Master Griller Daniel Veron and the highly entertaining Ryan Hattingh as they conduct a series of Beef Masterclasses.

Following the starters guests will be served three of Gaucho's famous steak cuts; Bife de Lomo (Filet) with Alta Vista Terroir Selection Malbec, Bife de Chorizo (Sirloin) with Zuccardi Serie A Malbec and Bife de Ancho (Ribeye) with Bressia Profundo Blend. For pudding, guests will be served a nineteenth century Beef Mincemeat Empanada with crème fraîche and Zuccardi Malamado. Each course will be served with wines especially chosen by Gaucho's Director of Wines Phil Crozier from his 200+ bin Argentine list. Price for this unique evening is £75. To book contact Matt Ford at Gaucho Piccadilly – 0207 734 4040

matt.ford@gauchorestaurants.co.uk www.gauchorestaurants.co.uk

Waxy O'Connors

Discover Ireland hosted their annual quiz night at Waxy O'Connors, the Irish bar just off Leicester Square in December. This really is a great pub for a fun night out and they serve some delicious food. The all day Irish Breakfast is a treat and includes Clonakilty black and white pudding.

Appletiser

Battered liver is not a dish that you eat but describes the state of the organ in my body after the shameful (but enjoyable) excesses of the holiday. This is going to mean several evenings during January not drinking. The problem is what to drink instead of alcohol that is both tasty and satisfying. The answer for me has been Appletiser and its sister drink, Fruitiser. Regular drinkers tend to find many soft drinks just too sweet but Appletiser has got just that right amount of tartness that makes it fine to drink all evening. And if you want a 'mocktail' then try a Fruitiser on the rocks - a healthy blend of Mango & Mandarin, Pomegranate & Raspberry or Apple & Dragonfruit - to add a touch of sophistication to your otherwise alcohol-free evening.



And if by mid January the lure of the demon drink is too much to resist why not visit www.appletiser.co.uk for some great alcohol based cocktail recipes just to add that little extra kick.

Win a Dinner by Paul Gayler courtesy of Maille Mustard

Finally Maille, France's leading mustard producer is offering a fantastic prize for you and seven guests. A sumptuous dinner prepared, in your own home, by highly acclaimed chef, author and food writer, Paul Gayler. Paul, who is the Executive Chef of The Lanesborough, will create the most incredible feast incorporating Maille® in each course. He will demonstrate the versatility of mustard and how, with a little bit of know-how, it can be used to enhance all sorts of dishes – even desserts!

Visit www.maille.co.uk and register to be automatically entered into a draw. When visiting the site look out for additional opportunities to enter more than once, and for some of Paul's unique recipes. If you're not lucky enough to win the main prize, don't worry, because fifty runners up will receive a luxurious hamper filled with Maille® merchandise and products - enough Maille to prepare your own fabulous feast.



Food Newz December 2009

Food Newz

Peter Morrell, Food and Drink Editor of AMG, reports on all things foodie he meets and hears about on his travels. Here is a roundup of the current news

4th December 2009

Bord Bia - The Irish Food Board

November was another great foodie month, one of the best events being the sampling of Irish Food at Mark Hix restaurant in Soho. Hosted by Bord Bia (www.bordbia.ie), the Irish Food Board, it was a showcase of the very best that Ireland has to offer in terms of fresh food from producers that care about quality, taste and value. Apart from the steak and Guinness pie, fresh oysters, Dublin Bay Prawns and Carigeen Moss Pudding, which were all good, the highlights were the smoked salmon and the artisan cheeses.



The smoked salmon was from the Belvelly Smoke House in County Cork run by Frank Hederman. Lightly smoked over beech wood, with a minimum of salt, the salmon really gives of its best in terms of taste. Critically acclaimed by the likes of Heston Blumenthal and Tom Parker Bowles, it is distributed by Wright Brothers of Borough Market.

The farmhouse cheeses were to die for and Ireland offers a whole range of styles. For example the St Tola Goats Cheese log from Cork is fresh as a daisy and packed with flavour while the Coolea, a hard cheese reminiscent of Grana Padano, has a nutty and almost toffee-like flavour. And if you like your cheese pungent then the Ardrahan, another Cork favourite, is for you. Look out for these, Gubeen, Cashel Blue and other Irish cheeses on the counters of Waitrose and Tesco - you won't be disappointed.

Ireland as a culinary travel destination has a lot to offer, read about a recent three day trip that I did recently exploring the area around Dublin by clicking [here...](#)

Chicken Naag - Anjum Anand



During November we had National Curry Week and, just in case you didn't make it to your favourite Curry House, leading chef, Anjum Anand, has created Chicken Naag the perfect curry dish that you can create at home.

The word Naag means Cobra in Hindi, so there can only be one drink to accompany this dish, and that is the World renown Cobra Beer. To watch the video of Anjum showing you how to cook Chicken Naag and for other great recipes visit the Cobra web site, www.cobrabeer.com/recipes

The Indian Maharaja Deccan Odyssey

An Indian restaurant that did impress me immensely during the month was Tamarai in London's Drury Lane, offering some very interesting canapes and main dishes. I was there for the launch of the 'Indian Maharaja Deccan Odyssey', a trip of a lifetime on India's first privately managed luxury train on an eight day journey through the heartland of the Maharajas and Moghuls from Mumbai to Delhi. Catering on the train is run by the World famous Taj Hotel group, so if you want to have the real Indian food experience and see some of the best attractions that India has to offer visit www.theindianmaharaja.com for more information.

Oki-Nami - Brighton

While on an Asian theme, if you are looking for a great gift for a friend or loved one this Christmas and they live on the South coast why not buy them a place on a Sushi workshop at Brighton's Japanese restaurant, Oki-Nami, co-owned by DJ Norman Cook, where they can learn the traditional art of Sushi making.



Oki-Nami's Japanese chef, Mike Dodd, who has over 15 years experience teaching and preparing Sushi, will be hosting the workshops. The afternoon starts with a look at the history of Sushi and the equipment and ingredients used in the preparation of the meal, followed by a Sushi making demonstration. Pupils will learn the art of how to cook the perfect Sushi rice, how to cut fish correctly and how to prepare and roll fillings such as the California Roll. Sushi Workshops cost £75 per person. For bookings please contact Oki-Nami on 01273 773 777. www.okinami.com

Seaweed Caviar from Porter Foods

At the Master Chef exhibition a couple of weeks ago, I came across a remarkable product from Porter Foods. It comes in a jar, looks like caviar, smells like caviar, tastes like caviar and the 'eggs' pop like caviar but it is, in fact ... seaweed. Made with a secret process, you can have the caviar experience without either killing a sturgeon or it costing you a fortune. Why not treat yourself for Christmas, and don't tell your visitors, they will never know the difference. Available from www.porterfoods.co.uk at £5.99 for a 113 gram jar.

Bangalore Express



My visit to a restaurant in the City called Bangalore Express this month is reviewed under the heading Bangalore Impress, which sums up the whole experience. A twist on the traditional curry, there are some really innovatory dishes on the menu. Add to that a beautifully designed dining space, good service and reasonable prices and you have the perfect eating experience. Click [here...](#) for the review.

Stanza

Another restaurant on the menu was Stanza in Shaftesbury Avenue, formerly Teatro, the new owners have changed the name and brought in a new chef, Maggie John-Lewis who has a wealth of experience at places like the Artisan at the Westbury Hotel and the Grosvenor House and Park Lane Hotels. To read the review click

[here...](#)

Bordeaux Quay

And finally, just to prove that we are not totally London centric, here is news of another out of town restaurant that has awards falling on it like confetti. On the day of the West Country floods a couple of years ago I drove to Bristol to see my daughter graduate from the city's university. Graduation day is important for any parent and a good restaurant in which to celebrate afterwards is a must. The choice on the day was Bordeaux Quay, which turned out to be perfect. Well sourced food, highlighting the best of the local area, made it the ideal venue. Bordeaux Quay, located on Bristol's historic harbour side, also has a brasserie, bar, deli, bakery

and cookery school all under one roof. For more information visit www.bordeaux-quay.co.uk

Well that's it until the New Year. Have a good Christmas, don't eat too much and if you do come across some good food or a restaurant that is extra special then mail me on peter@aboutmygeneration.com and I will try and give it a mention.



Food Newz November 2009

Food Newz

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6th November 2009

Bio-Grape

Lots of interesting new foods have come our way this past month, so let's start with a unique new product from Australia called Bio-Grape. This is a range of pastes made from residual grape skins and seeds that are left after the wine making process is finished. The great thing about these pastes is that they are very rich in anti-oxidants rating highly on the ORAC (Oxygen Radical Absorption Capacity) scale and are a delicious way to stay healthy.



Available in six different flavours such as Chilli Shiraz and Cabernet Pepperberry, they are the perfect accompaniment to cheese. They are in domed pots which means the past retains an attractive shape when served on the cheese board. The pastes have been tried by the AMG tasting panel and got a resounding thumbs up. The Bio-Grape pastes, gift packs and a Red Wine Jus and Red Wine Chilli Sauce are available in the UK online from www.porterfoods.co.uk.

San Cristobal Drinking Chocolate

Now that the clocks have gone back and the nights are drawing in there is nothing better than enjoying a cup of hot chocolate around the fire. Now you can make the experience even more luxurious with Cafedirect's award-winning San Cristobal Drinking Chocolate. This rich, creamy drink is made from the purest, most ethically sourced cocoa produced in the small town in the Dominican Republic from which it derives its name, San Cristobal. It was awarded a prestigious Gold Star at this year's Great Taste Awards, which are widely regarded as the foodie Oscars. www.cafedirect.co.uk

Toblerone Cupcake



As a kid, my favourite treat was a Cupcake. They came in a box of four and only in chocolate. Well the last couple of years have seen the Cupcake re-invented and one of the bakers at the forefront of this new-found popularity is Lola's Kitchen. They have just launched a limited edition Toblerone Cupcake. A sponge made using creamy Toblerone chocolate and with chewy honey-almond nougat pieces finished with a white chocolate ganache and topped with a generous chunk of Toblerone chocolate, they are a treat that is hard to resist.

This new flavour Cupcake joins their 16 other varieties, and is available for delivery in the London postal districts. You can order by visiting their web site www.lolas-kitchen.co.uk or visit their new Cupcake bar in Selfridges.

New Green Coffee from Nescafe

A new type of coffee which contains high levels of naturally occurring antioxidants has been launched in the UK by Nescafe®. Made from a blend of unroasted green coffee beans and roasted beans, Nescafe Green Blend has been specially created by coffee experts to deliver great tasting coffee, rich in flavour and aroma, with health benefits.

The goodness of Nescafe Green Blend lies within the unroasted green coffee beans which are naturally rich in polyphenol antioxidants and can help protect the body's cells from day to day damage, Polyphenol antioxidants are also found in green tea and cocoa. But unlike green tea, it tastes exactly like its regular counterpart, with no 'health drink' type taste either - you add milk and sugar as you would with any coffee. It costs £2.98 for 100g - the same as regular Nescafe.

The Angela Malik Cook School

How about this as a very special Christmas present to yourself or for the foodie in your life? A gift voucher for a lesson at the Angela Malik cook school in West London. Angela is a highly regarded chef and she can teach you how to create the perfect Indian dinner, demystify Thai food or perfect your Dim Sum making skills.



The range of options available is vast with something for everyone and all skill levels is catered for. Standard classes include: Indian Express Lunch, Real Vietnamese Cooking, How to Create the Perfect Indian Dinner, Thai Food Made Easy, Brilliant Cocktails and Canapés, A Taste of Morocco and Simple Chinese Cooking. For more information, to book and to buy gift vouchers and ingredients visit www.angelamalik.co.uk

Restaurants

I recently reviewed a fabulous Italian Restaurant in Great Eastern



Street, just north of the City of London. Called Lena, it offers superb, well-cooked regional Italian dishes in stylish surroundings, for the full review click [here...](#)

Bad news is that the Ice Bar has melted, but the good news is that it has been re-frozen into a new theme - Aquatic. Go and enjoy the 40 minutes of -5c, sipping a cocktail from an ice 'glass' and then come out and have a meal, the food in the restaurant is excellent and they have just announced the details of their usual fun packed New Year's Eve Party www.belowzerolondon.com

If you want something hotter then go to the Cuban Bar/Restaurant Floridita in Wardour Street. Fantastic live bands from Havana and salsa dancing give you the true atmosphere of Cuba as do the selection of Mojito cocktails and the food. Try the picanha (rump

steak), the very popular Brazilian cut with only limited marbling, served with farofa, a toasted manioc flour mixture and chimichurri relish. www.floridita.co.uk

I am continuing to get good reports of El Faro, the Spanish restaurant in Docklands. A stone's throw from Crossharbour DLR, it is easily accessible from both central London via the Jubilee line and from South London. They are now taking bookings for Christmas. The owners cook the food with real passion and I am told that the roasted Iberian suckling pig with mango and raisins tatin, pine nuts and Xerez vinaigrette is the best in London. www.el-faro.co.uk



Food Newz Archive

Food Newz

Peter Morrell, Food and Drink Editor of AMG, reports on all things foodie he meets and hears about on his travels. Here is a roundup of the current news

5th October 2009

It's been a very busy month on the food front, so let's get going with news of a new range of cookery tools. You may have seen the recent picture of Peter Mandelson sitting in what appears to be an old northern shop. The actual location was Nonna's Deli in Camden which is attached to Gordon Ramsay's York and Albany restaurant and also the venue for the launch of Gordon's new Professional range of kitchen equipment, (Strapline: Kitchenware you can swear by) that includes a stylishly sleek range of mixers, blenders, toasters and time saving kitchen tools.



Gordon himself was there to demonstrate some of the products and afterwards mix with the throng. Unlike his aggressive TV persona, he came across as very likeable, friendly and amusing and, apart from the odd word, doesn't even swear too much. Look out for the range of kitchenware in the shops soon.

How to boil an egg

If you are a regular reader of this column you will know that I was recently given four hens as a present. So to make a hard-boiled egg I have to... build a run, buy a 20 kilo bag of food, feed the hens, clean them out, collect the egg, boil some water, set the timer, shell the egg and before finally getting to eat the egg. But there is a simpler way... go to the supermarket and buy a ready boiled egg.

the happy egg co., the free range egg producer is expanding its range to include ready shelled happy boiled eggs. You can now buy ready-to-eat hard boiled eggs from Waitrose, ASDA, One Stop and online from Ocado.com. It's certainly a whole lot easier than producing your own and at 89 pence for two a lot cheaper too. For more information visit www.thehappyegg.co.uk

National Chocolate Week



With National Chocolate week happening between 12th-18th October I'm glad to see that Thorntons the chocolatier continue to go from strength to strength. Look out for the Madagascan milk chocolate with strawberry and Madagascan milk chocolate with salted pistachio nuts to be launched in the coming months, after winning golds at the 2009 Great Taste Awards. For more information go to www.thorntons.co.uk

Also look out for some new chocolate bars from Lindt - the Double Milk Caramel, delicate crunchy caramel pieces in a smooth milk filling, surrounded by Lindt's delicious Swiss milk chocolate. This is a new recipe and an addition to the Lindt Swiss Classic range. Visit www.lindt.co.uk

And if you are watching your weight, Splenda, the low calorie sweetener company, has got some great chocolate recipes. Click [here...](#) so see how to make the no-guilt Chocolate Stack.

Restaurant Newz

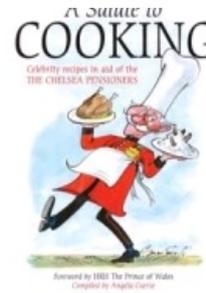
I have been wanting to try the wines and food of Georgia, particularly the Khinkali, traditional dumplings for a while and that opportunity came during September. I was invited by some Russian friends to eat at Mimino, a cosy Georgian restaurant in Kensington High Street., to read my review click [here...](#)

Retro and nostalgia are all the rage at the moment so Hardy's restaurant, on a tranquil corner in Marylebone, who are celebrating their 25th anniversary, is offering a Christmas menu from 1984. Priced at a very reasonable £19.84 per person it features old favourites like classic prawn cocktail, Duck Liver pate, Roast Turkey and Steak Diane. Desserts include Sticky Toffee pudding and Filo Mince pies.

Hardy's, founded by Nick de Bastarrechea, is still a family run local favourite offering a relaxed and friendly atmosphere for more info visit www.hardysbrasserie.co.uk

A Salute to Cooking

The Royal Hospital Chelsea, home to the famous, scarlet-coated Chelsea Pensioners, is to publish *A Salute to Cooking*, a brand new recipe book which has a front cover designed by satirical cartoonist, Gerald Scarfe CBE, a foreword by HRH The Prince of Wales and more than 100 favourite recipes contributed by a fantastic parade of celebrities from all walks of life including Joanna Lumley and Gordon Ramsay. On sale from 14 October 2009, (rrp £14.99), *A Salute to Cooking*, can be ordered from the Royal Hospital Chelsea website (www.chelsea-pensioners.org.uk) and will be sold in the Royal Hospital shop in the grounds of the Royal Hospital Chelsea. All proceeds will go to the Chelsea Pensioners Fund.



Food Events

Upcoming events include the Clovelly Herring Festival, being held at the harbour of this beautiful village on Sunday 15th November it offers tastings, live music and family entertainment. Visit www.clovelly.co.uk for more.

The Brick Lane Curry Festival is now underway and will run until the 10th October. The entire length of Brick Lane and Osborn Street will be closed to create easy access for the crowds and to add to the festival atmosphere. This will also make way for the al fresco dining opportunities that will be provided by the multitude of longstanding restaurants, which have added colour, flavour and character to one of London's most infamous streets for years and transformed Brick Lane into a cultural and social hotspot for tourists and Londoners alike. For more details visit the official web site www.bricklanecurryfestival.com

And finally, it's National Baking Week on 19th – 25th October. So get out your mixing bowls from the back of the cupboard and surprise your friends and relatives. Visit www.nationalbakingweek.com for more.

2nd September 2009

Reggae Reggae Sauce update

Do you remember the irrepressible Levi Roots who appeared on the Dragon's Den a couple of years ago with his Reggae Reggae sauce? Well, he and his sauce are going from strength to strength and Levi has teamed up with Birds Eye to make Reggae Reggae sauce one of the flavours in their Chicken Chargrill range. Other flavours in the range include new Lime and Chilli and favourites such as Original and Peri Peri. Available from all good supermarkets.



Restaurant News

Mestizo at 103 Hampstead Road, London's authentic Mexican restaurant and tequila bar is holding their fourth 'Gastronomic Week Festival' from the 8th – 13th September.

Featuring the cuisine from 10 states in Mexico (Yucatan, Chiapas, Campeche, Veracruz, Michoacán, Oaxaca, Guerrero, Jalisco, Guanajuato & Puebla), there will be a special menu available with a choice of 20 starters and 20 main courses. The Gastronomic Week Festival culminates on Mexican Independence Day, 15th September, with a special menu featuring traditional Mexican specialities. For more details visit www.mestizomx.com

Over at 57 Aldgate High Street, London EC3, Kasturi, the award winning Indian restaurant, has arranged a Fish Festival which will run from the 1st September to the 15th October 2009. The special menu will feature dishes such as the Crab Kebab (North-East Atlantic spicy ground crab cakes with coriander, mint, mustard and ginger), Salmon Tikka (Loch Fyne Scottish salmon, marinated with spices and fresh herbs, char-grilled in a traditional clay oven) and mouth-watering Sea Food Biryani (Chef Raj's unique innovation, using prawns, king prawn, octopus, mussels & white fish, served with chilled raitha).



This alternative Indian cuisine, namely Seafood with an Indian twist, is a must for food lovers. Diners can also enjoy an eclectic range of exotic beverages including Mango Lassi and fresh Coconut water. For more information visit www.kasturi-restaurant.co.uk

Unearthed

There is a brand new food range in the shops, called unearthed. It's great for sharing, mostly sourced from the Mediterranean, and includes olives, prosciutto, salami, chorizo, ham and feta as well as part-cooked bread. It's currently available from Waitrose, Ocado and Able & Cole, for more information click on www.discoverunearthed.com



British Food Fortnight 19 September – 4 October

Look out for a local event that will be running near you to celebrate British Food Fortnight. Here is a link to a list of things that are planned http://lovebritishfood.co.uk/whats_happening/

Cheshire Cheese

While we are on the subject of British Food one of the classics is Cheshire Cheese and to lift the gloom two Cheshire cheesemakers, highly decorated chef Duncan Poyser and nutritional expert Rachael Anne Hill have created the definitive salad to make you smile. Based on Cheshire Cheese the recipe contains a whole range of ingredients to lift your mood and improve your health. To see the salad recipe click [here...](#) or to find out more about Cheshire Cheese visit www.cheshirecheese.org



Chicken Run

And on the domestic front, my four chickens Amy, Susan, Britney and Kerry have settled in to their new home and are now producing between them three to four eggs per day, 90 per cent of which we give away. Their standard feed is a dry porridge like mix called Layers Mash and in the last four weeks they have consumed 20 kilos of it. However the real entertainment comes when they are given spinach, the run is a complete free for all with spilt water containers and feed bowls as the casualties of their rugby scrum Will keep you posted on progress.

7th August 2009

Chicken Run



Well I guess the big news this month, which I will keep you updated on, was the surprise foodie birthday present I got for my birthday - chickens! Not the ones that you eat but the ones that lay eggs. So living in my urban garden, 15 minutes away from central London are Amy, Susan, Britney and Kerry – four ex battery hens now, in rehab, who seem very happy and are now laying between three and four free range eggs a day.

Although I kept chickens in the country when I was younger, the last couple of weeks have been a vertical learning curve of finding out what to feed them and how to keep the local fox at bay. For ex-battery hens they have quickly developed some very sophisticated tastes for tomato and radicchio lettuce and are actually a lot smarter than they appear.



Infusion World



Moving on to other food issues, the AMG review panel has been tasting a brand new range of fruit, herbal and destination-inspired infusions from tea company Liptons. The new range of seven infusions are all-natural, and are both caffeine and calorie free. They are made with real pieces of luscious fruit, refreshing herbs and aromatic spices, to give fragrant aromas for drinking any time of day or night. All the blends are good but in a vote the panel's favourite was the Morocco. This is a unique blend of mint and spices, cleverly combining the exotic with minty freshness, Available at all major retailers and priced between £1.15 and £1.39. For more information

visit www.liptoninfusions.co.uk

Fresh from France

The French are masters at producing healthy and interesting food with fresh ingredients. French mustard maker Maille has come up with some simple but delicious recipes using their mustard as one of the five ingredients in dishes rather than just a condiment. Click [here...](#) to see the recipes. Maille was founded in 1720 and are still producing quality mustards, vinegars and sauces, for further information on their products visit www.maille.co.uk

Gourmet Island

This month we are running a competition for a day out to see historic Carisbrook Castle on the Isle of Wight, but did you know that the island is also a gourmet's paradise? I recently tried the oak roasted cherry tomatoes from the island's Tomato Stall (www.thetomatostall.co.uk), that are deliciously unique. There is also award winning cheese, prime beef and great restaurants. If you want to read all about food on the island then visit the Wightlink web site www.wightlink.co.uk/wighttastetrail and download the Wight Taste Trail Booklet



Food Festivals

There are a number of regional food festivals and events coming up over the next few weeks. The county of Worcester is holding its first ever Food and Wine Festival, the Worcester Feast, on 4th-5th September in the grounds of Worcester Cathedral. (www.worcesterfeast.com) This year's York Food and Drink Festival is being held on 18th to 27th September and includes foraging, regional real ale tasting and a dedicated chocolate fair (www.yorkfoodfestival.com) On 29th to 30th August 2009 the Yorkshire And Humber Seafood Group are holding the Coastal Flavours Of Whitby event. Endeavour Wharf in the town will be transformed and will play host to a Food Hall, Food Theatre and an array of entertainment for all the family. Dozens of specialist food producers from across the Yorkshire Region will showcase their high quality and varied produce in the designated Food Hall.

Restaurants

AMG has been out sampling restaurants in London and Dublin this month. First up is Ozer, a buzzy Turkish restaurant just by Oxford Circus, click [here...](#) to read the review. Second one is JB's at the Park Plaza Hotel in Victoria. A smart venue serving well sourced, quality food. The pre-theatre menu is ideal if you are off to see Wicked or Billy Elliot. Click [here...](#) for more.

If you are in Dublin you must make your way over to Ormond Quay, next to the River Liffey, to the Winding Stair restaurant. Like almost everything in Dublin it is shot through with literature, the ground floor is a bookshop! Upstairs you will find the very best of Irish Food. Smoked fish plates, cured meats, Irish Beef, fresh fish are all a showcase for the sheer quality and diversity available. For more information visit www.winding-stair.com



3rd July 2009

It's been a month of eating in some fascinating restaurants, discovering a few new ideas for the barbeque and alfresco eating as well as a variety of various other interesting food stories. So with the sun streaming in through the window as I write, here are a couple of suggestions for a cook-out.

The Parkinson Banger

Heston Blumenthal's favourite sausage, the Parkinson Banger, has announced two exciting new flavours; English Sage & Onion and Suffolk Ale & Herb. And, the Oxford recipe, a limited edition banger has also been launched specially for summer. Flavoured with lemon & nutmeg, it will inject a real zing into your meals this summer. Packed with succulent meat it is bursting with flavour, it got a thumbs up when sampled by the AMG team. The entire range has also now got a fresh new look with some stylish packaging. Available in all good supermarkets, for more information go to www.porkinson.co.uk



Birds Eye – Cook from Frozen BBQ meats

And while on the subject of barbeques, the weather always seems to be at total variance to the Met Office forecast, they say rainy, the weather does sunny. So the Birds Eye's new six product 'Steakhouse' range, which includes Tennessee Style BBQ Ribs, Smokey BBQ Beef Quarter Pounders and Sticky Chinatown Chicken Wings may be just the answer.

As all the products can be barbequed straight from frozen, they are easy to prepare and ideal for a great tasting last minute BBQ. Birds Eye's new Steakhouse range is available at all major supermarkets with an RSP of £2.99

Linwoods Health Food

Now, turning to matters healthy, if you want to get your full range of nutrients, vitamins, minerals, and essential fatty acids in your diet then take a look at Linwoods range of milled and blended seeds and berries. The Super Food range has seven products including Flaxseed, Sunflower and Pumpkin mix and Hemp. This last seed contains the ideal ratio of Omega 3, 6 and 9, great for the Brain, the Heart and to decrease inflammation. The Super Food range is available from Health Food shops, Pharmacies and good Grocers. To see the full range go to www.linwoods.co.uk



Dragonfly Tea

And keeping with the health theme, Dragonfly Tea are a family company, founded more than 100 years ago, and are responsible for the commercial creation and popularity of the well loved (and AMG office favourite) Redbush (Rooibos) tea. They have recently extended their range to include three rare Chinese teas, Huang Cha Delicate Yellow Tea, Lung Ching Refreshing Green Tea and Chung Mee Pure Green Tea. AMG has sampled all three and found them very refreshing, delicate and delicious.

Special techniques like steaming and heating have been used to enhance the fragrance, aroma and taste of the leaves. It is very difficult to pick a favourite as they seem to suit different times of the day. Our preferences were The Chung Mee for the morning, the Lung Ching for during the day and the Huang Cha for the evening. Available from good supermarkets and online from www.dragonfly-teas.com

McSween Haggis

Did you know that there is more Haggis sold in England than in Scotland and that London is the Haggis eating capital of the UK?. Well it's true, according to McSween of Edinburgh, makers of both traditional and vegetarian Haggis. Rather than consuming Haggis whole, why not de-construct it as a basis for canapés, pakoras, lasagne, pies and a whole range of other dishes? For some great recipe ideas involving haggis, see Macsween's website, www.macsween.co.uk/recipes

Restaurants

Here is a quick round-up of restaurants that we have enjoyed of late

From a distance Canary Wharf, in London's Docklands looks like a soulless place with cold, glass and steel structures dominating the area. But dig a little deeper and there really are some very charming oases of calm. One of them is a Spanish restaurant called El Faro, overlooking Millwall Dock and right next to the Crossharbour DLR. Sit on the terrace, chill out and enjoy delicious Spanish tapas. Visit www.el-faro.co.uk

If you want a truly unique dining experience then you must visit Dans le Noir. You get to eat your meal in total darkness and the experience is surreal. You start in a well lit reception area where you are put into a group of five or six people and introduced to your blind waiter. Then, forming a crocodile, hand on the shoulder of the person in front, you are led through a series of curtains to your table. You have to pour your own wine, find the food on the plate and engage with your fellow diners in pitch blackness. And what are you eating? It's a surprise, you find out when you get back outside. Visit www.danslenoir.com



If you want to know where your MP spends your money, then pay a visit to the Cinnamon Club. Based in the old Westminster Library in Great Smith Street, London SW1 it is one of the closest up-market restaurants to the Houses of Parliament. The food is gourmet Indian with a great emphasis on good quality spices and very precise tastes and flavours. For more information go to www.cinnamonclub.com

A quick mention for Denbies Wine Estate in Dorking, it's a great venue for lunch if you want great views and a relaxed atmosphere. To read about AMG's recent trip to Denbies, click [here...](#)



Also on the list is the Napa Restaurant in Chiswick's Moran Hotel where I enjoyed an excellent dinner on 30th June, to read the full review click [here...](#)

And finally, Thorntons is adding to their Chocolate Block Range with three Academy of Chocolate award winning new flavours. They are a Venezuelan Milk, a Dominican Dark with caramelised Macadamia Nuts and a Venezuelan Milk with Tonka Bean, which has the most intriguing taste. These new creations are the brainchild of Keith Hurdman, Thorntons' Master Chocolatier, who joined last year. So get down to your local Thorntons for a really different chocolate experience. The blocks are available nationwide for £1.79 each. For

more details visit www.thorntons.co.uk

4th June 2009

In this edition of Food Newz I am concentrating on the best of British food, some of which are being produced by small, artisan companies who do not always get the exposure they deserve.

Dorset Cereals

If you want to get your day off to a cracking start with some really luxurious muesli, breakfast cereal or porridge then you really must try the Dorset Cereals range. With no added salt or preservatives and low fat they are a healthy choice they are also absolutely delicious. There's a range of interesting fruit and nut combinations and the raisins are really juicy and plump. And, if you can't wait until your next breakfast then there are muesli bars and chunky slices to eat in the meantime. As the name suggests Dorset Cereals are made in the West Country. They are available from major supermarkets and from www.dorsetcereals.co.uk



Crantock Bakery

Staying with the West Country theme, one of life's simple but really tasty treats is a genuine Cornish Pasty. Only problem is getting hold of one. One of the biggest and best Pasty producers, Crantock Bakery, based near Newquay, sell their products through Morrisons. The 'Traditional' is delicious but also look for the speciality range that includes Beef Madras, Lamb and Mint and Full English Breakfast. They also make some great pork pies and sausage rolls. For more information visit www.crantockbakery.co.uk



Brown and Forrest - Smoked Foods

And still down in the West Country it's worth taking a look at Brown and Forrest. They are a small, family run smokery, started 22 years ago in Somerset. They produce the finest smoked eel and salmon as well as a whole range of delicious smoked food that includes smoked chicken, duck, lamb and trout. They learned how to smoke eel in Germany in 1981, using a simple wood fired systems with beech and apple for eel, oak for salmon and trout. It's a totally non-industrial, specialising in small scale batches, smoked to order and produced with love, care and dedication. To find out more and to order online visit www.smokedeel.co.uk



Broad Stripe Butchers

A good friend of the AMG site is Broad Stripe Butchers (Click [here...](#) to read more). They supply restaurant quality meat direct to your door. Just in time for the summer barbeque season, Broad Stripe has put together a mouth watering BBQ pack. Enough for six it includes succulent steaks, sizzling sausages, meaty burgers and tasty chicken wings. To order and for more information visit www.broadstripebutchers.co.uk



Debbie and Andrew's English Sausages

A swift trip up to Yorkshire finds us with Debbie and Andrew and their incredibly meaty sausages. The AMG review panel has tried a range of these sausages and they got a big thumbs up from everyone. For people who are dairy and wheat intolerant try the Harrogate. And if you don't know which one to choose the panel's favourite was the Sicilian, a perfect combination of sun-dried tomatoes, basil and mozzarella cheese. Available from Morrisons and other good food outlets or visit www.debbieandandrews.co.uk



Fresh! Organic

If you want a sandwich, sub or salad that is organic and comes in 'green' packaging look no further than Fresh! These products are made with love and care, so if you want something that will look after you then pick up a Fresh! product. Available in good supermarkets including Sainsburys visit www.freshnaturallyorganic.co.uk for more.



Paxton and Whitfield

Say the word cheese and you are either having your picture taken or thinking about France. Well, think again and get down to Paxton and Whitfield for some truly remarkable British Cheese. Paxton and Whitfield have been supplying cheese to a discerning British public for more than 200 years. And with branches in London, Stratford upon Avon and Bath and on-line ordering anyone can enjoy their vast array of mature cheddars, beautiful Stiltons and more. Visit www.paxtonandwhitfield.co.uk



Thorntons

Almost everybody knows Thornton's Chocolate and their range just keep on growing. They have recently launched a new line of chocolate bars with some really intriguing new flavours. These include Balsamic Vinegar, Orange and Cardamom and the classic combination with Chilli. For more details on the new range and all the Thorntons products visit www.thorntons.co.uk



Nar Restaurant - Vauxhall

If you are south of the Thames then consider visiting Nar, the new Turkish restaurant in Vauxhall. Located in two adjoining railway arches, it has been stylishly renovated and offers an eclectic mix of Italian and Turkish food. To read a review of the opening click [here...](#)



BTW Don't forget this year's Taste of London Festival being held in Regents Park 18th-21st June. For more details visit www.tastefestivals.com/london/

And another date for your diary, Ben and Jerry's Sundae on the Common, 25th-26th July. A top name line up including The Human League will play on Clapham Common while you sample Ben & Jerry's newest dairily delicious Fairtrade flavour, Chocolate Macadamia, along with 18 more flavours past, present and future. To book tickets visit www.benjerry.co.uk

4th May 2009

National Mango Week

Let's kick off with news about National Mango Week starting 25th May. To celebrate, Rubicon - a UK Exotic Juice brand, has created a selection of delicious food and cocktail recipes to encourage the British public to eat more mangos and drink the juice.



The mango, known as the 'King of Fruit', is one of the finest and most popular tropical fruits and has been cultivated in India since 2000BC. Mangoes not only have a taste to die for, but are also packed with vitamins, minerals and anti-oxidants.

Click [here...](#) for recipes and for more about Rubicon visit www.rubiconexotic.com

Cafe Fish opens in Edinburgh

Edinburgh's latest restaurant, Café Fish, opened its doors from 27 April 2009. Located on The Shore, Edinburgh's well-known foodie quarter, Café Fish will be serving only the very best of local and Scottish produce in a relaxed atmosphere and at an excellent price.



With a two-course dinner costing only £19 and three-courses priced at £23, Café Fish's menu will change daily and offer only the freshest selection of quality fish and seafood, as well as a meat or game and vegetarian options. Café Fish will have an intimate and friendly feel, with an open kitchen so that diners can watch their meal being prepared by the restaurant's experienced chef, Virginiae Dumon. For more information visit www.cafefish.net

The Black Farmer Gluten Free Sausages

As Coeliac disease claims more sufferers than ever – now thought to be at least one in 100 people – The Black Farmer® has come up with a great tasting range of gluten free sausages and bacon that the WHOLE family can enjoy.



Unlike many gluten free products The Black Farmer® sausages and bacon are available through the major supermarkets: Tesco, Sainsbury's, Morrisons.

Flavours include The Black Farmer's most widely available and 2008 Great Taste Gold Award winning Premium Pork sausages; Pork Onion & Chive and Pork & Leek. For more about the range visit www.theblackfarmer.com

Massis Grill & Bar kick starts Summer with its 5 a Day Event – 14th May 2009

Massis, the Lebanese Restaurant located in Paddington Basin, has partnered with Cancer Research UK and the Nuffield Health Club to encourage people to think about Al Fresco dining while combating the risk of cancer by consuming at least five portions of fruit and vegetables a day. On 14th May, Massis will be hosting their 5 at 5 event, which will be a fun evening of live music, activities and great food as well as raising money for Cancer Research UK.



From 5pm, for £12.50, customers can enjoy: Belly dancing lessons and demonstrations, a DJ as well as Live music, a choice of beer, glass of wine or spirit and mixer, a stand up buffet of hot and cold mezze, that will incorporate 5 portions of fruit or veg as part of the choices.

For each ticket sold, a proportion of the proceeds will go towards Cancer Research UK. and on the evening, the team from the Nuffield Health Club will also be operating a running clinic, to encourage customers to sign up to the next Race for Life. For more details about the restaurant visit www.massis.co.uk

Vegetarian Week 18th – 24th May

National Vegetarian Week (NVW) is the annual awareness-raising campaign promoting inspirational vegetarian food and the benefits of a meat-free lifestyle. Celebrated by the Vegetarian Society since 1992, Vegetarian Week is now eagerly anticipated for both meat and veggie lovers alike.



To celebrate National Vegetarian Week, Executive Chef, Mark Reed of Mango Tree & Awana Restaurants has created two unique, exciting menus designed to tickle the taste-buds of even the most hardened carnivores! Both menus are available throughout the day, over the course of the week. To book please contact 020 7823 1888 for Mango Tree (click [here...](#) for the menu) and 020 7584 8880 for Awana (click [here...](#) for the menu).

And while we are on the subject of the Mango Tree why not try their Thai High Tea as a change from English High Tea? Click [here...](#) for more details.

Sunraysia Tomato Juice Partner with the Prostate Cancer Research Foundation

In honour of Prostate Cancer Awareness Month this March and Men's Health Week (15th – 21st June), Sunraysia Pure Squeezed Tomato Juice will be donating 5p from each bottle sold to the Prostate Cancer Research Foundation (PCRF), in what is an ongoing partnership. The tomato juice, part of Sunraysia's healthy 'Pure Squeezed' range, contains lycopene, a disease-protective antioxidant and is unique by virtue of the fact that it contains no added salt, further enhancing its health benefits.



The Prostate Cancer Research Foundation launched the 'Give a few bob' campaign www.giveafewbob.org in 2007, in memory of entertainer Bob Monkhouse, who died from the disease. Sunraysia make a range of juices that are available from Waitrose, Tesco, Morrisons and Sainsburys. For more information visit www.sunraysia.co.uk

There will be more on Sunraysia and Men's Health Week on AMG later in the month

Fine Cheeses from France

Want to know what French cheese is hot this year? For those in the know the secret lies with the list of General Agricultural Competition (CGA) medal winners issued each spring from Paris. Like a fashion house with its new range, there is list of award-winning French cheeses published each year.





With 400 entries in the dairy section alone the competition is France's own cheese 'oscar' and has been running for almost 140 years. Only the best cheeses are crowned with prestigious bronze, silver or gold medals: a sign that the cheese maker has transformed a great cheese into magnificent one. So look to the medal winners for inspiration - the judges do the hard work so you don't have to.

Cheese categories that had winning varieties this year include: Camembert, Brie, Roquefort and Chaource – a decadently creamy and mild cheese with a white bloomy rind (like the Camembert's) that doesn't cost the earth. Or for something a little different, try Société Blue de Causses a cow's milk blue cheese that won a gold medal.

All of these cheeses are available from good supermarkets or visit www.frenchcheese.co.uk for more information or for French goat's cheese visit www.frenchgoatscheese.com

Manuka Gold launches their 'Start Your Day the Manuka Way' campaign

Manuka Honey is fast becoming one of the most talked about natural health foods. As well as being a natural source of sweetness and energy, this remarkable honey's properties have earned it a reputation as one of the purest natural alternatives to help maintain general good health and wellbeing.



So what makes Active UMF® Manuka Honey different from ordinary honey? Most honeys contain a naturally occurring 'active' agent, that the bees add to the pollen in their hives. However, this activity is easily destroyed when exposed to heat and light. Manuka Honey contains an additional naturally occurring 'activity', which makes it distinct from other honeys. This additional component is stable and doesn't lose its potency when exposed to the heat, light and dilution – this special quality is known as UMF® (Unique Manuka Factor).

Manuka Gold has linked up with the Active Manuka Honey Association (AMHA) – whose main role is to create a gold standard of Manuka Honey that customers can trust - to help educate consumers about UMF®. Their new booklet, 'Start Your Day the Manuka Honey Way' For more information or to download the 'Start Your Day the Manuka Honey Way' booklet for free go to www.manukabuzz.co.uk

