

SEASONAL RECIPE

Curried parsnip soup



January is surely the time for nourishing soup. After the richness of Christmas, we crave something wholesome to get through the most miserable of months. So, here's a seasonal soup – ideal with a dollop of Alistair's crème fraiche and a wedge of one of Mike's freshly baked breads.

Serves 4

2 tsp vegetable oil
3 garlic cloves
1 onion
2 green chillis
1 tsp each ground cumin and coriander
½ tsp each ground ginger and turmeric
5 parsnips, peeled and chopped
2 pints of vegetable or chicken stock
Juice of ½ lemon
4 tblsps of natural yogurt or crème fraiche
Bread

Heat the oil in a large pot, and then gently cook the garlic, onion and chilli for four minutes. Stir in the spices and parsnips, then add the stock. Bring to boil and simmer gently for 20 minutes. Process soup in blender. Stir in the lemon juice and season to taste, spoon into bowls, finishing off with a tablespoon of yogurt/crème fraiche. Serve with bread.

Pick of the month's produce

Brussels sprouts
Cabbages
Carrots
Celeriac
Kale
Leeks
Parsnips
Turnips
Pears
Oysters
Partridge
Pheasant

FARMERS' MARKET OF THE MONTH



With Benjamin Dent, chairman Kent Farmers' Market Association

Egerton market has been running since 2003, and its continuing strength is typical of a village renowned for its community spirit, but which also reflects the wonderful stallholders I met when I visited.

Andrew Smith lives in the farmhouse near Frittenden that his grandfather built in the 1880s, and where his family have been market gardeners ever since. He sells on the stall with his wife, Joy, and explained how he practices sustainable farming by keeping hens in his barn, so he can use their manure for his fruit and vegetables.

Mike Loseby used to manage a shopping centre in London. On one of his frequent escapes to Dymchurch eight years ago, he saw that the bakery was up for sale. "It's only bread and water," he thought, so he bought it and was delighted to move permanently to Romney Marsh.

Clearly, he has found his vocation, because he has been experimenting with flour and water ever since, as the wonderful variety of breads on his stall attests.

Alistair Byford-Bates bought the 82-acre Redlays Farm in the 1990s with his wife Lesley, where they keep Ayrshire and Guernsey cows. Finding dairy farmers at Farmers' Markets is rare, so it was a joy to see the full range of dairy products on sale, including yogurts, soft curd cheese, crème fraiche and milk which is not homogenised,



so that it retains a rich, fuller flavour.

Egerton is one of those Kent villages that is hidden away, and so such a delight to find – and I particularly recommend a visit on a Friday afternoon to take in the Market.

Food file

Egerton is half way between Ashford and Maidstone. The Market is held every Friday from 2pm to 4.30pm in the Millennium Hall.

Marshmallow Bakery can also be found at Meopham, Warehorne and Rolvenden Farmers' Markets. Andrew and Joy Smith also sell at Rolvenden.

To contact the Kent Farmers' Market Association:
☎ 01892 870666 ✉ info@kfma.org.uk

To find your nearest Farmers' Market, please visit kent.greatbritishlife.co.uk

NEXT MONTH: Vigo

Foodie heaven

Kent Inns of Distinction, a collection of stylish character properties located throughout Kent, is owned and run by husband and wife team Richard and Sherry Martin, who believe that their diversity will keep them ahead of the game



Sherry and Richard Martin

What are your hopes for your business in 2010?

Raising our game is our objective in 2010. These are exciting times for us, as our Michelin star consultant chef, John Burton-Race, will continue to work closely with all of our chefs (we have 14 now) in developing their skills and ultimately improving the quality of our food across all four restaurants. We will be enhancing our market share through capital improvements to our hotel sites in Kent and introducing new sales initiatives

We aim to offer good-value food products across all our sites that will be suitable for all occasions

What plans do you have to develop your business in 2010?

We have no plans for further expansion at the moment but will be launching our own Twitter page and looking at the continued expansion of our food and wine clubs.

What sets your business apart from your competitors?

We have quite a few strings to our bow, from weddings to restaurants, golf breaks to pubs, and each in a different area of Kent: rural (Ham, near Sandwich), coastal (Ramsgate), town centre (Tonbridge) and a village location (Wingham).

Who are your customers?

We attract golfers, diners, business people and wedding couples, with the common denominator that they all tend to be real 'foodies.'

How do you see 2010 developing?

If interest rates stay low, we will continue to develop sites through capital improvement schemes. For example, a refit of all the guest rooms at The Dog Inn at Wingham, near Canterbury which have massive usage and were last updated in 2004 when we first acquired the property.

What is your business mantra?

Food is the driver of our business, so we aim to offer good-value food products across all sites for all occasions, whether that be a wedding, dinner party, special event or merely a lunch or dinner out with friends. We

are members of Produced in Kent, meaning that virtually all our supplies are sourced from within the county, including all of our fish which is purchased from the Kent coast's day boats. The company spends more than £125,000 annually on fish.



John Burton-Race

What is best about doing business in Kent?

Apart from its ample supply of superb quality produce, its proximity to the continent for tourism and to London.

CONTACT

Kent Inns of Distinction:

The Dog Inn, Canterbury Road
Wingham, nr Canterbury CT3 1BB
☎ 01227 720339

The Blazing Donkey Country Hotel
Hay Hill, Ham, nr Sandwich
CT14 0ED
☎ 01304 617 362

The Ivy House
99 High Street, Tonbridge TN9 1BW
☎ 01732 771249

Harveys of Ramsgate
Harbour Parade, Royal Harbour
CT11 8LJ
☎ 01843 599707

www.kentinn.com