

Business Post

FOOD & WINE

MAY 2023

ICONIC TUSCAN
WINES

IN THE
KITCHEN WITH
EUNICE POWER

THE SECRET
RESTAURATEUR



Steaking their claim

Huw Gott and Will Beckett on bringing
Hawksmoor to Dublin

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The k-shaped recovery is a concept that many sectors have grappled with since the end of the pandemic, not least hospitality. The phrase refers to how different areas of the economy have recovered at varying speeds – some have roared back to life (the top half of the letter k), while others have gone downhill fast (the bottom half).

Will Beckett, one of the founders of the Hawksmoor steak restaurant chain, referred to the k-shaped recovery when I met him and Huw Gott, his co-founder, in London last month.

“Some people have just gone stratospheric, they’ve been extremely busy, then some have just been pulled down into the misery of things,” Beckett told me. “We’ve been really lucky to have been in the first group, but it hasn’t been easy for lots of people.”

Beckett and Gott, who will open their first Irish restaurant on College Green in Dublin later this month, were refreshingly frank when I asked them why they think Hawksmoor managed to come out of Covid in decent shape.

“Look, we think the food here is lovely. But we’re not doing anything revolutionary and new. We’re not going to blow your mind with how extremely clever we are,” Beckett said. “We’re going to give you things that you recognise, and that you’ve probably grown up with, done as well as we possibly can.”

It was a reply that struck a chord with me. I’m increasingly averse to eating in places where the performance seems to overtake the food. Don’t get me wrong: every now and again I love to enjoy a fine dining experience. But for the most part, it’s simplicity all the way.

You’ll find my full interview with Beckett and Gott on page 12. Elsewhere, there are recipes from Domini Kemp, Denis Cotter and Saghar Setareh, as well as Mick O’Connell’s dive into the tempting world of Super Tuscan wines.

Alex Meehan talks to Eunice Power about And Chips, her locavore fish and chips restaurant, Ali Dunworth talks to Micheál Briody of Silver Hill Duck, and Oisín Davis meets the latest generation to run Mitchells, the iconic Dublin wine and spirit store.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,
GILLIAN

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FOOD&WINE

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Bite-Size

Your guide to all things hot in food and drink this month



SAY CHEESE

The makers of St Tola, Young Buck and Coolattin are among those taking part in Irish Raw Milk Cheese Week, which runs from May 8 to 14. Designed to showcase the variety and quality of Irish raw milk cheese, the week will include promotional events at shops, restaurants and farmers markets across the country, with plenty of samples for shoppers and diners to try. Euro-Toques Ireland, the community of chefs, cooks, and producers, is also getting involved. "Our members pride themselves on protecting and preserving our culinary heritage, of which raw milk cheese plays an important part," Manuela Spinelli, head of community, people and culture at Euro-Toques, says. "It's a great time to sample some of these incredible cheeses." To find out more, visit irishcheese.ie/rawmilkcheeseweek.

POP UP, EAT OUT

Bean & Goose chocolate, Off the Cuffe Irish bitters, Mr L Cocktails and Craft Central beers will join businesses selling everything from sunglasses to beauty products at a special pop-up shopping event in Dublin on June 11. Organisers Kate Fine and Debbie Millington are following up their successful Christmas pop-up with a summer one, and are bringing together over 35 Irish brands and businesses for the event, which takes place at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire. "Our aim with the Irish Pop-Up Collective is to offer a platform for small Irish brands and businesses to promote their products," says Kate Fine. "Our first event last Christmas was a huge success and we feel this is down to how we carefully curated the pop-up and selected some of the best contemporary makers, designers and businesses in the country. It is also evident that Irish people want to support local businesses." For more details follow @irishpopupcollective.



RAISE A GLASS

The Sidecar, the cocktail bar at the Westbury Hotel in Dublin city centre, has launched a new menu inspired by the glamour, hedonism and wit of the 1920s. Named The Human Zoo, the menu features 16 new cocktails alongside quotes from the era and iconic illustrations from Anne Harriet Fish, the British cartoonist and illustrator. "We're really proud to introduce this new menu. We put time into understanding the classics of the era, then created our own original and modern twists on the archetypal serves," Oisín Kelly, bar manager at The Sidecar, says. "The idea is to present guests with the flavours they already know, but in exciting and different ways. High Sobriety, for instance, uses grape, vodka and elderflower mixed with Strega, a relatively unknown liqueur. The Forgive&Forget, our twist on a Paloma, uses salted cherries in lieu of a salted rim and mixes in blood orange, but keeps the core of the original." The Human Zoo menu also includes drinks like the Rockefeller Touch, which is made with Gunpowder gin, elderflower, basil leaf, basil citric and mint cordial, and The Connoisseur, featuring Teeling Blackpitts whiskey, Plantation 5 rum, Cherry Heering, Drambuie, honey, Angostura and an absinthe rinse. Illustrated and hard-bound, the new menu can be purchased to take home for €25, while the cocktails themselves are priced from €17 to €20. See doylecollection.com for more details.



FROM SOUTH AFRICA TO CORK

Rudi Liebenberg is the new executive chef at The Montenotte hotel in Cork city. A native of South Africa, Liebenberg was most recently executive chef at the Belmond Mount Nelson in Cape Town, and before that worked at The Saxon Hotel in Johannesburg. The Montenotte includes the Panorama restaurant and terrace, with the latter having extensive views over the city skyline, as well as the Glasshouse rooftop bar and the Gallery Suite, a private dining space with views of the Victorian sunken gardens in the grounds. See themontenottehotel.com.

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EARLY DOORS

Make entertaining easy with these breakfast and brunch treats from our resident chef **DOMINI KEMP**
Photography by **DEAN CARROLL**

Breakfast and brunch treats are a super way of socialising, and can incorporate a walk, fresh air, outdoor eating and the Sunday papers with the radio on in the background.

While eating out is an absolute treat, eating early is what suits me best – hence my love of 6pm dinner reservations – so having friends over for brunch can be a great way to hang out without impinging on precious sleep.

This thyme, onion and Gruyère tart also makes a lovely supper dish, especially with a crisp green salad and a strong Dijon mustard vinaigrette. The mushroom and leek sausage rolls will be a hit with veggies, while the Scotch eggs with their blanket of salty trout would look wonderful in a picnic basket. The cake is a dependable one and looks the business; it's a perfect way to wrap up a lazy morning's entertainment.



THYME, ONION
AND GRUYÈRE TART

THYME, ONION AND GRUYÈRE TART

You will need a 27cm tart tin with removable base
Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

For the pastry

130g butter
200g flour
1-2 tbsp cold water

For the filling

100g butter
Approximately 4 large Spanish onions,
peeled and thinly sliced
Salt and pepper
Thyme sprigs
250ml double cream
1 heaped tbsp Dijon mustard
2 eggs, beaten
4 egg yolks
300g good quality Gruyère, grated

METHOD

1. In a food processor or cake mixer, mix the butter and flour. When it has formed fine crumbs, add in enough water until it forms a ball, then wrap it in cling film and chill down for an hour in the fridge while you get started on the filling. You will need to preheat the oven to 180C, so bear that in mind.
2. For the filling, melt the butter in a heavy-based saucepan with a snug lid and sweat the onions with the thyme and plenty of seasoning, ever so slowly, for at least 25 minutes. They'll need the odd stir and they should shrink down by at least

half. Try not to colour them – the steam that gets trapped in the saucepan and the low heat should help keep them sweating rather than sautéing. Season really well, then remove from the heat and allow to cool.

3. Roll out your pastry between two sheets of cling film paper. You will not have a lot of excess pastry. Line the tart case, but leave pastry hanging over the edges to be trimmed after blind baking. Cover with crumpled parchment paper and fill with dried beans or rice and bake for about 25 minutes.
4. Carefully remove the paper and beans and then cook for another few minutes to dry out the tart shell. By this stage, the onions should be cool enough.
5. Beat the eggs and egg yolks with the cream and Dijon, and stir well, adding three quarters of the egg mix to the onions, along with three quarters of the cheese. Spoon this mixture into the tart shell (which should be placed on a baking tray to capture spillages and make it easier to transport) and when the filling is evenly distributed, spoon the remaining egg mix into the tin and top with sprinkles of the remaining Gruyère.
6. Bake until just set, which is about 35-40 minutes in total. Let the tart cool down and rest. It will keep on cooking. This is best served while still warm or at room temperature.

AUCTION OF FINE VINTAGE WINES & SPIRITS

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BLUEBERRY DRIZZLE CAKE

You will need a 23cm springform cake tin
Serves 8-10

INGREDIENTS

140g butter
200g golden caster sugar
2 large eggs
300ml sour cream
1 tsp vanilla extract
180g flour
1.25 tsp baking powder
Quarter tsp bicarbonate of soda
180g frozen blueberries
1 tbsp cornflour

For the crumble topping:

120g plain flour
50g granulated sugar
80g muscovado sugar
1 tsp ground cinnamon

Pinch salt

100g melted butter

METHOD

1. Start by making the crumble topping. Mix all the dried ingredients together and add the melted butter then mix lightly, using a fork to create a crumb like texture. Set aside.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C, and butter and flour the cake tin.
3. To make the cake, in a mixer beat the butter and sugar until light and fluffy. Add the eggs and keep beating – if the mix looks like it will curdle a bit, just add a tablespoon of the flour.
4. Mix in the sour cream and vanilla extract then fold in the dried ingredients (flour, baking powder and bicarb), and add the berries. Pour into a cake tin, top with the crumble mixture and bake for about 45 minutes until a knife comes out clean. Cool fully and then serve with a dollop of cream – you can serve with extra blueberries and some icing sugar on top if you like.

BLUEBERRY
DRIZZLE CAKE



“The Scotch eggs with their blanket of salty trout would look wonderful in a picnic basket”



SMOKED TROUT
SCOTCH EGGS

SMOKED TROUT SCOTCH EGGS

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

6 eggs
Zest and juice of one lemon
20g dill
20g flat-leaf parsley
1 tbsp capers, chopped
250g diced fresh trout
200g smoked trout
Black pepper
50g plain flour
Good pinch cayenne pepper
Salt
100g panko breadcrumbs
Vegetable oil, for frying

METHOD

1. Cook four of the eggs in simmering water for six minutes for soft boiled. Plunge into cold water and leave to cool fully before peeling.
2. Blitz the herbs with the lemon zest, juice

and capers in a food processor to form a paste, then add the trout and “pulse” to create a smooth paste but with some texture. Add some pepper.

3. Divide the mixture into four balls, then flatten out. In the palm of your hand, encase the cooked eggs carefully with the “blanket” of trout. Put on a baking tray and freeze for about ten minutes while you set up the crumb and heat the oil.

4. Put the flour and cayenne pepper in one bowl with some salt, the remaining two eggs beaten in another bowl, and then the panko on a plate. Dip the eggs into each coating in the following order: flour, egg, panko. Once evenly covered with a layer, chill until ready to fry.

5. Heat the vegetable oil, then fry the eggs for about four to five minutes until golden brown on all sides. Drain on kitchen paper and serve with good mayo and some extra lemon wedges.





VEGGIE SAUSAGE ROLLS

VEGGIE SAUSAGE ROLLS

Serves 4-6 as a snack

INGREDIENTS

400g chestnut mushrooms
3 tbsp olive oil
30g butter
Few sprigs thyme
Salt and pepper
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
2 tbsp sweet white miso
2 leeks, finely chopped
1 tbsp Dijon mustard
100g grated cheddar
70g panko
1 x 320g sheet ready rolled all butter puff pastry
1 egg, beaten with a pinch of salt
1-2 tbsp black sesame seeds

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 200C.
2. Fry the mushrooms with half the olive oil and butter with the thyme, and season well. Add the garlic and miso and once starting to brown a little, remove from the heat and blitz on pulse in a food processor.
3. Sauté the leeks in the remaining olive oil and butter and when soft, add to the mushrooms along with the Dijon, cheddar and panko. Season and set aside.
4. Roll out the pastry a little more and then cover the centre with the mushroom mixture. Roll over the pastry to seal it in and “crimp” with a fork. Brush with the beaten egg and chill, then brush with another layer of egg and bake for about 25-30 minutes.
5. Sprinkle with sesame seeds halfway through cooking. Cool slightly and then slice and serve.

Grantstown Nurseries



The **Dunnes Stores Simply Better** range has a well-deserved reputation for award-winning food and drink. Behind the scenes it also champions small Irish producers, helping them to grow while doing what they do best



A second generation tomato farmer, David Currid's father founded Grantstown Nurseries in Ballygunner in Waterford in 1978. "When you're growing under glass, sunlight is king and the sunny south east would have some of the best levels of sunlight in the country," David explains.

Supplying Dunnes Stores for over 40 years, 2023 marks the beginning of Grantstown Nurseries' new partnership with Simply Better. "There's hundreds of varieties of tomatoes available commercially, and we grow ten. From that we're supplying two varieties into the Simply Better range, amounting to 15 -20 percent of our crop. Our priority is to produce a great tasting tomato. Operating in the premium end of the market, we have to be able to grow a product that has a point of difference from everything else. So taste is the number one thing that we're looking for."

The first variety, Tomkin, is a small pumpkin-shaped tomato on the vine, its name a cross between tomato and pumpkin. The second Simply Better variety is Tomistar, a smaller vine tomato, juicy with a distinctive sweet taste. Tomkin is more robust with a lower juice content, making it ideal for sandwiches or roasting. Tomistar, a small cherry tomato, offering a taste explosion when you bite into it. It's great for salads or snacking."

Proud members of the Bord Bia Sustainable Horticultural Assurance Scheme, the Currids have been growing tomatoes in a safe and environmentally-friendly way for 40 years. "We harvest all our rain water, have PV solar panels on the roofs and are currently in the process of installing a wood pellet boiler to replace some of our fossil fuel use. We recover all the wastewater and reuse it. It's a closed system really, with everything either consumed by the crop or collected for use."

Commercial tomatoes are no longer grown in soil and David has switched recently from coconut husk to rockwool. "Our tomatoes grow in a controlled environment, and the glasshouses are monitored 24/7 on our computer. We continuously monitor the temperature, humidity and carbon dioxide levels. It's a high tech and sustainable way of growing."



Grown across two glasshouses comprising 10,000 square metres, these modern energy-saving 5 metre tall structures represent the pinnacle of green growing technology. "We can manage the environment to a point, but, essentially, we are completely dependent on nature and sunlight levels."

In place of insecticides, they use natural predators, introducing bugs into the greenhouse to control the pests. "Pollination is a massive part of tomato growing too as every flower equals a tomato. Without pollination you won't get a fruit or you'll just get a misshapen fruit which is less accessible to the market," David explains. Using native bumblebees in the glasshouse, the bees come in hives and they receive new bumblebees every two weeks during the growing seasons. "They go flying around the glasshouses and pollinate the flowers. They're actually looking to find nectar but there's none in a tomato flower! This doesn't put them off as long as they have a food source, and that food source is a syrupy drink supplied within their hive. And they're happy enough to go off and fly out again on another mission to get more."

The season takes 8 weeks from planting mid-January to the first crop, but tomato growing is a year-round job. "We wouldn't get any red tomatoes until mid-March and wouldn't really start supplying Simply Better until early April." David will continue to supply them right up to mid-November when the glasshouses will be cleared out and prepared for the new crop which will arrive the first week of January. "So we don't really get much downtime anymore. Even though we're only in production for seven and a half months obviously of the year it's a 52 week job."

Proud to be part of the Simply Better range, David admits that it's a real endorsement of the job that they have been doing. "It's great knowing that the Simply Better team feels confident that we can deliver very good taste."

FW

They've got beef

As they prepare to open their first Irish restaurant on College Green in Dublin city centre, **GILLIAN NELIS** met Will Beckett and Huw Gott of Hawksmoor to talk business, expansion, and how they've kept their friendship intact

On a sunny Monday morning in London, Will Beckett is learning something new about the Canary Wharf branch of Hawksmoor, the steak restaurant chain he co-founded in 2006. "I didn't even realise that door opened," he says as he welcomes me inside.

I've managed to entirely miss the main entrance to this, Hawksmoor's youngest London restaurant, and somehow ended up at a back door. But as Beckett says, at least now he knows it works.

Huw Gott, Beckett's business partner and childhood friend, arrives shortly afterwards, and within a few minutes we are drinking coffee at one of the tables in this eco-friendly floating pavilion the pair opened in 2021.

In 2013, Beckett and Gott had told *The Guardian* that there would "never" be 10 or 15 Hawksmoors. Between London, Edinburgh, Manchester, Liverpool and New York, there are now 11.

Hawksmoor Dublin, which we are here to talk about, will bring that to 12, while another restaurant is planned for an old cable car powerhouse in Chicago. What, I wonder, has changed in ten years?

"For a long time, we were just really happy to have something that worked, because up until the first Hawksmoor, that had eluded us. We'd always said that there was no point in expanding if it just meant us having a big number of not very good restaurants. That wouldn't have been a win for us," Beckett says.

"But I suppose our confidence grew, and we also had some really fantastic people working for us who wanted to progress in their careers. That was probably the main driver behind the second restaurant; we wanted them to stay with us."

For a long time, according to Gott, the pair had an "anti-change

mentality".

"We'd seen so many places that we liked go from one lovely little thing to something that got worse as it got bigger. But Hawksmoor just seemed to take on a life of its own, and eventually it felt right to put aside those worries and think about what we could do with it," he says.

When it comes to choosing where to open, Gott says, it's a case of finding the right building in the right city. "That's the sweet spot – an interesting, beautiful property in a location where we think people will like what we do," he says.

In Edinburgh, Hawksmoor is housed in a former National Bank of Scotland banking hall. In Manchester, it's in a late Victorian courthouse, and in New York, the United Charities Building in Gramercy Park, which was built in 1893 and designated a national historical monument in 1991.

The finishing touches are currently being put to Hawksmoor Dublin, which will be located in the National Bank building at 34 College Green – most recently, it was an Abercrombie & Fitch clothing store.

Designed by William Barnes in the mid-1840s, the property includes a striking 40-foot hemispherical cast-iron dome sitting on Corinthian columns which will add a dramatic note to the 152-seater restaurant, bar and private dining space.

Over 90 jobs will be created, adding to the 1,000 or so staff Gott and Beckett employ in Britain, and the 140 on the books in New York. How have they managed to keep their friendship intact as they grew the business to that level?

"When we first started out, neither of us knew what we were good at, and I think we were lucky in that we gravitated towards quite different sides of the business," says Beckett.



ABOVE FROM LEFT: THE EXTERIOR OF THE BUILDING THAT WILL HOUSE HAWKSMOOR DUBLIN; THE 40-FOOT DOME THAT WILL FEATURE IN THE DINING ROOM; A RENDER OF HOW HAWKSMOOR'S DESIGNERS EXPECT THE BAR TO LOOK AT THE DUBLIN LOCATION

HUW GOTT AND WILL BECKETT

HAWKSMOOR

ASSEMBLY
109
HALL

“When we first started
out, neither of us
knew what we were
good at”

“Huw loves the creative side – the things that you see, taste and drink – and I love the people stuff and the more business side of things. Obviously we’ll make big decisions together, but we trust each other and we don’t feel the need to interfere or look over each other’s shoulders.”

They are also, according to Gott, able to be totally frank with each other.

“One of the great things about working with someone that you know really well is that you’re able to have really open conversations,” he says. “Having someone who’s able to tell you that they think you’re being a bit of an idiot over something is really useful.”

The conversation turns to the food that Dubliners can expect at Hawksmoor, and Gott pre-empts the obvious question.

“All of the beef we serve will be Irish, and we’ve really enjoyed finding some incredible suppliers, not just of meat, but also of things like cheese,” he says.

“We want it to feel like a Dublin restaurant, rather than a copy and paste of something else. Wouldn’t it be great if in ten years’ time it had turned into a Dublin institution? That would be the dream.”

Gott and Beckett opened the first Hawksmoor in Spitalfields in east London with a £20,000 loan from family members. By 2013 they had four successful restaurants, and wanted to repay not just those early investors, but other friends and family who had backed them along the way.

Beckett set about finding a private equity partner, putting together a list of ten potential investors which were then whittled down to three. In the end, Beckett and Gott agreed a deal with Graphite Capital worth a reported £35 million that would see them stay on and shepherd Hawksmoor’s growth.

It has been a successful deal both financially and culturally – Graphite has, they say, supported their vision for the expansion of the firm. They’re often asked for advice by others on how to raise money for their businesses, but for Beckett, there’s a more fundamental question.

“I always ask people why they want to do it. Are they sure? It sounds alluring, of course it does, but the path to something big and shiny and successful is a difficult one that can involve fundamental change,” he says.

“My first piece of advice to someone in that position is to think quite hard about whether this is something that you really want to do. I think restaurants are best invested in when it’s clear that they are already working really well, and can be scaled up to something even better. But if you’re trying to fix problems in your business by getting bigger, that’s really difficult.”

When times are good, Beckett says, people will always want to invest in restaurants.

“It’s a sexy business, isn’t it? Developers want to get into it, private equity wants to get into it, people who’ve made money by their houses going up in value want to get into it. Then in the difficult times, all of that dries up,” he says.

“Both of those scenarios are a bit problematic. When everyone wants to put in money, we probably see too many restaurants opening, and then the rug is pulled out from everyone when things get rocky.”

Is it easier or harder for entrepreneurs to start a hospitality business today than it was for them?

“Oh it’s much, much harder today. We failed with our first three businesses, but we were still able to get another shot with Hawksmoor. I think we would struggle to get even one shot in today’s environment, given the costs involved,” Gott says.

Beckett agrees.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM HAWKSMOOR

It’s Saturday night in London, and in the Air Street branch of Hawksmoor, just off Regent Street, there is barely a free seat among the 265 in the first floor dining room. To describe the place as buzzing seems like a ridiculous understatement; it is positively vibrating.

A small army of staff whizz around depositing steaks, cocktails and bottles of wine in front of hungry diners. It’s loud – very loud – but this room has a much lower ceiling than the Dublin restaurant will have, so the decibel count should be lower.

On the à la carte menu, starters range from £9 for ash-baked beetroot to £21 to roasted scallops, with mains from £27 for a 300g rump steak to £46 for Dover sole. Large cuts of Chateaubriand, bone-in rib, porterhouse and T-bone are between £11 and £15 per 100g, with sides between £4 and £8.

I order the rump steak, while my guest goes for the 300g fillet for £43. They are both cooked perfectly medium-rare as requested, and are both gorgeous – the rump may be the cheapest steak on the menu, but I certainly didn’t feel short-changed.

On the side, anchovy hollandaise (£4) is a creamy, unctuous delight, and is eye-rollingly good with a side beef dripping fries (£6). We’d deliberately not ordered starters in order to have room for dessert, and when they arrive, we know we’ve made the right decision.

The sticky toffee pudding with clotted cream (£9) will haunt your dreams, in a good way – it is approaching mortal sin levels of deliciousness. Peanut butter shortbread with salted caramel ice-cream (£9) is another winner.

The martinis which my neighbours order look divine, but lightweight that I am, I need something a little lighter. The Hawksmoor take on a Cosmo – with Belvedere vodka, apricot, cranberry wine and Champagne – is just the job for £13.

This is comfort food on steroids: impeccably sourced, beautifully cooked and served up in a room that you won’t leave till you’ve had just one more cocktail. On this showing, Hawksmoor is likely to arrive in Dublin with a bang.

Gillian Nelis



HUW GOTT AND WILL BECKETT

“We set up our first bar for something like eighty grand. We worked 90 or 100 hours a week and paid ourselves £12,000 a year, but we were able to do that because we could live in grotty flats above Tube stations for a pittance. We were mediocre as business people for quite a long time, but that was ok, because you could be mediocre for a while and just tip along,” he says.

“It’s so expensive to get started now that if haven’t got good within your first six months, you’re in trouble. As someone who loves restaurants, I think that’s a shame. Where will the new blood, the creativity that the industry needs, come from?”

If entry costs will have a major impact on the future shape of the sector, so too will changing eating patterns. Where does a restaurant specialising in red meat sit in a world that is becoming increasingly focused on plant-based diets?

“The rise of vegetarianism and veganism, I think it’s great. I think it’s a symptom of people thinking much more about how their food is produced,” Gott says.

“Awful things happen in food production, and that’s across the board, whether you’re talking about meat or dairy, or even things like avocados. We try to find the people who are doing the very best that they can to produce food in a sustainable way, and then we support them by buying their produce.”

There is “undoubtedly” a global problem with beef consumption and beef farming, Beckett says.

“There’s too much of it. There’s too much of it done the wrong way, and I don’t feel uncomfortable saying that in the context of Hawksmoor’s existence,” he says.

“We have a responsibility to help improve things, and to be the restaurant that is seen to be doing things well – to be the restaurant that people who think about what they eat and how their food is produced want to come to.” **FW**

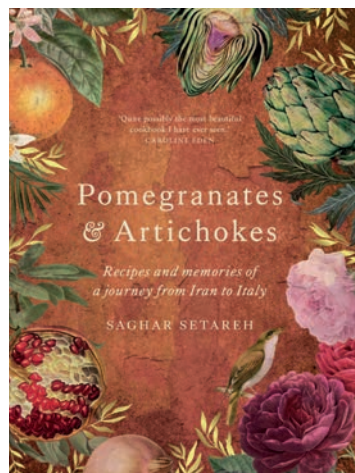
Hawksmoor Dublin opens on May 25, but will offer a 50 per cent discount on food during a soft launch period from May 17 to 24. See hawksmoor.ie



A culinary life from Iran to Italy



Saghar Setareh's new book, *Pomegranates & Artichokes*, is inspired by her culinary journey – born in Tehran, she moved to Rome in 2007 and works as a food blogger, photographer and teacher. Here are three recipes plus a garnish for you to try



POMEGRANATE & ARTICHOSES BY SAGHAR SETAREH
IS PUBLISHED BY MURDOCH BOOKS, RRP £25

SAFFRON ROAST CHICKEN STUFFED WITH DRIED FRUIT

In all cultures, sitting down to feast on a whole roast chicken, stuffed or otherwise, brings about feelings of comfort and abundance. While a roast chicken has nowadays become an easy casual dinner – something you'd happily eat with your hands, then lick those juices off your fingers and lips – a properly stuffed saffron roast chicken on an Iranian table still holds some prestige and elegance, albeit with the same joyful finger licking.

INGREDIENTS

For the chicken

1 whole chicken, about 1.8 kg
1.5 tbsp salt
1 lemon, halved

For the stuffing

200g prunes, pitted
100g dried apricots, halved
100g dried cranberries
30g butter
80g walnuts, coarsely chopped
50g golden sultanas (optional)
2 tbsp golden onion (see separate recipe on page 18)
2 tablespoons saffron infusion (see below)
Half tsp salt
Quarter freshly ground black pepper

For the saffron infusion

Half tsp saffron threads, very loosely packed
A good pinch of sugar

For the saffron butter

100g butter
3 tbsp saffron infusion
1.5 tsp salt

METHOD

1. Several hours before cooking, or even the night before, pat the chicken dry with a paper towel. Rub the salt on the chicken skin and in the cavity. Squeeze the lemon juice into the cavity of the chicken and leave the squeezed lemon inside the cavity. Leave to rest in the fridge, preferably uncovered.
2. About two hours before cooking, bring the chicken out of the fridge and let it reach room temperature. Discard the lemon.
3. To make the saffron infusion, grind the saffron strands with the sugar in a small mortar. If you don't have a small mortar, you can put the saffron and sugar on a piece of baking paper, fold all the sides so the powder won't escape, then grind with a jam jar or rolling pin until you have a very fine powder.
4. Boil the kettle, then let it sit for a few minutes. Tip the powder very gently into a small glass teacup, then gently pour three tablespoons of the hot water over it. (Never use boiling water, or you'll 'kill' the saffron.) Cover the cup with a lid or saucer and let the mixture 'brew' for at least 10 minutes, without removing the lid, to release the colour and aroma of the saffron. After this time your saffron infusion is ready to use.
5. For the stuffing, soak the prunes, apricots and cranberries in water in separate little bowls for 15 to 30 minutes.
6. Melt most of the butter in a pan. Drain the prunes, apricots and cranberries, then add to the pan with the



SAFFRON ROAST CHICKEN

walnuts and sultanas. Cook over a gentle heat for a few minutes.

7. Add the golden onion, saffron infusion, salt and pepper. Give it a stir for two minutes, then take off the heat. Preheat the oven to 220C.

8. For the saffron butter, melt the butter and mix well with the saffron infusion and salt. To prepare the chicken for the saffron butter rub, first put it on one side, then use a sharp knife to score three deep incisions on one leg. Turn the chicken around and repeat with the other leg. This will allow the legs and breast to cook at the same time.

9. With the chicken legs facing you, gently pull the skin at the end of the breast towards you with one hand, then insert two fingers of the other hand between the breast and skin. Repeat this carefully and gently, as much as you can, to separate the skin from the meat without tearing it.

10. Fill the cavity with about half the stuffing, reserving the rest for serving. Tie the chicken legs together with butchers' twine and place it in a baking dish. Using a pastry brush, rub as much as the saffron butter as you can on all sides of the chicken, and under the skin.

11. Transfer to the oven and roast for about one hour 20 minutes, brushing the chicken with more saffron butter every half an hour. Once the chicken is cooked through, remove from the oven and leave to rest for at least half an hour.

12. To serve, strain the juices at the bottom of the pan, and use about 60ml to heat the remaining stuffing to use as a garnish. Pour the remaining juices into a gravy boat to serve alongside the chicken.



GOLDEN ONION

Makes 2 tablespoons

INGREDIENTS

Oil, for deep-frying (the quantity will depend on the size of your pan)

*2 onions, peeled and halved, then sliced 5mm thick
Quarter tsp ground turmeric*

METHOD

1. In a large pan suitable for frying, heat the oil over medium-high heat. Make sure the onion half-rings are separated from each other. When tiny bubbles appear in the oil, add one slice of onion to check the heat. If the oil around the onion bubbles and the onion comes to the surface, the oil is hot enough; otherwise, wait until this happens.

2. Usually, two sliced onions can be fried in two or three batches in a nine inch pan. If your pan is smaller, you should fry the onions in more batches. This is actually time saving, contrary to what you may think, because one layer of onion fries more quickly, and piled-up onions become soggy and take more time to become golden and crunchy.

3. Fry each batch over medium-high heat for about eight to 12 minutes, or until the onion has shrunk down and is completely golden. At the last moment for the first batch, add all the turmeric, stir around a bit, then with a slotted spoon transfer the onion to a large dish lined with paper towel. The onion will darken once removed from the pan, turning golden brown on the paper.





4. Add another batch of onion to the pan and repeat. For this amount of onion, the turmeric added to the oil at the end of the first batch is enough. You can keep the golden onion in the fridge in an airtight container for three to four days, or freeze for up to three months. You won't need to thaw it - just break off a piece and add it to the hot pan. It will just take a little longer to cook as it thaws in the pan and the water evaporates.

MIDNIGHT SPAGHETTI WITH GARLIC, CHILLI AND OLIVE OIL

Serves 4-6

Originally from Naples, this pasta is a favourite all over Italy for its convenience and speed. With only garlic, chilli and heaps of olive oil, it might look as if this pasta dish has left a main ingredient behind – but taste it and you'll no longer think this. My favourite version of this dish is with breadcrumbs, a celebration of carb on carb that creates the most satisfying sandy texture; they say it's a Sicilian touch. As an extremely 'poor' dish, it doesn't even require cheese – and most importantly, cheese is not required flavour-wise. (I am diplomatically trying to tell you to never, ever add cheese to this dish.)

INGREDIENTS

Salt, for seasoning the pasta water
500g spaghetti
125ml good-quality olive oil
3 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 red chilli, finely chopped, seeds included, or half tsp chilli flakes
50g dry breadcrumbs

METHOD

1. Bring a large saucepan of water to the boil and season generously with salt. Add the spaghetti. We're going to cook it very al dente, only for half the time recommended on the packet.
2. You have about five minutes to add the oil to a large (but not necessarily very deep) pan with the garlic and chilli (but don't turn the heat on yet; just let the oil and spices get to know each other). Meanwhile, toast the breadcrumbs in a small frying pan for a minute or two, until fragrant and lightly browned, then tip into a little bowl.
3. Set the heat under the pan with the oil, chilli and garlic to medium-low. Be very careful not to burn the garlic, as it'll get a nasty aftertaste that will ruin the dish.
4. When your spaghetti is two-thirds cooked, save about 750ml of the cooking water. Drain the spaghetti and immediately add it to the pan of oil on blazing high heat and give it a stir with a wooden spoon (or even better, a pair of kitchen tongs).
5. Add 250ml of the cooking water and stir vigorously for a minute. Keep stirring for about four to five minutes, then add the remaining cooking water little by little, until you get a silky, creamy sauce that is still too wet to serve. Keep in mind that it'll keep drying up after you take the pan off the heat.
6. Mix in half the toasted breadcrumbs. Dish up the spaghetti quickly, sprinkle each bowl with more breadcrumbs, drizzle over a bit more oil and serve immediately. No cheese needed.

“Originally from Naples, this pasta is a favourite all over Italy for its convenience and speed”

STRAWBERRY TIRAMISU WITH MARSALA

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS

4 eggs, separated
4 tbsp sugar
Zest of one lemon
400g mascarpone
16 savoiardi (ladyfinger biscuits)

For the strawberries

500g strawberries
Juice of one lemon
3 tbsp sweet Marsala
3 tbsp sugar

METHOD

1. Hull the strawberries, then cut into quarters and place in a bowl. Dress with the lemon juice, Marsala and sugar. Cover and leave to macerate for at least two hours, or better still, overnight in the fridge, until the strawberries are sitting in a pool of sweet, slightly tangy crimson liquid.
2. Strain the strawberry liquid into a deep dish large enough to roll the biscuits in, and set the strawberries aside.
3. Whisk the egg yolks with the sugar and lemon zest using an electric mixer until pale and fluffy. No sugar grains should be felt if you rub the creamy mixture between your fingers. Gently mix in the mascarpone until smooth.
4. Using a clean whisk and a very clean bowl, whip the egg whites until white and stiff; adding a tablespoon of something acidic like lemon juice helps. In a circular movement, very delicately fold the egg whites into the mascarpone cream.
5. Set out six to eight nice-looking cups, or fancy little glasses. Add a dollop of the mascarpone cream into the bottom of each cup, then spoon in some strawberries. Roll a biscuit a few times in the strawberry juice and let it suck in the liquid at its leisure.
6. Break the biscuit into pieces so that it fits in the cup, pushing down a bit to fill any gaps. Add more strawberries, then a good dollop of mascarpone cream, and repeat. Before finishing with one last layer of mascarpone cream, gently tap each cup on your work surface to settle the ingredients, so that empty spaces are not left in the middle.
7. Cover each cup loosely with foil and chill in the fridge for about four hours before serving, so that the mascarpone cream sets. They are then best served straight away. **FW**

Paradiso found



Chef Denis Cotter of Cafe Paradiso in Cork shares two recipes from his new book

DAN DAN NOODLES

DAN DAN NOODLES

Serves 4-6

This highly spiced dish is a little bit of work if you're making it from scratch, but if most of the elements are to hand, it can be put together in 15 minutes. The separately cooked elements of tofu mix, sauce, noodles and greens are layered into bowls for the eater to mix themselves. This results in the rare pleasure of a dish that keeps getting better and more intensely flavoured as you eat into it, and the last mouthful is often the best. There aren't many dishes you can say that about! We use tahini as the base simply because there is always some around and we've come to like the light, creamy finish it gives. Chinese sesame paste, if you can find or make it, will give a darker, more robust appearance and flavour.

INGREDIENTS

Half an aubergine, finely diced
 4 mushrooms, diced
 100g napa cabbage stalk, finely chopped
 2 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
 250g tofu, crumbled
 1 tbsp hoisin sauce
 1 tbsp Shaoxing cooking wine
 1 tsp soy sauce
 Half tsp Chinese five-spice

For the sauce
 100g tahini
 150ml water
 40ml soy sauce
 Half tsp Chinese five-spice
 150ml dan dan oil (see below)

To finish
 400g rice or wheat noodles
 Steamed pak choi or other greens

For the dan dan oil

60g Sichuan peppercorns, coarsely chopped
 20g dried bird's eye chillies, coarsely chopped
 20g Korean hot pepper flakes
 6 star anise
 2 cinnamon sticks, broken
 1 litre sunflower oil

METHOD

1. To make the dan dan oil, put everything in a saucepan and heat gently on a very low heat until the oil is just beginning to simmer. Turn off the heat, cover the pan with a lid and leave to stand for at least one hour, but preferably for up to 24 hours.
2. Pass through a fine sieve (and, if necessary, a piece of kitchen paper) to get a clear oil. Discard the solids and store the oil. This keeps well for up to three months.
3. Now make the sauce for the noodles. Whisk together the tahini, water, soy sauce and five-spice in a small pot over a low heat



STRAWBERRY AND
ELDERFLOWER PAVLOVA

until emulsified, then slowly whisk in the dan dan oil, adding more water if required. Set aside.

4. Fry the aubergine in oil until browned and almost fully cooked. Add the mushrooms, cabbage stalk and garlic, and cook for a few minutes more. Add the tofu and continue to cook until everything is nicely browned.

5. Stir in the hoisin, Shaoxing cooking wine, soy sauce and five-spice, and cook for one minute, then remove the pan from the heat. Cook the noodles according to the packet instructions.

6. To serve, place a spoonful of the tofu mix in a bowl. Add some warmed sauce, then the noodles, then some steamed greens and finally a little more sauce.

STRAWBERRY AND ELDERFLOWER PAVLOVA

Serves 6

INGREDIENTS

For the pavlovas

120g egg whites
220g caster sugar, divided
1 tsp cornflour
1 tsp white wine vinegar

For the strawberry consommé

For the strawberry consommé
300g strawberries, chopped
60g caster sugar

For the elderflower cream

200ml cream
20g caster sugar
1 tsp elderflower cordial

For the basil oil

100g fresh basil
200ml olive oil

To finish

18–20 strawberries, halved or quartered
Edible flowers

METHOD

1. To make the pavlovas, preheat the oven to 130C fan. Whip the egg whites to soft peaks, then slowly add 170g of the sugar, beating in one tablespoon or so every 30 seconds at first, then two tablespoons at a time, until all 170g has been used. 2. Mix together the remaining 50g sugar and the cornflour. Add this to



DENIS COTTER

the whipping meringue, two tablespoons at a time. Scrape down the sides of the bowl, add the vinegar and continue whipping for five minutes. Put the meringue in a piping bag. 3. Line an oven tray with parchment. Lightly oil a 7cm metal ring and place it on the parchment. Pipe some meringue into the ring, filling it and swirling the top to get a flat-ish top. Lift off the ring, wipe it clean, oil it again and repeat to make six pavlovas in total.

4. Place the tray in the oven and bake for 12 minutes, then lower the heat to 80C fan and bake for 12 minutes more. Turn off the heat and leave for another 12 minutes. Finally, open the oven door and leave for 12 minutes. Remove the pavlovas from the oven and leave to cool completely. Use a palette knife to carefully remove the pavlovas from the tray.

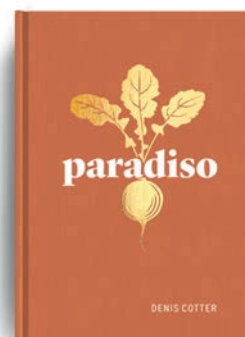
5. To make the consommé, put the strawberries and sugar in a metal bowl and seal the top. Place over a pot of boiling water for 40 minutes to soften the fruit. Transfer the fruit mix to a sieve lined with cheesecloth and strain over a bowl for two hours, retaining the liquid.

6. To make the basil oil, blanch the basil in boiling water for a few seconds, then immediately remove it and cool it in iced water. Leave on kitchen paper to dry, then blend with the olive oil. Leave for one hour before straining out the solids. The oil will keep for three or four days.

7. For the elderflower cream, whip the cream with the sugar, adding the elderflower cordial at the end.

8. To serve, place a pavlova on each plate with the flatter side up. Top with elderflower cream and halved or quartered strawberries, then pour a thin pool of strawberry consommé around the pavlova. Add a small amount of basil oil around the edge of the consommé, then scatter over a few mint leaves and edible flowers. **FW**

Paradiso: Recipes and Reflections by Denis Cotter is published by Nine Bean Rows, RRP €39. Photography by Ruth Calder-Potts





Chip chip hooray

Eunice Power talks to ALEX MEEHAN about running a locavore fish and chip shop, and making 7,500 plates of food in one night

There were several reasons behind Eunice Power's decision to open And Chips, her locavore takeaway in Dungarvan in Co Waterford, but one of them was particularly unusual – a local micro-climate that lends itself particularly well to growing potatoes.

"I'm very careful when I talk about sustainability because I don't want to be accused of greenwashing, but we are working towards being as sustainable as possible. We work with Colin Ryan, a potato grower in Dungarvan, and he discovered by trial and error that Maris Pipers, which are perfect for chipping, grow particularly well here," Power says.

"They've got high starch levels and a soft dry interior when cooked, and we now take 50 per cent of his crop in And Chips, which means that our chips are all prepared within five kilometres of the place they're sold and eaten. To me, that's remarkable."

Working with a local ingredient like this is not without its complications, however.

"You're at the whim of the weather and crop yields. For example, the sugar content changes during the season, so you can't just cook them identically all the time," says Power, whose career in food has mostly been focused on catering.

That business had been put into mothballs during Covid – there wasn't much call for mass



events when people were ordered to stay at home – but by lockdown, she had already decided to diversify and open the takeaway.

"I know my strengths. I'm really good at logistics and I'm a natural multi-tasker, and it turns out that's what you need to do well in the catering game. That, and a great contacts book full of people and partners who are reliable and know what they're doing," she says.

"But I got a little burned out from being on the road doing events for 20 years, so I decided to pull back the number of bookings I took. Getting staff was getting harder and harder, and it seemed like time for a change."

She opened And Chips four years ago with the goal of selling proper chips cooked fresh and not from frozen, as well as quality fish and complementary dishes like fish tacos, scampi and fish burgers.

All of the fish served is sustainable, and is sourced from suppliers including Helvic Seafood, Ballycotton Seafood, Atlantis Seafood and Flanagan's in Waterford. Beef for burgers and steak sandwiches comes from McGrath's in

Lismore, while Walsh Bakehouse supplies brioche buns and blaas.

"I thought And Chips it would be a lovely thing to do, and I didn't think it would be that hard. It turns out it's extremely hard. If it was easy, everybody would do it. But it seems I like making my own mistakes," she says.

"I fell in love with it but it still has its challenges. Staffing is very



Photography: Joleen Cronin

hard, and in fact just last week I bought an apartment in Dungarvan because I've come to the conclusion that the only way to be sure of staffing is to bring in people from abroad and give them accommodation at minimal rent. I don't see any other option as rent in the town is just too expensive. This is an investment in the business."

“People will still pay for quality and if they know who they are supporting”

Power studied hotel management in college, and started her professional life running a guesthouse before realising her talents would be better applied elsewhere. One invitation to cater a wedding turned into another, and over 20 years there was pretty much no variety of job she didn't take on.

“The biggest event we've ever done was a dinner for 2,500 people at the 3Arena in 2018, and it went off without a hitch. It was three courses, so that's 7,500 plates of food, and to pull it off we had to rope in 60 chefs. People came from all corners of the country to help out and it was a really special night,” she says.

“The only thing that went wrong was that we were working in a tunnel where the trucks load in, and we plated up thousands of desserts that had two or three edible flowers on each plate. Someone opened up the door and it turned

into a wind tunnel. Thousands of flowers went flying.”

Power's catering company is back working at a reduced level, and she organised this year's West Waterford Festival of Food, which took place in April. But she says And Chips is where a lot of her attention will go for the foreseeable future.

“That's my focus at the moment. I feel like I've spent enough time being in kitchens at 7am and working the long hours, and I don't want to do that anymore,” she says. “And Chips is a work in progress and I'm really enjoying it.” **FW**

andchips.ie



EUNICE'S *favourite five*

1 THE RESTAURANT

My favourite restaurant right now is undoubtedly The Beach House in Tramore in Co Waterford. It's absolutely gorgeous. It's in a Victorian building at the end of the coast road, and is hugely evocative. Peter Hogan and Jumoke Akintola run it and the food is fantastic.

2 THE HOTEL

I don't get to go to hotels that often, but I have a son in catering college and he was doing a placement in Claridge's in London, so I went and stayed. What a treat! It was just a fantastic hotel for food, drink and people watching. The whole experience was heavenly.

3 THE INGREDIENT

I love fennel. It's one of the most underused ingredients. I love it with fish, chicken or pork – it's great served in a salad or cooked in a rich Parmesan cream sauce. It's extremely versatile and I always feel virtuous eating it. It's a lovely feel-good vegetable that we should all eat more of.

4 THE COOKBOOK

I don't have a favourite cookbook but I do have a favourite author – Diana Henry. I love anything she writes. I have all her books and some of them are beside my bed. They're physically hefty books that stand up to being used in the kitchen and her recipes are just great. They're packed with super accessible and simple recipes that deliver loads of flavour.

5 THE KITCHEN GADGET

I have a small palette knife that I've had for years and really love. I use it for cake decorating. A sharp knife is all you need in the kitchen and I take care of all of mine. It cracks me up when my family put them in the dishwasher.

The Insider



Your guide to the interiors trends and kitchen essentials to try this month, compiled by **ELAINE PRENDEVILLE**



The garden party starts here. Behold Dutch brand Fatboy's 'Jolly Trolley', a weatherproof mobile bar that rolls beautifully into any outdoor entertainment setting. Use the Jolly Trolley to serve drinks and snacks, pop some planters on its lower shelf, or use it as a resting place for barbecue implements or sauces. Available in sage green or burnt orange, the Jolly Trolley is from the company best known for its oversized outdoor beanbags, and is available to order online from retailers including lampmasters.ie priced €889. Fatboy is also selling a limited collection of its designs at Arnotts in Dublin, where this brilliant 'Can-Dolly' candle holder (inset image) is available in orange, white or beige; €69 at arnotts.ie.



SAVE TO CONTACTS

Anyone in need of some interiors inspiration should bookmark joannemooney.ie, the online home of interiors stylist and all-round creative whizz Joanne Mooney. The former dental nurse has built a solid reputation for adding colour to everything she touches: from clothing and interiors, to crafty items that she encourages followers to make at home. You can buy her DIY textile art kits for €30, with patterns including these very fun floral and shoe motifs.

THE COOK'S SHELF



What does Finland taste like? It's a question photographer and designer Viola Minerva Virtamo has sought to answer in her book, *Eat Finland*. Expect to be taken on a journey across the Nordic country, with famous Finnish chefs and restaurateurs sharing their recipes and insights into this very particular cuisine. Learn how to make Finnish dishes including beetroot carpaccio with tarragon mayonnaise; barley risotto with forest mushrooms and a nettle garlic financier that tastes even better than it looks. *Eat Finland* - a culinary journey through Finland is available from bemycozy.com priced €32.

SERVING *Suggestions*



1. A tray table ideal for al fresco tipples: **RATTAN AND ACACIA WOOD TABLE**, €48.90 at Sostrene Grene.



2. Keep these stylish, **STAINLESS STEEL 'ICE CUBES'** in the freezer, before popping into drinks to keep them cool in the garden. Sky Ice Cubes, €49 by Georg Jensen at finnishdesignshop.com.

3. This is the Father's Day gift he really wants: **RÖSHULT'S CANVAS BBQ APRON** is the ultimate grill buddy. Approx €340; see roshults.com for more.



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A Super Tuscan tale

These iconic Italian wines remain highly-sought after among collectors and drinkers alike, writes MICK O'CONNELL



Two lines of centuries-old cypress trees march along the arrow-straight road before me like soldiers. The Etruscan coast is behind me and the Tyrrhenian sea at my back as I walk up the hill to Bolgheri.

Immortalised by the poet Giosuè Carducci, this small walled town heaves with churches, restaurants and wine shops. The latter is a relatively new phenomenon. While grapes have been an important part of the culture here for centuries, the region was only awarded its DOC status 40 years ago.

That DOC status is important in food production across Europe but hugely so in Italy, where it brings a sense of local pride to the bounty of the land. DOC stands for denominazione di origine controllata, or controlled designation of origin, and means that there is a set of rules that must be followed to ensure that production in the area reaches a required standard.

Once those standards have been met, the producer is allowed to use the name Bolgheri DOC on their bottles. Much like Chablis or Sancerre in France, this village name becomes the brand that is recognised by wine drinkers across the globe.

There is deep irony in the awarding of DOC status to this particular region, nestled on the Tuscan coast an hour's drive south of Pisa. The Super Tuscan movement began in the early 70s when a set of winemakers felt overly constrained by the local rules of production, and set about making more international-style wines in Tuscany.

The use of Bordeaux grape varieties, in particular cabernet sauvignon and merlot, tended to steal the headlines; their deep colour and plush nature gave huge contrast to the sinewy, rustic local sangiovese. But another Bordeaux influence arguably impacted the wines as much, if not more: the use of small barriques of new French oak.

Italy had always used oak barrels in wine production, but had tended towards the use of large old ones that gave little flavour impact to the wine. The introduction of new French oak barrels instantly internationalised them. In the early days many observers felt this was

as ridiculous as putting pineapple on pizza, but international markets appreciated the fact that the wines were immediately understandable.

Sinewy sangiovese may sound like a slur, but it is precisely this quality that lovers of authentic Italian wines adore. That said, it can be a challenging and acquired taste. Using these French international techniques put some producers squarely at odds with the rules of Italian winemaking.

Their wines were undoubtedly of huge quality, but they had to live outside the walls of tradition, exiled to vino da tavolo status within the system. Vino da tavolo, or table wine, in the main is local jug wine – basic, and nothing to aspire to.

These new producers had their eyes set much higher. Their goal was to create the finest wines in Italy, and because these wines did not have the geographical brand of DOC to fall back on, they had to create iconic brands to match them.

Sassicaia was the pioneer here. The Marchesi Incisa della Rocchetta was an agronomist whose main love was horses. The rumour is that he saw the potential in coastal Tuscany for Bordeaux-style wines and took cuttings from Château Lafite Rothschild to plant at his home estate.

The vines were planted in the 50s but the first commercial release was in 1971. Initially the wines met with a muted critical response, but in 1978, Sassicaia featured in a Decanter magazine blind tasting of 33 Bordeaux-style wines from all around the world, and blew the tasting panel away. The wine's icon status was confirmed when Robert Parker gave the 1985 vintage a perfect 100 point score.

As the fame of Sassicaia and its peers increased, the Italian rule makers faced a decision: they could either recognise the quality of these wines and bring them within the fold, or risk a revolution of the entire quality system. A new status was introduced to combat the quandary: indicazione geografica tipica, or IGT, which had with broader rules than DOC to allow for experimentation.

Sassicaia, the original rule breaker, was given its own DOC status to recognize its quality in 1994. Full circle completed. **FW**

WINE RATINGS

This is the international marking system for wine ratings, a 100-point scale which works on a percentile, rather than a percentage, scale.

95-100:
exceptional, of world-class quality

90-94:
very good quality

88-89:
average, but lacks greatness

85-87:
average to modest

80-84:
below average

70-79:
poor

BELOW 70:
unacceptable quality

**MARCHESI ANTINORI
TIGNANELLO**

€150 to €235 from *Fallon & Byrne, Whelehans, Terroirs, and Searsons (96-97)*
Two vintages of what many consider the original Super Tuscan are readily available in the market. The 2018 shows a bit more complexity and potential cellaring time. This is Sangiovese blended with Bordeaux varieties and aged in barrique before being placed in the iconic bottle.

2 ORNELLAIA

€250 from *Whelehans, The Corkscrew and Leonard's Fine Wines (97)*
The 2019 has the highest percentage of cabernet sauvignon in the blend since the 2002, and it shows in the wine's finesse. The Machiavellian story of this estate is one for another day, but this is one of Italy's jewels and should be part of every collector's cellar.

3 LE VOLTE DELL'ORNELLAIA

€35 from *Mitchell & Son, Jus de Vine, Neighbourhood Wine and Bradleys Off-Licence (90)*
This accessible wine gives a hint at the treasures as one slides up the price scale at Ornellaia. Mainly merlot and cabernet sauvignon give Bordeaux-style plushness, with a small part of sangiovese retaining the Tuscan accent.



4 GAJA CA'MARCANDA MAGARI

€100 from *Station to Station, Whelehans and The Allotment (94)*
No one has done more for the blue chip wines of Italy than Angelo Gaja. When he set up Ca'Marcanda in Bolgheri away from the family's Barbaresco home, he made sure to follow the map set by Sassicaia to get the best sites. This is a finessed second wine.

**5 TENUTA SAN GUIDO
GUIDALBERTO**

€55 from *Green Man Wines, The Corkscrew and WineOnline.ie (93)*
While Sassicaia is made with the two cabernets – sauvignon and franc – Gaidalberto also has merlot in the blend, making it more accessible. A wonderful wine in its own right, it is decadent and generous. Look out for Le Difese, their introduction to the estate.

**6 TENUTA SAN GUIDO
SASSICAIA**

€250 from *Neighbourhood Wine, Baggot St Wines, Mitchell & Son, Terroirs and Bradleys Off-Licence (98)*
The current release of this classic is the phenomenal 2019. Sadly these wines are like hen's teeth. The above merchants have some back vintages if you're in the mood to spoil yourself.



Wine, whiskey and WISDOM

OISIN DAVIS meets the latest generation of Mitchells to run the iconic Dublin drinks business

JONATHAN AND
ROBERT MITCHELL



Photography: Fergal Phillips

If you're familiar with the shops they've been running in Dublin for over 200 years and love their Spot whiskey range, the Mitchell clan need no introduction. But for everyone else, here's a quick synopsis.

In 1805, William Mitchell, a northern Englishman, opened a café on Grafton Street where fine wines were served. In 1887, his grandson Robert, who was named after Robert Emmet, started a whiskey bonding business. He would take the wine barrels he had purchased and when they were emptied, would refill them with single pot still Jameson whiskey.

As a means to differentiate the Mitchell whiskeys from the others sharing their cellar on Fitzwilliam Lane, each cask would be daubed with a particular spot of coloured paint – hence Green Spot, Yellow Spot and so on.

The current custodians of the family business are Jonathan Mitchell and his son Robert. No other Irish family in history have continuously worked so long in the drinks industry. I recently sat down with them both

in their Glashule offices to see if they could share some stories and advice for the many others who are somewhat newer to the trade.

In the boardroom, Jonathan Mitchell gave me a tour of the various portraits depicting previous family directors of their company. Among the many images pictures of well tailored Mitchell men sits a black and white photo of a lady in a dark dress.

"That's Agnes Fairbairn Mitchell, my grandmother. Her family owned The Shelbourne Hotel which was across the road from our Kildare Street shop, so I presume that's how she met my grandfather," Jonathan Mitchell says. "After he died she ran the company from 1920 to 1935, and was by all accounts quite brilliant."

He shows me the old ledger books that document domestic delivery orders, a part of the trade that Agnes excelled in developing – her clients included James Joyce and WB Yeats. Robert Mitchell picks up on the literary theme.

"Samuel Beckett was a huge Green Spot fan, but sadly we could no longer deliver to

him when he moved to Paris," Robert says.

"So he would tell his family and friends that they could get free boarding at his Paris apartment for at least a couple of days, as long as they brought a bottle of his favourite single pot still whiskey."

International distribution of Green Spot is no longer an issue for the sixth and seventh generations of the family firm – the business is now thriving. Last year it brought out a new variant, Gold Spot, and it continues to collaborate with international wine producers who have Irish backgrounds. The newly-released Green Spot Quails' Gate, for example, has been finished in Canadian pinot noir casks.

However, as Jonathan explains, there have been serious challenges.

"We had always purchased our whiskey from Jameson as bonders. When they became part of Irish Distillers, the supply to bonders like ourselves was phased out," he says.

"We were looking at 10 years worth of stock so we created a new partnership with Irish Distillers where it could produce spot

whiskeys, and we would remain on to market and sell it in Ireland.”

It was a smart move that not only kept the brand alive, but also helped to keep the traditional style of single pot still Irish whiskey breathing too. Back then, only a couple of brands were interested in maintaining that unique but old school type of spirit.

Today, dozens of distilleries across the island of Ireland are producing pot still whiskey, and we can raise a glass to Jonathan Mitchell for playing his part in getting them there. And as Robert advises the new Irish whiskey players: “Start off as you mean to finish, keep a long term vision and stand over your best quality liquid.”

You can meet up with Jonathan and Robert Mitchell at the Whiskey Live event in the RDS in Dublin from May 18 to 20. Here are my favourites from their range.

GREEN SPOT, €64, 40 PER CENT ABV

The original of the range, Green Spot is an essential bottle for any whiskey lover. A single pot still that is enriched with spice and honeyed sweetness, but has a Bramley apple bite to it. It has been a favourite for many, including the late TV chef Keith Floyd, who was a regular in the old Kildare Street shop.

RED SPOT, €135, 46 PER CENT ABV

The 15 years this pot still spends in three different casks gives it an incredible depth and intensity of flavour. A combination of

Bourbon casks, Spanish sherry butts and Sicilian Marsala wine casks deliver a dark cherry fruit quality to the taste, alongside a nutty aroma that sucks you right into the glass.

GREEN SPOT CHATEAU LEOVILLE BARTON, €74.95, 46 PER CENT ABV

This one starts off its journey as the standard Green Spot but is then given a special French twist by additional ageing in a Bordeaux cask from the Leoville Barton wine producer. A remarkable whiskey with a fruity element that lingers forever, and amplifies the clove and pepper spice.

GREEN SPOT QUAILS' GATE, €72, 46 PER CENT ABV

Pinot noir casks from this Canadian Irish wine producer were used in the 16 month finishing of this limited edition whiskey. It has a unique silky texture from the tannins, along with smatterings of raspberries and pomegranate that jump around your palate.

GREEN SPOT, 10 YEAR OLD SINGLE CASK EXCLUSIVE, €340, 58 PER CENT ABV

This was the last third party single cask release from Mitchell & Son. It was aged for 10 years, as was the tradition for Green Spot in the past. Lovers of rare, cask strength pot still whiskeys will go wild for its sweet pear notes and jasmine tea mouthfeel. **FW**



DEAN CARROLL ON BEER

For Dean Carroll, the change of season is a great time to try some summer beers

There are many indicators of the changing of the seasons between winter and spring, and I'm sure everyone has their own specific favourite and least favourite – the daffodils sprouting, the longer evenings, or perhaps the watery eyes brought on by the first hints of hay fever.

One of my personal favourites is seeing the banks of the Grand Canal in Dublin lined with people soaking up the sun, listening to buskers and sipping on summery drinks. There's an atmospheric shift in the city, and seeing as this year's shift has just happened, I thought I would recommend my picks for beers to pair with your own sun-soaked sipping session.



Grapefruit Radler from Stiegl,
ABV 2 per cent, €2.50 for 500ml from mchughs.ie
Radler, meaning cyclist in German, is generally a mixture of beer and lemonade. In this case, lager is paired with real grapefruit juice, resulting in a low ABV thirst-quencher. There's a delightful tang from the grapefruit, but it's worth noting that it's quite sweet if you're having more than one. It's available in bottles and cans.

Longlegs from Hopfully Brewing,
ABV 6.8 per cent, €4.95 for 440ml from Craftcentral.ie

This is another beer from Hopfully that supports Irish artists, with the brewery this time working with the wonderfully talented Sarah Moloney to illustrate the bright pink can. It's not just the outside that's interesting either – the brew itself pours with a pillowy white head and a soft, peach-coloured cloudy body. This New England IPA is conditioned on Colombian coffee supplied by Ground State Coffee, which amplifies the tropical fruit notes from the El Dorado hops.

Strawberry Vanilla Shake from Rascals,
ABV 5 per cent, €4.70 for 440ml from craftbeersdelivered.com

I have fond memories of being taken to the seaside when I was younger to get a milkshake and go for a walk along the beach. If you're looking for a slightly more adult way to relive similar memories, Rascals has you covered with its Strawberry Vanilla Shake, back again for its seasonal summer release. It's built with tons of lactose, oats and wheat to create a heavy body, with strawberry purée and vanilla for sweetness. It's a sunny boardwalk in a can.

A VERY IRISH SUCCESS STORY

ALI DUNWORTH meets Micheál Briody of Silver Hill Duck to chat about the continuing success of the business

If you've ever strolled through London's Chinatown, the rows of glistening roast ducks hanging in the windows of its restaurants will be a familiar sight. But would you ever guess that they came from Co Monaghan?

They are likely to be Silver Hill ducks, the supplier of choice in Chinatowns in Britain, and increasingly in major cities all over the world. It is a unique success story according to Micheál Briody, who has been managing director since 2019, having first joined the company as chief financial officer twelve years ago.

"Unique I suppose is a lazy word to use, but we've been called that several times," Briody says. "People are just fascinated by the story."

Silver Hill began in 1962 in Emyvale, Co Monaghan with the Steele family and just six quality ducks. Over time, the family developed their own breed, the Silver Hill duck, a fatty bird that lends itself well to slow roasting. It did well in Ireland but it was when the family brought the product to London in the 1980s that its true potential became apparent.

The ducks were snapped up by top Asian restaurants and five-star hotels, and became known in the UK as 'London Fat Duck'. Silver Hill soon became the number one supplier of head-on duck to the Chinese UK market, and they now supply duck to over 30 countries worldwide.

In Ireland, it's the pre-packed breasts, confit legs and crispy duck with pancakes we're more familiar with, which are available from retailers all over the country. You will also see Silver Hill duck listed on plenty of menus and in food service. Briody says the domestic market, while not being the firm's main earner, is still very important.

"That's where it all started," says Briody. "We're very proud of the presence here in

Ireland, but we've been around for 60 years and the growth prospects in just one market for a premium product are limited. That's why we looked at different countries and have been really successful in some of them."

Singapore has been one of those successful locations. Silver Hill first entered the market there in 2014 partly because of the parallels to London. But soon their birds were being

"You can't have a good product every day if you don't have good people"

talked about as "the wagyu of duck" and "the mother of all ducks", and were receiving glowing write-ups in magazines and media.

"It's a huge financial hub and a lot of people were already familiar with the product," says Briody. "That probably came about because of our early marketing endeavours, but those phrases and slogans were coined by customers, not by ourselves. Of course, we then tagged onto them."

Singapore continues to be a lucrative market for Silver Hill. In 2019, it launched a dining concept there called Duckland which exclusively uses Silver Hill ducks, and pitches itself as 'a farm to fork' concept with an emphasis on serving robust dishes.



MICHEÁL BRIODY

The firm has also moved into Hong Kong and Macau, and there are further plans to enter markets in South East Asia and the Middle East. Growing the brand means growing the Emyvale base, which hasn't been very straightforward, but Briody and his team are determined to find solutions to make it work.

Expansion plans currently on the table will allow them to move from processing 80,000 ducks a week to 110,000, and increase the workforce from 220 to 270.

"We're very proud of being in Emyvale," says Briody. "Most of our staff are based here and we want to grow and service the markets internationally, largely from a base here in North Monaghan."

There must be plenty of travel too I assume, in order to get all these global sales. But Briody laughs when he tells me that it's being managed.

"We've one head of sales who works side by side with the marketing manager. We have distributors in Asia but all of the sales in London, Manchester, Birmingham and Asia, that's all managed from here. We don't need or require footfall on the ground," he says.

"You can't have a good product every day if you don't have good people. That passion that Silver Hill workforce brings, that's really part of our secret sauce too, it's a critical part of it." **FW**

duckshop.ie

SECRET RESTAURATEUR

This month, our industry insider has service on their mind



Last weekend I had dinner in a well known Dublin restaurant with my friend the lawyer. We were both served by the head waiter, who originally hails from Eastern Europe. Both he and his wife (the hostess of another well known restaurant) have long settled in Ireland and committed themselves to careers in hospitality.

We struck up a conversation about other restaurants nearby, and people we knew in common in the trade. We discussed a nearby Michelin-starred establishment which is managed by a friend of his, and cheekily inquired if he had ever been tempted to “take the soup” and make a move. He jokingly said that the glitz and glamour of that world really wasn’t for him, and that he was very happy where he was.

During our meal we saw excellent service by the team in the restaurant, who were friendly, interested in our food and drink choices, and attentive at all times. An unfortunate mishap at another table by a young new staff member was quickly resolved with minimum fuss.

An experience like this ought to be something which customers take for granted. However the lawyer – an inveterate winer and diner – remarked that it was refreshing and almost rare to meet restaurant staff who took such pride in their work. Even at Michelin-starred restaurants, he said, he has often felt that staff were just “going through the motions”, with little interest in the diners, the food or the business generally.

It would be silly to deny that this is often a reality. The acute labour shortages of recent times has led to a lot of chopping and changing, which makes it very difficult to build a consistent team. But there’s another issue, and that’s how the job is viewed.

Often in the restaurant trade, we tend not to see that the service aspect is as important as the food. In some cases it comes a poor third, behind both the food and the image and ego of the chef, which is all too often the overriding priority.

The result is that working in hospitality is just seen as a stopgap en route to getting a “real” job, and a means of paying the bills until you take the next step in your life. We simply don’t do enough to foster the idea of restaurant work as a medium to long-term career which can be both fulfilling, and which provides surprising financial security.

At a mid-range restaurant in Dublin, Cork, Galway or Limerick, a server can expect to be paid at least €12 per hour over a 40 hour working week, and to make €350 in tips during that week. This amounts to about €27,000 in wages annually, which is subject to PAYE, with €18,000 in tips.

By any measure, this is an exceptionally good earning potential for a sector that requires no formal education as a prerequisite. Given the shortage of serving staff over the last two years, this is a level that a hard working person could reach quite quickly.

But how many young jobseekers out there would have any idea that the restaurant sector offers these prospects? Not many, if our current recruitment or retention woes are anything to go by.

Part of the problem is that there is no culture of encouraging young people into the sector, and relatively little history of young people being offered training in it. The Technological University of Dublin – or DIT, as it was known to those of us of a certain age – has done its bit to address this over the years.

It offers a two year certificate course in restaurant and bar management at its School of Culinary Arts and Technology in Grangegorman. This is the only course of its kind that I’m aware of that is focused on the restaurant sector as opposed to hotel and hospitality management more generally, but is unfortunately limited to just 32 places every year.

It strikes me though that what we need most is a cultural shift across the restaurant sector. We can do this by encouraging young people to see the trade as a potential career path, by properly training them up, and by making them a truly valued part of the business.

Perhaps then all customers can have the “wow” factor of great food, matched with great service, far more regularly that they are used to today. **FW**

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FOOD & WINE

NOVEMBER 2022

AUSTRIAN
WINE

SALLY
BARNES ON
HER LIFE IN
FOOD

BEER
MEETS ART

A man with a beard and tattoos, wearing a green t-shirt and a green apron, stands in a restaurant. He is looking directly at the camera. The background shows a modern dining area with wooden tables and chairs, and a wall with a chalkboard menu.

*“The idea that you have
to open six days a week to
make money is bollocks”*

Irish chef Trevor Moran on running
America’s best restaurant



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Photo: Dean Carroll
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Best Irish Food Magazine 2022

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Anyone who is currently weighing up just how well they manage to balance their life and their work should find today's cover interview fascinating. It's with Trevor Moran, an Irish chef who you may not have heard of, but who is running a small restaurant in Nashville that has just been named the best in the world by American Food&Wine magazine.

As Moran tells Alex Meehan, that restaurant, called Locust, opens for three days a week, a fact that has led other chefs to tell Moran that he has a hobby, not a job.

But he is having none of it, and is determined to challenge what has become the norm in the industry over the years: work 18 hours a day, five or six days a week, until you burn out, keel over, or both.

"The old idea that you have to work six days a week and stay open all day to make it happen is bollocks," Moran says. "You just burn out. The solution is to make the menu smaller, cut down on staff and don't be stupid in your outgoings."

It's an intriguing insight into a new way of doing things – a way that is beginning to sound far more sensible than what many of us, no matter what industry we are in, have found ourselves doing over the years.

Elsewhere, Mick O'Connell is extolling the wines of the Burgenland region of Austria, and Domini Kemp is cooking up some nutritious dishes to fortify yourself with before Christmas madness kicks in.

There are also Chinese, Thai and Korean-inspired recipes to try, and an interview with Tony Parkin, the new chef at House at the Cliff House hotel in Ardmore in Co Waterford.

Happy cooking and happy reading - and we will see you next month for our full-on festive issue.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,
GILLIAN

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Bite-Size

Your guide to all things hot in food and drink this month



CHRISTMAS AT THE CASTLE

There's always strong demand for tickets for the Edwardian-inspired festive afternoon tea served every year at Luttrellstown Castle in Dublin, so book early if you don't want to miss out. Priced at €60 per adult and €30 per child, it will be served this year on November 27, as well as December 4, 11, 18, 21, 22 and 23. Expect smoked salmon on Guinness bread, ham hock and wholegrain mustard mayo on mini blaas, warm chocolate and orange madeira cake, maple and peach tartlets, and more. Book at luttrellstowncastle.com.

NOVEMBER is a good month to...

eat cookies, then repeat

Need a gift that keeps on giving for the cookie lover in your life? Sarah Cremin may have just the thing for you. Cremin set up Good Fortune Cookies in Cork in December 2020, soon after graduating from Ballymaloe Cookery School, and is now taking her business nationwide with the launch of a cookie subscription service. Called Treat & Repeat, the service is available at two price points - €90 including delivery for a three month subscription, and €180 including delivery for six months. Order the former and you'll get three monthly deliveries of fifteen freshly-baked cookies, order the latter and you'll get six monthly deliveries - order by December 16 for pre-Christmas delivery of the first box. You can also order one-off gift boxes, and there's one variety that's a must for Corkonians - the 'Corkies' box of Hadji Bey rose cookies, Barry's Tea shortbread, and Beamish cookies. A box of 15 cookies is €25 plus €5 delivery, and you can mix and match your flavours. Cremin can also accommodate corporate gift orders; see good-fortune.ie.



DIVE INTO A NEW SEAFOOD BAR

Mark Commins and Conor Graham, the friends and business partners who already own Linnane's Lobster Bar and Flaggy Shore Oysters in Clare, have expanded again, this time in Galway. The pair have opened Barnacles Bar & Kitchen in Salthill, where the menu includes dishes like whole roast lobster with dulse seaweed and mint butter potatoes, fish and chips, cured salmon with edamame beans, and - of course - those gorgeous Flaggy Shore oysters. Cocktails include the Salthill Lady, made with spiced orange gin from the nearby Micil Distillery along with Cointreau, lemon, rosemary syrup and egg whites, and a French 75 made with Gunpowder Gin from Co Leitrim. Barnacles opens Wednesday to Sunday from midday, with last orders for food taken at 9pm. More details at barnaclesbar.ie.



PIZZA, PLEASE

We're big fans of the pizza bases made by Gianpiero De Vallier - or Piero, as he's better known - at Food&Wine, and we're not the only ones. His bases, which are available nationwide, won a gold medal at the Blas na hÉireann awards in October, with the judges referencing their "lovely aroma and flavour", and "impressive, rustic and generous" appearance. Made to a family recipe and containing six ingredients - Italian flour, soya flour, extra virgin olive oil, yeast, sea salt and filtered water - the bases owe their great flavour to a two-day long fermentation process. You can find stockist details and recipe suggestions at pizzadapiero.ie.



RÉMY MARTIN

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CALM BEFORE THE STORM

DOMINI KEMP, our resident chef, shares nourishing dishes for you to enjoy ahead of the next month's indulgence. Photography by DEAN CARROLL

November is a hovering type of affair. People give up booze, grow beards and are reluctant to get the party started. I have just the thing: lots of plant-based goodness, the start of which was this (rather ugly) but rather delicious lentil bolognese. Now, I know that when I shout out "Who's with me?", you may be thinking of slinking off, but just get back here.

There are a good few dishes in this month's column to keep you ticking over until D-day (December 25, which is fast approaching), and if you decide to give up meat altogether, I would make a double batch of the lentil bolognese to use as the base for the low-carb lasagne, which was another tasty supper that was well received.

The sweet potato soup was bonkers simple to make and really, you just can't go wrong with those flavours. I made this soup in a hurry and really badly; there was no real skill. I wanted to make it fast, so don't judge my technique. It's shockingly lazy but the miso and garlic butter drenched croutons make it all okay. I get that sourdough croutons are not very Asian, but really they were a great vehicle for the miso butter. However, if you're feeling virtuous, make some tamari roasted pumpkin seeds instead, which are my favourite alternative for gluten-free and low-carb croutons for soups and salads galore.

Enjoy these nourishing dishes throughout November and I'll see you next month for our annual Christmas feast.





LENTIL
BOLOGNESE
- RECIPE ON
PAGE 10



LOW-CARB
AUBERGINE
LASAGNE

LOW-CARB AUBERGINE LASAGNE

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1 aubergine, sliced thinly lengthways
50ml olive oil
Salt
1 white onion, peeled and diced
400g minced beef, approximately
250g mushrooms, diced
1 tin tomatoes
½ tube tomato purée
3 tbsp Worcestershire sauce
4 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
1-2 tsp dried herbs like thyme or oregano
Pinch chilli flakes
1 courgette
125g ball mozzarella, torn

METHOD

1. Preheat the oven to 190C. Place the aubergine slices onto a baking tray, then drizzle with half of the olive oil and season with salt. Bake until golden brown then cool.
2. Meanwhile, heat the other half of the olive oil in a pot over a low heat and sweat the onion. When soft, turn the heat up to high and add the beef. Cook out and when you have a little colour, season well and add the mushrooms.
3. Stir then add the other ingredients, excluding the mozzarella and courgette, and cook out, adjusting the seasoning until good and tasty. Cook through fully and set aside.
4. Using a peeler, cut the courgette into thick ribbons.
5. To assemble the dish, scoop the meat sauce into a baking dish or lasagne tray and then top with the aubergine slices. Pile the courgette onto top and add the mozzarella. You can bake straight away until the mozzarella has melted a little and the courgette is starting to brown at the edges or cool fully, then refrigerate and you can bake it until piping hot for about 45-50 minutes for a perfect homemade ready meal.

SWEET POTATO, COCONUT AND MISO SOUP

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

1 heaped tbsp coconut oil
1 onion, peeled and diced
2 sweet potatoes, peeled and chopped
4 carrots, peeled and diced (approximately 200g)
1-2 tsp ground turmeric
Salt
1 tin coconut milk
800ml water

For the garnish

1 tbsp white miso
2 tbsp butter
2 tbsp olive oil
2 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
2 slices sourdough, cubed
30g Parmesan
2 tbsp tamari, optional
2 tbsp pumpkin seeds, optional
Toasted coconut shavings, optional

METHOD

1. Melt the coconut oil in a decent sized heavy-based saucepan, and sweat the onion, sweet potatoes and carrots then add the turmeric and lots of salt. Put a lid on the pot and cook for about 5 minutes - you don't want the vegetables to colour.
2. Next, add the coconut milk and half the water, then cook until the vegetables are tender. Blitz the soup until smooth, adding more water to get the right thickness. Season well and that's it done.
3. To make the croutons, preheat your oven to 180C. Melt the miso with the butter, oil and garlic over a gentle heat and whisk together. Pour the buttery mix over the cubed bread, then tip onto a baking tray and bake in the oven for about 15-20 minutes, turning regularly. Grate the Parmesan over the croutons to add another layer of flavour and when golden brown, cool. If you'd like some extra umami, drizzle the tamari over the pumpkin seeds and toast until crisp.
4. To serve, divide the soup between bowls and serve with the croutons on top, plus some toasted umami pumpkin seeds if using. A sprinkle of toasted coconut shavings works well here too.



SWEET POTATO,
COCONUT AND
MISO SOUP



ROAST PINEAPPLE

ROAST PINEAPPLE

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

50g butter
 3 tbsp honey
 150ml rum
 1 pineapple, peeled and trimmed
 1-2 vanilla pods
 Crème fraîche or Greek yoghurt, to serve

METHOD

1. This is another total cinch to make. First preheat your oven up to 200C, then melt the butter and honey together in a pan over a low to medium heat. Next, add the rum carefully - it might flame - and the alcohol will cook off.
 2. Meanwhile, stab the pineapple with skewers or similar to make a little tunnel in which the stuff the vanilla beans. Place into a baking dish.
 3. Drizzle the rum and honey butter over the pineapple and cook, basting often, until golden brown, about 30 minutes. Slice and serve with your favourite creamy condiment - I like crème fraîche or Greek yoghurt.

“Use the lentil bolognese as the base for the low-carb lasagne”

LENTIL BOLOGNESE

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

200g dried beluga lentils
 30-50ml olive oil
 1 large white onion, peeled and diced
 200g carrots, peeled and diced
 3 celery sticks, diced
 6 garlic cloves, peeled and sliced
 Salt and pepper
 1-2 tsp fresh thyme leaves
 Good pinch chilli flakes
 ½ tube tomato purée (approximately 70g)
 Small glass red wine, around 100ml
 1 tin tomatoes
 400ml vegetable stock or water
 2 tbsp soy sauce or tamari
 1 tbsp balsamic vinegar
 50g ground hemp seeds, optional
 Roasted vegetables or cooked pasta, to serve

METHOD

1. Soak the lentils in plenty of cold water for at least 30 minutes, or if possible, a few hours. Then drain and set aside; you can prep the vegetables while they are soaking.
 2. Heat the olive oil in a large pot over a low to medium heat, then sweat the onion, carrots, celery, garlic, seasoning, chilli and herbs. Cover with a lid and cook until soft then season really well.
 3. Add the tomato purée and cook out for a minute or two, then deglaze the pot with the red wine. Next, add the tomatoes, stock, tamari and balsamic, then the drained lentils.
 4. Cover and cook until the lentils absorb the water and are tender. Add the hemp seeds at the end if you are looking for a little more plant protein, then serve the bolognese on its own with roasted veggies or with some pasta. **FW**



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“I want to come home and do

Trevor Moran's Locust has 36 seats, opens three days a week, doesn't post menus on its website - and has just been named the best restaurant in America. The Dubliner talks kitchen culture, making money, and his desire to return to Ireland with ALEX MEEHAN



TREVOR AND THE LOCUST TEAM

something like Locust in Dublin”



Photography by ANDREW THOMAS LEE

You might think that running a restaurant with 1,000 people on a waiting list for tables would be a career-defining high. But Trevor Moran is taking a pragmatic view of it.

“When you think about it, it’s actually not much use. Whether it’s 1,000 people or one person, it doesn’t make a difference. We don’t have room for them, so what can we actually do?”

Moran chuckles as he says this. The Irish chef doesn’t want to come across as ungrateful, but he’s bemused by all the attention the restaurant is getting. Locust is relatively new – it opened in Nashville, Tennessee, in October 2020 – but over the past couple of months, it’s become one of the most celebrated places to eat in the United States.

In early September, Locust was named restaurant of the year by American Food & Wine magazine. Later that month, The New York Times added Locust to its 2022 The Restaurant List, a run-down of the 50 places in America the paper’s critics “are most excited about right now”.

In October, Locust featured on an episode of *Somebody Feed Phil*, the Netflix documentary series, which focused on Nashville. So yes, Moran says over the phone – it’s been a busy few months.

“We were always full, but that’s because we’re small and we want it that way. We don’t want to be big, we’re a neighbourhood restaurant at the end of the day. I like that we were made Restaurant of the Year, because it was a nod to the culture of the place and it wasn’t centred on me. It recognises that we’re doing something different,” he says.

“I tend to shy away from awards and that kind of thing in general because I think they’re a bit toxic, like influencer culture in general. If you’re working your ass off and your food isn’t getting that kind of attention, and then you go on Instagram and see everyone else’s perfect food life, you might think yours is shit. But really food is all about the eating. The only true test of someone’s food is how it tastes, not really how it looks.”

“The guys here want to work hard when they work, and have enough time off to maintain their creativity and spark, and to be with their families”

Moran, like many chefs, fell into the business. “There was certainly no big plan. Basically, I was on the dole and they threatened to take it away unless I actually got a job, so my mum encouraged me to try being a chef,” he says.

He got his first job in Brasserie Na Mara in Dún Laoghaire around 2002, starting in the pastry section.

“I was completely clueless at the start. I’d no idea what was involved in cooking or kitchens, but as soon as I saw the machinery in the background, the way the place was run and how it worked, I was hooked,” he says. “It was insane, but I fell in love and stayed for around four years there as the sous chef.”

It was while he was working in south Dublin that he first met fellow chef Karl Whelan, who at the time was working in a restaurant called Tribe in Glashule.

“That was a really amazing place for a period of a year or two. There was this secret moment in cooking there that nobody really knew about it, where you could go in and get perfect pithiviers, amazing terrines and crudos, or lamb and foie gras wrapped in crêpinette with a morel mushroom sauce. It was just outrageously good food and it blew my mind,” Moran says.

“Karl showed me that it was possible to walk into a fridge, see what was there, and come up with something super refined. I stayed with him for a few years and then he went off to Le Meurice in Paris, and I went

to Mint under Dylan McGrath.”

Seeing the level of cooking being done by McGrath and his crew at Mint, which was located in Ranelagh, further inspired Moran, and ultimately led to him going to Copenhagen to work at René Redzepi’s Noma at the peak of that restaurant’s influence.

He arrived in 2009 as an unpaid stagiaire but stayed on, finding himself at the forefront of the ‘new Nordic’ food movement built on foraging and fermentation that aimed to reinvent cooking from the ground up. Moran rose to be sous chef under Redzepi, and spent four years at Noma before deciding to move on.

“I had been at Noma for a while and took a job at a friend’s restaurant in Copenhagen, a place called Bror, but I had a friend in Nashville who was running a place called The Catbird Seat there and he reached out. I wanted a change, so I jumped,” he says.

Unlike restaurants that are carefully designed by marketing types to fit specific commercial niches, Locust started life quite differently. Moran had one idea for it, but let it evolve as he felt it needed to.

“We started out as a dumpling restaurant, with hand-cut noodles and shrimp toast and shaved ice. It was quite Japanese in focus but that didn’t take long to change. A lot of my chef friends came to work with me and we started to get really excited about what we could do,” he says.

“We had a cool kitchen with all the gear you’d want, so it wasn’t long before we started having a bit more fun. There’s a lot of inspiration from British and French food, from fine dining and that world, with a Japanese component. We’re probably now more of a European-style seafood restaurant than anything else, but it’s quite minimalist.”

Locust opens three days a week, for five and a half hours a day. Lunch is served for two hours, and dinner for three and a half. Usually there are around six dishes on the menu, with the odd special added too. Prices for dishes range from around \$16 up to \$60 for larger format, whole fish-type options.

There are six chefs, and no waiters or front of house staff. Diners get to listen to loud music while the chefs work – The Pogues’ *Rum Sodomy & the Lash* is on regular rotation, along with a good splash of metal – and the restaurant seats around 36 people at its nine tables.

As for the food itself, it’s hard to pin down. Locust deliberately maintains a very lo-fi approach to social media and marketing – there’s no menu on the website and no Twitter account, with only an Instagram page to show off what Moran and his team are doing.

“The food is rustic but there’s a fair bit of technique behind it. The idea of the restaurant is pretty minimal. There are four of us in the kitchen and we do everything, we pour drinks, take checks, the works. Every chef has two dishes, tops, and we keep it to that,” Moran says.

“There might be only eight things on the menu, but that allows for a level of execution that’s really high if we want it to be. I’m really proud of some of the things we’re putting out.”

Recent dishes have included house-canned clams served with a black garlic olive oil mayonnaise, beef tartare hand rolls served with freeze-dried capers and marinated rice with horseradish cream, and eel risotto. There are usually dumplings on the menu as well as kakigori, which is Japanese shaved ice flavoured with passion fruit and salted caramel.

On the day we talk, Moran uploads a picture to Instagram that attracts my attention. It looks like mackerel on toast, but there’s a bit more to it than that.



“Mackerel is pretty common back home but not so much here, and getting it from somewhere like Maine to Nashville isn’t easy. But we got some amazing fish in, so we made a simple bread dough with a little ferment on it. We cleaned up the mackerel, gave it a light cure with salt and then grilled it over coals on a hibachi grill,” he says.

“Then we put it onto the bread, fired it, doused it in brown butter, filled the crust with matsutake wild mushroom purée, and then put some sea urchin on top. So yeah, pretty simple!”

Moran has been outspoken in the US food media about his disdain for the notion that chefs must work incredibly long hours to barely break even. But can he really make money with such a small restaurant open only three days a week – are the economics of running a business in the US so different to Ireland?

“Of course you can make money. There are high rents to pay because we’re in a good spot, but the old idea that you have to work six days a week and stay open all day to make it happen is bollocks. You just burn out. The solution is to make the menu smaller, cut down on staff and don’t be stupid in your outgoings,” he says.

“We’ve been open for two years and it’s going well. Everyone is well paid, has medical and dental, and gets three days off a week. It’s a different system, but don’t worry, we work hard.”

When some other chefs hear about Locust’s hours, they tell him he has “a hobby, not a job”, according to Moran, not that it bothers him.

“Actually we do a 60-hour week, it’s just well organised. Most people who think we have it easy wouldn’t last, but our system works. The guys who work with me want to work hard when they work, and have enough time off to maintain their creativity and spark, and to be with their families,” he says.

Moran, who lives with his partner and five-year-old daughter, describes Nashville as a pretty good town for food; when Irish friends come to visit, he shows them around and they usually love it.

“It’s a vibrant scene, and food truck culture is big here. The trucks give people a start and an opportunity to try something new and if it works, they expand up into a bricks and mortar restaurant,” he says.

“There’s a lot of barbecue joints, good Italian-American food, and a lot of ‘meat-and-three’ joints, which are sort of diner/canteen set-ups, usually with a family emphasis. There’s often a mom or grandma out the back cooking up a pot roast or frying catfish. It’s not something you’d want to eat every day, but it’s always delicious.”

Moran is one of a growing group of Irish chefs who have enjoyed success around the world. He personally knows more than a few of them who intend to return to Ireland in the near future, and he has plans to do so too.

“There are all these guys and girls out there with enormous talent and they’re all gonna come back. It’s started already I think. There are Irish chefs in charge of three Michelin star kitchens around the world and they’re going to come home. I can’t wait to see what happens in the next 10 years as a result,” he says.

“Personally I can’t wait to get home. Last month we shut down for a couple of weeks and I brought my family and all the chefs to Ireland, we went on a food tour of Dublin, Galway and London. The next time I come back, I’ll do some sort of pop-up dinner with Karl Whelan. I love Nashville, but I want to come home and do something like Locust in Dublin, somewhere quirky with a real food-forward feel.” **FW**

A Seoul-ful Sunday lunch

Korean-style fried chicken restaurant **Chimac** has just opened its second outlet in Terenure, Dublin and has shared delicious recipes for you to try this month. Owned by **Sofie Rooney** and **Garret Fitzgerald**, the restaurant is well-loved for its twice-fried Irish free-range chicken and flavourful sauces. Here, Fitzgerald shares his favourite Sunday lunch recipes. See chimac.ie for more.

Photography by **Max Rooney**

GOCHUGARU SPATCHCOCKED CHICKEN WITH CHICKEN DRIPPING ROASTIES AND FUDGY LEEKS

Serves 4

This chicken dinner is an absolute staple in our home and we always come back to this gochugaru mix because it's such a delicious mix of salty, smoky and sweet. Easy to prepare, just pop it all in the oven and let the leeks and potatoes roast to perfection in chicken fat. Spatchcocking the bird makes this quick meal even quicker, as it cooks more evenly so that the breast and thigh are cooked at the same time. The real plus is the crispy, golden brown skin - more surface with dry heat means crispier chicken.

INGREDIENTS

1 spatchcocked chicken - you can do this yourself or else kindly ask your butcher to do it for you

2 leeks, topped and tailed with outer leaves removed and cut into chunks

1 red onion, peeled and cut into quarters

4 Maris Piper potatoes, cut into roastie chunks
Olive oil

For the marinade

4 garlic cloves

3 healthy pinches sea salt

1 tsp black peppercorns

½tbsp gochugaru

1 tbsp paprika

1 tsp cumin

60ml olive oil

15ml apple cider vinegar

To serve, optional

Red chillies, thinly sliced

Spring onions, thinly sliced

METHOD

1. First, make the marinade. Grind all of the dry ingredients together in a pestle and mortar, then add in the wet. Rub the marinade all over the chicken and marinate for 6-12 hours in the fridge.

2. Preheat your oven to 200C, then place the leeks and onions in the centre of a baking tray. Scatter the potatoes around the outside and place the chicken on top of the leeks and onions so they don't burn. Pour a good glug of olive oil over the top then pop the dish in the oven for somewhere between 45 minutes to an hour until the chicken is cooked, taking care to baste the chicken every 20 minutes - not necessary but you deserve it.

3. Once the chicken is cooked, remove it from the oven and place on a board to rest. Give the veg a good toss to redistribute and pop it back in the oven to get extra crispy for about 20 minutes.

4. To serve, carve the chicken, garnish if desired, and enjoy with the vegetables.

SOY-MARINATED SCOTCH EGGS

Makes 6

This is the Chimac take on a scotch egg, a variation of which you'll find daily in our Terenure branch - we use fatty minced chicken in place of pork, with deliciously umami soy marinated eggs which are perfectly soft boiled. We love a custardy, jammy egg yolk, but if you're not a fan simply increase the egg cook time for a more firm yolk. Don't get put off by the multiple steps in this recipe, they're all super simple, just take your time.

INGREDIENTS

For the soy marinated eggs

6 room temperature eggs

Ice

100ml soy

100ml water

100ml mirin

For the scotch egg sausage

600g fatty minced chicken

6g salt

1 tsp soy

1 tbsp gochujang

1 tsp gochugaru

3 garlic cloves, peeled and minced

4 spring onions, thinly sliced

For the coating

100g plain flour

3 eggs, whisked

100g panko breadcrumbs

1 tbsp sesame seeds

Rapeseed or vegetable oil, for frying

Sliced spring onions, to serve

METHOD

1. First, cook the eggs. Bring a litre of water to a rolling boil, then gently add the room temperature eggs and start a timer for six minutes. Add the ice and some cold water to a bowl - this is your ice bath - and once the timer goes off, remove the eggs and pop into the ice bath for ten minutes. When cool, remove the eggs from the water and peel them carefully.

2. For the marinade, whisk the soy, water and mirin together in a bowl. Add the eggs and leave to marinate for a maximum of four hours in the fridge.

3. To make the sausage, mix all of the ingredients together in a bowl until you get a homogeneous texture, then store in the fridge for 4 to 24 hours to let the flavours come together.

4. Fill a pot/wok/fryer with oil and bring to 180C - you'll want to submerge the scotch eggs so use as much oil as needed to do so depending on your vessel.

5. To assemble the scotch eggs, set up your breadcrumbing station - place the flour, eggs and Panko in three separate bowls. Mix the sesame seeds into the breadcrumbs. Next, take a plum-sized amount of sausage and press it as flat as possible without breaking it.

6. Take an egg from the marinade and roll it gently in flour, then wrap the flat sausage around the egg, sealing it with your fingers gently. Toss the covered egg in the flour, then the egg wash and finally the panko-sesame mix. Repeat with the remaining eggs and mix.

7. To finish, deep fry the eggs for six minutes, making sure the egg is submerged in the hot oil. Use a slotted spoon or tongs to remove from the oil, then transfer to a rack and leave rest for seven minutes.

8. To serve, cut the eggs in half and scatter with sliced spring onions.





CLOCKWISE FROM LEFT: GOCHUGARU SPATCHCOCKED CHICKEN WITH CHICKEN DRIPPING ROASTIES AND FUDGY LEEKS; SOY-MARINATED SCOTCH EGGS; BLISTERED GREEN BEAN AND SESAME SIDE SALAD





GUINNESS AND GOCHUJANG SHORT-RIB STEW

BLISTERED GREEN BEAN AND SESAME SIDE SALAD

Serves 4

We love this salad with green beans, but you could swap them out for broccoli, sugar snap peas or mangetout – whatever you've got handy. This is the kind of recipe that surprises you because it's so much better than the sum of its parts.

INGREDIENTS

Neutral cooking oil
300g green beans
½ tbsp soy sauce
4 tbsp freshly roasted sesame seeds
½ tbsp mirin
Pickled or fresh red chillies, thinly sliced

METHOD

1. Place a frying pan over a high heat. Once hot, add a drop of oil and the green beans. Fry the beans for about six minutes until nicely blistered.
2. While they're cooking, put all the other ingredients, excluding the chillies, in a pestle and mortar and grind to create a paste.
3. To serve, dress the blistered green beans in the paste and garnish with the chillies.

GUINNESS AND GOCHUJANG SHORT-RIB STEW

Serves 4-5

As comforting as the traditional Irish stews we grew up eating are, this Guinness and gochujang short-rib dish also brings a punch of spice that you'll find yourself craving on a cold winter's evening. Despite its title, the real star of the show is the umami veg, stewed to perfection and packed with flavour from the rich meaty broth.

INGREDIENTS

1 tbsp freshly ground black pepper
A good sprinkle of sea salt
3 beef short ribs
1 tbsp oil
1 white onion, peeled and diced
1 celery stalk, diced
6 large carrots, peeled – 1 diced, 5 roughly chopped
10 garlic cloves, peeled and crushed
500ml Guinness Foreign Extra or similar
1 kg baby potatoes, quartered or halved depending on size
160ml soy sauce
240ml mirin
160g gochujang
Water or stock

To serve
Cooked rice
Chopped spring onions

METHOD

1. Sprinkle salt and black pepper all over the beef short ribs.
2. Bring a heavy pot to a high heat, add the oil and wait 30 seconds, then add the beef short ribs. Brown the beef on all sides, resisting the urge to agitate it too much – the dark fond (the caramelised bits of meat) on the bottom of the pot is pure flavour and will be deglazed by the Guinness.
3. Once the meat is browned, reduce the heat to medium and add the onion, celery and diced carrot. Cook for five minutes, stirring every 30 seconds, then add the garlic and sauté for one minute.
4. Add half the Guinness and deglaze the pot by scraping the bottom with a wooden spoon, then add the gochujang, soy, mirin, potatoes and the five roughly chopped carrots.
5. Submerge the veg and meat with either water or stock, then increase the heat and bring to a boil. Once boiling, reduce the heat to a simmer and cover with a lid. Leave it stew for three to four hours, stirring occasionally, until the short rib is tender but not falling apart. At this point remove the fully intact short ribs.
6. Increase heat to high and let the remaining liquid, uncovered, reduce by about 40 per cent. This should take about 40 minutes.
7. One reduced, add the short ribs back into the rich gravy and heat up over a medium heat.
8. Once the meat is hot again, divide it, the veg and sauce between four or five bowls and serve with cooked rice and thinly sliced spring onions. **FW**

Feast of Flavour



The **Dunnes Stores** **Simply Better** range has a well-deserved reputation for award-winning food and drink. Behind the scenes it also champions small Irish producers, helping them to grow while doing what they do best

This month we caught up with Yvonne Waldron of Waldron Meats which is based in Co Roscommon. A true family business, they have been producing top quality meat products for over 30 years. “We started our business here back in 1989,” Yvonne explains. “It was very small - we had a little cooker and we cooked hams and cut up bacon to sell locally. It literally started in our garage, that was our little factory.”

It may have been small but the fledgling Waldron Meats was soon supplying all the local shops in the surrounding area. Things really took off when the family took more control of the process and started to buy in the pork, rather than pork products, and developed its own cure for the meat. The growing success saw the Waldrons investing in a purpose-built factory, located at the back of the house. “To this day that’s where we are, out in the middle of the country,” Yvonne says, with some pride. “We were local and traditional and we still are. When I look out the window here, I’m looking at green fields and stone walls. We’ve no intention of moving into town or to an industrial estate.”

Quality is at the heart of what Yvonne and the team produce and as a brand Waldron Meats has picked up a whole host of awards for its products over the years. “Winning awards is great but to win them consistently is the important thing,” she explains.

In late 2020, the Dunnes Stores Simply Better Collection team reached out to the Waldrons about working on a range of meats for the Simply Better brand. The conversation began properly in February 2021 but, as Yvonne explains, Covid restrictions had an impact.

“You could only have so many people working at a time and we are really hands on here,” she explains. “Nothing is outsourced and everything is hand cut and hand cured so that held us back a bit.”

The Simply Better team were very supportive, however, and the range launched in Easter of this year with three sliced ham products and two bacon products. The new range has been very well received - and some products have already won awards. The Simply Better Hand Cut Unsmoked Irish Ham won a 3 Star Great Taste Award and the Simply Better Rack of Bacon won a 2 star award. It’s an indication of the quality that infuses everything the Waldrons do. The products are made with 100 per cent Bord Bia quality assured pork and the team takes the time to allow the meat to cure slowly and to rest for the best possible taste. “This is a job that can’t be rushed,” Yvonne says.

The Waldrons have been doing what they do for a long time and, as Yvonne notes, the Simply Better team allows them to just get on with it while offering key supports around things like packaging and branding. And of course the partnership with Dunnes Stores means the Waldrons can now get their award-winning products into stores all across Ireland. Consumers have been able to buy and try the products since April so Yvonne and the team are expecting the next few weeks to be busy ones as Irish households start making plans for their Christmas dining.

It’s clear the collaboration is a successful one and Yvonne loves working with the Simply Better team. “They are absolutely brilliant to work with,” she says. “They were prepared to work at our pace and they have the same values where the provenance and quality of the product are number one. That would be our attitude as well.

“They’re very supportive and with the five products available now nationwide it’s given us more exposure. To get around the country for a small business like us is hard. We can’t be everywhere - and it just wouldn’t be practical to be driving all the way to Kerry with a ham!” **FW**

Mix it up

Not quite authentic, but 100 per cent delicious, is how **Rosheen Kaul** and **Joanna Hu** describe Chinese-ish, their new cookbook. Test their claim for yourself with these recipes



BEIJING HOT CHICKEN

Serves 4

I had a theory: if you put chicken through the same three-day process as Nashville hot chicken (brining, buttermilk brining, and then dredging), but swapped the cayenne, paprika, onion and garlic for a deeply aromatic northern Chinese spice mix, it could be pretty good.

While we're at it, why not use the Korean technique of dredging and frying, too? That could be really good.

It wasn't just good, it was utterly glorious. The potato-starch dredge became an incredibly light and crispy (not hard and crunchy) coating. The double-frying technique was so effective that the chicken was still crispy the next day. The intensity of the spices in the buttermilk brine penetrated right into the chicken, resulting in perfectly seasoned, tender bites.

Then, of course, there was the spice mix, that magnificent spice mix. The warm, roasty aromas of cumin, garlic and chilli take you right to the smoky back alleys of Beijing, where this same spice mix is dusted over crisp charcoal-roasted meats.

I also managed to cut a whole day out of the traditional Nashville process by condensing it into two steps. On day one, you make the buttermilk brine and submerge the chicken in it. On day two, you dredge and fry. The spiciness can be adjusted to suit your personal preference, as the chicken is well seasoned even before you coat it in the chilli oil and spice mix.

When I make fried chicken at home, I always do half plain, half spicy, so it's not all pain and suffering. I eat my fried chicken between two slices of fluffy white bread, with tiny pickled green chillies, mayo and a wedge of lettuce to cool the burn. How you choose to eat yours is entirely up to you.

INGREDIENTS

Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
2 tbsp chilli oil
1 tsp salt

For the buttermilk brine

1 litre buttermilk
2 tbsp salt
2 tsp chicken bouillon powder
1 tsp garlic powder
2 tbsp Sichuan or regular chilli powder
8 skinless chicken thigh fillets

For the Beijing spice mix

2 tsp white peppercorns
1 tsp Sichuan peppercorns
3 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp garlic powder
2 tsp Sichuan or regular chilli powder
2 tsp chilli flakes

For the potato-flour dredge

265g potato starch
75g plain flour
1 tsp ground black pepper
1 tsp salt

METHOD

1. On day one, make the buttermilk brine. Combine the buttermilk, salt, chicken bouillon powder, garlic powder and chilli powder in a large bowl or container. Ensure the container is deep enough so that the chicken will be completely submerged.
2. Place the chicken thighs into the buttermilk brine, cover and refrigerate for 12 to 24 hours.
3. The next day, first make the Beijing spice mix. Heat a small pan over a low heat and toast the white and Sichuan peppercorns and cumin seeds, moving the pan continuously so that the spices toast evenly.
4. When the spices are lovely and aromatic, add the garlic powder, chilli powder and chilli flakes, and toast gently for 30 seconds. Allow the spices to cool, then grind them into a coarse powder using a mortar and pestle.
5. To make the potato-flour dredge, combine the potato flour, plain flour, black pepper and salt in a large bowl. Set aside.
6. Heat at least 6cm of oil in a large heavy-based saucepan to 160C, using a food thermometer to check the temperature. Lift each piece of chicken out of the buttermilk brine and shake off the excess.
7. Thoroughly coat the chicken in the potato-flour dredge, then carefully lower into the oil. Fry the chicken in batches, making sure the pieces don't touch each other or stick to the bottom of the pan. Fry for five to six minutes, until the crust is just set. Transfer to a wire rack to rest while the remaining chicken is fried.
8. When all of the pieces have been fried once, fry each batch a second time, until the coating is extra crispy, for another six to seven minutes. Potato flour does not brown like plain flour does, so don't attempt to fry until golden. When you tap the coating and it is hard and crisp, the chicken is ready to drain on a wire rack. Reserve 125ml of the hot frying oil.
9. Place two tablespoons of the spice mix in a heatproof bowl with the reserved frying oil, chilli oil and salt, and mix. Add two chicken pieces to the bowl at a time, and toss to coat in the spice and oil mix. Return the chicken to the wire rack and sprinkle generously with the remaining spice mix. Serve hot.

“I eat my fried chicken
between two slices
of fluffy white bread,
with tiny pickled green
chillies, mayo and a
wedge of lettuce”



BEIJING HOT CHICKEN

DAN DAN MIAN

Serves 4

This is one of the recipes I'm proudest of. My sister and I spent years trying to find a version of dan dan mian that resembled the one from our childhood. It was always too saucy and meaty, and too similar to another Chinese noodle dish called zhajiangmian. For me, the perfect dan dan mian is a small bowl of sesame paste-slicked noodles with a sprinkling of crispy pork. Fragrant with Sichuan pepper, dried chillies and ya cai (Sichuan pickled vegetable), the noodles are slurpy-crispy-spicy perfection. Sesame paste has a habit of becoming claggy, so hot stock is added sparingly to loosen the sauce. Making this in small portions is absolutely essential to maintaining the perfect texture, but no one said you can't have more than one bowl.

INGREDIENTS

250g pork mince
 Half tsp light soy sauce
 Half tsp ground white pepper
 Half tsp salt
 2 tbsp vegetable oil
 Half tsp grated ginger
 Half tsp grated garlic
 35g ya cai (Sichuan pickled vegetables)
 1 tsp Sichuan or regular chilli powder
 1 tsp dark soy sauce
 250g dried thin wheat noodles
 500ml good-quality store-bought stock, plus extra to serve
 1 tsp ground Sichuan peppercorns, to serve

For the sauce

1 tbsp white tahini
 1 tbsp light soy sauce
 1 tsp Chinkiang black vinegar
 1 tbsp grated garlic
 1 tsp sesame oil
 1 tbsp chilli oil
 1 tsp caster sugar

METHOD

1. Combine the pork, light soy sauce, white pepper and salt and allow to stand for 30 minutes to marinate.
2. Heat the oil in a wok or frying pan over medium heat. Add the ginger and garlic and fry until fragrant. Add the marinated pork mince and fry until crisp, 10–12 minutes.
3. Add the ya cai, which you will find at most Asian grocers, chilli powder and dark soy sauce. Fry gently for one to two minutes, then turn the heat off but leave the wok on the stove for now.
4. Cook the noodles in a saucepan of boiling water according to the packet instructions, then drain. Mix all of the ingredients for the sauce together to combine and divide between four bowls. Stir 125ml of hot stock into each portion to create a loose, creamy sauce.
5. Divide the noodles between the four bowls, top with the crispy pork and ground Sichuan peppercorns. Add another tablespoon of hot stock and stir thoroughly before eating.



PUMPKIN CAKES

Makes 15 to 20 small cakes

Pumpkin cakes are that perfect mix of crunchy outer shell and sweet, slightly doughy centre. The glutinous rice flour adds a yielding bite and elasticity, and the sesame seed coating makes things even more moreish.

INGREDIENTS

300g pumpkin flesh (about one small pumpkin), peeled, deseeded and cut into thin, even slices
 2 tbsp icing sugar
 200g glutinous rice flour
 Vegetable oil, for deep-frying
 75g sesame seeds

METHOD

1. Place the pumpkin in a microwave-safe container and cook on high for eight minutes, until very soft. Alternatively, you could steam the pumpkin for 25–30 minutes until very soft.
2. Drain any excess water from the flesh, place in a blender and blend into a purée. Add the icing sugar; adjust for your desired level of sweetness and blend once more.
3. Transfer the pumpkin purée to a bowl and add the glutinous rice flour in increments, working the mixture into a dry dough with your hands. You may need to add more flour depending on the water content of your pumpkin. The dough shouldn't stick to your hands.
4. In a wok or heavy-based pan, heat the oil to 160C using a food thermometer to check

the temperature. To make the cakes, roll the pumpkin dough into balls about the size of a ping pong, then flatten each into a 1.5cm disc.

5. Lightly dampen the surface of each cake with a little water and coat with sesame seeds. Working in batches, gently slide the cakes into the hot oil and fry until golden-brown, about five to six minutes.
6. After all the cakes have been fried once, fry them a second time for about 20 seconds to form a lasting crispy shell. Set aside to cool briefly before serving. **FW**



RECIPES EXTRACTED FROM CHINESE-ISH BY ROSHEEN KAUL AND JOANNA HU, PUBLISHED BY MURDOCH BOOKS, £22.

THIS IS NOT JUST CHRISTMAS FOOD
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The M&S Christmas Food to Order online shopping service is now open, making the big day even easier and more delicious

Imagine it: pre-ordering the most gorgeous spread of Marks & Spencer festive favourites online, and simply picking up the lot in one trip just before the big day. This year's M&S Christmas Food to Order service is now open, with over 50 Christmas Foodhall classics available to book online for collection at your M&S Foodhall at your preferred time on either December 23rd or 24th.

M&S Food is iconic for a reason, and this year the product development teams behind the M&S Christmas Food to Order range have focused on perfecting the classics and making them of the highest quality and the most delicious yet. The M&S Christmas Food to Order range includes everything from classic Irish turkeys to vegan mains and from sumptuous sides to dazzling desserts, covering all the Christmas dinner staples, as well as snacking dishes for throughout the day. And for the showstopper, M&S is proud to present the Free-Range Stuffed Irish Turkey Crown from Monaghan's Grove Farm.

Christmas should be as stress-free as possible, and this translates to less time running around the shops, stuck in the kitchen, or worrying about great taste. With its convenient collection service, and the opportunity to amend your order in the run-up to the festive celebrations, M&S Christmas Food to Order gifts you more time to focus on what really matters: eating the highest quality Christmas food with family and friends. From the starter to the dessert, M&S Christmas Food to Order is designed to make the big day as easy and delicious as possible for everyone.

FOOD&WINE HAS SELECTED SOME OF OUR FAVOURITES FROM THE M&S CHRISTMAS FOOD TO ORDER RANGE.

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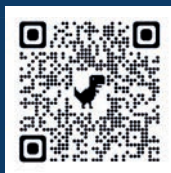


Free-Range Stuffed Irish Turkey Crown, from €45.90; Vegan Rolled 'Turkey' Joint, €15.00; The Ultimate Smoked Salmon Platter, €27; 12-month matured Christmas pudding €16; Helter Skelter Cake, €30

CHRISTMAS CONVENIENCE

Here's how M&S Christmas Food to Order works

- 1. BOOK A SLOT:** go to christmasfood.marksandspencer.ie to choose a collection time and location on December 23rd or 24th that works for you.
- 2. START SHOPPING:** secure your all-important festive essentials and treats with a €40 deposit
- 3. TOP UP YOUR ORDER:** need to amend your items, collection store or time slot? No problem - it's quick and easy to amend your wish list at christmasfood.marksandspencer.ie
- 4. COLLECT IN STORE:** collect M&S Christmas Food Order hassle-free on December 23rd and 24th and pay the outstanding balance as you pick up.



Visit christmasfood.marksandspencer.ie/ to see the full Christmas Food to Order Range and to book your slot.

CRYING BEEF

Serves 2

A version of the classic Thai dish, which goes by many different names but is often known as Weeping Tiger. The only sound you'll hear while cooking this dish is the delicious sizzle of beef.

INGREDIENTS

1 tsp salt
 2 pinches cracked black pepper
 1 tsp granulated sugar
 2 tbsp stir-fry sauce (see below)
 2 sirloin steaks, weighing about 180g each
 15ml vegetable or rapeseed oil
 10 fine green beans, halved
 Half a red onion, sliced
 Half a white onion, sliced
 Handful iceberg lettuce leaves
 8 cherry tomatoes, halved

For the stir-fry sauce

400ml water
 250g granulated sugar
 500ml light soy sauce
 30g cornflour or potato starch

For the dipping sauce

2 tbsp tamarind juice
 2 tsp lime juice
 2 tbsp fish sauce
 1 tsp chilli flakes, crushed in a pestle and mortar
 Half tsp granulated sugar

METHOD

1. To make the stir-fry sauce, mix all the ingredients together in a pan over a low heat until the sugar and cornflour have dissolved. Leave to cool and store in the fridge for up to two weeks.
2. Put the salt, pepper, sugar and stir-fry sauce in a dish and mix together. Add the steaks and leave to marinate for two hours.
3. To make the dipping sauce, put all the ingredients in a bowl and mix together. Set aside.
4. Remove the steaks from the marinade and transfer to a hot flat frying or griddle pan and cook. For rare, 1.5 minutes per side, for medium rare, two minutes per side, and for medium, about two and a quarter minutes per side. For well done, cook for about four to five minutes on each side, depending on thickness. Remove from the pan and set aside to rest.
5. Heat the oil in a wok or deep saucepan over a medium to high heat and sauté the beans, red and white onion for about four minutes.
6. Slice the steak, place the sautéed veg on the side along with the dipping sauce in a bowl or dip pot. Serve with the lettuce and cherry tomatoes on the side.

SQUIDS & GIGGLES



Bring a bit of brightness into your winter cooking with these three dishes from a new cookbook focused on Thai cuisine

SALMON PANEANG

Serves 2

Paneang is a less well-known Thai curry which, due to its vibrant red colour, is often mistaken for its fiery red cousin. It tends to be thicker than a Thai red curry and richer and sweeter, with a nutty, rounded flavour.

INGREDIENTS

2 tbsp self-raising flour
2 salmon fillets, skin on
95ml vegetable or rapeseed oil
400ml coconut milk
2 tbsp palm sugar (or soft brown sugar)
Pinch salt
1 pak choi, cut into 6 pieces, blanched
6 tenderstem broccoli florets, blanched

For the curry paste

6 large dried chillies
1 tsp cumin seeds
1 tsp coriander seeds
2 tbsp sliced lemongrass
2 tbsp chopped galangal
2 tsp crushed garlic
2 tsp diced red onion
2 tsp paprika

METHOD

1. Scatter the flour over a plate and dust the salmon fillets in it, making sure they are completely coated.
2. Pour 30ml of the oil into a flat non-stick frying or griddle pan over a medium to high heat, add the salmon and pan-fry for six to seven minutes, turning to ensure the salmon is evenly cooked. Once cooked, remove from the pan and set aside.
3. Put all the curry paste ingredients in a mortar and pound to a paste with the pestle. Alternatively, whizz together in a small food processor.
4. Heat 50ml of the oil in a wok over a medium to high heat, add the curry paste and cook for two to three minutes until it releases the oil from the sides; this cooking method helps to remove the rawness of the curry paste, and also releases the flavour of the herbs.
5. Add the coconut milk, palm sugar and one teaspoon of salt and cook for a minute until mixed through and thickened.
6. Heat the remaining 15ml of oil in a separate wok and stir-fry the pak choi and broccoli for two minutes until cooked. Season with a pinch of salt.
7. Place the cooked salmon on serving plates, arrange the stir-fried veg on the side and top with the sauce.





MANGO STICKY RICE PUDDING



RECIPES EXTRACTED FROM THE GIGGLING SQUID COOKBOOK BY GIGGLING SQUID, PUBLISHED BY EBURY PRESS, £25. PHOTOGRAPHY BY HAARALA HAMILTON.

MANGO STICKY RICE PUDDING

Serves 2

A traditional dessert enjoyed across Thailand, sometimes made with fresh mangoes gathered straight off the tree.

INGREDIENTS

380g sticky rice
380ml water
150g white sugar

1 tsp salt
300ml canned or fresh coconut milk
2 ripe mangoes, sliced

METHOD

1. Wash the rice in cold running water three times, draining the starchy water each time. Cook the rice with the water according to the packet instructions. When it's done, let the rice sit for 10 to 20 minutes, then gently fluff with a spoon.

2. Add the sugar, salt and coconut milk to a saucepan and bring to the boil over a medium to high heat. Cook until the sugar and salt have completely dissolved, then remove from the heat.
3. Place the cooked sticky rice in a bowl, add the thick coconut milk mixture and mix gently together. Leave to cool.
4. When ready to serve, divide the sticky coconut rice between two bowls and top with the sliced mango. **FW**

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THE IRISH TIMES



Star of the sea

Tony Parkin, the new chef at House at the Cliff House hotel in Ardmore, Co Waterford, tells JORDAN MOONEY why he's here for the long haul

“I’ve been very open about the fact that I want a second Michelin star. And I know I can do it.” Tony Parkin has just served his new tasting menu for House restaurant at the Cliff House hotel in Ardmore, Co Waterford for the first time and is telling me about his ambitions for it.

Parkin arrived in Ireland on October 3 and spent a week honing the menu, meeting his team and sourcing new local suppliers before overseeing his first service from the kitchen on October 11.

Born and raised in England, he began his career with an apprenticeship before climbing the ranks at restaurants like Noma, Restaurant Gordon Ramsay and Northcote.

“I’ve been working in this industry for 22 years now. I did my apprenticeship at 16, then I went to Copenhagen to work at Noma and a now-closed French restaurant,” Parkin says.

“I came back and went to Gordon’s for three years, then went to a place called The Curlew, which was my first head chef job. It was where I won my first Michelin star, but I burnt out a bit there from just massively overworking myself.”

Burnout is plaguing the industry at every level, but for Parkin, the solution starts at the top.

“You have to be aware of people’s needs; that’s something I’ve learned over time. I think I was an absolute tyrant back



Photos: Michelle Martin

in the day, but I've calmed down a lot. I wasn't the nicest in the kitchen, but then I had a kid and that changes your perspective," he says.

"I don't raise my voice in the kitchen now. I hate the feeling of being stressed and I don't want anyone else to feel it."

Most recently, Parkin was cooking at The Tudor Room at a hotel in Surrey called Great Fosters. He was awarded a Michelin star within four months of taking over, so given that - why Ireland?

"I think as you get a bit older you start to look at things in a different way. A lot of people my age would probably never dream of packing up their house and moving away, but change is good," he says.

"For me, there were loads of dynamics which made me agree to come here, like the setting, the chef-patron role, which means I get to run the show front and back of house, and the support from the owners. But the products available also drew me in, and the chance to be part of a country whose food offerings have gone ballistic in a good way. The UK is just boring when you compare it."

The move to Ardmore is a long term one for him, he says.

"It feels right, being here. It's evident that people take their food and their produce seriously which is another thing that drew me in. Since I got here, I've been trying to meet suppliers, people have been approaching me about produce," he says.

"I don't raise my voice in the kitchen now. I hate the feeling of being stressed and I don't want anyone else to feel it"



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proud of what they're doing.

"That's the idea, and in a spot like this, why not? Why not make some changes to be the best we can? I want House to be a destination, somewhere people travel to. I want it to be one of the most highly regarded restaurants in the country, because I know that it can be that." **FW**

Tony Parkin's seven-course tasting menu is priced at €150 per person. Alexandra Raitaneva's wine pairing is €85 per person, or €100 with a glass of Champagne. A package including overnight accommodation in a sea view room with breakfast, plus the seven course menu, costs from €589 to €745 for two. See cliffhousehotel.ie.

"I've also gone to some other restaurants to see what they're doing. I went up to Jordan [Bailey] and ate at Aimsir, then had a tour there, then I've been speaking to fishermen and dairy farmers, just everyone. It's all falling into place and I'm really excited to work with Irish food and producers."

For Parkin, a big focus going forward will be refining what House has to offer, as well as striving for that elusive second star. The restaurant's last three head chefs, Martijn Kajuter, Ian Doyle and Róisín O'Connor, all displayed a northern European and Nordic ethos in their cooking.

Parkin has introduced strong French and Thai influences throughout the menu - a lobster dish, for example, features a nahm jim salad of the claw - alongside classic accoutrements like crisp tablecloths, simple white plates, a strict staff uniform policy and more.

A big part of his plan is to work closely with Alexandra Raitaneva, the restaurant manager and head sommelier at House. Creating a smooth, integrated dining experience from when guests arrive right up until they depart is key, and for Parkin, that means that changes may be coming to the restaurant down the line.

"My food will be completely different to what has been served here previously and I think Alex more than anyone has embraced that. She gets what I'm trying to do. I think she wants the same thing I do for this restaurant, which is for it to move forward," Parkin says.

"I'm not just a chef, I'm the chef-patron now and it's important to see how I can make this whole process easier, make the restaurant better. I want to show the customers that we're professional and we've taken care to prepare their food properly. I want to grow a strong, solid team that is

TONY'S favourite five

1 THE RESTAURANT

Can I say Chapter One in Dublin even if I haven't been there? I love Mickael Viljanen and I love what he does, he's a really close friend of mine. I think that he's an inspirational chef, but he's also achieved so much and he's so naturally talented, he's relentless.

2 THE HOTEL

Coworth Park in the UK. It's part of the Dorchester Collection and it's stunning, it has a fantastic restaurant called Woven by Adam Smith, another good friend of mine. While I was at my last restaurant Adam was a great support to me and the whole hotel was too actually, they used to help me out a lot if I needed anything. I used to go there quite a lot, it really is stunning.

3 THE INGREDIENT

Scallops, because they lend themselves to lots of different preparations and techniques. They're always a big seller on menus too. I like to do them raw with a yuzu granita, confit tomatoes and caviar. I find them really therapeutic to prep.

4 THE COOKBOOK

Mine, of course. No really, I would say Kin Thai by John Chantarasak. He's been a massive inspiration for me, he's a phenomenal Thai chef. A lot of things I've done in my cooking, he's helped me with them because I've always had a big passion for Thai cooking.

5 THE KITCHEN GADGET

It's really weird, but it's the serving spoons that I use. I bought them for my old restaurant and I still have them now, I use them for everything from quenelling to saucing plates because they've got the exact right amount of dip in them to give just enough. And they're gold so they stick out and I can always find them if they go missing in the kitchen. They were 14 quid off Amazon and they're wicked, I've had them for about three years.

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The Insider



The interiors trends and kitchen essentials you need to try this month by **ELAINE PRENDEVILLE**



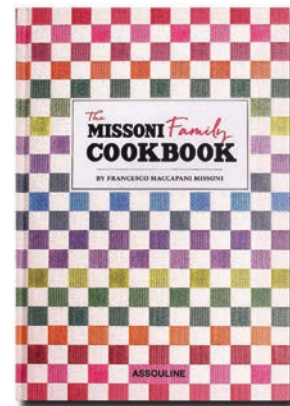
Call off the search: the ultimate dining chair has been found. The Penguin Lounge chair looks as handsome today as when first conceived by Ib Kofod-Larsen in 1953. It's curvy but simple, balanced and calm, and just so absolutely, reliably comfortable. Made to order by design company Menu, choose from natural oak or walnut (as pictured here), and from seven seat colour options including this marvellous red. Delivery takes approximately ten weeks; small beer for a lifetime's enjoyment. Penguin Lounge Chair from €990 at menuspace.com.

TRIED AND TRUSTED

Stuart Heeny, head chef at Zampas Bar & Restaurant at the Hard Rock Hotel Dublin, shares his home cooking must-have.



“My favourite gadget in the kitchen is my KitchenAid Artisan Blender. It's so versatile for preparing different meals throughout the day. We make smoothies for the kids in the morning, it blends soups for lunch and I can make fresh sauces like pesto for pasta and a quick tomato sauce for homemade pizzas. It also blends vegetables really finely so you can add more than you traditionally would to a bolognese - the fussy vegetable eaters won't notice a thing.”



THE COOK'S SHELF

For those who love fashion as much as food, The Missoni Family Cookbook is a delicious taste of what it's like to eat with the iconic Italian clan. Featuring vibrant recipes that have been passed down through generations, you'll find enough inspiration here to feed any stylish crowd. The Missoni Family Cookbook compiled by Francesco Maccapani Missoni is priced €60 and published by Assouline.

YES, but do I need it?



The sell: The Dyson Purifier Cool Autoreact automatically senses and captures 99.95 per cent of pollutants, purifying and cooling the air as it does so.

The price: €549.99 at dyson.ie

Our experience: As stylish as one might expect from Dyson, the Purifier Cool Autoreact is tall and sleek and once you get it out of the box and attach the filters, you're ready to go. Along with a cooling function, the device purifies the air and watching the LCD screen, which shows real-time reports of temperature, humidity levels and pollutants in the air, is surprisingly addictive. We were quite focused on exploring the Purifier Cool's ability to remove cooking smells but being faced with evidence of significant dips in air quality was an eye-opener. Using the device became routine in the kitchen, especially when frying or grilling.

The highs: It's a lovely-looking device, very simple to use and does an excellent job at keeping a

room cool. It gets top marks for the 360° oscillation and the diffused mode, which gives the purifying effect without the whoosh of cool air. It was also very satisfying watching the display showing microparticles and other pollutants gradually returning to 'green' after cooking.

The lows: At higher power levels it's not the most quiet (though it's 20 per cent quieter than the previous model). It's also better suited to larger spaces but Dyson does have other, smaller devices. The price won't be for everyone and it's worth noting that Dyson recommends the HEPA+ Carbon filter is replaced once a year, which will set you back €72 each time.

F&W verdict: If you're in the market for something to improve the air quality in your kitchen or home, this is definitely worth looking at. And with the festive season on the way, it could be the very thing to keep the chef cool and calm during those Christmas gatherings.

SAVE TO CONTACTS



You'll mostly find Brian Keaney in a factory in Turku, Finland's oldest town. The Dubliner who went to Finland in the 1990s to study design made the country his home

and today runs Tonfisk, a Scandinavian-Irish brand that continues to disrupt the world of interiors with its clever twists on everyday items. Keaney's 'Warm' – a coffee and tea cup collection that keep liquids warm through the use of ceramics and wood – remains a best-seller, while more recent additions include the Newton milk and sugar set (the sugar lumps neatly balance while the milk pours) and the porcelain Utu, a sculptural pendant light with a timeless quality. You'll find selected pieces by Tonfisk at Designist in Dublin and the full range at tonfiskdesign.com.



SERVING Suggestions



1. 'Dark Romance' dinner plate, €65 by **BERNADETTE** at the Marvel Room at Brown Thomas

2. **LE CREUSET**
Vitesse Wine
Fountain, €95 at
Celtic Whiskey Shop



3. Sunny Sunflower teaspoons, €16
by **DOING GOODS** at
smallable.com



A Philosophical SPIRIT

This month our spirits expert OISIN DAVIS chats with Remy Savage, the Franco-Irishman bringing art into cocktail bars



REMY SAVAGE

The residents of Dublin's Pearse Street certainly know all about him, now we just have to make sure the rest of Ireland does. I'm referring to Mr Remy Savage, one of the most creative and dynamic forces in the global cocktail industry. His mother is Italian and his father is a Dub from the aforementioned south inner city but he mostly grew up in France, saying that he is "basically a European mess" when referring to where he's from.

He has been behind some of the most celebrated and awarded cocktail bars in the world, all of which are fueled by his intense love and study of philosophy and art. While he was recently back in his father's native Ireland doing demos in Bar 1661 and with Jameson in Castlemartyr Hotel, we got a chance to hang out and he let me in on how his wonderful mind works.

Hospitality started early for Savage. At age 17, he began working in an Irish pub in Lyon, France which kickstarted his love for service and beverages of every kind. Throughout his time at college studying philosophy, he kept working in Irish bars, often alongside his dad. Later, a move to Paris and a job in a new cocktail bar called Little Red Door made a big impact on him: within a year he was running it and awards and accolades came flooding in from near and far. This was where he also began a lifelong commitment to celebrating art within bars.

"Museums and art galleries are empty and when they do have people in them, a lot of them don't even want to be there. You go because your school is making you go or you're on a date and you want to feel cultured. Museums are empty but bars are full, yet art, for me, is the best thing to talk about as it's the ultimate form of human expression," Savage explains passionately.

"So how can we make art more approachable and easier to interact with? Obviously my line of work means that I have to make things that are tasty and full of flavour in a bar, so I thought flavour would be a great way to engage with art in a way that's non-educational."

It was this line of thinking that saw him create drinks and menus inspired by artistic

**"I want to celebrate
as many art
movements as
possible"**

endeavors such as Parisian architecture and beyond. Ballsy concepts that thankfully were always matched by delicious, elegantly composed cocktails – he proved that when you can bring the two together in a bar, magic happens. He would later bring this same aesthetic to The Artesian in London before eventually opening his own place in 2021 where he would go all in with his dedication to art in bars.

“I always wanted to open bars that celebrate art that is relevant to its location. Although the Bauhaus art movement started in Germany, it got decimated by Nazis and their founders fled to East London where you can still see their output in buildings and city works,” Savage tells me.

“That’s why we wanted to open a Bauhaus themed bar there. The Bauhaus ideologies are all about functionality being key and it being expressed in a minimal way. Their founders were obsessed with primary colours and shapes in all their work so we’ve tried to make those visions a reality in East London.”

Shapes, his art-centric establishment is now already ranked in the highly coveted World’s 50 Best Bars list and every detail, from the staff uniforms to the minimal ingredient cocktails, pays homage to Bauhaus.

Savage is only just getting started: He’ll soon be opening a bar in Paris dedicated to the art nouveau movement, called Bar Nouveau, and he’s returning to Lyon next year to celebrate the Abstract Art movement with a bar that will be aptly called Abstract.

He has a completely unique vision for the global bar industry with no shortage of energy and dedication to aid him on his journey.

“I want to celebrate as many art movements as possible by bringing them into bars. And I want to do this as much as I physically can, until the day I die,” he says.

Here are some of Savage’s greatest hits, from minimalist approaches to innovative lockdown cocktails.

THE MINIMALISM MENU AT THE ARTESIAN

In 2019, Savage rolled out a cocktail menu with his then-bar manager Anna Sebastian. It was comprised of 22 drinks but each one only had two ingredients in it as he had followed minimalist architect Mies van der Rohe’s “less is more” mantra, and so each drink was mixed from just one

spirit, liqueur or wine and one other key ingredient or flavour. The physical menu itself was based on a design by geometric sculptor John Edmark and featured a wooden mechanism with moving parts that would fan out into something resembling a tree, each branch bearing the name of a drink.

THE SPEED OF SERVICE AND THE OPENING HOURS AT SHAPES IN EAST LONDON

The high level catering equipment that Savage, his partners and team have at this East London bar allows them to extract flavours from practically any food item and add them to spirits. The alcohol in the spirit is the ultimate preservative and allows them to batch their cocktails in advance, carbonate and bottle them. Ultimately, the customer never has to wait more than a minute for an amazing cocktail there and what’s also really cool is that they trade until 5am. Night owls take note.

HIS LOCKDOWN GIN COCKTAIL

On a lockdown podcast with fellow Irishman Dean Callan, Savage shared his recipe for a delightful, super simple mixed beverage: just 50ml gin, 100ml Oolong tea and 5ml sugar syrup. It was an instant hit for me. Tea specialists supply Oolong, it’s gorgeously floral with great tannins. **FW**



DEAN CARROLL ON BEER

The artistry isn't just inside this trio of beers, it's on the outside too



We have an ocean of choice when we go to our local off-licence for beers these days. We’ve been taught not to judge a book by its cover, but often the artwork featured on a can of beer can decide what we choose to pick up. The world of beer relies heavily on good art to promote its products, and I don’t think it’s a stretch to say the world of art needs a good beer now and then to function too. This month Dot Brew is bringing the two worlds slightly closer together by featuring artwork from Lia Tamayo Mac Manus. The one-of-a-kind painting is based on a blind tasting of the beer it adorns, and is a representation of its rich flavour profile. The original framed canvas will be auctioned via the DOT Brew Twitter page (twitter.com/DOT_Brew) today, Nov 6 from 10am until 9pm, with all profits going to the artist.



BA Imperial Stout Potstill by DOT Brew

12 per cent ABV, €7.60 from martinsofflicence.ie

The aforementioned beer isn’t just special on the outside. It’s a massive 12 per cent stout aged in pot still whiskey barrels from Teeling. These custom barrels have had the heads replaced so that the whiskey is aged in a combination of French and American oak. The result is a delightfully heavy stout that offers notes of vanilla, toffee and a subtle spice from the pot still whiskey.

Dark Steering by Whiplash

5.2 per cent, €5.50 from whiplashbeer.com

Whiplash has remained one of the best-designed Irish beers since its launch in 2016 thanks to minimalist designs that are contrasted with vibrant artwork created by Sophie De Vere. These pieces are entirely analogue - her work comes together from images and designs she hand cuts from books and magazines. This particular piece represents a Schwarzbier or a German black lager. Medium bodied, with a crisp finish, it has a sweetness throughout and notes of black cherry.

Stark by Hopfully

6 per cent ABV, €4.50 from craftcentral.ie

The latest beer from Hopfully Brewing is a New England-style IPA, brewed with Motueka, Galaxy and Citra hops. With notes of fresh lime, guava and mango, the beer is fittingly wrapped in a tropical green label featuring a beautiful illustration by Cork-based artist Annie Mar.

Burgenland does it better

Austria's wines showcase family ties and exciting terroir, writes
MICK O'CONNELL



In January 2013 I visited Austria for the first time. The destination was a small town called Rust about an hour south east of Vienna. This area was the heart of the old Austro-Hungarian Empire, the cradle of the Esterházy family who were the largest landowners in Hungary. Rust, with fewer than 2,000 inhabitants, has the odd title of being Austria's smallest city. Rumours abound that the Hungarian crown granted this title after a barrel of Ruster Ausbruch was received. One of the sweetest vinous bribes, Ruster Ausbruch is a delicious dessert wine similar to Hungary's more famous Tokaji.

Rust is the home of the Austrian Wine Academy and I was visiting as a very wide-eyed Master of Wine candidate. There were many rabbit-in-the-headlight moments that week. Imposter syndrome, I discovered, is real. All the candidates were in the same boat and a huge sense of camaraderie grew out of those initial nerves. I made friends for life that trip and in the subsequent years I grew to love a family that I met there for the first time.

Practical experience was a key part of our journey and after pruning vines one morning in a blizzard, we returned to the warmth of a large restaurant for a wine tasting. Attached to this restaurant was a small wine shop selling local wares. I'd say that shopkeeper shut up for the day after we left; nothing like having a bus full of wine nerds arrive to boost a slow morning's trade.

There was a simple, striking label peering off one of the shelves, a young man with spiky hair. He looked just like Josh, an Australian sommelier who was part of the seminar. I picked up a bottle to drink with him later and it was unlike anything we had drunk before. Almost jarring in its vividness. Different but incredibly delicious.

Stephanie and Eduard Tscheppe bought a run-down farm in the village of Oggau in 2007. The vines hadn't been tended for years and as such had avoided chemical interference. The couple decided to farm the grapes biodynamically from day one. Biodynamic farming is like a

supercharged version of organics. Each decision in the vineyard is made with a view to improving the overall health of the farm as a whole. It is a hugely time and labour intensive way to farm, no small undertaking for a young couple.

The couple noted from early on that the wines that came from the different sites around their domaine had very specific characteristics. A family was born with youthful vibrant wines like Atanasius with the spiky hair through to Mechthild, a wise complex grandmother. The family's generations formed a system something like that of Burgundy with grandparents as Grand Cru, parents as Premier Cru, and children as village level.

While I was in Rust we had a huge snowfall which aligned with my previous vision of Austria as a cool climate wine region. Burgenland, the province around Rust, is on the shores of the Neusiedler See, a large lake spanning the border that is home to many wildlife species but famous for its storks. Often as summer reaches its pinnacle, the lake becomes parched. Drought is common in this region and temperatures of 40 degrees Celsius are not uncommon, breaking the cool climate myth. The snowfall was cleared in a morning, each person in the community looking after the patch in front of their own home, the sense of family and community perpetuated.

The community of organic wine producers in Burgenland is growing. Around the town of Gols, nine likeminded farmers produce wines of terroir, or a sense of place. In the mid-nineties, these farmers formed a group called Pannobile, named after the old Roman name for the area. Some of the finest producers in the region are here with Heinrich, Judith Beck, Pittnauer and Claus Preisinger all worth seeking out.

Here is a selection of some of Burgenland's finest with a sprinkling of classics from the other wine regions of Austria. If you get a chance to visit the area look up Gut Purbach, who have an incredible wine list alongside local food and rooms to sleep off all the indulgence! **FW**

WINE RATINGS

This is the international marking system for wine ratings, a 100-point scale which works on a percentile, rather than a percentage, scale.

95-100:
exceptional, of world-class
quality

90-94:
very good quality

88-89:
average, but lacks
greatness

85-87:
average to modest

80-84:
below average

70-79:
poor

BELOW 70:
unacceptable quality

1 HEIDI SCHRÖCK & SÖHNE RIEDE KULM BLAUFRÄNKISCH

€29 from *The Corkscrew, Bradleys Cork and The Winehouse Trim* (91)

Hailing from the village of Rust, Heidi makes an exciting range of wines from dry to sweet. Subtle spice across a dry mineral edge palate. Dusty tannin and real crunch are two of the hallmark traits of Burgenland's benchmark red grape variety.

2 MICHAEL WENZEL FURMINT

€30 from *Green Man Wines and Neighbourhood Wine* (92)

One of the most fascinating tastings I have ever been part of was in Michael's small tasting room in the village of Rust. Here he shows dry furmint (the grape most famously associated with sweet Tokaji) from the local quartz soils. Vibrant, textured and refreshing.

3 GUT OGGAU JOSCHUARI

€80 from *Green Man Wines, Neighbourhood Wine and Boujee Booze* (94)

From the village of Oggau on the Neusiedler See, Stephanie and Eduard bring this suave red. A natural wine to pour for your friends who "hate natural wine". Complex and elegant just like the man on the bottle, this is a wine that proves natural wine's ageability.



4 KRACHER AUSLESE CUVÉE

€20 for a half bottle from *Searsons, Drinkstore and Worldwide Wines Waterford* (92)

Delicious sweet wine from chardonnay grapes grown on the western shore of the Neusiedler See. Kracher's wines have a knack for balancing intense sweetness with a lightness of touch to remain refreshing.

5 LOIMER EXTRA BRUT RESERVE NV

€44 from *The Corkscrew, The Winehouse Trim and wineonline.ie* (92)

Biodynamic farming here at 400 metres above sea level near the village of Langenlois. This sparkling wine shows a breadth of orchard fruit, subtle toasty notes from 18 months lees ageing and a well integrated bubble.

6 WEINGUT ALLRAM GRÜNER VELTLINER STRASS

€23 from *McHugh's, D-Six Off Licence, Sweeney's D3* (90)

A great value example of grüner veltliner, the grape variety that has become Austria's calling card. Crisp and mineral with subtle citrus notes and a little sprinkling of complex white pepper. Brilliant apéritif or food wine.



SALLY BARNES

WILD and RARE

Sally Barnes of Woodcock Smokery in West Cork is an iconic artisan producer. Here, she tells JORDAN MOONEY about her food journey

“It’s not easy being a woman in this industry, you know,” Sally Barnes laughs, explaining her career thus far to me over the phone. “I had to work so hard to get here.”

Barnes is one of Ireland’s greatest small producers, and is known as much for her dry wit as her exceptional smoked fish. Woodcock Smokery, which she founded more than 40 years ago, sells a range of smoked fish products, but is probably most renowned for the wild smoked salmon which Barnes has focused on due to her fear for what farmed fish would mean for our oceans’ ecosystems.

Her interest led her to qualifications in oceanography and food production from the Open University, and now she is one of the most well-versed people in the country speaking out about the issues that overfishing, fishing caps and climate change are causing here.

Her award-winning business didn’t start this way, however – it was really founded out of necessity.

“I’m Scottish, a real country girl, and I’d quit my teacher training programme in London because I just hated London. I’d met a man, a commercial fisherman, and I followed him here to Ireland,” Barnes says.

“Cork reminded me of the Scotland I’d known when I was young, so I loved Because

commercial fisherman are gone for so long, you end up being almost a single parent by default. I had to do everything alone and I had to figure out how we could get by. My generation were prepared to do so much to keep food on the table, but I couldn’t go out and get a job out of the home because I had two young children to mind.”

When he wasn’t away at sea, Barnes’ husband would fish on local lakes.

“One night he brought home five fabulous, huge brown trout, but we had no freezer so I had to figure out how to use them. When I first got to Ireland, we would go fishing and we caught so much mackerel that we ate it for three weeks straight. At that point, I just couldn’t eat any more mackerel and these trout brought me right back to that, so I tried to think about it all differently,” says Barnes.

“I thought back to what people did before, how did they conserve and store fish? They salted and then smoked it, but the only preserved fish that was available then were these awful, bright yellow kippers from Scotland. I thought that I could surely do something better than that myself.”

Barnes began her experiments by smoking fish using a tea chest - “that wasn’t too successful” - but she kept going. She began foraging and planting, and then, thanks to a

fish dealer who owed her money giving her a kiln as part payment, taught herself how to properly smoke fish. It was that kiln which led to what is now known as the Woodcock Smokery.

“I have gained so much confidence through the years, and when I won supreme champion at the Great Taste Awards, it was confirmation that I was doing something right,” Barnes tells me. “I found validation, and that’s really important as a woman in business.”

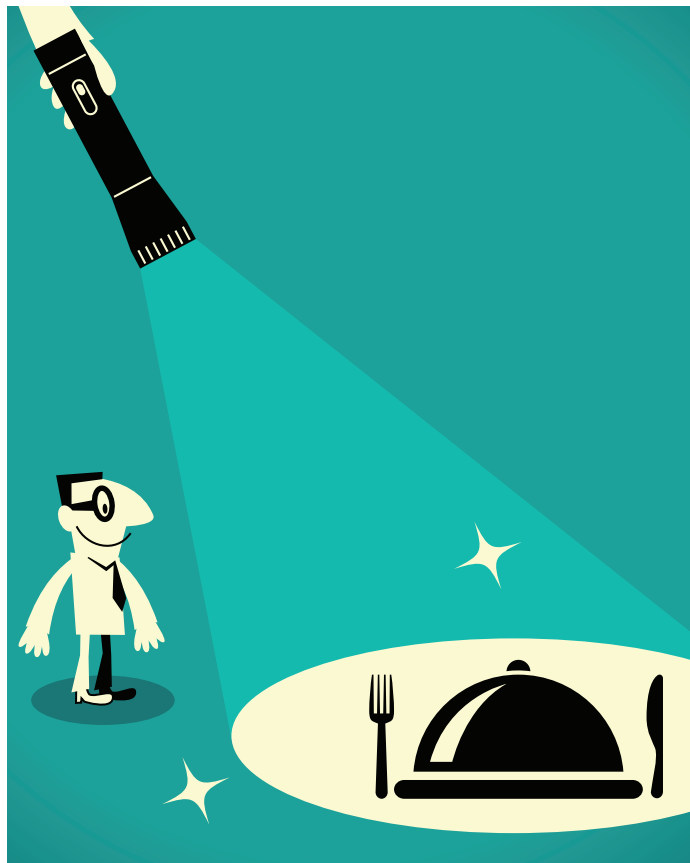
In the years since, Barnes has studied and experimented, learning the best ways to produce smoked fish. She is now passing on her knowledge through courses she runs at her west Cork base. With full-day and half-day courses on offer, as well as a multi-day wild Atlantic salmon course, Barnes also uses the courses to inform people about the challenges facing marine life right now.

“Farming fish isn’t helping anyone,” she says. “I’ve deliberately decided to keep my business small and focus on wild, but now the stocks of wild salmon are so short that I nearly have to ration out what I sell. We are facing real challenges in this industry.” **FW**

woodcocksmokery.com

SECRET RESTAURATEUR

This month, our industry insider hails their new robot overlords



On a trip to a European city over the summer I had a most curious experience. Travelling on my own in what is a very expensive location, I felt no shame in booking a decidedly budget hotel. You know the type: bright, newly decorated, spotlessly clean.

I arrived to find no reception desk and not a single member of staff. Instead, in a very small lobby, I found two large touch-screen machines, the kind which you find yourself abruptly shuffled towards when you walk into a bank branch these days.

The machine asked me for my surname and a booking reference, and promptly spat out a keycard for my room, which also magically opened all the locked doors and lifts in between. In three whole nights in that hotel, I didn't set eyes on – let alone converse with – a single member of staff.

Is this the way of the future for the hospitality sector? With crippling labour shortages, will the more straightforward tasks be taken over by machines?

The idea already seems to be catching on. As I sat down to write this piece, I happened to see a news report about a farm in California which claims to be the first to be manned entirely by robots, growing lettuce and kale in huge indoor hydroponics bays.

With fruit and vegetable farms in Ireland finding it difficult to employ seasonal labourers, will they too turn to machines to do the work? You'd have to wonder how economically feasible this would be in the long term, given the huge amount of energy machines would consume.

And what about automation in restaurants? Last August, Mezli, a

Mediterranean restaurant in San Francisco claimed to be the first fully automated restaurant in the world.

Its chefs prep and partially cook ingredients each morning, then drop them off at the “pod” style restaurant. Customers order by touch screen, with robots assembling their orders by heating up the ingredients, adding sauces, toppings and garnishes, before delivering the order to a smart locker for collection.

If you think there's something cold, sterile and dystopian about this, then you'd be right. It reminds me of mealtimes in *Star Trek*, which involved speaking at a screen to order food before it to magically appeared in a little hatch in the wall. Even ten years ago, the thought of talking to a computer seemed ridiculous, but now it has become part of our daily lives. So why not when ordering food? (“Hey Siri, can I get a 10oz rib-eye, medium?”)

Our parents' generation will remember so-called “automats” in the United States before the 1970s, which were essentially fast food restaurants with vending machines. Even they involved some level of human labour, but could even that be under threat? Could servers themselves be replaced?

After the first Covid lockdown, the Royal Palace, a Chinese restaurant in the Netherlands, trialled two robot servers for their reopening. Interestingly, customers complained that it felt “impersonal”, with the owners concluding that the human touch could never be fully removed from a restaurant setting.

But automation is already creeping in by degrees. For many years now, businesses offering takeaways have relied on computers, with customers ordering online and having food delivered to their door with virtually no interaction with pesky humans.

Some chains have retained the Covid-era trend of allowing customers to order directly from their tables via their phones with the help of a QR code. How long before more restaurants in Ireland begin to do likewise, or go even further, like Senbazuru Izakaya, an excellent Japanese restaurant in Dublin, which has a robot waiter that can carry plates to tables and sing to customers as they eat?

While there is a certain novelty factor about this, you get the impression that it's only a matter of time before automation becomes a much larger feature of our business. Yes, robot restaurant servers may just be the latest fad dreamt up by West Coast millennials trying to justify their own existence.

And yes (to continue the sci-fi references), as fans of the *Terminator* movies and *Battlestar Galactica* will know, it's only a matter of time before the robots turn against us and kill us all. But if you ask me, as a beleaguered restaurant owner trying to fill job vacancies, that might just be a risk worth taking! **FW**

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