

THE SUNDAY BUSINESS POST November 11 2007

Agenda

Ireland's cultural and lifestyle magazine

Ireland's top 50 in food

*Ross Golden Bannon
is on the trail*

LUXURY OF TIME

Jaeger-LeCoultre's
€500,000 watch

GO WILD!

Kevin Thornton's
Atlantic salmon



bluish purple skinned potato with a floury texture – or visit www.irishseedsavers.ie for information on getting involved.

35 The Tio Pepe Kinsale Gourmet Festival

It started in 1976 as an end-of-season party for staff, suppliers and regular customers, but it soon grew into a landmark culinary event. Over 30,000 meals were served during the three-day festival in October this year, with events like the Berringer Mad Hatter's Taste of Kinsale food crawl. As Kinsale is twinned with Newport, Rhode Island, chefs from Kinsale and Newport were baking whole lobsters too. It's culinary Christmas – three days of indulgence without the family fights.

36 Derryvill Farm Blueberries

Most people think blueberries are the quintessence of American cooking, but this berry is thriving on John and Belinda Seager's farm outside Portarlinton in Co Offaly. Considered one of the superfoods because of its high antioxidant levels, they're producing relish, preserve and blueberry tonic. Find out more at www.derryvillblueberries.com.

37 Eat Smart Week

There are an abundance of campaigns to persuade us to eat healthily, but how many give us really practical information? This year the Nutrition & Health Foundation – supported by Michelin starred chef, Derry Clarke – launched Eat Smart Week with some sensible advice on estimating portion sizes. A recommended portion of cooked rice or pasta is about the size of a tennis ball; for meat it's the size of a deck of cards; for cheese its the size of a matchbox. So you don't have to be that smart to eat smart. www.nutritionandhealth.ie.

38 Arctic Char

Health officials rightly tell us to eat less meat and more fish. As fish stocks decline, wild fish are becoming a greater luxury and we will only sustain growing demand with farmed varieties such as arctic char. The fish is closely related to both salmon and trout and is native to Ireland, having thrived in our cold waters since the last Ice Age. They are at low risk of extinction and are a welcome alternative to cod, which I've always found dull. www.cloonacoolarcticchar.ie.

39 Michael's Food & Wine

With its simple notice: 'Not a restaurant, no chef, just simple food, enjoy!' Michael's represents the emergence of a new style of deli-restaurants where you can buy your wine and eat in the restaurant with sensible corkage (just €5.95 here). The menu of flawless superior quality Italian food is perfectly pitched for the many who want to eat out rather than dine out. Michael's Food & Wine, 57 Deerpark Road, Mount Merrion, Co Dublin, tel 01-2780377.

40 Dunn's of Dublin's blackened salmon

In 1800, Father Matthew persuaded publican John Dunn to give up his business and become a fishmonger, and Dunns has been delivering fine fish ever since. Its blackened salmon is a unique product which combines two of Ireland's most famous ingredients: stout and salmon. Marinated for three days in sugar, salt and a herb and spice mix, the stout is then added for a further two days,



Clockwise from top: the Bretzel Bakery (42); Silver Hill Ducks (45); Black Bacon pigs (48); the Tio Pepe Kinsale Gourmet Festival (35)

turning the salmon completely black. Father Matthew probably wouldn't approve, but we'd recommend served with a stout and honey dill sauce. www.dunns.ie.

41 The Phoenix Cafe

Hidden away next to the visitors' centre of Aras an Uachtaráin, you'll find an example of what a good cafe can be. The cafe fare includes a wide range of hearty quiches, soups, some stonking salads and homemade cakes – which are legendary. But the real point about this cafe is its homemade nature and the quality sourcing. No pre-formed, bulk buying here. The lesson is simple enough: quality ingredients make quality food. The Phoenix Park, Dublin 8: tel 01-6770090.

42 The Bretzel Bakery

Founded in 1870, the Bretzel Bakery is part of Ireland's Jewish history and is still delivering superior baked products today. Its commitment to tradition goes beyond its premises as it also explores old varieties and flavours through the Irish Bakery School. Many Dubliners still call it the Jewish bakery; although the Kosher certificate is gone, the quality remains. www.bretzel.ie.

43 Tarnished Irish hospitality

Anyone who's wavering about international chains taking over our hotels need only dine in the Saddle Room of the re-opened Shelbourne hotel. The magic ingredient in the Shelbourne is really rather simple: training staff about local knowledge. It is astonishing that international firms don't place staff training systems at the top of their business model. Where are the staff training manuals and staff systems?

44 Drink Aware Campaign

For the first time, an alcohol awareness campaign has focused on how binge drinking impacts on those who aren't drinking. The 'Had Enough' campaign rightly highlights emergency workers, cab drivers and ordinary people in the street. But until we educate young people about responsible alcohol consumption, there's little hope of change. The French continue to give their children watered down wine with their meals. Ever seen the French falling around drunk?

45 Silver Hill Ducks

From Emyvale in Co Monaghan to being the producer of choice for the Michelin-starred chef Heston Blumenthal, the Steele family's business has come a long way. But we all knew about them long before Heston declared their ducks to be the best in the world. After all, 98 per cent of all ducks in Britain's Chinatown restaurants come from Silver Hill. The Steel family has been breeding the Silver Hill duck since 1962 and their consistent quality has delivered real success. www.silverhillfoods.com.

46 Atlantic Organics

United we stand, divided we fall. Atlantic Organics is an umbrella group of organic farmers in the north-west who recognise that together they punch a bigger punch, especially when the members straddle the border counties. Based at the Organic Centre in Rossinver, Co Leitrim, they've launched Rossinver-Grass Root Organics. Watch out for the range of organic oats and organic tomato relish. www.rossinverorganics.com; www.atlanticorganics.com.

47 Wine appreciation

Alcohol is a big part of our culture and in moderation, is fun and even healthy. The problem is we don't know when to stop. In my view there's a link here between our over consumption of junk food too. The hit from high fat food is short, so we consume more. High quality food has greater complexity so when we stop to appreciate it, we eat less. Equally, a high quality wine has a level of complexity that needs to be savoured. Next time you're buying wine, put the two bottles back and buy one for the same budget. Better still, invest in a wine course. www.wineboard.ie.

48 Black Bacon

O'Doherty's Fine Meats in Fermanagh has been refining its skills for over 40 years, so it's no surprise that Pat O'Doherty spent five years perfecting his award winning Black Bacon. The bacon comes from black saddleback pigs and curing is done using ancient techniques and natural ingredients. Pat O'Doherty visited retired farmers on both sides of the border gathering old curing methods, and combined these with his own skills to produce their famous Black Bacon. O'Doherty's Fine Meats, Belmore Street, Enniskillen, Co Fermanagh, tel 0044-2866 322152; www.blackbacon.com.

49 The carbon footprint of water

Some foods carry a heavy carbon footprint, but we are unlikely to say goodbye to our exotic treats. Thankfully, more and more chefs are moving these ingredients from centre stage and making local, seasonal produce the real stars. However, in a country with one of the highest precipitation rates in Europe, why are we importing bottled mineral water? Buy local, or better still, turn on the tap.

50 The Demise of the Michelin Guide

The long awaited Michelin star at Chapter One was as much an indication of the guide's poor intelligence gathering as it was a celebration of this flawless restaurant's unique style. But it still raises the question if the Michelin Guide actually ventures outside the Pale, and how many more restaurants around the country will never be recognised. Chapter One, 18-19 Parnell Square, Dublin 1, tel 01-8732330.