

Greener than the green grass of home



It was an ambitious and slightly crazy undertaking, but you know how we love our awards. Not just one café, but five, were to be assessed for Green Tourism awards and the assessment was only eight weeks away. Could we make it work?

With environmental issues becoming ever more important at Heritage Portfolio, Visit Scotland's Green Tourism Business Scheme (GTBS) was an opportunity to go for an award that would demonstrate the company's commitment to sustainability.

So with Kirsty Hepburn championing the cause as Heritage Portfolio's Environmental Co-ordinator and graduate placement Ruth Walker (known as our Green Goddesses) engaged for eight weeks to work flat out on the project, the race was on to see if our existing environmental policy could be fine tuned and extended in such a short space of time.

Five cafes were prepared for the GTBS audit – the Queen Street Café, in the Scottish National Portrait Gallery; the Gallery Café, in the Scottish National Gallery of Modern Art; Café Newton, in the Dean Gallery and Café Delos and Soupson, both in the National Museum of Scotland. Environmental issues were already on the agenda at all the cafes, with plenty of measures in place, but this was the opportunity to demonstrate our commitment.

"With the short time frame we felt it was realistic to aim for the Bronze award, to achieve good standards in areas such as recycling, energy efficiency and use of water at the cafes," said Kirsty. "We also had work to do raising awareness of green issues with our customers, providing information about green transport options such as cycle routes and bus routes. Our aim was to change the way the five cafes functioned, not just to meet the high standard required to achieve the award, but to sustain environmental awareness throughout the organisation for the future."

So there was utter delight when, on the day of the audit, not only did all five cafes win an award, but four of the cafes received a silver award. We'd exceeded our own high expectations by demonstrating best practice in many areas.

Of course the story doesn't end there. Green awareness is now influencing the way business is done throughout Heritage Portfolio, so going for gold, where a track record of excellent green practices is required, may be on the cards for the future.

A Taste of...Sustainability

The newsletter has gone green too. To celebrate this 10th edition we've printed A Taste of Autumn on recycled paper and we're committed to using recycled paper in the future.

A Taste of Autumn

issue number 10
Autumn 07



Seven centuries of elegant entertaining

We are delighted to announce a new partnership with a remarkable East Lothian house steeped in Scottish Baronial history.



The home of the Duke and Duchess of Hamilton, Lennoxlove House, is set in an expansive estate near Haddington. Guests have been made welcome here for over 700 years, but the recent refurbishment of the property has created a new level of luxury while the historical significance of the house has been carefully preserved. Eleven bedrooms now provide exquisite facilities to complement beautiful public rooms – rooms with one of the finest private art collections in Scotland – that can now be hired for exclusive use.

This is the rarefied atmosphere into which Heritage Portfolio has been invited as the event caterer. The partnership will allow the finest food and drink to be served in these sumptuous surroundings for corporate events, conferences, meetings, weddings and private functions.

Fraser Niven, chief executive of Lennoxlove House, has welcomed the new partnership. "Ever since Lennoxlove House re-opened in July, it was important to us that we found a catering firm that operated on a five-star scale in keeping with the House's standards and expectations. We are delighted to have sealed an exclusive partnership with Heritage Portfolio. It's a firm which has built up a fantastic reputation due to the quality and expertise of its culinary creations. Each chef is trained to the highest of standards and is constantly coming up with innovative yet traditional menus, which contain an abundance of fresh Scottish produce."

The close partnership that has developed will allow us to focus on creating distinctive menus that mirror the luxurious atmosphere and historic setting of the House. The grandeur, seclusion and impeccable style of the surroundings will be reflected in signature dishes developed exclusively for this ancient and romantic house.

For more information about Lennoxlove or to make a booking, please contact Katherine Wilson, event manager, katie-wilson@lennoxlove.com, 01620 828 604, www.lennoxlove.com



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The Bees' Knees

Welcome to this special 10th edition of our seasonal newsletter!

Smooth, sticky and sweet, honey deserves its reputation as a sensuous ingredient that can transform savoury dishes and lift desserts onto a completely different plane. Robbie Gleave, Development Chef at Heritage Portfolio, got stuck in to a bit of background research about this sweetest of amber nectars. Did he allow his enthusiasm for food and thirst for more detailed knowledge to get the better of him? Turn to the feature inside and decide for yourself.



Robbie Gleave talks about his passion for understanding honey, his search for ever more creativity in the kitchen, a dog with a nose for a little sweetness and explains where the bees' knees come in to the story.

I have been making a deliberate attempt to get into the background of some of the more 'standard' ingredients that we use, with honey being the most recent. The more you dig around the more you feel an injustice is being served on this incredible natural food by regarding it as standard fare at all. The subtlety, variety, flavour and health enhancing properties of this wonderful bees' stuff just becomes more surprising the more you scratch the surface.

Humour me while I share where this thirst for detail can lead. One of the most fascinating facts I uncovered during my research into honey was that different types of bee have different tongue sizes. This means that only certain types of bee can collect nectar from 'deeper' flowers. How do I know?

This obscure detail was shared with me by a man I met during a brief trip to the island of Tiree. He was on the island to study the decline in population of the island bumble-bee. Amazingly, as well as his encyclopaedic knowledge of the ways of bees, this man had a dog, given to him by the Ministry of Defence, and not just any dog. You'll have heard of sniffer dogs being trained to find explosives or drugs and pigs being used to sniff out truffles. Well this dog was trained to sniff out bumble-bee nests! In the course of the conversation I failed to establish why the MOD were interested in the island bee and am left with thoughts of an army of a million bees being asked to rise up in defence of the island.

Back in the kitchen, it's not entirely clear how the man and dog incident really fits into the story of choosing the choicest of honeys for some of our new autumn dishes, but the tale was too good not to tell and the dog may indeed play an important role in ensuring a ready supply of honey for us to include in some of our autumn dishes. But that stage in the research is over and the serious business of creating new dishes featuring particular honeys is now in the forefront of my mind.

Today's step is speaking to Pierre, my man at Clarks Speciality Foods to get some serious quantities of honey samples together. From there we will get engrossed in the business of picking particular types that really complement particular foods, so you can expect a lot more detail on our menus in future, rather than the simple 'honey dressing' or 'honey crème brûlée'.

Honeys vary according to the nectars they are made from, so beekeepers are able to influence where and upon what the bees feed and the final style and flavour of the honey. In Scotland, heather honey is a speciality, but different flavoured honeys are sourced from around the world, including thyme honey from Greece and Australian Eucalyptus. Other flavours on the tasting list will be Acacia, orange blossom, dandelion and chestnut.

Many of our autumn ingredients lend themselves superbly to an additional spoonful of this wonderful Bees' stuff, such as a bramley apple chutney or a victoria plum panacotta. We are just taking things a step further, as we decide which honey is best for which dish.

Another ingredient I've been experimenting with is bee pollen. This is absolutely bursting with good things, can be found in health food shops and must be well up the super-food list. We've used it as a decorative touch to a dessert, mixed with finely grated bitter chocolate and crushed caramelised almonds.

I am deliberately not looking too closely at how bee pollen is collected. I have the fantastically romantic idea that somewhere there is a line of bees on a conveyor belt slowly streaming past a team of small-fingered patient people, very gently scraping the bees' knees with a small blunt instrument to remove the pollen. I would hate to find a more practical explanation!

So is honey really an ingredient that should be tasted in the same way as a fine wine or exclusive chocolate? Should we know the name of the hive and be able to locate the field where the nectar was collected? Does it make a difference that we understand the hive's production process? The answer for me is an emphatic and resounding YES. I am prepared to go to almost bizarre lengths to seek out the best raw ingredients and will push boundaries to find the most exotic or the most satisfying combination for a particular recipe.

So, next time you're shopping, don't put honey on the list. Put 'manuka' honey, 'orange blossom' honey or 'dandelion' honey instead and find your own favourite.



Confit of duck leg with seared foie gras, butternut squash, potato cannelloni and manuka honey jus

Robbie's orange blossom lamb marinade

Quantities are enough to 'smother' 8 cutlets

- 1 dessert spoon orange blossom honey
- 1 clove crushed garlic
- 8 'twists' of milled black pepper
- 1 teaspoon chopped fresh rosemary
- 1 large glass red wine
- Finely grated zest of 2 lemons

Whisk all ingredients together and pour over your lamb cutlets.

Cover and refrigerate for 24 hours turning the cutlets once after about 12 hours.

When you're ready to cook, remove lamb from the marinade, pat dry with kitchen paper, sprinkle with a bit of salt and seal both sides of the cutlets in hot oil.

(We tend not to add salt to our marinades as this has a tendency to draw moisture from the meat, better to add just prior to cooking.)

Remove from the pan, transfer to roasting tray and cook in the oven.

The cutlets will take 6 or 7 minutes in the oven at 220°C

My personal choice is to leave the lamb a little pink in the middle, so slightly undercooked and more tender.

Whilst the lamb is cooking pour all the marinade into the sealing pan, bring contents to the boil and allow to simmer until almost evaporated and sticky, leaving a really intense combination of flavours.

Add a ladle full of lamb stock and bring back to the boil.

When the lamb is cooked, roll them about in the cooked marinade and serve.

Serve with a simple, smooth buttery mashed potato and a few '30 second boiled' sugar snap peas.



Tell them about the honey

The sweet truth about honey

🍯 HONEY CONTAINS VITAMINS AND ANTIOXIDANTS, BUT IS FAT FREE, CHOLESTEROL FREE AND SODIUM FREE.

🍯 TO GATHER ENOUGH NECTAR TO MAKE JUST ONE POT OF HONEY, THE BEES MAY TRAVEL A DISTANCE EQUIVALENT TO FLYING AROUND THE WORLD THREE TIMES.

🍯 APPLE BLOSSOM, CHERRY BLOSSOM, HAWTHORN, LIME BLOSSOM, DANDELION, BORAGE AND HEATHER HONEY ARE ALL PRODUCED IN THE UK.

🍯 HONEY HAS LONG BEEN RECOGNISED AS A NATURAL REMEDY AND HAS BEEN USED AS A MEDICINE FOR THOUSANDS OF YEARS. IT HAS ANTISEPTIC PROPERTIES, IS USED AS A CURE FOR HAYFEVER AND CAN SOOTH SORE THROATS.

🍯 DID YOU KNOW THAT BEES HAVE 4 WINGS?

🍯 THE HONEYBEE'S WINGS STROKE 11,400 TIMES PER MINUTE, THUS MAKING THEIR DISTINCTIVE BUZZ.

🍯 THE HONEYBEE IS NOT BORN KNOWING HOW TO MAKE HONEY; THE YOUNGER BEES ARE TAUGHT BY THE MORE EXPERIENCED ONES.

🍯 IN ORDER TO PRODUCE 1 POUND OF HONEY, 2 MILLION FLOWERS MUST BE VISITED.

🍯 HONEY IS THE ONLY FOOD THAT INCLUDES ALL THE SUBSTANCES NECESSARY TO SUSTAIN LIFE, INCLUDING WATER.

Warmed walnut and ginger cake, chilled espresso jelly and fresh honeycomb