

## Gone Fishing

We have been intrigued this summer by the concept of wild food and easy summer outdoor living.

With summer the most popular season for dipping a rod and catching Atlantic salmon in our Scottish rivers, we were out exploring along the riverbanks, in the forest and around the garden seeking out extraordinary additions to our growing panoply of ingredients. It's not just an excuse to escape from the routine and enjoy the sunshine and the showers (so good for the garden); the outdoors is a fabulous source of real culinary inspiration. What about a salsa verde of just-picked herbs and wild garlic leaves to go with that freshly caught salmon? Or, without going further than your lovingly tended and well stocked veg garden, some crisp, green asparagus and fresher-than-fresh peas from the pod to add the finishing touch.



## Take one wild salmon, just caught...

Mike Gerrard and Donna Dailey, both freelance journalists based in the United States, were quick to pick up on our passion for all that's fresh, local, wild and free when they took part in one of our cookery courses at Lennoxlove House. Robbie Gleave, Development Chef at Heritage Portfolio, introduced them to his own take on Scottish cuisine.

We've taken several cookery courses but the one my wife and I did recently stands out as a real delight. We discovered that Robbie had been up at 6am that morning picking herbs, salad greens and flowers in his garden (yes the flowers were for eating too).

Not only that, but the wild salmon we were to prepare had been caught to order by Robbie's colleague Heritage Portfolio's own Head Chef, Brian Canale, whose passion for food clearly extends well beyond the kitchen.



Robbie was going to show us how to make a true Scottish dish, but with his own unique interpretation: "If it grows or grazes in Scotland then it's Scottish!" This means that the conventional limiting factors are suddenly gone. Herbs such as rocket, borage, mizuna and coriander grow well in Scotland and add an exotic element to the more traditional ingredients which he was to introduce.

We did, however, start with something very traditional - some tablet - which Robbie remembered to keep stirring even while doing half a dozen other things at the same time.

We made a delicious elderflower dressing for the salad, which I would never have thought of, but it worked extremely well and was very delicately flavoured. A simple blend of oats and butter produced, in a few minutes, a topping for the salmon which, when it was baked, was superb.

Along the way we picked up tips on poaching eggs, cooking potatoes, choosing kitchen equipment and a few labour-saving ideas that professional chefs need to know.

And all the time Robbie was teaching us how to do this he was relaxed and chatting, averting potential disasters (on our part, that is), and amiably coping with a few unscheduled interruptions (after all the Queen's Garden Party at Holyrood, for 8000 guests, was only a few days away at the time).

The dish we prepared was not only delicious, it looked impressive too - but nothing we couldn't do at home to show off to dinner guests. All I can add is if we ever have a few thousand close friends around for a garden party, we'll know who to ask to do the cooking.



# A Taste of Summer

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## A buyer's menu card...

While some of you know us best for fine dining, others will immediately think of Beetroot Blue and sandwiches for an office lunch, but please don't think that either of these is all that we do!

We have carefully created a range of offers to cater from the more practical day-to-day events to the glamorous for which we are well known. The common theme, no matter what you ask us to do, is that we try to do it just that bit better.

Here we've laid the table, buffet style, for you to select just what you need. Don't forget too that much of our work is bespoke - we delight in opportunities to be endlessly creative or just to provide some good quality everyday home cooking.



### Beetroot Blue

Sandwiches, nibbles, sweet treats, fruit; all perfectly packaged with neat notes on what's what.

Perfect for: office lunches, friends at home for lunch, meetings.



### Conferences Packages

Bowl food, easy to eat while you network. Hot and healthy meals, packed with slow-release energy to get delegates through the afternoon.

I'd want to eat this: if I was at a conference of course!



### Designer Canapés

We've a range of designer selections, named after famous Scottish haute couture designers. Or use your own design flair and select a mix to reflect your style and event. We'll be delighted to help with a second opinion or two!

Just right if: you're planning an event where flair is essential and value for money matters too.



### Tailcoats and Tutus LIVE

See the main feature for more about this stunning new offer, taking food and drink into the bright lights of Broadway.

Ideal if: you want to create a sensational evening of food and entertainment, but have an eye on value for money.



### And then of course there's...

#### Formal Dining

By no means an after-thought, fine dining is perhaps what we are best known for here at Heritage Portfolio. We are continually working on new seasonal menus, with fresh tastes, textures and aromas to delight your guests.

When you plan a formal meal with Heritage Portfolio there is nothing packaged about either the food or the approach. The whole event is planned to precision: from the 'amuse bouche' to the tablet and coffee - we delight in the detail.

## Watching the trends

Scott Robertson, Sales Director at Heritage Portfolio, considers the impact of the recession on the industry and asks where the downturn will lead the conference and meetings market in Scotland.

The economic downturn is currently having a major impact on the type of event planning that organisations are undertaking. The result is a market with real challenges and some surprising opportunities.

A recent report from MIA (Meetings Industry Association) focuses on the downward trend in conference business through the end of 2008 and on into the early part of 2009. However, there are suggestions in the report that these downward trends will not continue and may in fact be levelling. This kind of information is vital to us and indeed supports what we see on the ground, where we are continuing to look for innovative ways to promote our venues both to local clients and to the rest of the world.

In early summer we hosted a gala dinner on behalf of VisitScotland's Business Tourism Unit, welcoming buyers from Germany, Spain, the UK, the United States, Canada, India and Russia. The dinner was just one element in their two day visit and it is a delight to be promoting Scotland's very finest opportunities to key contacts from all over the world.

Buoyed by this success, we were also delighted to see Edinburgh's position in the ICCA statistics (International Congress and Conventions Association) continue to improve, a reflection on the range of venues and the quality of the offering available from Scotland's capital.

Looking ahead to autumn there are opportunities to promote our venues in St Petersburg, where I am joining the VisitScotland Business Tourism Unit once again, for a joint sales mission to this important emerging market. Then it's back to the UK for the Edinburgh Convention Bureau's networking event in London. Finally, there will be more opportunities to meet incentive planners and conference agents at an event in Munich.

There are some excellent opportunities to attract key business tourism to Scotland at the moment. The strength of both the Dollar and the Euro has made the country increasingly attractive as an international destination and it's exciting to be promoting a wide range of business tourism opportunities to clients from right around the globe.

In conclusion, as we head towards the winter season, there is a need to stay focused on the key trends, to be reactive, flexible and above all to work hard at business development.

Don't miss the latest food theatre sensation to come to town, our tantalising cocktail and canapé extravaganza. We've put together a dramatic performance featuring some of our most spectacular canapés and divinely drinkable cocktails as the stars of the show.

*Tailcoats & Tutus*  
LIVE



### ~ THE PERFORMANCE ~

William Shakespeare, West End Musical or a night at the ballet? Well, as you can tell from the outfits, the influences are eclectic, and as ever you can stamp your own ideas and style to tailor the whole event for your particular audience. All the world's a stage, after all.

### ~ THE CAST ~

Charismatic chefs who use all their culinary skills and techniques to create tongue-tantalisingly tasty canapés before your very eyes.

A troupe of charming serving staff, bedazzling in their tailcoats and tutus, mingling between your guests with the canapés. Creative and clever canapés, made with stunning ingredients, many making their debut appearance. Now the performance element takes the whole show into the realm of the extraordinary.

Cocktails, lively with inspiration and imagination and if we ever hint at the traditional, there is always a twist, of course.

### ~ THE PROGRAMME ~

Sit back and watch the action! To experience the LIVE element of the show, food bars will be located around the room, where your guests can watch and ask questions as some of the most popular canapés are created by our team of endlessly inventive and dedicated chefs.

### ~ THE PROGRAMME NOTES ~

If this was a real theatre programme, this would be the section for some pseudo-intellectual remarks about why we interpreted the playwright's offering with a particular twist, the significance of the setting, the costumes and all that rigmarole. However, this is our chance to explain why we're launching this particular dramatic performance this season.

Bizarre as it may seem, Tailcoats and Tutus LIVE is our answer to the recession. Right now there is a need to find innovative ways of creating something memorable for guests, without it breaking the bank. Instead of lowering the ceiling on the fine-dining experience our suggestion is to consider this new approach to food as entertainment. By adding a frisson of excitement to our already excellent canapé offering, we believe you can offer your guests something quite out of the ordinary.

## Realising the Biggar vision

The dream was simple; to create the perfect, Scottish country house wedding.

This special commission involved creating a very particular atmosphere; sumptuous yet relaxed at the same time. The entertainment included a classic gospel choir flown up from London to perform at both the wedding ceremony and the reception, a string quartet to provide a relaxed and romantic background, a talented band for the evening entertainment, encompassing everything from big band to motown and 80's pop and then the contrast of an Irish folk band for the barbecue party on the following evening.

As for the children, their needs had been carefully catered for too, with a marquee kitted out with ride-on arcade games, play stations, Wii and dance mats. Better still, clowns and entertainers provided live entertainment, with the whole children's space completely supervised, leaving the adults free to enjoy the relaxed and sophisticated surroundings of the country house.

Ian Muckett, Senior Hospitality Manager sums up how the team delivered on the day: "For the wedding breakfast itself, the expectations had been set extremely high, with a choice of four starters, four main courses and a number of dishes where the presentation had to be finished at the table. It was a real delight for me to see how each part of the team played their part with precision timing and absolutely maximum effort to pull it all off on the day. Logistics, operations, theming, event design and of course the guys in the kitchen all contributed to an exceedingly complex operation."

Sunshine on the day was about the only element that was outside our control, but that arrived too, providing the finishing touches to a beautiful dream.

It may have looked effortless on the day, but behind the seamless delivery lay the months of planning where, step by careful step, the dream was gradually moulded into reality. Linda Martin, Principal Event Designer here at Heritage Portfolio, took a lead role in interpreting the original vision in order to create a spectacular and memorable wedding. "The planning process is incredibly detailed, but it is always about more than the detail. My role was to listen, understand, suggest, believe, create, involve, persuade and then deliver!" With the family living abroad, there were only a few client meetings, and these were vital. Here was the opportunity to build the bond of friendship and trust that would be the basis for every discussion and every decision. Linda was then in close contact by phone and email, debating and deciding the menu selections, sending sound bites of music and detailed descriptions for the theming as the whole wedding was gradually pieced together.

