

food for thought

with Benjamin James

Our resident foodie Benjamin James of the **George and Dragon** in Chipstead reveals what he has in store for the pub in 2012 and shares his favourite monthly recipe



One of the delicious seasonal dishes that can be found at The George & Dragon in Chipstead

*ONE £10 VOUCHER PER TABLE, PER BILL

Ben's favourite monthly recipe: parsnip gratin

In these articles I would like to share with you one of my favourite recipes and a seasonally-inspired cocktail; this month I've chosen a deliciously different parsnip gratin which we accompany with seared duck breast and braised red cabbage here at the George & Dragon in Chipstead.

It is worth taking the time to make this gratin, similar in construction to potato dauphinoise; it slices easily when cold so is perfect for eating hot or as leftovers.

For four people

4 x Parsnips (peeled)

400ml of double cream

1 x whole egg

Thyme leaves

1 tsp honey

1 x finely chopped garlic clove

Salt and pepper

Finely slice the parsnips (ideally lengthways). Line a baking dish with greaseproof paper; lay out the parsnips, slighting overlapping each other, in tight rows covering the bottom of the baking dish. Sprinkle with salt and pepper, chopped garlic and thyme leaves. Repeat this process until all of your parsnips are used, ideally you will have four or five layers. Mix the cream, honey and egg together and pour over the layered parsnips. The liquid will spread down between the layers. Use a wooden spoon to press down the top to ensure all layers are tightly packed. Cover with tin foil and bake in an oven at 180oc for around 45 minutes until the mix is set with a slight wobble.



It has been two years to the month since we started penning these Field to Fork articles. In this time we have covered various topics from foraging for mushrooms to hunting out the best local suppliers, all in our quest to ensure that the George & Dragon in Chipstead serves the very best locally-sourced food, that reaches your table freshly prepared by our team of talented chefs. Our ethos here at the George & Dragon in Chipstead is a simple one, we only use fresh, seasonal and where possible local produce. Our menus change daily to reflect the best of what is available seasonally and our focus is on great quality ingredients treated simply and cooked perfectly. I'm also proud to report that our commitment to exceptional food over the last two years has been recognised by customers and critics alike. We now appear in Alistair Sawdays' Good Pub Guide, Harden's Best Restaurants 2012 and came runner up at the Taste of Kent awards 2011.

Perhaps as a nation we have all become accustomed to chain restaurant food, but new customers are always pleasantly surprised to hear that 98 per cent of our menu is made from scratch in our kitchens. Everything from our delicious terrines and chutneys to our innovative desserts and the bread we bake twice a day. This is the only way we can guarantee real quality and taste, and there is nothing more rewarding as a chef than to create something from scratch and be able to count a dish's ingredients on one hand as opposed to the long lists, including many preservatives, found on the back of products in most supermarkets' equivalents.

Cocktail of the month: the chocolate truffle

With Valentine's Day approaching a chocolate truffle-inspired cocktail is a decadent accompaniment to any romantic meal and can be flavoured with your favourite spirit. However, the ingredient list is a little long for you average home spirit cupboard, so I have decided to offer *Vine* readers an exclusive discount, which I hope will encourage you to come and visit us at the George & Dragon in Chipstead to try one.



■ Visit the pub at 39 High Street, Chipstead, TN13 2RW and for more information or to book, call 01732 779019 or visit www.georgeanddragonchipstead.com