



Christmas Newsletter 2011

### MARINATED IN CHRISTMAS CHEER!

With the festive season upon us, the Blue Strawberry and Table Talk team are full of cheer as our chefs marinate and roast the finest British ingredients to delight guests over the coming weeks. Bespoke canapés including handmade miniature Christmas puddings, festive cocktails like our toffee apple martini and seasonal table decorations are just a glimpse into the grotto of festive finishing touches that will guarantee an utterly unique Christmas party.



### CHRISTMAS COOKING MADE EASY

From frenetic Christmas shopping to the invasion of unexpected family members into your usually, perfectly orderly household, Christmas is a time of joy but also immense stress! To make preparations a little easier, our super talented chefs and experienced owners, Molly and Jojo, have shared with us their most valuable tips which are sure to help reduce the stress leading up to and on the actual day.



## HELPFUL HINTS AND TIPS!

**Blue Strawberry owner, Molly Ronan** has kindly agreed to share her infamous gravy recipe with us; pre-make and freeze or rustle up on the day, either way, read on to hear how to make a seriously tasty gravy! 'Whilst deglazing the chicken or turkey pan, add about ½ pint chicken stock, 1 cup white wine, a little tomato ketchup (about a dessert spoon), a couple of dashes of Worcestershire sauce, a couple of dashes of light soy sauce, around a dessert spoon of red currant jelly and dissolve a couple of teaspoons of cornflour in some sherry and add to the pan. The sherry gives it a lovely rich flavour so I normally decide to add a little more! Then either add more cornflour or more stock to get the right consistency. Bring to the boil and simmer for 5 minutes. Then enjoy with juicy roast meat and perfectly cooked organic vegetables!'

**Table Talk owner Jojo Browner** says 'Christmas day can never be without mince pies, however they're always eaten at the end of an enormous feast, so my little tip is to make mini mince pies to have as petits fours. If you decide to make them yourself, mix butter with cream cheese (in replacement of the lard quantity) to make a really delicious, light shortcrust pastry. Then grate the zest of one orange into the dough before rolling it out to give the pastry a delicious fruity flavour. Another of my favourite little cheats is to buy good quality mince meat; add a swig of your best brandy to it and no one will ever guess that you didn't make it yourself!'

**Executive Head Chef Gerald;** 'Start prepping for Christmas two weeks in advance. People never leave enough time but if you make your basic necessities like brandy butter, bread sauce, stuffing and gravy a couple of weeks early and then freeze, it will stop that last minute panic.' Extra idea; add a pinch or two of nutmeg to your bread sauce to give it added depth and flavour.

**Sous chef Dylan said;** 'To prevent bland turkey, mix garlic and thyme with soft butter. Lift the skin of the turkey by the cavity and rub the flavoured butter in between the skin and breast. This will add a depth of flavour to the meat, making this year's Christmas lunch an unforgettable taste sensation!'

**Chef Darryl's handy hint;** 'Maris Piper are a great potato for roasting- to get the perfect crisp result (but still keeping a light, fluffy inside) cook the par-boiled potatoes with rosemary sprigs in piping hot duck fat. To ensure even cooking and equally dispersed flavour, toss the tray every 5 – 7 minutes until golden brown and truly delicious! And always remember to season well with salt and pepper!'

And finally, for the perfect Christmas pudding recipe visit our blog.

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## EVENT NEWS

### CHRISTMAS TIME!

#### Christmas Lights at Stella McCartney

The sparkling event, bursting with A-list celebrities, saw Emma Bunton and Jennifer Saunders (who was dressed as Ab Fab's 'Eddie') switch on the eco-friendly Christmas lights at Stella McCartney's Bruton Street store. Stella, who will be appearing in one of the new episodes of Absolutely Fabulous, looked stunning as she welcomed her guests to the star studded event. Table Talk served an array of drinks including a warming mulled wine which spread a festive aroma throughout the store. A traditional hot chocolate and roast chestnut stall, outside the entrance, added to the evening of fun and frivolities. While the eclectic Who's Who of iconic guests from the fashion industry and the arts, including Sir Paul McCartney, Alexa Chung, Dame Kelly Holmes, Sir Bob Geldof and Kate Moss ensured that this event was a dazzling start to the festive season.



### **The start of Christmas at Hampton Court Palace**

The Direction Group started their festivities by holding a stunning Christmas party at Hampton Court Palace. A dinner of golden beetroot cured salmon, warming pot roasted chicken with potato dauphinoise followed by a dessert of Brandy snap boxes and salted caramel popcorn was served to over 400 guests split across four dining areas in the Palace. This impressive event was expertly managed by the Blue Strawberry team, proving that no challenge is too great for them. Merriments were further continued in the historic Tudor kitchens where, at the end of the evening, mulled wine and mince pies completed the festive occasion.



### **Austrian National Tourist Board**

The Austrian market themed event at One Mayfair, complete with festive Christmas trees decorated in the style of the four provinces of Austria, kicked off with traditional Austrian Glühwein, mulled wine and a delicious rum punch. Potential business trading partners for Austria were invited to the event and enjoyed a mixture of traditional Austrian food, created by Blue Strawberry, in the form of canapés and mini meals including Wiener Schnitzel - Viennese schnitzels with roast parsley potatoes and cranberry compote and Char Gravavlax - Beetroot cured char gravavlax with dill and cucumber pickle. After an informative speech about Austrian traditions, attendees took part in cookie decorating getting everyone into the festive spirit as well as creating a fun and relaxed opportunity for networking.



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As well as the multitude of bespoke Christmas celebrations, we have had a busy couple of months since our last newsletter. With a variety of events including Hard Rock's star-studded PINKTOBER charity dinner, a selection of exclusive exhibition openings and the preview for the international buyers of the Autumn/ Winter 2012 Dr. Marten shoe collection, we have been non-stop! Read on to hear more about some of the incredible events we have been part of over the last two months.

## **HIGHCLERE YEARLING PARADES**

### **A Star Studded line-up at the Highclere Yearling Parades**

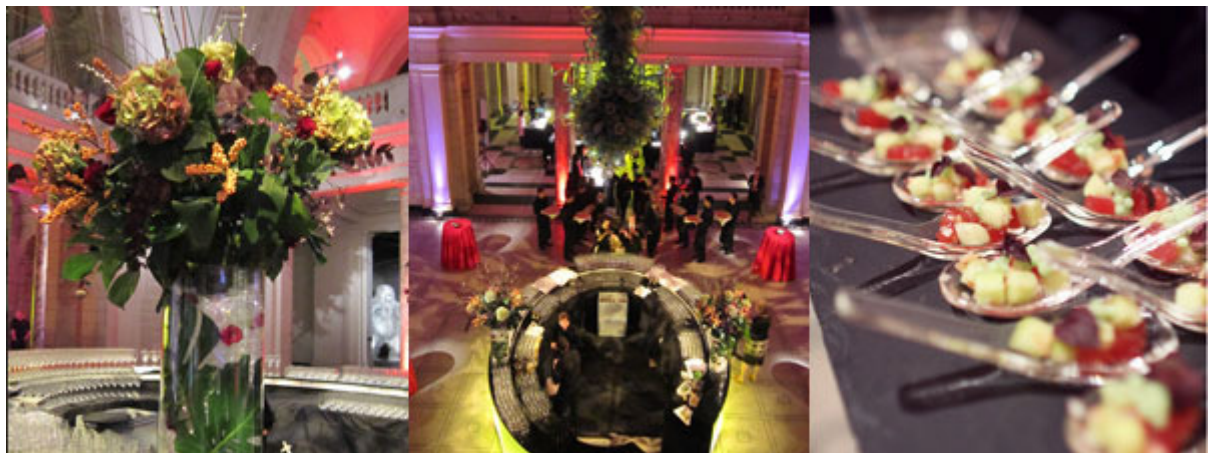
As the stars of Downton Abbey filmed the 'Christmas special' at Highclere Castle, the estate also played host to one of the most sought-after invitations in the racing world. Highclere Thoroughbred Racing showcased their own stars of the future in the form of 16 blue-blooded yearlings to over 800 people during the four day event. Each morning breakfast canapés including miniature eggs florentine, sizzling sausage baguettes and bacon butties with warming Bullshot and Bloody Marys created a spectacular start to the day. Enthusiasts such as Alex Ferguson, Denise Lewis, Barry McGuigan and actor Nathaniel Parker, enjoyed the morning parades and a Champagne reception followed by a super stylish lunch, created by Table Talk, in the stunning marquee which was set in the grounds of Highclere Stud with panoramic views over the rolling Berkshire Downs.



## EXCLUSIVE EXHIBITION OPENINGS

### Asian Art in London at The V&A

Guests were greeted by traditional oriental drummers 'Taiko Meantime' as they arrived for The Asian Art in London Annual Gala at the V&A. Attendees at this exclusive reception, mingled with directors and curators of Asian art collections from worldwide museums. Under the impressive Chihuly glass chandelier that hangs in the Dome, Blue Strawberry served an array of delicious canapés from bite size steak and chips with béarnaise sauce to Vietnamese rice paper rolls with crisp Asian vegetables. This annual event is the highlight of a ten day series of sales and exhibitions; the evening was an enjoyable networking occasion for London's leading dealers in Asian art.



*\*Canapé photograph courtesy of Daniel Morgan, Umlaut Collection*

## East Meets South-East London

The heavy aroma of spices helped transport guests from Neptune Court, at the National Maritime Museum, to a bustling marketplace for the opening of Traders the East India Company and Asia Exhibition. Colourful spices lined the bases of canapé trays while the menu, which was created to evoke the tastes of the famous trade routes, delighted guests. Table Talk's canapés included tea smoked duck with Chinese spices, pickled vegetables and pear chutney as well as toasted mini parathra with butter chicken ballotine and mango chutney which were washed down with mango lassi's and a refreshing lychee and grapefruit juice Asian Breeze. Under hanging Chinese lanterns a tea stand decorated with orchids offered a variety of fragrant Indian peach, pomegranate and green teas, while traditional style wicker furniture created a respite for guests looking around the exhibition.



## Don McCullin at the Imperial War Museum

Fighter planes lit with shades of purple and orange set the scene for the opening of Shaped by War, photojournalist Don McCullin's new exhibition at the Imperial War Museum. Having trained in the RAF and worked as an overseas reporter for the Sunday Times Magazine, award-winning photographer McCullin has a significant body of work. From powerful pictures of Iraq and Afghanistan to capturing scenes from the Vietnam War this impressive exhibition showcases many of his monumental photographs capturing the history of modern warfare. Celebrity guests including Bill Bailey, Tony Robinson and Jon Snow were among those celebrating the exhibition's opening as they, and the host, sung the praise of Blue Strawberry's canapés. Guests enjoyed lobster and crayfish thermidor tart and miniature wild boar sausages with creamy mash as well as a selection of other delicious canapés.



## Exhibition Opening at the Dulwich Picture Gallery

An immaculate table set for 125 guests, awaited the lenders, friends and sponsors of Painting Canada: Tom Thomson and the Group of Seven exhibition. This new exhibition at the Dulwich Picture Gallery displays works from the early twentieth century depicting the Canadian wilderness- last displayed for the British public in the 1920s. Guests discussed the artwork over canapés and drinks before a feast of Orkney scallops, fillet of venison and chocolate and clementine sabayon mousse were served, by Blue Strawberry, to great delight in the main gallery.



*\*Photograph on the right courtesy of Tony Hart*

## DELICIOUS DINNERS...

### Stunning Dinners at Kensington Palace

Blue Strawberry are delighted to have continued their successful summer at Kensington Palace with an even more eventful autumn and winter. A host of household names have dined on our delicious menus including Chubb, The English Cricket Board and Virgin Atlantic.

### Red Hot Virgin Atlantic Dinner at The Orangery

On an unseasonably warm autumn evening the most influential figures from the airline industry came together at Kensington Palace. The evening organised by Virgin Atlantic saw waiting staff in red hats serve canapés from trays decorated with red rose buds. Ruby red runners ran down the tables in the Orangery where guests dined on Blue Strawberry's fresh crayfish, prawn and avocado salad followed by roast fillet of Casterbridge beef. As well as Virgin Atlantic cabin crew in full uniform who hosted the evening, several singers dressed in uniform went on to sing in a stunning cabaret act at the end of the event.



## Rock n' Roll Dinner for PINKTOBER

Music legends Beverley Knight and Bonnie Tyler performed at an unforgettable charity dinner organised by the Hard Rock Café at the Natural History Museum. The evening held as part of the PINKTOBER campaign, in aid of breast cancer care, was hosted by Gloria Hunniford who's charity The Caron Keating Foundation was the main beneficiary. A silent auction including artwork by Tim Wakefield signed by Bon Jovi and the presenters of Top Gear as well as hand-painted masks by celebrities including Tracey Emin, Ronnie Wood and Bananarama helped raise even more for the worthy cause. Bespoke features including PINKTOBER wristbands, given to every guest, and chocolate shaped guitars on the dessert added the sparkling touches to this star studded evening. Guests raved about Table Talk's steak and chips with one rather famous guest asking for seconds!

