

Flavours of Summer



Great Westcountry Lamb

Now that all the fuss is all but over about the infamous and I think overrated spring lamb (Easter should be about chocolate eggs only), this is definitely the time to be getting down to your local butchers for some truly great Westcountry lamb.

As a chef I never tire of the versatility of this wonderful meat with its abundance of textures and flavours with cuts to suits all needs and wallets.

Lamb is meat from a sheep less than a year old and once over a year should be called hogget. Mutton comes from sheep that is two years old or more and traditionally from a castrated male. Ouch!

The pasture that the lambs graze on will have a distinct and lasting affect on its flavour, i.e. the lush Devon countryside or the heather covered hills of our moors and even the fields sprayed by the sea mists of our famous coastline will all define the flavour of your dish.

Of course it is true almost every region will have had its own breed specifically adapted to the local environment and I believe that within the Westcountry we have one of the finest in our Poll Dorset breed, an excellent sheep that can breed all year round.

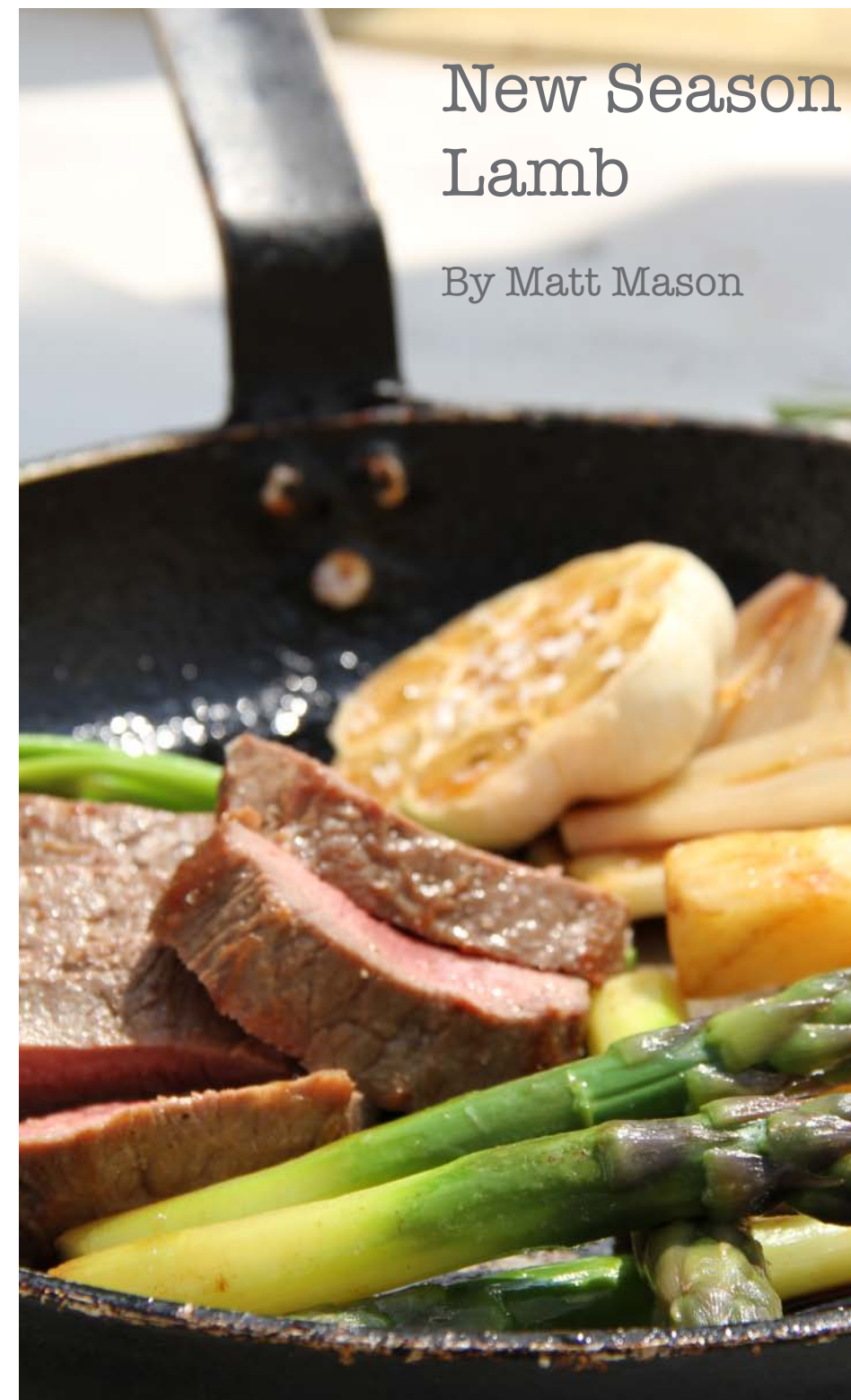
One thing is for sure, now is the time to enjoy new season lamb which is so much more flavoursome and complex than the spring lamb we saw at Easter.

We hope you enjoy trying this recipe; it's a delicious loin of lamb with celeriac puree that we are currently serving on our main menu.



New Season Lamb

By Matt Mason



1) Take one 8 oz boneless loin eye of lamb (for two people), one celeriac and one bunch of English asparagus.

2) Simply peel and roughly chop your celeriac into mouth sized pieces and blanch in well seasoned water for two to three minutes and reserve.

3) Snap the asparagus near to the base to remove its woody stem.

4) Heat your favourite large non stick frying pan, add the seasoned lamb loin and sear on all sides.

5) Add the celeriac and the asparagus to the pan and continue to cook on a moderate heat for a further three to four minutes turning frequently.

6) Remove the loin of lamb from the pan and leave to rest in a warm place for at least two to three minutes - just enough time to open the wine.

7) Continue to cook the veggies in the pan until the desired degree of cooking is achieved (still with a bit of crunch for the asparagus and the celeriac should yield to a knife when pierced much like a potato).

8) Serve perhaps with a simple watercress salad and a mint hollandaise or some hot buttered peas and mint. Or try cooked and chilled peas with a little finely shredded fresh mint and salad dressing.

Most of the emphasis on this recipe is about good ingredients locally sourced to be enjoyed and appreciated rather than the equivalent of a cookery marathon and hours spent in the kitchen. Good food and good company is what it's all about.

Elderflower Cordial

If I could encourage you to make one thing it would definitely be making this wonderfully fragrant and refreshing elderflower cordial. Elderflower trees are bursting into life as we speak, pick on a sunny day and use as soon as possible.

You will need:

- 2.5 kg caster sugar
- 2 large unwaxed lemons peeled for the zest and sliced
- 30 of the freshest, frothy creamy white elderflower heads - and their stalks removed.
- 3 oz citric acid (available from chemists)

Method:

Bring the sugar and 1.5 litres of water to a gentle boil. Simmer for two minutes then turn off the heat.

Gently wash the elderflowers and transfer to the syrup along with the lemons, the zest and the citric acid.

Cover the pan and leave in a cool place to infuse for 24 hours.

Line a colander with a larger piece of muslin cloth or tea towel over a large pan or bowl.

Slowly pour in the syrup - allowing it to drip slowly through in its own time. Discard anything left behind.

Use a funnel and a ladle to fill sterilised bottles, chill until required or even freeze for excellent ice cubes.



Other stuff

A bit of bed time reading...The Devon Food Book. Show your support and buy the definitive guide to all things foodie from our county and a recipe each from Matthew and Scott.



Available to buy directly from the Jack or order online from Amazon

What's cooking on TV...

We love the Great British Menu - some great old fashioned kitchen banter...
What's not...
Iron Chef UK - the less said the better!

Fish Watch

Cornish mackerel - superb, great value for money and cooks in seconds perfect for the BBQ.

In Season

Look out for marsh samphire, wild asparagus, Carolyn Bellinger's heirloom tomatoes and some other exciting new ingredients on the way. Gooseberries - coming soon!

We're also using Boccadon farm veal and from The Bath Pig Company English Chorizo made using our very own Kenniford Farm pork - www.thebathpig.com

A range of interesting and unique flours milled directly from Clyston Mill at Broadclyst.

The very first new season new potatoes are coming soon. Watch out for Anyas and Pink Firs - simply stunning and not around for long.

Also English cherries are not far away now.

Wild salmon is around from June 1st. Blink and you will miss it's short season!

And still going strong:

Asparagus better be quick it will soon be gone!

Albeit towards the end of the season and just bursting into bloom Allium ursinum or wild garlic to you and me! Just like garlic only much milder, perfect in a salad with steak or a late addition to soups or sauces or even pesto.

Jobs we love

Messing about finding the perfect burger recipe for the summer snacks menu.

Writing new menus

Podding peas and broad beans

Anything to do with asparagus

Making rhubarb crumble from scratch with my son Charlie age six. Watch out Junior Masterchef here we come!

Where we have eaten and how we rated them ...

Hibiscus - fancy two Michelin starred restaurant run by Claude Bosi - a great meal especially the asparagus smoked over hay.

Jamie's Italian - a truly fantastic burger and some huge mammoth olives.

Afternoon tea in the sun at Combe House - never bettered.

Lunch at fifteen - tasty.



Food Hero:
Carolyn and Paul
Bellinger

Carolyn and Paul Bellinger are food heroes in the truest sense of the word.

Both decided to leave successful corporate careers behind them to follow their dream of leading a self sufficient life. Their small holding is called Oak Lodge and it is situated at Holcombe Lane on East Hill, just outside Ottery St Mary, where Carolyn's family has farmed at Holcombe for over 100 years.

Traditional, as well as the more unusual vegetables are grown, including salad leaves and edible flowers, various coloured carrots, both golden and stripped beetroot and black and yellow beans to mention but a few. The fruit garden grows the usual strawberries and raspberries with additional varieties including golden raspberries, white, black and red currants, tayberries, loganberries, blackberries and gooseberries.

At the bottom of Oak Lodge lies an orchard planted out with traditional varieties of apple, plum and cherries trees, local to the area. Free range chickens roam in the orchard and lay the most fabulous pastel coloured eggs. Situated just seven miles from the Jack, at the beginning of each year Matthew and Carolyn sit down and spend time looking at seed catalogues before agreeing what can be grown for the restaurant.

