

chef PAUL COLLINS

Private Dining In The Luxury of Your Home

February 2013

Welcome to February. It's been a flying start to the year with many post Christmas dinners and lunches booked in your homes. I was invited to go on BBC Radio Oxford on 27th January to comment on the horsemeat scandal in burgers (*Paul, right, with BBC Radio Oxford presenter Ali Jones*). The story reinforced in my mind the importance of knowing your suppliers, where your food comes from and to buy organic where possible. This leads to another food news story of 2013 about mackerel. It has long been a favourite ingredient of mine – catching my own off the Dorset coast, but now the Marine Conservation Society has downgraded its sustainability status due to over fishing and recommends that mackerel be only eaten occasionally. The MCS suggests eating herrings or sardines instead. Once again we the consumer should know where our food comes from. If we consume fish it must be sustainable or have a day off from meat and fish entirely and go veggie!.



A Valentine Dessert Of Chocolate Fondant (IMPRESS SOMEONE SPECIAL IN YOUR LIFE..)



Ingredients (to make 8)

285g 70% dark chocolate
3 eggs & 3 yolks
250g butter
150g sugar
75g flour (sifted)

Method:

- Butter and lightly dust with cocoa powder 8 individual aluminium pudding moulds.
- Melt the chocolate with the butter.
- Whisk the eggs, yolks and sugar together until light and fluffy, then pour the melted chocolate.
- Fold in the flour.
- Pour the mixture into the pudding moulds.
- Bake at 180c for 8-10 minutes.
- Remove and turn out onto a dessert plate.
- Serve immediately with fresh cream.

My 3 food stars this month are **CHAMPAGNE (OR FORCED) RHUBARB**; at this time of the year you can enjoy champagne rhubarb from the Yorkshire triangle. Much more tender and pink than its hardy outdoor cousin - that comes later in the year. Poach the rhubarb with a small amount of ginger, vanilla and sugar and serve with a softly set pannacotta – a perfect showcase for this ingredient. **PURPLE SPROUTING**; I never get bored of this delightful, most quintessential English vegetable. Simply steam and serve with unsalted butter and a little Maldon sea salt. Finally **SALSIFY**; an unusual root vegetable that to me can resemble a pile of sticks! However, once peeled and blanched try sautéing them in a pan with a little butter – they have the most delicious nutty flavour.

My Tip of the Month

MARMALADE: buy enough Seville oranges to make a year's batch of marmalade. Use half of them now and freeze the other oranges to make another batch later in the year.

As always, if you would like me to cook in your home, or want my advice about a recipe or have any food questions don't hesitate to email or call. Good Eating!

Paul.