

A great seasonal treat



In the latest of his monthly seasonal food features, **ANDY CLEGG** of Norwich's Last Wine Bar, celebrates one of Norfolk's greatest seasonal treats.

This monthly column is about making the most of seasonal food. It is designed to help you enjoy the unique flavour of ingredients which are naturally at their best at any given time of year, rather than forced to crop at unnatural seasons, or flown half way around the world. It is a double pleasure when I can choose an ingredient which is not just in season, but also locally sourced – and not just produced locally, but one where Norfolk leads the world in terms of quality. There are few ingredients which represent our county better than Cromer crab, and we have the benefit of a ready supply of beautifully fresh crabs at this time of the year.

Cromer crabs are famous amongst seafood aficionados for their sweet, tender flesh, and high proportion of white meat to dark. They are in fact brown crabs, one of more than 4500 species of crab found worldwide. Norfolk fishermen have harvested this delicacy for centuries, although the number of crab boats operating from Cromer today has fallen to around a dozen, working 200 or so crab pots.

Advocates of the Cromer crab say that in a side by side comparison, it will win out against any other variety of crab – even ones from nearby Norfolk waters. You can of course buy a ready-dressed crab, which has the benefit of someone else having done all the hard work. The downside of doing this is that dressed crabs really don't last very long – you really should eat it the same day; whereas a whole crab will last a day or two longer.

And somehow the dressed crabs never seem to



Also In Season

Fruit/veg: Asparagus, broad beans, Jersey Royal potatoes, rhubarb, spring onions, passion fruit
Meat/fish: Lamb, rabbit

have quite as much white meat in them as the ones you do yourself – funny that! So it is worth learning how to dress a crab yourself. Once you have mastered the art, you will wonder why you ever bothered buying ready-dressed ones. May also sees the Sheringham and Cromer

Crab and lobster Festival, which runs from May 20-22. With cookery demonstrations, taster sessions, masterclasses and a month-long restaurant trail, there really is no excuse for not sampling possibly Norfolk's finest food this month – while it really is at its best.

● Next month: Sea trout

Tian Of Crab & Celeriac Remoulade With Carpaccio Of Kiwi

Serves four

- 2 dressed Cromer crabs
- 2 kiwis, peeled and sliced as thinly as possible
- 1 small celeriac, peeled and grated
- a pinch of smoked paprika
- 2 tbsp mayonnaise
- a sprig of dill
- 1 lime, zest & juice
- 250ml olive oil
- 3 drops of dark soy sauce
- 1 tbsp chardonnay vinegar

● Separate the white crab meat from the brown. In a bowl, mix the brown meat with the celeriac, paprika, mayonnaise, lime juice and zest, and dill. This creates the remoulade.

● For the dressing put the olive oil, soy sauce and vinegar in a jam jar, and shake (with the lid on, of course!).

● To serve, lay the kiwi slices in a neat circle, and top with the remoulade. Then place the white meat on top, and dress around the edge of the plate.



Cod Fillet, Purple Sprouting Broccoli, Sautéed Anyas & Crab Velouté

Serves four

- 4 x 6oz cod fillets
- 700g Anya potatoes, par-boiled
- 500g trimmed purple sprouting broccoli
- 1 dressed Cromer crab, white meat only
- 55g butter, plus a little extra for sautéing
- 45g plain flour
- 500ml fish stock
- 100ml double cream
- 5 strands of saffron



- For the velouté, melt the butter in a saucepan, then add the flour and cook for three to four minutes on a low heat. Now add a little of the fish stock and stir with a wooden spoon. Repeat this until all the fish stock has been used, and cook on a low heat for 20 minutes, stirring as often as possible.
- Taste the sauce, and if you can still taste flour then cook for a little longer. Once the flour

taste has gone, add the double cream and saffron and reduce for five minutes. Now add the white crab meat and remove from heat.

● In a frying pan, melt some butter and add the sliced, par-boiled Anya potatoes, and cook on either side for three minutes on a medium/low heat.

● Butter a baking tray, dust it with sea salt and drizzle with olive oil. Now place the cod skin side down, and roast for 12 to 14 minutes at 180°C.

● Blanch the broccoli for two minutes in salted, boiling water.

● Arrange the potato on the plate, top with broccoli followed by the cod, and then finish with your crab velouté.

Nibbles

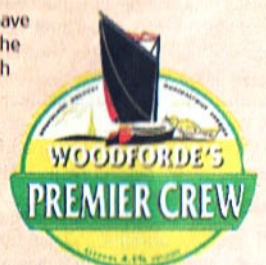


● Swapping a popular Saturday food market to a Thursday would seem to be a bit of a risk, but it appears to have paid off for the monthly market at Wroxham Barns. Organisers Produced In Norfolk changed the day of its traditional market and launched a range of new products. Managing director of Produced in Norfolk Jane Miller said: "We find there are more local people at Wroxham Barns on a Thursday, whereas there are more visitors at the weekends, so it is better for local people who are shopping for vegetables and cakes." The first Thursday market had a very Easter theme with Buns of Fun, from Sheringham, selling chocolate products including Easter eggs. Other stallholders included Yare Valley Culinary Oils, based at Surlingham, Pies, Puds and Tarts, from Walsingham, spicy offerings from the Bhaji Man and hot sauces and nuts from Norfolk Heatwave. In future the market will run every third Thursday of the month until the end of September.

● Two-and-a-half years after the career meltdown that almost destroyed his reputation, former Norfolk chef Tom Aikens is once again running his own show. With the help of new deep-pocketed backers, the 41-year-old has regained ownership of his Chelsea restaurants — Michelin-starred Tom Aikens and its bistro spin-off Tom's Kitchen — after losing financial control of them in the 2008 crash. The deal, said to be worth around £5 million, also involves plans for at least eight new branches of Tom's Kitchen in the capital within a few years.

● St Benedict's Restaurant, situated unsurprisingly on St Benedict's Street, runs host a number of wine tasting dinners throughout the year which explore many different countries, and in 2011 they will be taking tasters on our very own Tour de France — but without the leg work. Each date showcases a specific regions wine, with the accompanying regional menu. This year's dates start on May 18 with wines from the Rhone region, then continue with Brittany on June 29, Provence on September 14 and the Pyrenees on October 26. The price, including three course meal and featured wine, is £34 per person, with a £5 per person deposit required; which will be taken off your final bill. More details: 01603 765377. www.stbenedictsrestaurant.co.uk

● Norfolk brewers have been quick to toast the promotion of Norwich City to the Premiership. The county's biggest brewery Woodforde's has released Premier Crew a limited edition 4.1% ale.



Director Mike Betts said: "We're a proud and passionate supporter of Norwich City and what better way to celebrate the promotion than by creating a patriotic tipple that the whole city can be proud of?" Premier Crew will be available in draught and is available for a limited time only. Also in celebratory mood is Winter's Brewery, based in Hellesdon, who have On The Beer City now on sale at various pubs including the Kings Head in Magdalen Street. Mark Winter, part of the award-winning father and son brewing team with dad David, said: "We brewed it obviously before Norwich were pro-moted, but City were doing really well, and we hoped that they would get promotion." Meanwhile Lowestoft-based Green Jack has produced Canary Premier.

www.woodfordes.co.uk
www.wintersbrewery.com

● Food, restaurant and pub news can be emailed to goingout@archant.co.uk