

GOURMET LIFE

Food news from around the county



CREDIT: GIANPAOLO MARIO GIANCOVICH

IOW FOOD WEEKEND

To celebrate the Isle of Wight's fantastic food scene, Ventnor's The Royal has organised a Gastronomic Weekend on September 30, introducing guests to some of its favourite suppliers. Couples can pay £495 for the weekend which includes tours of The Garlic Farm and Goddards Brewery, a cookery demonstration in the hotel kitchens, and tasting sessions with The Tomato Stall and Isle of Wight Distillery. There is also the chance to meet fruit and vegetable growers from nearby family-run farm Living Larder, and enjoy three-course gourmet dining in the sumptuous setting of the hotel restaurant. To book, visit royalhotel-iow.co.uk/events.aspx

CREDIT: SARAH GAUNT



A MASTERCHEF FUNDRAISER

19-YEAR-OLD Jade Smith, from Fleet, has been crowned 'Master Chef' by Gordon Stott at The Sun Inn Dummer's cooking competition at Basingstoke College of Technology, helping to raise £1,300 for Ark Cancer Centre Charity.

Jade beat off competition from fellow contestants 24-year-old Christine Sweet from Andover, and 19-year-old Sam Nurse, from Basingstoke, all third year students on the City & Guilds Level 3 Diploma in Professional Cookery.

30 supporters of Ark Cancer Centre Charity

enjoyed three-courses prepared by the students including original takes on Lamb 'n' Mint and Duck 'n' Orange. Jade, with assistance from sous chef, Amber Choinski, won over diners with her deconstructed version of Toad in the Hole with pea puree, Yorkshire pudding and cider jus.

Diners donated what they felt the meal was worth with all proceeds going to support the building of a much-needed cancer treatment centre for North Hampshire residents.



CREDIT: ADAM LYNK

TASTEBUD TICKLER

We've been hearing good things about Brockenhurst's Balmer Lawn Hotel and so we headed down recently to try out the new tasting menu in their restaurant Beresford's. Created by the hotel's Executive Head Chef, Chris Wheelton, the seven courses take you on a journey of local ingredients presented in an international style, with unusual offerings such as the lobster and lemongrass risotto - which was a particular favourite with us. All beautifully presented and within the stunning setting of the New Forest, it is well worth paying a visit before tables get booked up. The Tasting Menu is priced at £45 per person not including wine, call 01590 421056 to book.

Stars all round

Hampshire food and drink businesses have swept the board at this year's Great Taste awards with local producers coming away with over 70 stars.

This year's awards involved over 400 judges who came together for 49 judging days from March until July. The judges are made up of top chefs, deli and farm shop owners, retail buyers, food writers, farmers...the list goes on. The judges blind-taste in teams of three or four ensuring a balance of expertise, age and gender.

Jude's Ice Cream came away with an impressive nine awards, Owtons Butchers achieved five awards, Moonroast Coffee and Farmer's Choice Free Range got four, Summerdown Farms, Two Cocks Farm and Brewery, Caracoli and Winchester Distillery were all given three and Ambrose Sausages, Charlotte Brown's Handmade, Harley Sweet, Hill Farm Juice, Hockeys Farm Shop, Isle of Wight Distillery, New Forest Ice Cream and Lyburn Farmhouse received two. While Chalk Stream Foods were



awarded two stars for their Cold Smoked Chalk Stream Trout, Chocolate by Miss Witt was given one star for her Blackcurrant & Star Anise chocolate, Naked Jam received two stars for her Strawberry Syrup and Enjoy Raw Chocolate gained one star for their Orange chocolate variety.