

Stir it up

THE MAGAZINE FOR CATERERS

SEPTEMBER
2010

£1.50

**BACK TO
SCHOOL
SPECIAL ISSUE**

**WIN £150
VOUCHER
IN OUR MIXES
COMPETITION**

**ALL YOU NEED
IS LOVAGE**

**MY SIGNATURE
DISH WITH
MELINDA
MESSENGER**

PRODUCED BY THE COUNTRY RANGE GROUP FOR THE CATERING SECTOR



*Jollof Rice made with Uncle Ben's® Mexican Chunky Salsa sauce.
Just one of our new collection of recipes exclusively for schools.*



Our recipe for successful menu planning

Uncle Ben's® and Dolmio® foodservice sauces are perfect for school kitchens. They are versatile and economical to use and deliver 100% great taste, helping you to improve meal uptake. What's more, all of our sauces are within the 2010 FSA salt guidelines, and many are already within the 2012 targets. The majority of the sauces are high in vegetable content too, so you can use them with confidence on your menus. Best of all, every sauce can create dozens of different dishes, so you need never be stuck for ideas!

To find out more, and to receive a set of recipes exclusively developed for education and fully nutritionally analysed, contact sarah.gray@eu.affem.com, or call 0800 952 0011.



100%
GREAT
TASTE



contents

Editor's Letter



I'm avoiding all the clichés about 'where has the summer gone?' or making reference to the fact that autumn is already upon us. Instead, I'm going to say that it may only be the September issue, but we at Country Range are already thinking ahead to Christmas! See our Planning for Christmas article on page 23. While the children have been enjoying the long summer holiday, we've been in the classroom swotting up on all the latest news in the education sector to bring you this bumper Back to School issue.

Our good friend Antony Worrall Thomson and Michelle Berriedale Johnson are talking food allergies on page 21, and we take a look at how older workers can plug the hospitality skills gap on our Advice from the Experts column (page 45).

The very lovely Melinda Messenger chats to us and shares her Signature Dish on page 42, and we've got three copies of her new book up for grabs on our Country Club pages (page 19). One lucky Country Club winner will also scoop £150 to spend on catering equipment in our special Country Range mixes competition. Be a winner!



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* A C Nielsen MAT Value share May 2010

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www.twinningsfs.co.uk



The Soapbox

by Roger Rant



Backwards to progress

To paraphrase that successful ad for soft drinks - 'have you been quangoed?'

The government are looking for ways to save money and quangoes to axe. It's time to fight back against unnecessary regulation, cost and stupidities. If you were thinking of developing your menu to include squirrel (who would be surprised these days?), be careful - selling non-native species, such as grey squirrel, is illegal! If you see opportunity for constructive change, tell your MP, and tell us. Let's move forward by de-restricting.

You can email your letters to editor@stiritupmagazine.co.uk



COOKS CALENDAR

SEPTEMBER

- BACK TO SCHOOL**
3rd - 17th **SOIL ASSOCIATION ORGANIC FORTNIGHT**
Details: www.soilassociation.org
- 5th - 17th **SPECIALITY & FINE FOOD FAIR**
London
Details: www.specialityandfinefoodfairs.co.uk
- 12th **AUTUMN ALFRESCO PARKLAND FOOD FESTIVAL**
Swinton Park
North Yorkshire
Details: www.swintonpark.com
- 14th **CRAFT GUILD OF CHEFS GRADUATE AWARDS**
Royal Garden Hotel,
London
Details: www.craftguildofchefs.org
- 23rd **BRITISH TURKEY AWARDS**
Claridge's Hotel, London
Details: www.britishturkey.co.uk
- 18th - 3rd Oct **BRITISH FOOD FORTNIGHT**
(Nationwide)
Details: <http://lovebritishfood.co.uk>
- 24th **WORLD'S BIGGEST COFFEE MORNING**
Details: www.macmillan.org.uk
- 25th - 26th **BRITAIN'S BIGGEST CHEESE FESTIVAL**
Cardiff Castle
Details: www.thecheeseweb.com

OCTOBER

- 4th - 18th **THE LONDON RESTAURANT FESTIVAL**
Details: www.visitlondon.com
- 11th **NATIONAL CHEF OF THE YEAR 2010 LIVE FINAL**
The Restaurant Show,
Earls Court, London
Details: www.craftguildofchefs.org
- 28th - 30th **THE NATIONAL HONEY SHOW**
St George's College,
Weybridge, Surrey
Details: www.honeyshow.co.uk
- 31st **HALLOWEEN**

NOVEMBER

- 1st - 7th **BRITISH SAUSAGE WEEK 2010**
Details: www.britishturkey.co.uk
- 5th **BONFIRE NIGHT**
Details: www.dti.gov.uk/fireworks
- 20th - 24th **11TH CULINARY WORD CUP**
(global event)
(Luxembourg)
Details: www.craftguildofchefs.org
- 30th **THE HEINZ TOMATO KETCHUP COOK-OFF DEADLINE**
Sheffield College
Details: www.craftguildofchefs.org
- 30th **ST ANDREW'S DAY**

Sustainably farmed beans...

We only buy beans for our Kenco freeze dried coffee range from Rainforest Alliance Certified™ farms. Rainforest Alliance certification helps to ensure a decent wage for workers, access to education for their children, and protection for the environment.

Great tasting coffee...

At Kenco, we've dedicated ourselves to coffee pleasure for over 80 years. So you can be sure that the coffee you choose is specially selected and carefully blended to give a delicious coffee experience.

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Real Coffee Experts

T. 0870 241 4820 www.kencocoffeecompany.co.uk

Baumann's Blog by Mark Baumann

Mark Baumann is Stir it up's regular columnist. He is the owner of the acclaimed Baumann's Brasserie in Coggleshall, Essex, was elected as a Master Chef of Great Britain in 2003, is a regular TV chef - and is a proud customer of the Country Range Group. Each issue, he shares anecdotes about life in his chaotic world of catering...



I've had my 'marketing' hat on this month. We've just started emailing out a customer newsletter (called Baumann's Nez Rouge) to let people know about events that we have coming up in the brasserie and academy. We have a database of around 5,000 people and it only costs about 1p per email so it's a brilliantly cheap way of communicating with your customers. Before we only used to promote things internally - but now our special events are filling up in no time.

Business is good at the moment (fingers crossed!) but we can't sit still because there is always someone waiting in the wings to take your custom.

Strangely enough someone popped in the other day on their way to an 18th birthday party and asked if they could buy some champagne from us.

He ended up spending £900 so there are obviously people out there with available cash!

That's clearly an extreme example but, generally, things are getting better. I also joined my old mates Jean-Christophe Novelli and Gino D'Acampo at the Whitehaven Festival in Cumbria recently. The people have gone through some terrible stuff there recently (a madman on a shooting rampage, a school coach crash and a policeman washed away in the floods) so it was good to be part of something positive taking place there. We were doing cooking demonstrations and there were around a quarter of a million visitors!

They said it was the best festival they had ever had and they've invited me back next year.

They treated us so nicely and we had a black Bentley with a driver at our disposal! The sun shone and the crowds came out and it was an absolute privilege to be there. Another thing that has happened this month is I've been approached by an after dinner speaking agency, which is quite exciting. I'm not sure if I'm going to go for it yet. I've done a lot of talking in my time but I've never really enjoyed entertaining people without a frying pan. It's nice to be asked though. The grass soup on the new menu has been met with surprise... that it's so tasty! I think people were concerned at first about whether they should be eating grass but, really, it's just a herb. It has gone down extremely well. Back to marketing and I've finally taken the plunge and set up Facebook and Twitter accounts. Everyone seemed to be doing it apart from me, plus my 13-year-old daughter is on Facebook and the only way my wife and I could keep an eye on her was to sign up! I'm 'chefbaumann' on Twitter and I've got about 40 followers already. I'm planning to use it as a marketing tool for the business, but at the moment I'm following Paris Hilton and cricketer Shane Warne!

Happy cooking!

Mark

Mark with fellow chef
Jean-Christophe Novelli



Country Range Customer Profile

The Rising Sun Hotel

in Lynmouth, Devon



As catering jobs go, being head chef at an historic 14th century smugglers inn overlooking a picturesque harbour in Devon has to be up there.

Oliver Wood has been at the helm of the Rising Sun in Lynmouth for the last two years and is blessed with having fabulous ingredients on his doorstep all year round.

He describes his approach to cooking as *"modern, uncomplicated and honest with a refreshingly unfussy presentation"*, therefore allowing the very best fresh local produce to speak for itself.

He says: *"I originally came here as a relief sous chef and was later offered the job of head chef. At that time we made the decision to change the restaurant. Previously we had a fine dining restaurant and separate bar food but I didn't want to do that kind of food any more. Now we do the same throughout and we don't mess around with it too much - we make very simple food using fresh local ingredients."*



The Rising Sun Hotel

 DAILY MENU AVAILABLE INSIDE
 Fresh Local Produce.
 A Wide Selection of Local Meat and Game.
 Fresh Fish and Shellfish (Mussels, Sea Bass, Oysters).
 Locally supplied Vegetables.
 Locally brewed Real Ales.
 Soft Bread and Homemade

Country Range Customer Profile



The oak-panelled restaurant specialises in fish and seafood, including Cornish crab, Lynmouth Bay lobsters, local oysters and salmon fished from the River Lyn.

They also source many ingredients from Country Range.

Explains Oliver: *"The owners Tony and Clair Vickery have been using Country Range products for a long time and have a well-established connection with them. I have to say I am very happy with them too - every Country Range product has the quality we have come to expect."*

Oliver and his team make their own chutneys and jams, and bake fresh bread every day - sometimes twice a day.

He loves his job - and the town - so much that Oliver has decided to lay down some roots (he's originally from Hereford) and has recently bought a house in the area.

"It's such a nice part of the world and the people here are lovely," he adds. *"And, from a cooking point of view, it's great because I can get my hands on great local produce."*



Here Oliver shares one of his favourite recipes: Skate, chicory and anchovy salad

Ingredients

- 1 skate wing, about 600g-800g (skinned on both sides)
- poaching broth - enough water to cover your skate wing
- 1 glass of white wine
- zest of 1 lemon
- 1 head of fennel, sliced
- 1 onion, peeled and sliced
- 2 sticks of celery, chopped
- 1 whole bulb of garlic, cut in half
- 4 whole peppercorns
- a good bunch of parsley, tied
- sea salt
- 2 heads of green chicory
- a bunch of rocket, picked
- a handful of chopped parsley
- a small handful of baby capers

Method

1. When poached and allowed to go cold, skate sets very well into a beautifully firm but giving fish. It also shreds very well for this dish.
2. To make the poaching broth, mix all the ingredients together. Bring it up to the boil and turn the heat down to a simmer.
3. Slip the skate wing into the

poaching pan and cook for about 10 minutes (check that the flesh comes away from the bone) then turn off the heat and allow to cool in the liquor.

4. When cold, remove the skate from the liquor and pull the flesh from the bone. It should come away in easy strips.

Anchovy dressing

Ingredients

- 20 anchovy fillets
- 8 cloves of garlic, peeled
- a good splash of Country Range red wine vinegar
- 150ml Country Range extra virgin olive oil
- ground black pepper

Method

To make your dressing, either whizz all the ingredients in a food processor or pound in a pestle and mortar.

Bring together your leaves, skate, parsley, capers and the dressing (caution - there may be too much so do not add it all at once) and toss.



In the Mix....

Flour Based Mixes

A versatile range of products from Country Range that require only the addition of water.

Delicious cakes, breads and puddings can be created quickly and easily with the flexibility for you to add your own ingredients and toppings to create a home-baked finish.

Country Range flour based mixes are packed 4 x 3.5kg.

The range consists of:

- Sponge Mix
- Scone Mix
- White Bread Roll Mix
- Chocolate Sponge Mix
- Crumble Mix
- Suet Mix
- All Purpose Pastry Mix
- Shortcrust Pastry Mix
- Ginger Sponge Mix
- Plain Muffin Mix
- Chocolate Muffin Mix
- Pizza Base Mix

The Sponge and Scone mixes are also available in a 12.5kg pack.

Free from Hydrogenated Fats.

COUNTRY RANGE

Country Range Foodservice
covers the UK and Channel Islands
For details of your nearest distributor call
01282 684555

or visit our website
www.countryrange.co.uk

Five ways to use... Country Range Dried Oregano

Oregano is a pungent green herb with a great affinity for a variety of foods, from lamb to vegetables, stuffings and egg dishes.

Oregano is closely related to marjoram and works brilliantly in Greek, Italian and French recipes. It is a superstar when cooked with garlic and, in the UK, is often sprinkled liberally on pizzas. It grows easily in well-protected areas in the UK and, because of its high oil content, oregano dries well. You can replace dried oregano with fresh, but double the amount used. Dried oregano is a kitchen essential, but make sure you replace it frequently as it quickly loses its pungency.

1. Why not try oven-baking pork loin in olive oil, garlic, thyme, and oregano for a deliciously flavoursome dish?
2. For a fishy treat, clean and gut 12, large fresh sardines, sprinkle with lemon juice, olive oil, oregano, salt and pepper and oven bake for 20-30 minutes.
3. Sprinkle dried oregano over cubed feta cheese, cucumber, tomato and onion for an authentic Greek salad.
4. Another traditional Greek dish is Beef Stifado - a hearty stew containing tomatoes, onions, garlic, oregano, rosemary, thyme and cumin.
5. Make your own Cajun spice mix by combining the following:
 - 1/3 cup salt
 - 1/4 cup chilli powder
 - 1/4 cup Hungarian paprika
 - 1 tbsp onion powder
 - 1 tbsp coarsely ground black pepper
 - 1 tbsp dried basil
 - 1 tbsp dried oregano
 - 1 tbsp ground coriander
 - 1/2 tsp cayenne pepper
 - 2 tsp dried thyme
 - 1/4 tsp cumin
 - 1/4 tsp white pepper



Competing Care Cooks

Country Range sales representative Gary Bastow was one of the judges at the NACC northern regional care cook off in Harrogate.

Entrants had to design a two course menu for four people at £5.20 and to cook it in 90 minutes.

One of the competitors taking part was Stephen Wilkins, 18, from Harrogate Neighbours Housing Association.

His entry was sourced entirely from Country Range supplied produce and he went on to win Highly Commended with his menu of ham and leek gratin, then strawberries and cream.

The overall winner was Matt Gomersall (pictured above) from Donnithorpe Hall in Leeds. His dishes were smoked haddock ravioli with spinach coulis and poached egg, followed by lemon panna cotta with strawberry soup. All competitors received a certificate for taking part, which were presented by Sue Ullmann, NACC Northern Chair, and Nick Hancock from Stray FM.

Gary said: "It was a most enjoyable day and everyone who attended commented on the high standard of cooking that is happening around the care homes, residential homes and sheltered housing schemes in the north."

NEW

All the goodness of Weetabix made **Chocolatey**



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Hot stuff!

Spice up your menu with new Country Range ready-to-use sauces. We've got five hot new flavours to tempt you:

- **Balti Curry Sauce**
A blend of tomatoes, cumin and coriander leaves.
- **Tomato & Chilli Sauce**
Tomato sauce spiced with chilli. Suitable for Chilli Con Carne recipes.
- **Jalfrezi Curry Sauce**
A medium/hot sauce with onion, coconut milk and pepper
- **Madras Curry Sauce**
A medium/hot curry sauce.
- **Rogan Josh Curry Sauce**
A medium/hot curry sauce with onions and peppers.

Country Range sauces have been developed with a clean label declaration, making them suitable for school canteens. All of the sauces in the range are free from gluten and wheat, and come in 2.25kg easy dispense tubs.

WIN
a tub of Country Range curry sauce in our Country Club competition, see page 17



New mixes guarantee perfect results every time

Country Range has added four new mixes to its growing list.

WIN
a £150 voucher to spend on new uniforms or catering equipment, see page 17



The new mixes are pizza base, fish batter, chocolate muffin and plain muffin. They are nut-free, suitable for vegetarians and are free from hydrogenated fat, artificial colours and preservatives.

The mixes are ideal for time-pressed chefs who need guaranteed perfect results every time. Pack size: 3.5kg



Each issue, Stir it up's cleaning expert Gary Davis offers his top tip of the month.

This month, Gary says:

Every kitchen uses a sterilising fluid and many are paying more than they need to for a brand name. Country Range Food Safe Sanitiser (CRG1032 2 x 5 Ltr) is as good as the leading brand of sterilising fluid. A safe and effective sterilising fluid for use in kitchens, on surfaces and utensils, it is even gentle enough to wash salad, fruit and vegetables! No kitchen should be without this product.

Pulsating pulses, fabulous fruits and no-nonsense nuts

As the nation battles with obesity, heart disease and high cholesterol, healthy eating is increasingly being put at the top of many people's food agendas.

Pulses and cereals are a brilliant low fat source of protein, fibre, vitamins and minerals and they count as a portion of your five-a-day. They are a great way to bulk up dishes such as casseroles, or to use as a meat substitute, which has two benefits - lowering the fat content and making a cheaper dish! This month, Country Range has unveiled a fabulous new range of pulses, cereals, dried fruits and nuts to ensure you have all the ingredients to make a plethora of delicious and nutritious dishes.



Facts & top tips

- Most dried pulses need soaking for several hours before cooking. Exceptions are lentils, green and yellow split peas and mung beans. Soaking times vary from four to 12 hours, but it's usually more convenient to soak them overnight. Add a teaspoon of bicarbonate of soda to speed things up. An even quicker method is to bring them to the boil in a pan then turn the heat off and soak them, covered for about an hour.



- Always discard the soaking water, rinse and cook in fresh water without any salt (which toughens the skins).
- Allow 55g/2oz dried weight per person. Once soaked and cooked they'll at least double in weight.
- Dried pulses store well for long periods (six months to a year) if kept in a dry, airtight container away from the light.
- There is substantial evidence that eating more pulses can reduce the risk of coronary heart disease. The risk of cardiovascular disease is lower when people eat foods that result in a lower blood cholesterol level.
- Like fresh fruit, dried fruit is rich in vitamins (A, B1, B2, B3, B6, pantothenic acid) and dietary minerals (calcium, iron, magnesium, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, copper, manganese).
- Some dried fruits, such as apricots, nectarines, peaches, and sultanas, are treated with sulphur to prevent oxidation, which turns them brown. Mild sulphuring also helps retain the vitamin content of the dried fruit, especially vitamins A and C.
- Eating nuts as part of a healthy diet can be good for your heart. In addition to the cardiac benefits of consuming nuts, the risks of having a stroke, of developing type 2 diabetes, of developing dementia, and of gallstones have all been found to be lowered by eating nuts.

The new Country Range pulse, nut and dried fruit range comprises:

CEREALS & PULSES

Marrowfat Peas
Red Lentils
Black Eye Beans
Butter Beans
Chick Peas
Cous Cous
Green Split Peas
Haricot Beans
Yellow Split Peas

DESSERTS

Semolina
Tapioca

DRIED FRUIT

Sultanas
Raisins
Mixed Fruit
Currants
Apricots
Pitted Prunes
Chopped Dates
Prunes
Dates
Fruit Salad

NUTS

Walnut Pieces
Walnut Halves
Ground Almonds
Flaked Almonds
Cashew Nuts
Hazelnuts
Chopped Mix Nuts
Brazil Nuts
Pistachio Nuts
Salted Peanuts
Coconut





Starter or Side dish: Crunchy Chickpea Salad

The unique flavours of pecans and succulent sundried tomatoes make this chickpea salad something really special. Serve as a light starter or accompaniment to main course.

Serves 4-6

Ingredients

1 cup (200g) dried chickpeas
120g sundried tomatoes, slivered
½ cup sultanas
½ cup pecan nuts roughly chopped
2 tbsp olive oil
Juice of 1 lemon
1 tsp fresh dill, chopped
Salt and pepper

Method

Soak the chickpeas overnight in three times their volume of water then rinse, drain and cover in a pan of freshly boiled water.
Simmer until tender (for about an hour), adding marinated vegetables such as aubergine for extra depth of flavour. Drain, rinse and cool, and mix together with the chopped and prepared sultanas, pecans and sundried tomatoes. Serve on a bed of fresh iceberg lettuce, alone or as a tasty accompaniment to grilled chicken.

Winter Warmer: Bean and Cabbage Soup with Chorizo

As the nights draw in, nothing could be more comforting than this hearty bowl of soup made with kidney beans, haricots and chickpeas from Country Range:

Serves 4

Ingredients

½ cup (100g) dried chickpeas
½ cup (100g) dried red kidney beans
½ cup (90g) dried haricot beans
2 tbsp vegetable oil
2 garlic cloves, minced
½ cup of breadcrumbs
2 tbsp chopped parsley
1 large potato, peeled and diced
1 cup fresh green beans
1 large tomato, chopped
1 bay leaf
4 cups shredded cabbage (½ head)
6 cups water
salt and pepper to taste
Chorizo, thickly sliced

Method

Soak the chickpeas and red kidney beans in water overnight, and haricot beans for three hours. Drain, rinse and add to freshly boiled water, simmering gently for an hour.

In a large pan, sauté the garlic and breadcrumbs in olive oil before adding the pulses, diced potato, chopped tomato, cabbage and bay leaf. Simmer for around 20 minutes.

Add the sliced chorizo, freshly chopped parsley, and season to taste.



COUNTRY CLUB

Welcome to the
Country Club

- exclusively for customers of
the Country Range Group.

This regular
feature offers
you that little
bit extra.

Competition

LOAD UP THE PROFIT WITH OLD EL PASO!

Old El Paso is offering Stir it up readers the chance to profit from the soaring UK popularity of Mexican food¹ by giving away a hot piece of kit to serve its super thick, crunchy Nachips™.

The first reader to be drawn will win a branded Old El Paso Nachips™ warmer together with Nachips, Salsa and Jalapeños, offering consumers a delicious snack in seconds with minimal effort and an opportunity to customise, whether they choose to load up with Mild Salsa, Jalapeños or Grated Cheese. Designed to keep Nachips™ at a consistent temperature, the equipment is emblazoned with the Old El Paso logo, maximising on the power of the top Mexican food brand in the UK².

"Served on a disposable tray, in a chip cone or standard crockery straight from the warmer, our tasty, slightly salted Nachips™ are the perfect snack," said Chris Braeger, foodservice development

manager for Old El Paso. *"They are thicker than standard tortilla chips, so they won't break when loaded up with accompaniments. You also get fewer breakages than in a conventional bag."* Mexican food is the fastest growing ethnic cuisine and as a category is third in size behind Chinese and Indian, according to research³. The key benefits of offering Mexican cuisine on menus are ease of preparation, excellent margin return and customer satisfaction.

To enter, email competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk providing your name and contact details and the name of your Country Range wholesaler, quoting 'Old El Paso Nachips™ warmer giveaway' in the subject bar. For more on products and support, visit www.oldelpasoprofessional.co.uk or call 08451 290929.

Sources:

1. IRI Grocery Outlets, 52 w/e 20th February 2010, Ambient Mexican Market
2. Allegra Eating Out Report 2009
3. IRI Grocery Outlets data for 52 w/e 15th May 2010



Freebies

Meltingly soft, creamily smooth milk chocolate made with Alpine Milk. Milka is a \$2.4bn Global brand and the No.1 chocolate brand in Europe, with a 36% repeat purchase rate - customers keep coming back for more.

Available in two delicious 25g bars
-Milka Daim (24 x 25g) and
Milka Alpine Milk (24 x 25g)
- which come in display ready casing,
perfect for driving till-point sales.

Ideal for:

- Cafés and till points in coffee shops
- Travel: Planes and trains - a great link with coffee
- Contract catering: Workplace Canteens

To discover the secret of Milka, the first 25 lucky readers can get their hands on a **FREE case of Milka Daim** to taste the delicious, creamy Milka chocolate and trial with customers.

DISCOVER THE SECRET AND BOOST SALES SUCCESS WITH MILKA



Simply send an email titled "Discover the secret of Milka" to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk including your name, contact details and the name of your Country Range wholesaler.

Competition

CURRY THE FLAVOUR



This month sees the launch of our delicious new Country Range ready-to-use sauce range. Available in spicy Balti, Tomato & Chilli, Jalfrezi, Madras and Rogan Josh, they will ensure you serve up fabulous curries every time. To celebrate the launch, we are offering 25 lucky readers the chance to **win a jar of one of our new Indian Ready To Use sauces** to try for themselves.

All you have to do to enter is send an email titled 'Curry sauce', along with your name, contact details and the name of your Country Range wholesaler, to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk

Competition

MIX IT UP - AND WIN NEW UNIFORMS

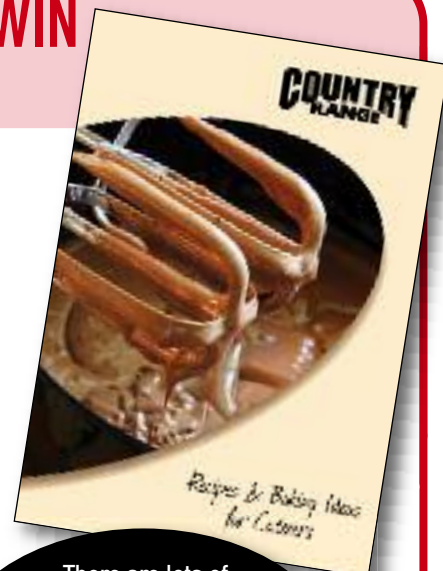
Children the length and breadth of the UK return to school this month kitted out in their new school uniforms - and we are offering you the chance to **win new uniforms for your catering team**. Or perhaps we can help you to update some of your catering equipment? To coincide with the start of the new term, Country Range has launched four new catering mixes, which are ideal for the education sector.

The new mixes are pizza base, fish batter, chocolate muffin and plain muffin. They are nut-free, suitable for vegetarians and are free from hydrogenated fat, artificial colours and preservatives.

To celebrate the launch of these new mixes, we are offering one lucky Stir it up reader the chance to **win £150 worth of vouchers to spend on catering equipment or clothing of their choice**.



To enter this exciting competition, simply send an email titled 'Mix it up', along with your name, contact details and name of your Country Range wholesaler to competitions@stirupmagazine.co.uk



There are lots of recipes using the new mixes in the free recipe booklet inserted in this issue of Stir it up. If you haven't received a copy email Olivia@countryrange.co.uk



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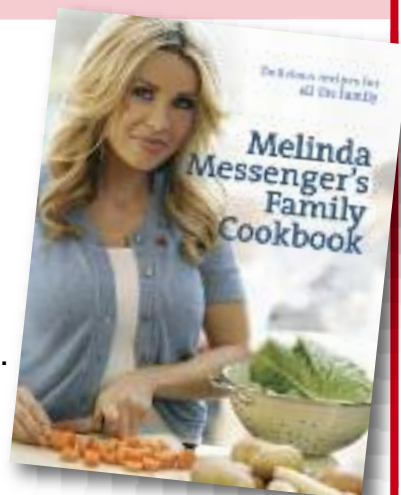
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With more than 100 pages packed with family pictures and recipes from TV presenter Melinda Messenger, her new book is tipped to be a foodie hit.



And those generous people at New Holland Publishers are offering three lucky Stir it up readers the chance to be one of the first to grab a **FREE copy of the hardback worth £16.99 each.**

Brimming with mouth-watering recipes passed down from friends and family, 'Melinda Messenger's Family Cookbook' has lots of ideas for producing delicious seasonal dishes.

You will find an exclusive interview and recipe preview on pages 42 and 43 of this magazine.

To enter, simply send an email titled 'Melinda Messenger', with your name, contact details and the name of your Country Range wholesaler, to competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk

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The first 20 people to email their name, address and Country Range wholesaler to competitions@stiritupmagazine.co.uk will receive a chef's apron absolutely free!

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Kim is the veggie best!



Chef Kim Barnish has been voted the Vegetarian Society's 'Chef of the Future 2010'.

Her meat-free menu wowed the society's judges from their Cordon Vert cookery school at a live cook-off at their Cheshire HQ. The contest was open to veggie and non-veggie chefs - the final four of which were Lora Aleksandrova from Salford University, Kim Barnish from Keele

University, Walter Fullick from Tameside College and James Parsons from The Bedford Swan. Kim's winning menu kicked off with a starter of beetroot soup with apple horseradish and avocado cream. Her main consisted of cashew nut coated peppers and red bean fritter on sprouted beans, courgette spaghetti, enoki mushroom warm salad in a tamarind and sherry vinegar dressing. Her final dish was a dessert of soft cheese panna cotta with raspberries,

pineapple and lime salpicon and sesame tuilles. Cordon Vert's head of catering, Katie Douglass, says: *"The Chef of the Future contest set out to find the chefs with talent, promise, creativity and new ideas. The winner impressed the judges with her wonderful seasonal menu. As part of her prize Kim will now receive a scholarship to the Cordon Vert school to complete her Professional Diploma in Vegetarian Cuisine and we are very excited to welcome her here."*

Premium tea in 'pillows'



Leading tea manufacturer Twinings has launched a new premium tetra mesh range - 'Twinings Tea Deli', enabling outlets to put on a loose tea experience without the inconvenience of a loose tea service.

Twinings Tea Deli includes six rare and unusual 2nd flush and single estate loose tea blends: English Breakfast, Signature Earl Grey, 2nd Flush Assam, Gunpowder Green Tea & Mint, Peppermint, and Blackcurrant & Lavender.

The teas are presented in Tea Pillows; each pillow is made from a delicate and transparent mesh bag, developed to deliver the freshest and richest flavour associated with traditional loose teas.

Helping caterers meet the growing

demand for the premium tea experience out of home, Twinings Tea Deli has been developed for outlets looking to expand their tea menu and offer a tea experience with a difference. Andrea Stopher, senior customer marketing manager at Twinings, explains: *"We are experiencing a renaissance in tea, and people are looking for something different compared to what they can make at home. Consumers are now willing to pay more for an experience that offers them something truly memorable. Twinings Tea Deli has been developed to open up the profitable loose tea market and bridge the gap for outlets looking to take the next step from a standard tea bag offering."* Twinings Tea Deli is supported with a range of stylish merchandise including menus, tea timers, branded jars and glassware, enabling outlets to deliver a premium and profitable tea experience.

Food allergies - feeding you the facts

He is one of Britain's top celebrity chefs with his own range of gluten-free marinades.

She is an author, food historian and editor of Food Matters magazine. Together, Antony Worrall Thomson (AWT) and Michelle Berriedale Johnson (MBJ) are a leading authority on food allergies. Fresh from the success of the national 'Freefrom' Awards, Stir it up asks the pair to share their expertise.

How well do you think the industry currently responds to catering for customers with allergies?

AWT: Poorly. Chefs need to understand the difference between allergy and intolerance and the importance of avoiding cross contamination in the kitchen.

It is really important that allergies are taken seriously; a reaction really can be a matter of life or death to those who are severely affected by a food.

MBJ: Catering for those with food allergies/intolerances is made much harder by the fragmented nature of so much of the industry, by the number of foreigners with limited command of English who work in it and buy the rapid turnover of staff making any kind of training very difficult.

There are two manuals available to caterers and they can be found at www.allergycateringmanual.com.

Why do you think more people are suffering from food allergies?

AWT: I believe it's a result of chemical overload; the added chemicals we have to digest from our food.

MBJ: Add to that the nutrient depleting effects 'mono cropping' - the trend for not rotating crops, but growing the same crop year after year.



I would also suggest that all of the residues in/on food of chemical fertilisers and pesticides are a contributory factor. And finally the over-processing of ingredients in the food industry; the excessive use of high-gluten refined wheat flour; processed foods too high in sugar, fat and salt; lack of exercise; lack of sun light and the enormous increase in man-made electromagnetic radiation to which we are all now subject....

Do you or your family suffer from any allergies or intolerances?

AWT: Although I am not diagnosed as such, I think I suffer mildly from gluten intolerance. I don't avoid wheat totally but I do find it adversely affects me and I limit my intake and explore gluten and wheat-free alternatives as part of my diet. Unfortunately my wife is allergic to wasp stings.

MBJ: When my now adult son Jonathan was 18 months old his was diagnosed with a dairy intolerance.

As was his father. I was shocked to find there was a lack of alternatives for those needing dairy-free diets.

Have you ever witnessed someone having a severe reaction to food in the past?

AWT: We had a nanny, Lizzie, who almost died from drying her hands on a tea towel that had previously been used to crush some nuts. It was really frightening and in later years it has served as an important reminder of how we must make sure that we educate people who may come into contact with people with food allergies.

Dynamic duos set to fire up hospitality

The search is on to find the UK cookery world's perfect partners and deserving winners of this year's Essential Cuisine Chefs Team award 2011.

You might be a shrinking violet but a sparkling sidekick on a competitive stage, or have flair by the bagful but work best with an extra pair of eyes to check on the detail.

However you gel, if you and a teammate can work together a dream, you could be holding up the ultimate teamwork trophy at the Hospitality Show at Birmingham's NEC next January (24-26).

Head chef James Hart and chef Leszek Karpinski from Goodenough College were pronounced this year's Essential Cuisine Chefs Team after battling it out against nine teams at Hotelympia.

Nigel Crane, managing director of Essential Cuisine, producer of kitchen-made tasting stocks, gravies, demi-glaces and jus, said the competition celebrated the part good teamwork played in bringing more impetus to the UK hospitality industry.

"We're not saying individuals are not important, it's just that effective and efficient teamwork goes beyond individual accomplishments," he said.

"The best teamwork happens when everyone harmonises their contributions and works towards a common goal."

"What we are looking for is productive duos who share such vision, and when challenges arise, as they always do, they have the resources and commitment to deal with them in a constructive and positive manner."

This is easier said than done in such a high pressure industry, but those who master it will reap success in competitions and catering as a whole."

To register a team in the competition, email: essential@proactivecompetitions.co.uk.

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Christmas is coming!



It might only be September, but caterers are already thinking ahead to the busy festive season.

Now is the time to start planning your Christmas menus, as well as thinking

about themes for decorating your venue and, dare I say, crackers!

As ever, Country Range has a comprehensive range of products to make sure your Yuletide parties go off with a bang.

Martin Ward, group purchasing manager, said: "As well as the obvious Christmas products, such as cranberry sauce, frozen prawns and pickled

walnuts, our range also includes fabulous canapés and buffet-style food, and delicious gateaux and desserts. "We can fully support Christmas menus and your Country Range sales representative will be able to advise you on our full Christmas range to provide inspiration for your festive season."

So what are the tableware trends for Christmas 2010?



With the recession still affecting life, the Christmas festivities give the opportunity for a little extravagance that needn't cost the earth.

In short, it's about classical décor combined with modern elegance. Adam Pindus, of cracker and tableware manufacturers Swan Mill, says the company has crackers in their range for Christmas 2010, from party crackers all the way to deluxe handmade crackers with gifts inside, such as alarm clocks and calculators. To cater for all tastes and budgets, there are eight tableware ranges which coordinate with the Christmas crackers to create the 'ultimate table setting', plus a full selection of party accessories such as poppers, blowouts, hats and party boxes.

Says Adam: "Every part of the offer is based on quality, except the traditional cracker jokes, but even these were updated in our high-end crackers last year, with conversation starters and trivia questions as featured on Chris Evans' show on Radio 2 and the Daily Mail!" To make sure that all these products are ready for Christmas, Swan Mill's design team starts looking at trends and developing crackers and tableware ranges in August and they start manufacturing in December for the following year. Adam continues: "Christmas is a huge opportunity for the customer to drive revenue in these sectors. Customers need crackers but also linen contracts are very difficult to manage at this time of year and, with our tableware range going from plain napkins, silver and gold speciality napkins to our luxury Swansoft 'linen feel' napkins and Swansilk and Ducks Back wipeable tablecoverings, we can provide a low cost, high-quality, design-led solution to the hotelier or restaurateur."

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All you need is lovage

- The latest herb catching the eye of celebrity chefs!



Jamie Oliver served it from the kitchens of Downing Street; Sophie Grigson grows it in her herb garden, and Andrew Nutter swears by it in his hollandaise sauce.

We are talking Lovage - the plant/herb which grows to over 6ft tall and is said to boost everything from your libido to your kidney function. Gardeners grew it during the Middle Ages for women to pop into their love potions and chemists to turn into a tummy tonic or a deodorant. These days you are more likely to find the celery type ingredient gracing restaurant kitchens where it is chopped and sprinkled on to salads and veg or into stocks, soups and sauces. Every part of the lovage plant can be used. The leaves are used as a herb, the ground seeds are an aromatic substitute for pepper, and the stems

can be used like a vegetable. Even the root makes a tonic tea. Lovage has a strong, musky flavour similar to celery but with lemon notes. It is a traditional favourite in Scotland, so try it with game such as pheasant, or combine with smoked haddock and bacon or ham. It is also good with chicken. Add a spoonful of the chopped leaves, or the seeds, to savoury, cheesy doughs as you would chives or parsley. Sprinkle the chopped leaves over plates of green beans or peas, or add them to salads. Lovage can be a good substitute for dill, parsley, chervil or tarragon, and can be used instead of basil to make pesto. Soup is another typical use. The stalks can be treated the same way as celery. Word of warning though: if you are thinking of growing it yourself, this isn't a herb to grow in your window box. This giant of a plant spreads itself out in a clump three feet wide with inch-thick roots in all directions - and has a life span of about 20 years.



Get blushing!

Leatham's SunBlush range has come a long way since it was first introduced in the late 1990s.

Mark Leatham first introduced us to SunBlush tomatoes, which are slow roasted for extra flavour and marinated with sunflower oil, garlic and oregano. They are ideal for use in salads, starters and canapés, and the marinade can also be used for dressing salads with balsamic vinegar.

The range now includes Chilled Tomatoes 1kg, Red and Yellow Peppers 1kg, individual quick frozen Anti Pasti mix 500g, Sandwich Chutney, Tomatade® 1kg and new Ambient Pasteurised Tomatoes 1.1kg.





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BACK
TO
SCHOOL



SPECIAL

Save our school lunch budget - or see Britain's children suffer

By Vicki Young, LACA's newly appointed Business Manager



The UK is emerging from a recession, facing a new coalition government and suffering significant public sector cuts.

Combined, these three factors are sure to effect all of you trying to provide a healthy meal service.

So why now, when thousands of families are struggling to make ends meet, are we removing the possibility of increased eligibility to a free school meal for children from low income families?

The possible loss of the £280million School Lunch Grant must also be leaving most caterers questioning whether their service will be viable in the future.

Fundamentally, as an industry, our members want to serve healthy school meals to pupils and the hard work that has been undertaken over the past five years to embed nutrient based standards in schools is finally paying off. The LACA and School Food Trust Annual Survey of School Lunches shows an increase in the uptake of school meals of 2.1% in primary and 0.8% in secondary schools – results which are testament to efforts of all involved.

As a country we have gone from having no food standards to some of the most stringent in the world and LACA members have risen to this challenge.

After all this hard work it is crucial that we protect the grant or face going back to the days when some children won't have access to at least one healthy meal a day.

The axing of the Building Schools for the Future programme will also have a negative effect on those schools who were counting on improved facilities for feeding their children.

LACA members can only hope that the need for adequate kitchen facilities is taken into consideration by architects

and building contractors in future projects. LACA will continue to provide a voice for all of our members who work hard to provide a school meals service, whether they be local authority or private sector caterers, single site schools or other suppliers to the industry and we just hope the Government will acknowledge the need to be looking at the long term negative effects of not providing a school meals service whilst trying to counteract obesity and poverty in the UK.

When some children are still being sent to school with packed lunches filled with crisps, chocolate and sugary fizzy drinks, it reminds us that there is a still a long way to go.

Unless the Government supports our industry to provide children with at least one guaranteed healthy meal a day, what hope is there?

LACA is a professional body representing 800 catering managers and over 100,000 staff employed in nearly 20,000 schools that provide services to Local Authorities in England, Scotland and Wales. LACA also has members employed by companies in the manufacturing and/or supply of food and equipment to schools.

For more information please visit www.laca.co.uk

National School Meals Week

Local Authority Caterers Association (LACA) is, once again, running National School Meals Week with a range of activities and events.

The week - which takes place from 8th to 12th November 2010 - encourages school caterers to provide a healthy school meal that meets the nutrient standards laid down by the respective national body or government.

The other key messages are to:

- Make healthy eating fun and enjoyable for primary school pupils
- Encourage the hotel and catering industry to support schools and help pupils to enjoy and have an interest in great food.
- Promote regular exercise, such as dancing, so that secondary students and primary pupils understand the importance of adopting a healthy lifestyle.
- Help young people understand what it was like in the 1940s to have a meal at school and encourage them to remember the significance of Remembrance Day.
- Put fun into the promotion of healthy eating so the pupils enjoy the food and want to come back for more.



- Increase the number of healthy school meals that are served in schools each day. LACA is also hoping to encourage local chefs, waiters, bar staff and front of house teams to work with schools to promote school catering.

Here are some ideas:

- Team up with a local restaurant and ask their head chef to come and cook a school meal for the day. Perhaps it could be a job swap and a school cook could visit their hotel or restaurant at another time.
- A local bartender could come into the school and show pupils how to make delicious fruit smoothies. This is a great way for pupils to learn more about getting their 5-a-day.
- You could invite a restaurant manager or head chef to come and talk to the pupils about the different job roles within a kitchen or restaurant.
- Waiting staff could talk to the children about how to set a table properly and teach them which cutlery to use for the different dishes e.g. soup, fish, meat, pudding. Pupils could even help set up the dining room for a school lunch.
- Arrange for secondary school pupils to get work experience in the catering industry. This could be part of a competition where the winners get to work in a hotel as their prize.

Don't be disheartened by massive government cuts - says School Food Trust

Britain's schools can still make big changes on small budgets, despite the government's removal of a £5 billion national refurbishment scheme.

The axed Building Schools for the Future (BSF) project would have seen millions of pounds pumped into updating dining areas and catering facilities for Britain's school, college and university students.

But a spokesman for the School Food Trust (SFT) is urging caterers not to become disheartened by the scrapping of the scheme. He says: "At the SFT we have always focused on the small, low cost improvements that schools can make in their kitchens and dining rooms without having to raise lots of capital. "Trying self service or staggering

lunchtimes or bringing in a mobile serving point can all help to improve the experience for children without costing the earth."

A Mintel study into schools and food suggests many ways in which caterers can tempt pupils to eat on site. The 'School Meals, Leisure Intelligence' report suggests providing ready-made cold pack lunches to meet the current 'snacking culture' prevalent in today's educational establishments.

It also revealed a desire by children to eat more healthily - as long as they don't have to make drastic changes to their current diet.

The Mintel study suggests introducing food stations (such as salad/sandwich/jacket potato bars), which allow children to customise their meal and add in a touch of 'good' and 'bad' elements.

The report concludes: "In addition, increasingly schools and caterers are recognising and instigating a move away from the idea of one size fits all in regards to canteen menus, with

dining room operators having to adopt a more flexible style in order to cater to the palates of the local area. "The result of this is that caterers have to adopt more flexible buying practices in order to meet government guidelines as well as remain responsive to pupils' taste preferences."

Many schools have also adopted high street marketing techniques such as 'buy a meal and get pudding for a pound' to appeal to secondary school pupils.

The spokesman for the School Food Trust adds: "Our work to help schools find solutions will be absolutely crucial at a time when budgets are being reined in.

"At the same time, we would always urge schools to think about the importance of a good lunchtime for children's health, welfare and performance when they're planning how to use their own capital budgets and looking at whether their kitchens and dining rooms are up to the task."



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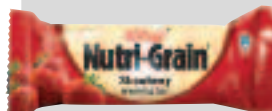
If you're looking for cakes and biscuits you can serve in schools, look no further than Kellogg's Nutri-Grain and Elevense. Under the School Food Trust guidelines, Kellogg's best-selling range of soft bake bars can now be served at lunchtime. This means you can now stock the big brands students want and help your lunchtime profits.

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Pizza sales to take £883million slice of the market by 2014, says study

- But make them from scratch to meet nutritional standards

They're popular, cheap, easy to make and profitable - and, with the right toppings, pizzas are a nutritional super-hit in the dining halls.

As Britain's students pour back from the summer holidays, pizza could be just the dish to ease them back into a new term. The chilled and frozen pizza market is worth around £800million at the moment, and forecasters Mintel believe that figure is set to rise and rise. Alternatively, you can make your own pizzas from fresh and experiment with a range of different toppings. Here is the Stir it up guide to some healthy topping ideas to give you a 'pizza the action':

Make perfect pizza bases every time
- with Country Range new pizza base mix

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Tuna

Tuna is a brilliant source of the omega-3 fatty acids EPA and DHA, protein, potassium, selenium, and vitamin B12. It's also a very good source of niacin and phosphorus.

Spinach

Loaded with antioxidants and full of iron, spinach is an all-round superfood.

Pineapple

One of the few fruits which work on pizza. Vitamin C and digestion-aiding bromelain are prominent in this golden wonder. It is even a natural anti-inflammatory.

Mushrooms

Full of selenium (important for the immune system and thyroid) and riboflavin (to keep the skin, eyes and nervous system healthy) and a whole host of nutrients.

Broccoli

Full of vitamins C, A and K, along with quite a bit of folate and dietary fibre.

Chicken

It's full of protein, but not full of saturated fat and sodium like pepperoni. Chicken also has some good stuff like zinc and selenium (to boost the immune system) and essential B vitamins.



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the dairy experts

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Dairy experts Pritchitts are encouraging students to get their daily milk - with a little musical incentive.

They are running a promotion for secondary school students to win an iPod shuffle every school day for the whole of the autumn term. The daily draw is open to pupils aged 12-18 years. To be in with a chance of winning all they need to do is go online at www.vivamilk.co.uk and enter their Viva Milk on-carton code.

Viva Milk is the ideal way to get students drinking milk as it complies with school guidelines, contains no artificial colours, flavours, sweeteners or preservatives, comes in three great flavours - strawberry, banana and chocolate. The promotion will run every school day from 2nd September to 17th December 2010 (excluding half term).

For more information or to request your free poster, please call 0208 290 7020, email vivadailywin@pritchitts.com or visit www.vivamilk.co.uk



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Care home feeding claims 'fundamentally inaccurate' - says boss

A leading care home boss has slammed a report condemning certain feeding methods for the elderly.

Barchester Healthcare Chief Executive Mike Parsons has defended the care sector against a damning report by the Royal College of Physicians and British Society of Gastroenterology. The report titled 'Oral feeding difficulties and dilemmas: a guide to practical care, particularly towards the end of life' condemns the over-use of artificial tubes in care homes. It claims the procedure is used inappropriately to ease the workload of care home staff. Mike Parsons strongly refuted this

allegation on Channel 4 Evening News, saying: "I am incensed by this report. It's just fundamentally inaccurate. Nursing homes do not make the decision as to whether to introduce artificial feeding - it is always a clinical decision." Mr Parsons is a British entrepreneur, best known for founding Barchester Healthcare, the UK's fourth largest provider of care homes.



Fish dish nets Craig Care Cook of the Year award

Care home cook Craig Matthews has been named the NACC's new Care Cook of the Year.

Craig, from Elizabeth Finn Homes Ltd, beat off stiff competition from six other competitors in the national clash. Their brief was to create a two-course meal - meeting nutritional guidelines - with a budget of £1.30 per head. In the Birmingham-based finals they had to create four portions of their meal.

Craig clinched the crown with his culinary offering of poached fillet of haddock with rosti potatoes, wilted spinach, poached egg and marjoram butter. For pudding he made a dark chocolate and espresso cream with orange tuille biscuit.

NACC Chairman Derek Johnson says: "The quality of entries in this year's competition was exceptional and reflects the rising standard of food in the care sector."

"Craig's winning dish was the 'icing on the cake' and met the nutritional requirements of an older person along with being colourful and tasty."

Dare you venture into the dragon's den?

An organisation which helps hospitals to tackle malnutrition is hosting a 'Dragons Den' style contest for its members.

BAPEN - British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (UK) - has cash to hand out to successful contenders. The charity posted an advert on its website, which reads:

Are you a budding nutritional entrepreneur?

Are you seeking funding?

Have you invented a revolutionary feeding product or device and need financial support to develop it?

Then why not pitch your idea in the BAPEN Dragon's Den'?

The dragon replacements for TV's Deborah Meaden, Duncan Bannatyne and Theo Paphitis - wanted to remain anonymous when contacted by Stir it up magazine.

But a BAPEN insider says: "It's a way of lightening up the atmosphere at our annual conference, and being able to offer funding for great ideas too."

The 2010 conference will be held at the Harrogate International Centre in November, and more details can be found at: www.bapen.org.uk



Food-Service



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Quality is the best recipe

Allergy-free hotels - not to be sniffed at

One in three Brits are sufferers, says study



Lindsey McManus

An increasing number of hotels and guest houses are offering 'allergy-free' accommodation to the UK's 5.4million sufferers, says a leading medical charity.

The industry is responding to the 75.5 per cent of people interviewed by Allergy UK who said they would rather stay at home than risk an attack on holiday.

Charity spokeswoman Lindsey McManus says: "Many people feel that going away is just too complicated and would rather relax at home in a safe environment.

"However an increasing number of hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation seem to be offering allergy-free zones, rooms and catering for a number of food intolerances."

The charity provides practical advice to any operators who are hoping to create allergy-free zones/rooms or

cater for food intolerances.

Lindsey adds: "We have tested and approved certain barrier bedding, air purifiers and other products or methods for reducing allergens. We have a helpline number and relevant links on our website too."

Allergy UK is working in association with allergyfriendlyhotels.com which lists information about allergy-free hotels.

Founder Clare Millar says she set up the site after her husband was diagnosed with a severe dust mite allergy.

She says: "Although he was able to control the allergic rhinitis at home, he found that in hotels or B&Bs the symptoms returned immediately."

Miles Quest, of the British Hospitality Association, believes the leisure industry is responding well to the rising number of allergy sufferers from the UK and visitors from abroad.

He says: "Allergies are an important consideration for any food service operator and most menus remind diners who may be allergic to certain ingredients to check with the waiter - so it's important that waiting staff are made aware of potential problems, and know how to deal with them.

"Allergy-free hotels take it a step further, though they need to be clear about what allergies they are free of.

"The problem is that there are so many different allergies that it is difficult for any one hotel to be sure that it can cover them all. But obviously, technical advice is needed to set them up and staff must be very well trained."

All the information you need for creating allergy-free rooms or zones can be found at www.allergyuk.org

Watch & Wait Game for Landlords

A game of watch and wait is facing beleaguered publicans over whether or not they get to keep their cigarette vending machines.

An amendment to the Health Bill, which was passed as one of Gordon Brown's government's last major pieces of legislation, gave Westminster the power to outlaw the machines in all UK pubs, bars, restaurants and small shops. While publicly welcomed by some health organisations, including charities such as the British Heart Foundation, pub industry bodies criticised the move as a further unwarranted slap in the face to its members already struggling under the smoking ban, from the recession and against supermarket alcohol promotions. Now the hospitality trade must wait and see if the Cameron-Clegg coalition takes up the mantle and implements the ban. Said a spokesman for the British Beer and Pub Association (BBPA): "There's not much profit to be made out of cigarette vending machines. It's more about offering customers a service. Losing the right to offer that service, which will greatly irritate some customers, is unnecessary and could make life even more difficult for hard-pressed publicans. Vending machines are well-supervised and governed by a tough code. Publicans are well used to selling restricted products and don't need further restrictions.

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Leading Lights - Emily Watkins

Leading Lights celebrates the careers of some of the most prominent and inspiring people in the catering industry.



She's one of Britain's most talented chefs - and Heston Blumenthal's former protégée who flew the Fat Duck nest three years ago to set up her own award-winning restaurant. Now Emily Watkins is receiving rave reviews for the delicious dishes she is producing at her own pub eatery, the Kingham Plough in Oxfordshire. Today the new mum-of-one shares her story with Stir it up . . .

In the past three years you have bought and overseen the rebuilding and refurbishment of the Plough, turned its fortunes around and had a baby! What kind of hours have you had to put in?

A lot! When I was seven months pregnant I was doing normal hours; 8am to 11pm. But then I cut them back a bit - going home at 6pm. Then when Alfie was three months old I went back into the kitchen but, within a week, I was back to doing four or five double shifts which was just too much for me. It was hard to back off from the pub for a while but having a baby meant I had to cut back my hours, which is probably the only way to make me slow down.

What time does your day typically start?

That depends what time my nine month old baby, Alfie, wakes up. At the

moment it is 4.30am! He started crawling properly this week so I'm hoping he will be so exhausted he will sleep longer. I work 8am until five, between three and four days a week now and we do between 400 and 500 covers a week. There are five chefs in total. I do try to stay away from the place one or two days a week - but it is hard to!

What was your route into cooking?

After university - where I studied business and set up a catering company - I was keen to make a full-time career as a chef. Mum thought it was a fad and that I wouldn't enjoy the hours. But I was very keen. So I contacted a friend in Florence and moved over there. I found the restaurant I wanted to work in and they let me waitress half the week and work in the kitchen the other half of the week (unpaid) until I was allowed to chef full time. I didn't speak any Italian and mostly couldn't understand what they were telling me to do at that point!

Have you had any kitchen nightmares?

Yes, my first week working in Italy. I was put on the pastry section and told to have 15 of each dessert en place. By the weekend one dessert ran out, then another and then another and because I had just started, was nervous and couldn't speak the language, I didn't say anything - which made the situation worse. That was probably the worst telling off I ever got. And one of the first valuable lessons learned. Never try to gloss over a mistake. If you hold your hands up to it early enough the situation can usually be rescued!

What are you like in the kitchen? Do you dish out the tongue lashings?

I don't think shouting motivates anyone. Occasionally on a Saturday night if something gets taken to the wrong

table there will be a momentary snap, but most of the time it's silence and concentration in the kitchen.

How did you come to work with Heston?

Two-and-a-half years after working in Italy I was chatting to my head chef (I could speak Italian by this point) about my next career move. I called the Fat Duck on the off chance and flew over for a trial. When I returned to Italy the next day, Heston's head chef Ash kindly offered me a job, so I moved back four days later!

I was very respectful and in awe of Heston, I don't remember too much of that day because I was so nervous.

How would you describe your time at the Fat Duck?

Very interesting, very encouraging and a really great atmosphere. I learnt to be open minded there, and to question things I had previously been told. That's where Heston is coming from. He wasn't formally educated in catering, he learnt on the job, so when he was asked to do something like blanch vegetables in salted water he'd say 'really, does it why?' He started questioning the common perceptions. He wasn't necessarily discrediting anything, just investigating if it was true. He taught me to be open about ingredients, to really look at them, play around with them and make the most of them.

What is the secret to your success at the Kingham Plough?

I think going out for a meal is a real treat and should be a mixture of great food and fun in a relaxing atmosphere. We have a short menu, changing daily, making the most of seasonal ingredients.

Do you have an advice for aspiring chefs?

Work hard and stay focused. Also, get into the best kitchen possible.



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Celebrity Signature Dish

My Signature Dish by

Melinda
Melinda Messenger



Celebrity Signature Dish

TV presenter and celebrity mum Melinda Messenger is three quarters of an hour late and a little breathless by the time she is ready to be interviewed.

She's fresh from the palaver of prising three protesting children away from their new pet guinea pig, hamster and gerbil before embarking on the school run.

Not very showbiz but that's the charm of Melinda Messenger; down to earth, good natured and devoted to her brood - Flynn, 10, Morgan, 8, and Evie, 6, and husband Wayne.

Which brings us nicely on to Melinda's new cook book, featuring beautiful colour photographs of the family gang and their favourite recipes, old and new.

Melinda's biggest influence in the kitchen is her late granny.

"Granny was born, and grew up in India, because her parents worked out there.



"When she moved back to England she would spend her days cooking. We would travel from our home in Swindon to Granny's house in London and no matter what time of day or night we arrived there would always be a huge table full of food laid out for us.

"She must have been cooking and baking for the entire week! We would find a table laden with samosas, freshly cooked breads and pastries and baked Alaska - all homemade of course. The house always smelt of aromatic spices."

These days Melinda is a vegetarian but cooks meat and fish for her family. She adds: *"I think I was born a vegetarian. Even though I cook meat and my children eat meat, from the age of three I would sit there shifting meat round my plate, not wanting to*

eat it at all.

"My daughter Evie, however, is a total carnivore; she salivates at the sight of a hunk of flesh in Sainsbury's."

Melinda's Family Cookbook is published on October 1st - and every recipe in it had to please the exacting palate of a discerning panel of judges. *"My view with the recipes has been that if my family eat it, love it and ask for second helpings, then it is worthy of a place in the book!"*



Butternut and red onion tart

Serves 6

Ingredients

2 tbsp olive oil
1.5kg (3lb 5oz) butternut squash, peeled, deseeded and cut into chunks
6 tomatoes, halved

120g (4oz) butter
4 red onions, peeled and cut into wedges
5 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
1 red chilli, deseeded and chopped
1 tsp ground coriander
1 tsp ground cumin
1 packet of ready-rolled puff pastry
1 egg whisked with 1 tbsp cold water

Method

1. Preheat the oven to 220°C/425°F/gas 7. Place 1 tbsp olive oil in a large baking tray and add the butternut squash. Toss to coat in the oil and then make sure the squash is in a single layer so that it cooks evenly. Cook in the oven for about 10-15 minutes - you're just looking for them to soften a little.
2. Two minutes before the squash is ready add the tomatoes, cut side down.
3. Meanwhile melt the butter and the

remaining oil in a pan. Add the onion, garlic and chilli. Cook for about 4-5 minutes. Stir in the coriander and cumin and fry for a minute longer.

4. Tip the onion, garlic and chilli into the baking tray with the squash, making sure it is evenly distributed. Leave to cool.
5. Roll out the pastry making one sheet large enough to cover the whole tray. Lay the sheet over your vegetables and trim off the excess. Place in the fridge to chill for about 30 minutes.
6. Brush the pastry with the egg and bake in the oven for about 20 minutes. Ovens may vary so keep an eye on the pastry throughout; you are looking for a golden brown pastry and the juices bubbling around the edges. Remove from the oven and place a tray or board over the baking tray. Carefully flip the baking tray over and serve immediately.

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NEW RANGE

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Plum Tomato, Basil & Crème Fraiche	6 x 515g



IT HAS TO BE



Silver service - Could older workers plug hospitality's skills gap?

By Brian Wisdom, chief executive of People 1st



As the government discusses proposals to raise the age of state-funded retirement - should the hospitality industry be looking at more mature employees to fill the skills gap?

Older workers are a constantly growing demographic. By 2033, 23 per cent of the UK's population will be aged 65 and over, up from 16 per cent in 2008. The EHRC's (Equalities and Human Rights Commission) recent survey into older workers' aspirations found that a quarter of men and two-thirds of women over 50 want to carry on working past the state pension age - yet hospitality continues its over-reliance on a shrinking young workforce. Staff retention is already a major issue in the hospitality industry, and the failure to attract and utilise older workers is a key contributor. By positioning our industry as one for the young, we are missing out on a wealth of experience

from later life workers who, despite having valuable skills to offer, may take a look and think 'that's not for me.' One company that is bucking the trend, and reaping the benefits of employing older workers, is McDonald's. In August 2009, Lancaster University carried out a survey of over 400 McDonald's restaurants and found that customer satisfaction rose by 20 per cent in those employing staff over the age of 60. Around two-fifths of their restaurants currently employ staff in that age bracket.

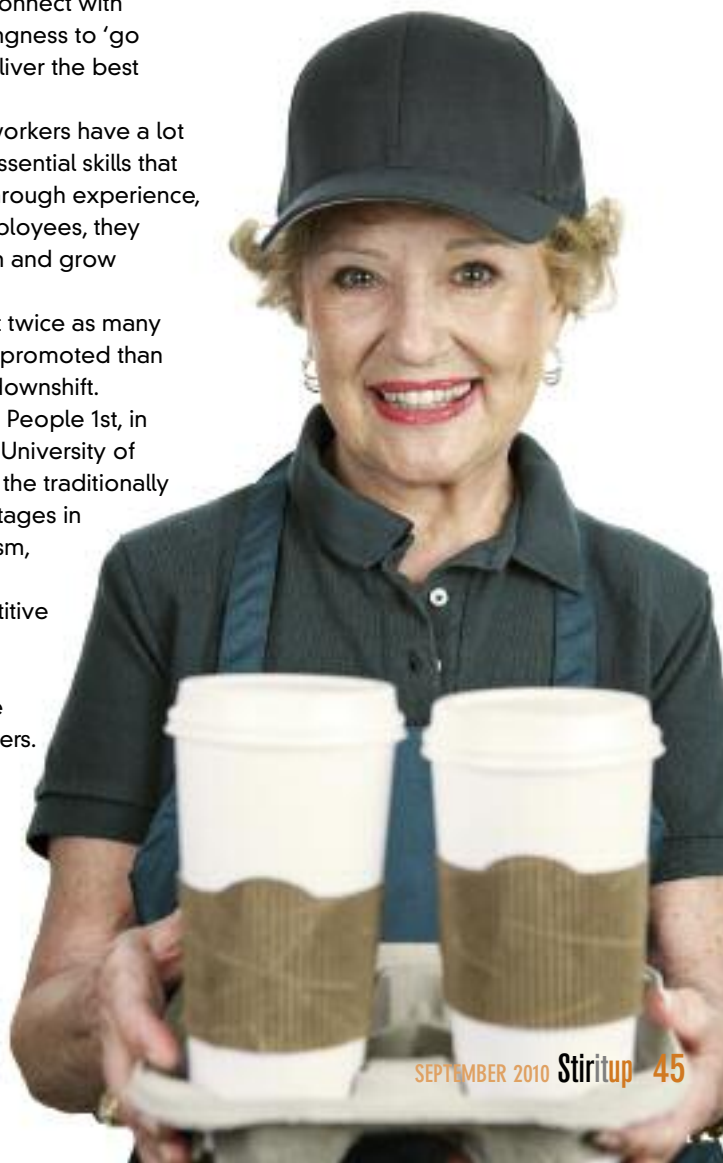
Some of the strengths highlighted by the research included older workers' empathy, ability to connect with customers, and willingness to 'go the extra mile' to deliver the best possible service.

It's clear that older workers have a lot to offer, often with essential skills that can only be learnt through experience, but like all other employees, they will continue to learn and grow with the business.

The EHRC found that twice as many over-65s want to be promoted than those who want to downshift.

Our own research at People 1st, in partnership with the University of Stirling, showed that the traditionally perceived disadvantages in hospitality and tourism, such as low wages, unsocial hours, repetitive work and seasonal employment were not entirely negative issues for older workers.

Whereas younger workers may be put off by these factors and move on, older workers find compensation for them in being needed, valued, and maintaining a good work-life balance. Perhaps it is time for companies to target this group for some stability? If more employers follow examples like McDonald's and recognise the value of older workers, not only can we avoid the inevitable problems of over-reliance on a shrinking demographic, but we can also tap into a wealth of skills and experience that can broaden our industry's appeal as a whole.





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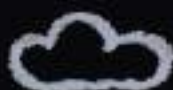
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