

Dine like a King in May

Richie Herkes Head Chef of Northcote Manor in North Devon gives his recommendations for a sumptuous feast fit for a King.

King Henry VIII loved to eat and as a homage to the former owner of Northcote Manor Head Chef Richie has brought an ardour for food to the hotel and has created stunning menus for everyday dining, special evenings and events.

Hailing from the days of King Henry VIII when local produce was all you could get we feel today that local produce is hugely important to creating our menus. It also helps to create a restaurant that local people feel proud to come to. It would be so easy to go out and buy all our ingredients from a “one stop shop” but it makes our food more special to know that we have forged strong links with local regional suppliers. If you can find good local specialists to buy your produce from you will reap the benefits and strange as it may sound you may find yourself feeling a euphoric sense of regional pride, which comes from the knowledge that you are supporting you local suppliers. Richie insists on 2 things when creating his menus. The first is sourcing the freshest ingredients he can get, and the second is that the food tastes great when it is sent from the kitchen.

“I like to make my dishes taste as stunning as they look”

This seems to be his personal mantra and proof of this are our popular Gourmet Evenings where local ‘foodies’ come to dine in our restaurant savouring the sorts of culinary treats our Old Monarch would have been proud of.

One of our most popular and requested items on the menu has to be our superb beef, which we buy from our jolly local butcher in Northam. The beef we use and therefore highly recommend is a mature beef. It should be left to hang for more than 3 weeks which loosens up the muscle and allows a much more tender cut.

For a party of 8 people Richie recommends a main course of “Roast North Devon Beef with Simple Mash, Fine Beans with Truffle Oil and Balsamic Dressing.”

To make this at home you will need:

- 1 Beef Fillet
- 1lb 4oz of Fine Beans
- 3lb of Maris Piper Potatoes
- 1 tin of Truffle Shavings
- 1 Packet of Butter
- 10 fluid ounces of Whipping Cream
- White Truffle Oil
- Olive Oil
- Balsamic Vinegar

1 Packet of Fresh Basil

1 Lemon

Seasoning to taste

- Prepare the beef fillet by taking all the fat and sinue from the fillet. Tie the fillet with string to keep its shape and then place on a tray. Roughly chop the basil and sprinkle over the beef then cover and place in the fridge until needed.
- Chop both ends off the fine beans place into boiling water and cook for a few minutes until al dente literally meaning crisp to the bite.
- Peel and boil the potatoes until they are soft enough to mash. Drain the potatoes and mash until soft and creamy. Place the mashed potatoes on the heat again to make sure that all the moisture has evaporated. Add the cream and half the butter and mix until unctuous, season to taste.
- Mix the truffle shavings with some oil and season to taste.
- Juice the lemon and mix with some oil and balsamic vinegar to make the dressing.
- Heat a large baking tray until it smokes slightly then add some oil. Seal the beef until it has coloured then place in the oven at 190° for 40-45 minutes
- Place the beans on the tray and cover with the rest of the butter.
- Once the fillet is cooked to your liking allow to rest making sure that all the blood has drained away.
- Heat the beans and the mashed potato through and whilst they are warming slice the beef ensuring you have enough for 4 slices per person.
- To assemble the dish:
 - Place the beans in the middle of the dish and place the slices of beef on top of them. Using two spoons make quenelles with the potato. A quenelle is a three sided shape.
 - Place two quenelles on top of the beef and drizzle the dressing around the edges of the plate. Finally finish the dish by spooning some truffle oil over the beef and using some fresh herbs to add extra freshness and colour.
- We would recommend a good Australian Shiraz to accompany this dish. **Bon Appetit!**