

Monday 24th November 2014

Dear Customer,

We have Lyncroft Farm's Maris Piper potatoes in the bags this week and 'lucky dip' carrots – either Orange, Yellowstone or Purple Haze – and parsnips - all from Royal Oak. And because you've been very naughty, you've got a January King cabbage.

Baked Aubergine with Spinach and Melted Cheese

400g aubergines	400g tin chopped tomatoes
200g spinach, chopped, drained and cooked	2 balls mozzarella, drained and sliced
100g pecorino or other hard cheese, grated	80g pine nuts, toasted
3 tbsp flat-leaf parsley, chopped	4 tbsp olive oil
1 ciabatta bread, sliced, toasted and drizzled with olive oil	salt and black pepper

Preheat the oven to 180C / Gas 5. Cut the aubergine(s) in half, place them on a baking tray and bake them in the oven for about 15 minutes. Remove from oven and leave to cool. With a tablespoon, scoop out the flesh to make hollow cavities, keeping the skin intact. Chop up the flesh and in a large bowl, mix it with the spinach, pine nuts, parsley, hard cheese and chopped tomatoes. Season with salt and pepper, sprinkle with 2 tablespoons of olive oil and mix well. Stuff the aubergines with the mixture and place them on a baking tray. Lay the mozzarella slices on top, drizzle with the remaining oil and bake in the oven for about 15 minutes until they are golden and the cheese has melted. Serve immediately with the toasted ciabatta bread.

Carrot and Parsnip Soup

50g butter or margarine	1 large onion, chopped
1 litre hot vegetable stock	300g carrots, sliced
300g parsnips, sliced	1 tbsp marjoram, parsley and thyme
salt and pepper, to taste	

Melt the butter or margarine in a pan on a medium heat. Add the onion and cook for 3-4 minutes. Then add the vegetable stock, carrots and parsnips. Boil and bring to a simmer until the vegetables are tender. Blend with a hand-held food blender. Bring to the boil again and add the herbs and season with salt and pepper. Simmer for half an hour, occasionally topping up with water.

January King Cabbage with Pears

500g January King cabbage	2 ripe pears, peeled and diced
1 tbsp creamed horseradish	100ml single cream
salt and pepper to taste	cayenne pepper, to taste
nutmeg, to taste	knob of butter or margarine, for cooking
small onion, finely chopped	sugar, to taste

Remove the hard core of the cabbage and rinse. Bring a large saucepan of salted water to the boil, add the cabbage and blanch for 5 minutes. Drain and rinse under cold water to stop it cooking then shred the leaves finely. Melt some butter or margarine in a saucepan and cook the onion until translucent. Add a little sugar, add the cabbage and cook and stir for a few minutes. Add the horseradish and cream and bring to a simmer. Season with salt, pepper, nutmeg and cayenne to taste. Add the pears and heat through for just a few minutes. Serve.

It's Sunday...my 'letter to you' day. I've been trying to get to the bottom of why I'm French. My friend Helen texted me yesterday and told me to check out the magazine in the Times about being a Parisienne. I read it, no doubt about it, it was me. She'd ripped a similar article out of the paper a few months ago and posted it to me with a 'post-it' note on saying 'this is you'. I played a friend one of my songs a few weeks ago – she gave me a strange look and said "it's French". It wasn't. The first thing Katharine Hamnett said to me was that I was French. Everyone says the Izzy Lane aesthetic is French. A journalist wrote I had the "just fell out of bed glamour typical of French film stars...".....no, I'm certainly not going to ask the editor to take that one down.

So with a Welsh father and an English mother, and living in the Yorkshire Dales.... why am I French. Was it that the moment I was born, being August, my parents threw me in the car and drove to Brittany, I'd already screwed up half their summer holiday. The first photo of me, only hours old, is in my grandfather's arms on the beach at Pornichet. Maybe it was the smell of garlic-roasted frogs' legs which wafted up my nostril as I rolled past the restaurant in my pram.

With the usual peril of googling on a Sunday morning, I decided to look for a film I was in when I was 17 and living near Paris. I'd got roped in by a friend as an extra. It had some of the big names of French cinema in it and the lead won the Cesar Award for Best Lead Actress for it... or so I've just read. I had only seen a clip from it once, not long after I did it. My French boyfriend, can't remember which one, took me to the top of the Pompidou Centre. He didn't throw me off, although he probably wanted to, but it was my birthday, and he sat me in front of a computer in the film library and played me the scenes I was in. I was shocked and not shocked - it one of those seedy, intellectual films but with a lot of sexvery French basically. My part was respectable and fully clothed, I hasten to add. I wasn't in it much, I remember the director saying 'elle est trop presente' detracting attention from the star ☺.

So anyway I googled the forgotten film and clicked on the trailer. In the opening scene there was a girl leaning against a wall. She was next to two other girls, who looked nowhere near as cool and 'presente'. 'She looks like me' I thought. I had to watch it 20 times before I could comprehend it was me – a whole 10 seconds of me. It was very strange, I don't even have any photos of me at that sort of age. I looked brooding and intense – an odd mix of self-consciousness and attitude. I left Paris for London soon after and was harassed with phone calls asking me to go back to Paris for a film role. I didn't ask what the film role was that I was being headhunted for or the type of film but I'd assumed the worst and didn't bother. Who knows where I would be now had I gone – maybe I would have ended up as a French film star falling glamorously out of my Parisian bed each morning to leave my mascara

smudged around my eyes, without brushing my hair, just pinning it straight up, sticking on some heels and going off to meet Jane Birkin for lunch. Actually..... give me an organic box scheme and a flock of sheep any day.

Hope this finds you well. And just a word of warning, if your behaviour doesn't significantly improve there will be a big swede in your bag next week.

Kind wishes,

Isobel