

Monday 16th July 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Sweltering still no doubt. It's Sunday and boiling again here. We did have a freak couple of raindrops earlier in the week but they evaporated before touching the ground. There is a possibility of a little rain this evening but only a possibility, then there is nothing in the forecast for the next two weeks again. I remember times like this in London, and Richmond Park looking like Africa, I even wrote a song about it, but I have never seen a thoroughly yellow Wensleydale. It's impacting all our UK growers of course who are irrigating furiously. And to irrigate, they are often extracting their quota from rivers, but with river levels so low in many areas the Environment Agency has now stopped further extraction leaving them stuffed. Carrot growers say they need 20 days of rain to get their crops growing again, they say yield will drop by 40% this year. Potatoes, with their short tubers demand a lot of water so are not growing. The broccoli, cauliflower and salad and leafy crops are also particularly affected. In the nurseries and glass houses they are struggling to control the heat levels and the red spider mite is running rampant. The fruit trees are suffering drought stress. So, some rocky weeks and months ahead for produce unless there is a change in the weather.

We have lovely, sweet pointed cabbages in the bags again this week. We will be moving to bunched spinach, kales and chards soon once the crops are robust enough to be bunched given we no longer use plastic. Bear with us, please.

Here are some tasty recipes you could try this week:

Creamy Lemon and Cabbage Pasta with Garlic Crumbs

2 large handfuls fresh chunky breadcrumbs	3 tbsp olive oil
3 garlic cloves, finely chopped	300g pasta eg penne or farfalle
1 medium onion, chopped	125ml white wine
zest of ½ lemon	140g crème fraiche
½ head cabbage very thinly sliced	

Heat the oven to 200C. 180C Fan/ Gas 6. In a bowl mix the breadcrumbs with half the oil and 1 clove of garlic and season well. Spread out on a large baking tray and bake for 8 minutes until crisp and golden. Remove and set aside. Cook the pasta to al dente according to packet instructions. Meanwhile pour the rest of the oil into a frying pan, add the onion and remaining garlic, season and cook for about 4 minutes until golden then add the wine and lemon zest. Reduce for a few minutes then add the crème fraiche. Remove from the heat but keep warm. Add the cabbage to the pasta water for the last 3 minutes of cooking time, Drain and return to the pan. Add the creamy sauce to the pasta and serve topped with the garlic crumbs.

Pointed Cabbage with White Wine and Fennel Seeds

2 tbsp olive oil	1 tsp fennel seeds
1 large onion, sliced	1 pointed cabbage, core removed, shredded
250ml dry white wine	1 tbsp white wine vinegar
½ bunch coriander, chopped	

In a large saucepan heat the olive oil, add the fennel seeds and toast for 1 minute to release the flavour. Stir in the onion and cook gently for 2 minutes then stir in the cabbage to coat in the oil and fennel. Pour in the wine and the wine vinegar, allow to reduce by half then simmer on the hob for another 5 minutes until the cabbage is cooked and the sauce has thickened slightly. Stir in the coriander and serve.

New Potato and Red Pepper Frittata

4 tbsp olive oil	750g new potatoes, scrubbed and sliced
1 red pepper, deseeded and sliced	2 cloves garlic, crushed
2 tbsp dry white wine	6 Hen Nation eggs
salt and pepper	

Heat the oil in a large non-stick frying pan. Add the potatoes, peppers and garlic and saute for 10 minutes turning occasionally. Add the wine and continue to cook over a medium heat turning occasionally for a further 10 minutes or until potatoes are tender. Whisk the eggs in a large bowl then using a slotted spoon transfer the potato mixture to the eggs and season. Add a little extra oil to the frying pan and when hot add the potato and egg mixture. Cook over a low heat for 10-15 minutes or until the mixture is almost set. Using a large dinner plate carefully turn the omelette over and cook on the other side for 2-3 minutes, or simply place the frying pan under a preheated grill until lightly golden. Serve hot or cold with salad.

Adjacent to the sheep's field alongside the river is a large wild area of long grasses and wild flowers and a stretch of deep, wooded riverbank. At great expense last week we got this whole area fenced off from the farmers arable crops and opened it up to the sheep. We let them through. They immediately started pulling and gorging themselves on the fresh green leaves, any fresh green leaves. I expected to find them all dead the next morning, too desperate to be discerning, poisoned. Alas, they were all there. I could see little ears poking up out of the grass, bellies full. That should keep them going for the next few weeks.

The triumph of the week for me was the delivery of my new stick, cordless Hoover. The hefty, back-breaking Sebo which I have been dragging round the house for the last 15 years overheated and after a fruitless search to find a local repair place I took to the internet to buy a replacement. It is an utter revelation not precariously balancing the half-ton Hoover on each step of the stairs, the cord wrapping round my ankles. I zipped up the stairs with the new stick to do the bedroom and just did the stairs on the way up, it took seconds. I will no longer have to suffer the misery of the accumulation of dog hairs on the stairs knowing I will soon have to haul the Sebo out, and putting off until it's desperate. Lainey tipping plant pots out on the carpet, no problem. Life has just got a whole lot easier.

I hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes,

Isobel