



**Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2022**

Dear Customer,

It's Sunday afternoon. There is thick, warm fog outside with intermittent heavy downpours. Not the weather to be out in, maybe not the weather to even bother getting dressed. It's Sunday after all - dressing gown day.

Here is a tasty little recipe you could try this week

Aubergine and Sweet Pepper Ragu with Pappardelle

320g aubergine, chopped into 2cm cubes

1 tbsp olive oil

2 cloves garlic, crushed

400g tin chopped tomatoes

1 tbsp soft brown sugar

1 tbsp capers, drained

250g pappardelle pasta, or other pasta shape

1 onion, finely chopped

2 sweet peppers, finely chopped

200ml vegetable stock

1 tbsp red wine vinegar

Bring a large pan of water to boil, tip in the chopped aubergine and place a saucer over to stop the aubergine floating to the top. Cook for 10 minutes until tender but holding its shape. Leave to drain in a colander. Heat a sauté pan, add the olive oil, followed by the onion, cook until soft and golden, add the garlic and cook for another minute. Add the peppers and cook until softened. Add the drained aubergine, chopped tomatoes, stock and sugar. Simmer for 15 minutes until thickened. Stir in the vinegar and capers. Cook the pasta and add to the sauce, toss to coat and serve with fresh basil.

It's very hard to keep up with events. It's like being on the bullet train. Since my last note Truss has gone, phew, Johnson came back, terrifying, and Rishi is now PM. Or at least he will be in a few hours once he's been to see the King. It's Tuesday morning and I'm late again. I've just about recovered from all that stress and exhaustion. And it is all so distracting. I've got work to do. We have our organic inspection on Monday with all the onerous admin that entails: I'm sending the clothes for our new Izzy Lane collection here there and everywhere to have their photos taken – the lifestyle shots, the cut-out shots – while still chasing manufacturers to deliver, and it's already nearly November. I've just had a call from the farmer where the sheep are and three of them are out, they're going under the electric fence which has no battery, across the stream, and into his crops.

I'm also feeling very sick after having had to put a new engine in one of the vans a few weeks ago and realising / remembering on Friday that I had paid for an extended warranty which was still valid. It's too late, I would've had to notify them and get the work approved in advance. That has hit me hard and I'm trying not to think about it.

So 'Hail, Rishi'. The most alarming thing is all the camera crews in Richmond and footage appearing on the news channels of our locals being interviewed. It's so embarrassing, they're all idiots. But I must admit, he is popular here. I was on the racecourse yesterday and spoke to an ex-soldier who said that Rishi had called him 10 days ago to ask how his daughter was who had just had a baby and nowhere to live. I think he helped get her somewhere.

He won't get the Cabinet he wants as he has vowed to bring the party together. He will have to keep the mafia, aka ERG, happy. He will be expected to find money from nowhere for everyone and everything. That there is none, and how you deliver that fact, will be his greatest challenge. He could get some big wedges of cash from windfall taxes, of course that would be a good start. At least he has a grasp of economics unlike his predecessor.

Reiterating what everyone is saying, all politics aside, we have our first British Asian PM, and that is pretty cool, But I do want to share with you an email he sent me when he first became elected as MP for Richmond which I think says a lot about him and what motivates his.

“Dear Isobel,

Please accept my sincere apologies for the delay in getting back to you. In the thrall of setting up new offices and processes, I missed your email. It was wonderful to hear from you – your evident entrepreneurial drive and passion for your causes shines through. I am glad we have people like you living locally and keen to create exciting new enterprises with purpose.

Your email raises an important issue. From my time living and working in Silicon Valley I came to appreciate the benefits of having a concentration of finance providers, mentors, entrepreneurs, academics and talented employees all being in the same place. This “ecosystem” makes it much more likely that idea and opportunities succeed as the right connections are made.

I would like to recreate some of that locally. One idea I had is to do an annual “Silicon Dale” event where we bring together entrepreneurs like yourself, experienced business people who can provide mentorship, experts in social media, legal experts to advise on different types of financing, and a range of different finance providers themselves. A gathering like that would hopefully enable you to make the connections you need to improve the chances of success. It would also open up our part of the world to people often based in London or indeed abroad so they could see the range of opportunities and talent we have locally.

What are your thoughts on something like this being of value to you? Liz had mentioned you to me and suggested we have a drink together at some stage so hopefully we will have a chance to discuss this then.

Kind regards,  
Rishi

How sweet was that ! I don't want people to be horrible to him. I think maybe he's in the wrong party and at the wrong time ! I hope the real Rishi gets the chance to step forward. I hate the divisiveness of politics

I hope you have a good week.....Kind wishes, Isobel