

Monday 11th May 2015

Dear Customer,

Hello, and I hope this finds you well. It's Monday morning and I still haven't recovered from being up all night on Thursday and all the pre and post-election commentary. Well, well, well ! What a shock wasn't it.

It was a tale of two towns here. Richmond is underdone, on the surface downmarket and un-gentrified, with no visible wealth. The people I know who have wealth go round looking like tramps in beaten up cars – as is often the case. On Thursday however, at 6pm when I went to cast my vote, the demographic had suddenly changed and new Mercs, Jags and big 4 x 4's were rolling in to cast their votes. They were confident, successful and used to having their voices heard. On the other hand, in the queue were people who didn't have such grand control over their destinies – those who would feel every bump of whatever policies were meted down. Those at the bottom I guess. And this was their one moment in 5 years where their voice could be heard. I felt very moved by it..... and sad.

Egged on by the opinion polls, which couldn't be wrong, and a race too close to call – Miliband carved his pledges into a slab of stone. That is the weirdest thing I have ever seen. His political tombstone as it turns out. It wasn't a great campaign and when the chips were down his appeal was not sufficiently broad. And so we enter a brave new world.

Here are some delicious recipes you could try this week:

Whole Roasted Cauliflower

1 medium cauliflower	250g Greek yoghurt
2 tsp sea salt flakes	1 tsp cracked black pepper
juice ½ lemon	75g freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat the oven to 200C / 180F / Gas 6. In a bowl mix together the yoghurt, salt, pepper, lemon and cheese to form a thick paste. Remove the thick leaves and place in a roasting tray. Spread the paste liberally over the cauliflower and roast for 40-50 minutes, or until a deep golden brown and a knife pierces easily into the cauliflower.

Broccoli, Leek and Cauliflower Bake

275g cauliflower, in small florets	225g broccoli, in small florets
2 leeks, thinly sliced	50g butter
50g plain flour	450ml milk
175g Cheddar cheese, grated	1 tbsp wholegrain mustard
pinch nutmeg	slice of brown bread in breadcrumb
1 tbsp fresh flat-leaf parsley, finely chopped	25g freshly grated Parmesan

Preheat oven to 190C /375F /Gas 5. Add the cauliflower to a saucepan of boiling water, cover and simmer for 4 minutes. Add the broccoli and leeks to the pan, cover and simmer for a further 2-3 minutes. Drain the vegetables. To make the sauce, melt the butter in a saucepan, add the flour and mix. Slowly pour in the milk while whisking and gently bring to the boil. Cook for 2-3 minutes, stirring all the time while the sauce thickens. Mix in the Cheddar, mustard and nutmeg. Remove from the heat and continue to mix until all the cheese has melted. Spread the vegetables evenly in an ovenproof dish and pour the sauce on top. Mix the breadcrumbs, parsley and Parmesan cheese together and sprinkle over the top. Bake for 15 minutes, until golden and slightly crispy.

Broccoli and Courgette Pasta

2 courgettes, trimmed	200g broccoli
450g dry spaghetti	6 tbsp olive oil
25g walnut pieces, roughly chopped	zest of one lemon
pinch dried chilli flakes	salt and freshly ground black pepper
4 tbsp Parmesan, or alternative	

Coarsely grate the courgettes then place them in a clean tea towel and squeeze dry. Meanwhile, wash the broccoli and prepare by trimming the base of the spear. Chop in diagonal slices about 3cm long with the leaves. Heat the oil in a large frying pan, add the courgettes and fry for 7 minutes on a medium heat. Stir occasionally. Add in the broccoli, chilli flakes, walnuts and lemon zest and continue to cook for a further 3 minutes. Season with salt and stir. In the meantime, cook the pasta in a large saucepan of salted boiling water for 8-10 minutes or until just tender. Drain in a colander. Add the spaghetti to the frying pan and toss all together on a medium heat for 30 seconds. Serve immediately with cheese on top.

Work on the Garden Centre continues – will it never end. It's amazing how much money you can spend on just two rooms and a bit of outside space in electricians, plumbers, painters, joiners, floorers, labourers, fencers.....and then all the gear. It's getting a bit worrying. When we can't afford to stock it, maybe we can just charge 20p entrance fee for people to come and have a guided tour to look at the paintwork and the new crittall window. I think that would be worth 20p.

The big question mark remains. When we open, will anyone even come.

Kind wishes,

Isobel

PS I'm sorry the newsletter didn't make it onto the back of the invoice last but we had printer problems. You can however find it on the website.