

HOUSE & GARDEN

MAY
2009
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THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO STYLISH LIVING

OUTDOOR TREATS

PERGOLAS, ARBOURS AND ARCHES
A PERFECT ENGLISH GARDEN
SMART FIRE BOWLS AND BRAZIER

PLUS
SPRING
RECIPES
LIGHT,
PRETTY
AND
DELICIOUS



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BACK TO LIFE
A HEROIC
RESTORATION
IN OXFORDSHIRE

INSPIRING STYLE

A CHIC, LUXURIOUS THAMES HOUSEBOAT

AN ARCHITECT-DESIGNED ESCAPE ON A CORNISH CREEK

A CLASSIC PIED-A-TERRE IN LONDON

AN ARTIST'S STUDIO IN PARIS

TASTE NOTES

Innovations, observations and reviews in the world of wine and food, by Kassia St Clair-Rouse and Liz Morcom MW



The perfect indulgence for anyone with a sweet tooth, **Pippin Doughnuts** (01793-496210; www.pippindoughnuts.co.uk) are handmade, and filled with the company's own fruit jams and rich, vanilla custards. Especially good are the cinnamon and brown-sugar doughnuts, which are delicious with coffee. A box of 12 assorted doughnuts costs £10. You can find them at Gloucester farmers' market every Friday and Swindon farmers' market on Sundays. Slightly more kitsch are the delightful **cupcakes** from Lola's Kitchen (020-7483 3394; www.lolas-kitchen.co.uk), which come in a variety of flavours and colours. You can have a name or a message frosted in coloured icing, so they are good for parties. I recommend the Red Velvet cupcake, which has a cream-cheese topping on a scarlet, chocolate base. A box of six assorted cupcakes costs £11.40, at Selfridges. **KStC-R**

Adrienne Baba's love of Japanese food and pottery led her to live and train in Japan for five years. These **ceramics** are just part of the result; they come in a range of finishes. Oxfordshire-based Adrienne also runs popular, Japanese cookery classes, and caters for dinner parties. She will be exhibiting her work at Astall Manor in early May as part of Oxfordshire Artweeks (www.artweeks.org). A six-piece dining set costs from £45. For further information, visit www.adriennebaba.com **KStC-R**



The ethos behind **Look What We Found!** soups (www.lookwhatwefound.co.uk) is rooted in the importance of provenance, and the small-scale producers of the soups' ingredients are identified on the packaging. The soups burst with flavour and make a great lunch standby. Shown here is David Baarda's English Tomato Soup with Cheviot Cheese Pesto; a 300g pouch costs £1.59, at Waitrose. **KStC-R**



*Most wine regions are scenically imposing; some are stunning. The Douro Valley, home of port, is one such. An impressive new hotel, the Aquapura Douro Valley, has opened, just over an hour from Porto and a few kilometres from the town of Regua, at the heart of this UNESCO World Heritage site. It is one of only two Portuguese hotels included in Tatler's 101 Best Hotels in its 2009 Travel Guide. A former nineteenth-century manor house and port quinta, it has 50 rooms, 21 luxury villas (which are also for sale), two restaurants, outdoor and indoor pools, a gym, and a spa, in which treatments include products made from local grapes, all high in antioxidants. The hotel makes a perfect base from which to visit the local port quintas, and wine-tasting visits can be organised by the hotel. For more information, visit www.aquaparahotels.com **LM***

WINES OF THE MONTH

These two impressive blends are both from Marks & Spencer and cost £8.99 each. **Cuvée Extrême 2006** is an attractive, spicy red - a blend of Syrah, Grenache Noir and Carignan - from grapes grown in Tautavel and the Agly Valley in the sunny Côtes du Roussillon. Subtle oak ageing adds complexity. **Knock on Wood Sauvignon Blanc/Semillon 2008** is an elegant, dry white - a blend of grassy Sauvignon Blanc and lemony Semillon - which comes from the respected Flagstone winery in the Western Cape. A small proportion of the Semillon is barrel-fermented in American oak, which adds a hint of vanilla. **LM**



PHOTOGRAPHS: LIS PARSONS; 'ZENZAN' SERVING BOWL, £35, AND 'NIL' BOWL, 14CM DIAMETER, £5; BOTH AT HABITAT; LINEN NAPKIN, £8.95, AT THE CONRAN SHOP; SILVER-PLATED DESSERT SPOON, £72 FOR SIX, AT FEW & FAR; 'LUX' PLATE, 20CM DIAMETER, £9.50, AT FEW & FAR; 'CEVA' ESPRESSO CUP AND SAUCER, £5, AND 'DIP' DISH, £3.50, SOBER, £3.50, AT FEW & FAR; 'DOROTHY' ICE-CREAM DISH (TEAL), £7, ALL AT HABITAT



Historically, there have been few real competitors in terms of quality to the Sauvignon Blancs of New Zealand, or those from the Loire. In recent tastings, however, I have found many more examples, from France and the New World, which are both appealing and well priced. Here is a selection - all perfect for spring and summer drinking: **The Naked Grape 2007**, from Charente, £6.49, Waitrose; **Terrunyo 2007**, from Chile, £7.49, Majestic; **Secano Estate 2008**, from Chile, £6.99, and **M'HUDI 2008**, from South Africa, £7.99; both Marks & Spencer. **LM**

Badger's Hopping Hare, a light (4.5%), pale, hoppy ale, is made specially for the spring by Dorset family brewers, Hall & Woodhouse. The spring water and yeasts used are local, and the beer is brewed to a recipe passed down through generations of the family. Hopping Hare costs £1.79 for a 500ml bottle, and is available only until June, at Tesco, Sainsbury's, or online from www.badgerdirect.com **LM**

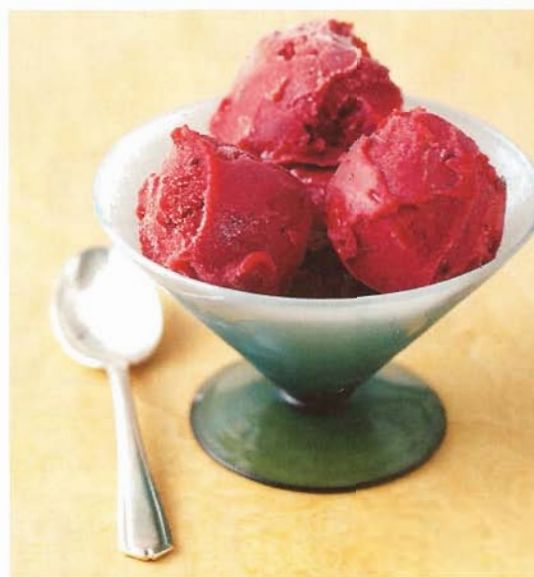


The Boston Sausage's products are exemplary. The signature **Boston Sausage** (above) contains a minimum of 70 per cent pork, and is not overburdened with herbs or fruits. It is that rare beast: a simple, honest breakfast sausage in which the flavour of the meat is allowed to take centre stage. With a moist, crumbly texture, the sausages cry out to be piled on to a fork, with eggs, on a Sunday morning. They cost £8.89 for 1kg, from Borough Market, SE1. For further information and mail order, visit www.bostonsausage.co.uk **KStC-R**



The cheerful colours of these chic, French, **sugar tablets** for coffee will brighten up the end of a meal. They are part of a range of similarly pretty sugars, which includes lumps in the shape of teddy bears and miniature pastries. A 45g packet costs £15.95, from Poudrier Rose. For further information and mail order, visit poudrierrose.com **KStC-R**

DIARY DATE *May 8-10* **The Real Food Festival** brings together around 500 food producers under one roof, all eager to show off the fruits of their labour. There are plenty of smaller companies involved - offering many new things for you to try - as well as familiar favourites. It makes a wonderful day out and provides an excellent opportunity to sample many different foods. It takes place in Earls Court; tickets cost £18 at the door, or £14.90 if you book in advance. For further information, visit www.realfoodfestival.co.uk **KStC-R**



If the delicious **Blackcurrant & Kirsch Sorbet** by Beckleberry's had a mantelpiece on which to show off its awards, it would be an impressive sight. At last year's Great Taste Awards, it came top in three categories: Best English Speciality, Best Speciality from the North East, and Supreme Champion. It has a wonderfully deep, luscious colour and flavour and is the perfect end to a spring meal. A 500ml pot costs from £3.95 at Harvey Nichols, selected Waitrose stores and Beckleberry's coffee shop. For further information, visit www.beckleberrys.co.uk **KStC-R**

*There can be few more congenial surroundings for wine study than those of Vinécole, at Domaine Gayda, near Limoux in Languedoc. Even with the strong euro, the prices for the courses are fair, while the cost of getting there can also be a steal: Ryanair has daily flights from Stansted to nearby Carcassonne. Accommodation is available in the Domaine's stylish gîtes. Vinécole is run by Master of Wine Matthew Stubbs, and Emma Kershaw. Courses range from a half-hour 'speed' lesson in how to taste wines, to all-day wine 'experiences' - including trying your hand at winemaking - and wine-related weekend breaks. For more information, call 00-33-4 68 31 64 14, or visit www.vinecole.com **LM***