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Summer Newsletter 2012

Lots of new developments at Huntsham to keep us busy which is just as well as the weather is hopeless.

We are now on  @HuntshamFarm and  so follow us to get the latest news.

Middle White pork sausages

We recently sent a sample of our Middle White sausages to the two Michelin-starred Restaurant Sat Bains with Rooms in Nottingham. They had told us that they had won an award for their breakfasts which they were very pleased about. Having tasted out Middle White sausages, they wanted to add them to their breakfast menu so as to raise their game another notch. We know they are very highly regarded indeed for their breakfasts so that is very flattering. Many people order our sausages as part of an order for a half porker but we find that, during the summer barbecue season, our sausages are especially popular on their own. They are available in packs of 6 and in multiples of 5kg. Drop us an e-mail if you would like some (Richard@huntsham.com) or give Richard a ring on 01600 890296.



Loin of Middle White pork

Middle White Pork

Marcus Wareing at the Berkeley

Our pork continues to find its way onto the grandest restaurant tables and we are very proud of the accolades it receives. Here is an extract from the Summer Newsletter of Michelin two star chef, Marcus Wareing.

Our Supplier

The rare breed Middle White pork is sourced from Huntsham Farm in the beautiful Wye Valley owned and run by Richard Vaughan. The farm has been in the Vaughan family for nearly four hundred year. Richard and his wife, Rosamund, specialise in producing rare breed meat – such as Longhorn Beef, Ryeland lamb and Middle White pig (still available to try on our lunch menu in celebration of Slow Food Week.) Huntsham Farm rare meats are in hot demand by top restaurants and a variety of well known chefs.

Vaughan is experiencing unprecedented success as a supplier as there are only 350 Middle White sows in the UK of which 120 are owned by him. By using rare breeds we ironically encourage the survival of these fabulous forgotten foods to ensure they are around for years to come. We hope to try some beef next.

Longhorn beef mince

We have been working with a well-known celebrity chef to produce mince suitable for his 'Ultimate American Beef Burger'. He felt that, for burger-making, a slightly more coarsely ground mince would work better. After much trial and error, we have managed to get this exactly right and he is using our mince. We shall continue to produce our mince using a 4mm hole for everyone else unless they ask for the coarser ground. The hole for the coarser ground is only 2mm larger, at 6mm, but it does make quite a difference.



Longhorn cattle grazing the Hollow Meadow with Huntsham Court in the background

Rosamund likes the coarser ground for ragu-making as well as burgers and thinks that it produces a splendid sauce for serving with pasta, especially if the ragu is left to cool overnight and reheated the next day. Rather nervously, in view of the number of high-powered chefs who read our newsletter, she is going to include her recipe – see box.

Like our Middle White sausages, our Longhorn mince beef is available on its own in packs of 500gms and in multiples of 5kg. If you would like to try the coarser mince – or just have an order of the normal finer ground for the summer – let us know.

Rosamund's Ragu Recipe

Ingredients

1x 500gm pack Huntsham Longhorn mince (either coarse or fine ground)

1 medium onion – roughly chopped

A couple of small carrots – roughly chopped

4 rashers good quality unsmoked streaky bacon - chopped

100-150 gms closed cap mushrooms

A good dessertspoonful tomato paste

Good bunch of thyme

2 bay leaves

4-5 strips rind from an unwaxed lemon (be generous – I use most of a lemon)

Sherry glass of port (or red wine)

Sherry glass of Madeira (or red wine - but try to include either port or Madeira as the meat really enjoys this sweetness)

Stock – because I have plenty of beef bones, I always have a supply of beef stock in the freezer but chicken stock or even tinned beef consommé will do fine

Olive oil, butter, sea salt, black pepper

Method

Fry the bacon gently until the fat runs and then add a little olive oil. Sweat the onion and carrot in the combined fats until soft and sweet. Turn up the heat and add more oil if necessary. Brown the meat (try to avoid browning the onion and carrot by stirring so that it is on top of the meat).

Add the Port and Madeira, bring to the boil and simmer for a few minutes. Add the herbs, tomato paste, lemon rind and enough stock to cover the meat well and simmer very gently for an hour.

In the meantime, slice the mushrooms coarsely and fry gently in butter. Towards the end of the cooking time for the meat, add the mushrooms and their juices to the ragu and season well with salt and pepper. Remove the herbs before serving.

Down on the Farm

Hay and silage-making has been a real problem this summer. The endless rain means that there is absolutely no shortage of grass but we desperately need a spell of drier weather so that we can make winter feed for the animals. Farming may be more mechanised than it used to be but it is still very dependent on the weather.

Today we have had one of the bureaucratic nightmares all farm have to suffer. One of our Longhorn cattle had lost both its ear tags

– they must have two to comply with the regulations or we get fined. If they lose one, it is easy enough to fit a second but, with both gone, we had to check every beast in the herd to find out, by the tedious process of elimination, what the missing number was. Much rounding up of grumpy cattle in the Hollow Meadow and barging about in the mud trying to check the tags of animals not in the least interested in standing still while we did it – the best part of half a day wasted.

Building renovations



Huntsham Farm Entrance Barn - recently renovated with new stone tiles

We think the big entrance barn (in the photograph) looks a treat with its new stone tiled roof. Its dovecote, clearly visible in the picture, has been painstakingly renovated and we have also installed an owl box, carefully-separated from the dovecot, in the hope of attracting back the wonderful big barn owls that used to live in it. The stone tiles were all cut out by hand from a delve (small private quarry) near Hay-on-Wye, just

as they would have been in past times (except that building materials of that sort which now arrive by lorry would, in earlier times, have been floated down the River Wye - which surrounds Huntsham on three sides). We have an excellent team of talented craftsmen carrying out the work and they are doing it very carefully so that the barns end up looking like original old barns in good repair and not too shiny and ‘renovated’.