Cooking school for Akaroa

Fresh local ingredients – Lou Bentley of the Akaroa Cooking School.

The former premises of Café Cirque at Akaroa Village Inn near the Akaroa Main Wharf are being transformed over the next couple of months into the base for a cooking school.

Ant and Lou Bentley plan to run one-day courses using local ingredients to help people learn more than just the basic skills of cooking with fresh produce.

There will also be courses on pasta-making, cheese-making, bread-making and that sort of thing Lou told The Akaroa Mail.

"Really we're going to be showcasing local seasonal produce, what we can get in terms of lamb or beef or salmon – what is available."

She said that many of the dishes taught would be suitable for occasions such as dinner parties, and that content would include some of the 'tricks of the trade'.

The basic courses will give customers a fun-filled day of cooking demonstrations, peppered with local history and information about Banks Peninsula, followed by a three-course meal with matching local wines around the school's large dining table.

The Akaroa Cooking School will also be providing catering for conferences and other occasions at Akaroa Village Inn.

Lou was trained through the New Zealand School of Food and Wine, and has worked in kitchens in both New Zealand and England. Ant has a degree in tourism marketing, and plans a more managerial role in the business.

"It is a venture that's designed to encompass all we enjoy about life really" Lou said.

The first classes are scheduled for early November.