



The Akaroa Cooking School

What's New or in the News

August 2010

Akaroa MasterCook – The Grand Final



Esther Blythe

Esther Blythe, Manager of Akaroa jeweler shop Fire & Ice, took out this year's Akaroa MasterCook held at the Akaroa Cooking School. Her three course meal started with a Trio of Smoked Salmon including a sushi roll in tempura batter, a potato rosti with horseradish crème fraiche topped with smoked salmon and a pea and smoked salmon soup. Esther's main course was chilli & rosemary marinated rack of Canterbury lamb, with a roasted pumpkin, sundried tomato and chickpea stack, slivered beetroot and salsa verde. Her meal concluded with her own creation called 'The Devils Passion' which was a layered dessert with a raspberry jelly, topped with a white chocolate and cointreau mousse, finished with macerated berries.

In a dramatic last minute twist to the final, Jules Faulls the local digger driver got stranded in Fiji unable to fly back to NZ. Thankfully Jane Cook, runner up in semi final one agreed to step in and compete in the final. Owner of local B&B L'abri in Takamatua, Jane Cook had less than three days to devise and practice her three course meal for the final. This was an incredible feat and the standard of her food was unbelievable especially considering how little time she had to prepare.

"It was by far the toughest judging decision we had to make over the past seven weeks" stated resident judge Steve Bradley, taking over half an hour for the judges to make their final decision. "Esther's originality, passion and attention to detail is what clinched it for her in the end, and we feel that she has a real future in food if that is what she decides to pursue" Lou Bentley says.



Esther's winning lamb dish



Brett McGregor judging the final

Guest judge – NZ MasterChef, Brett McGregor was blown away by the incredible quality and presentation of the food produced and was asking the competitors for some of their recipes. “I can’t believe in a town of only just over 500 people you have had 80 people in here each week supporting the competition” stated Brett. “It’s amazing to see the huge surge of interest in food across all of New Zealand recently, and that’s filtering down to our younger generation which is just fantastic”.

“The competition has been a huge success and we already have five competitors booked in for next year’s competition” stated Ant Bentley. The locals are already talking about who could be crowned next year’s MasterCook.

Feast of Canterbury – 1st to 20th September



From 1st – 20th September, the region’s finest restaurants, boutique retailers, growers, wineries, regional food heroes and personalities will showcase their talents with a diverse calendar of events. The festival celebrates and enhances food and wine excellence in turn generating national and global anticipation and visitation.

Through its delivery Feast of Canterbury promotes the quality produce, talent and lifestyle of our great foodie region to reinforce Canterbury as the preeminent food and wine capital of New Zealand.

To find out more information including the Feast of Canterbury timetable go to www.feastofcanterbury.co.nz

Mediterranean Banquet Pop up Dinner – Friday 3rd September



As part of the Feast of Canterbury, The Akaroa Cooking School, Vangionis restaurant, Black Estate Wines and Three Boys Beer have joined together to create a rustic style Mediterranean country banquet at a secret location.

Think long tables, antipasti's followed by pasta, slow grilled meats and fish, salads, salsas and vegetables with sweet treats to follow. This is set to be fabulous night of great food, beer & wine and will suit those people who love adventurous dining.

The price is only \$70 per person with the secret location (within 5 minutes of Akaroa township) to be revealed the day before! Bookings can be made by emailing Steve at Vangionis Vangionis@xtra.co.nz or calling 03 304 7714.

The Cooking School Gourmet Road Trip

In October this year we are launching our first cooking school road trip where we take our class out to meet our suppliers over four days complete with our mobile cooking facilities. The Banks Peninsula is a treasure trove of fantastic produce and artisan suppliers. We will talk with the suppliers about their produce and then cook up some fresh dishes on the spot.



Collecting crabs, pipis & mussels at Le Bons Bay

Our suppliers include award winning La Casa Toscana olive oil, asparagus growers, organic vegetable and fruit growers, cheese makers, fish & shellfish, lamb & beef farmers and some fabulous local vineyards. Over the four days we will visit the suppliers, do a lot of hunting and gathering of our own including netting for flounder, fishing, crab potting and foraging for local produce. We will also learn the art of making small goods such as bresaola and chorizo. The days will be punctuated with impromptu cooking once we have harvested produce around the Banks Peninsula and its beaches.



Le Bons Bay Paddle Crabs

The four day class will culminate in a final banquet dinner back at the cooking school in Akaroa with all the local produce. This class will be limited to eight guests who are really looking at doing something completely unique and want to immerse themselves into a foodies paradise.

If this sounds like something you might be interested in please email the cooking school to register your interest: info@akaroacooking.co.nz

Christmas Banquet

Leading up to Christmas we are running two special Christmas cooking classes with recipes and inspiring ideas to make your next Christmas banquet one to remember. We step away from the traditional turkey and ham and demonstrate some fantastic dishes from a scrumptious morning breakfast, through to a banquet style lunch, desserts, gift ideas and much more with a summer theme in mind.

Come December when the festive season begins, your menu will be completely sorted allowing you more time for Christmas shopping and a celebratory wine or two with good friends!

Call us on 021 166 3737 or book online at www.akaroacooking.co.nz. This class runs from 10am until 3.30pm and is \$195 including all food & wine plus recipes to take home.

Upcoming Classes & Spring Timetable

Our spring timetable is now out and can be viewed on our website. Along with our regular classes, Gourmet in a Day & Fresh from the Wharf we also have Spring Harvest, The Ultimate BBQ and A Day at the Bach. For full class descriptions please go to www.akaroacooking.co.nz

Single & Starving – Sunday 22nd August

There are only a few spaces left for our very first Single & Starving cooking class. Still can't find the perfect partner? We are holding a special class for single guys and girls to demonstrate some saucy dishes to woo your next date. We will even demonstrate some delicious breakfast dishes should your date progress that far...!!!

If you know just the person who needs to come to this class, please pass on the news!

\$125 including all food, wine & recipes. 11am until 3pm



The Ultimate Father's Day BBQ – Sunday 05th September



On the first Sunday of September we are running a special Father's Day BBQ class.

It will be a fantastic day of tips and great recipes to help take your dad's BBQ to the next level. From cooking the perfect steak to the art of hot smoking, this class is a must for those looking to enhance the whole BBQ experience.

At the conclusion of the class, everyone sits down around the school's large dining table to enjoy a fabulous BBQ banquet.

A great gift for your Dad this coming Father's Day! We also have gift vouchers available. Call us on 021 166 3737 or book online at www.akaroacooking.co.nz. This class runs from 10am until 3.30pm and is \$175 including all food, beer & wine plus recipes to take home.

Corporate Groups and Private Bookings

We have had an increasing number of corporate groups at the cooking school many of whom have been in Akaroa for conferences or meetings. Each group is different and we customise the day or evening to suit. For example we have had groups in for dinner who have split into two groups, received a goody bag with the same ingredients and then had a 'cook off' to produce their own starter. The team at the cooking school then judge and choose a winner.

These are always good fun and surprisingly competitive with remarkably good results too. These evenings conclude with a main meal and dessert cooked by the team at the cooking school. We have also had groups in for half and full day cooking classes which always culminate in a sit down meal with wine.

Last week we had a group of 24 senior high school students from a Christchurch school who were keen to expand their culinary knowledge. It was certainly a busy day and it was great to see so much enthusiasm towards food and cooking from such a young group.

We are now getting enquiries about Christmas staff parties and what we can do to accommodate groups in terms of cooking demonstrations, competitions and dinners. The cooking school is very flexible on this front and we work closely with the organisers to put together a day or night that totally meets their requirements.

If you would like any further information about private bookings please call Ant on 021 166 3724 or email ant@akaroacooking.co.nz

Happy cooking,

Ant.

