



The Akaroa Cooking School

What's New or in the News

October 2010

Meeting our suppliers

One of the best parts to our job is meeting with our suppliers and seeing first hand where the produce originates. Going forward we will be including a segment in our newsletters showcasing new and existing suppliers with information on how you can get hold of a range of fantastic Canterbury produce.

Gruff Junction Cheese

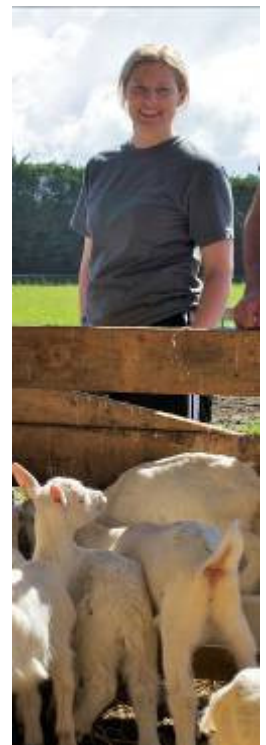


Half an hour south of Christchurch on the banks of Lake Ellesmere, Ev Moorhead farms 250 white Saanen goats and his daughter Anna makes a range of hand crafted goats cheese. Originating in 2006, Anna's haul of medals is a testament to her ability as a cheese maker. Her Selwyn Farmhouse Mature recently picked up Champion Goats Cheese at the recent 2010 NZ Champion of Cheese awards.

Saanen goats originate from the Saanen Valley in Switzerland and are mild natured, producing high volumes of milk so make ideal farming goats. A Saanen nanny produces up to five litres of milk each day. The Saanen doe has a majestic air about her, which coupled with her milk producing ability, identifies her as "Queen of the Dairy Goats".

The goats are milked between September and March and Anna produces a variety of cheeses including Gouda, Chevrego, Blue, Feta, Halloumi and Fromage Blanc. Anna says that New Zealanders palate for goat's cheese is changing and that people's perception of goat's cheese being too 'Goaty' is definitely changing. Once you try her cheese you understand why.

We spent a fascinating morning with Anna & Ev and learnt many things goat and cheese related. We were lucky enough to be there for the kids feeding time and we also given a tour of the farm,



Anna with her kids

milking shed and cheese factory. Not only does Anna make great cheese she makes a mean cup of tea – whitened with goat milk of course.

Anna’s cheeses are widely available throughout Canterbury including farmers markets at Riccarton House, Lyttelton, Akaroa, Darfield and the French Market in Poplar Lane in Christchurch. Here you can taste before you buy which is highly recommended! For a full list of other outlets throughout Canterbury and the rest of New Zealand, click on the link www.gruffjunction.co.nz/outlets.htm



Chris & Jenny Grey - Asparagus



Chris Gray

Just along from the Racecourse at Motukarara, Chris & Jenny Grey grow beautiful asparagus which pops out of the ground each October. The season is very short finishing at Christmas time so we make the most of it when we can. The Gray’s have been growing asparagus for many generations now and the oldest bed is over 100 years old. They grow two types of asparagus; green and purple. The purple variety has slightly higher sugar levels and lower fibre levels.

The asparagus is picked each morning by hand before being freighted out to green grocers, restaurants and the odd cooking school. We love knowing that asparagus used during our cooking class was in the ground the day before. Chris is currently developing a new picking harness with the pickers lying on their stomachs whilst being wheeled along the rows. The aim of this is to make

the picking experience more comfortable so the pickers are more inclined to come back the next day!

Asparagus is a superfood when you look into its properties. Low in calories and sodium but high in vitamin B6, calcium, folate, antioxidants, vitamin C which helps the body produce and maintain collagen.



Lou has been making a fresh asparagus carpaccio salad with finely chopped raw green and purple asparagus, very thin slices of whole lemon including, thinly sliced spring onion and lemon juice mixed together with lemon and fennel olive oil topped with crumbled Gruff Junction feta – spring on a plate!

Chris and Jenny have a small shop on highway 75 a kilometre or so past the Blue Duck Café on the way to Little River where you can drive in and purchase some super fresh bunches.



Jenny Gray in their shop

The Olive Grove – Robinson’s Bay



Lou and Chris in the olive grove above Robinsons Bay

Just off the main road at Robinson’s Bay lies The Olive Grove. Planted in 1994, it is one of the most southerly olive groves in the world. Chris and Annette Moore produce a fantastic extra virgin olive oil which we have used in the cooking school since we started. The rich volcanic soil of the Banks Peninsula, unique climate and clear atmosphere helps to produce some of the finest olive oil in the country. This was backed up by a gold medal at the 2010 Olives New Zealand awards where they picked up a gold medal in their class.

Chris and Annette grow seven varieties of olives. From Tuscany there are the peppery and green Frantoio and Leccino varieties. From the dry hills of Israel they grow Barnea and Souri as well as Nabali from Palestine. Finally they have the excellent pickling olive Manzanillo from Spain, and Verdale from South Australia. Each variety has its own unique character and flavour, and a delicate blending operation is required to ensure their blended olive oil has the perfect taste.



Lou with Annette and Chris in the tasting room

As well as producing their award winning Robinsons Bay Grove Blend extra virgin olive oil, they also infuse high quality extra virgin oil to produce a variety of versatile infused oils; Mandarin and Lemon, Garlic, Basil and Chilli. The Olive Grove also produces three varieties of table olives.

Robinsons Bay olive oil can be purchased at the Christchurch Farmer’s Market at Riccarton House on Saturday mornings. We also supply their fabulous olive oil at the cooking school.

Upcoming classes

'The Ultimate BBQ' – This Sat 06th November

Learn how to create a stunning summer BBQ menu and lots of tips and techniques to take your next BBQ to the next level. We will cover everything from fantastic marinades, bbq basics, hot smoking, great salads, drinks, bread making and much more. All of your friends will be queuing up to be invited to your next BBQ.

Finally we will all sit around the dining table and eat a BBQ banquet with matching NZ wines and beers.

Only a few spaces left for this Saturday's class so call us on 021 166 3737 to secure you place. 10am until 3.30pm. \$175 including all food, wine, beer & recipes.

'Taste of a Traveller' Sat 20th November with NZ Masterchef Brett McGregor

New Zealand's first ever Masterchef will be hosting a special one-off class at The Akaroa Cooking School showcasing recipes from his upcoming book. The book deal was part of his prize package after taking out the title of New Zealand Masterchef in April this year beating finalist Kelly Young.

Brett says his cookbook will feature dishes from Spain, Morocco and Asia and show "how travelling can influence your culinary world at home". The class, called 'Taste of a Traveller', will be a selection of recipes from his up coming book. "I want to showcase one recipe from each of the regions I loved to travel and feast", states Brett.



It's not the first time Brett McGregor has been at The Akaroa Cooking School. In July this year he was the guest judge in the Akaroa Mastercook final which had been running throughout the winter proving a huge success with the locals. Brett 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 over 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" Brett said.

'We are very excited to be privy to some of the recipes from his new book', says Lou Bentley, owner of the school. 'I'm sure the book will be a big hit with New Zealanders and we can't wait to get a sneak preview'. Brett will cook five of his recipes throughout the day at the cooking school, culminating in a sit down meal with matching New Zealand wines.

There are very limited spaces for this one-off class so book early in order not to miss out on spending a day with New Zealand's first ever Masterchef.

Date	Saturday, 20th November 2010
Time	10am until 4pm
Location	81 Beach Road, Akaroa
Cost	\$195 (very limited spaces)

Gift Vouchers

Cooking School gift vouchers make wonderful gifts for those who are looking at giving someone something a little bit different. A day at The Akaroa Cooking School is certainly a great day of self indulgence and perhaps there is someone you know who needs a special day out.

They also make great Christmas and Birthday presents as well as corporate gifts. Visit our website to find out more. www.akaroacooking.co.nz

Christmas parties

We are now getting loads of bookings for Christmas staff parties and offering groups a range of options. Some groups are opting for cooking demonstrations followed by a meal, others more hands on and having a 'cook off' between teams and turning it into more of a competition followed by a meal and drinks. The cooking school is very flexible on this front and we work closely with you to organise a day or night that totally meets yours and your teams needs. We are also doing a lot of Christmas party catering – ie drinks and canapés so please do not hesitate to call if we can be of assistance to you during the busy Christmas rush.

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

And finally...



Big congratulations to our guests from our weekend 'Gourmet in a Day' class. Happy wedding anniversary to James & Hayley, happy honeymooning to Lee & Kate and a happy birthday to Dan. Certainly a celebratory class and enjoyed by all.

See you all next year!

Happy cooking,
Ant.

