



The Akaroa Cooking School

What's New or in the News

September 2010



Steve Bradley basting the pork

Mediterranean Country Banquet

On September 3rd the cooking school in conjunction with Vangionis restaurant, Black Estate Wines and Three Boys Breweries hosted a pop up dinner in a rustic old barn perched on the hillside above Akaroa. The location was a surprise to the guests who met at Vangionis restaurant before being taxied by 4WD to the barn and they were greeted by a lamb and a pig on the spit in the entranceway.

On the menu was a Mediterranean inspired selection of antipasti, spinach and ricotta cannelloni, a whole boned out stuffed pig, a whole boned out lamb followed by tiramisu and black boy peach and apple cobbler. This was all washed down with a selection of great wines from Black Estate and a lively golden ale from Three Boys Brewery.

The dinner was part of the Feast of Canterbury which was held over the first three weeks of September celebrating Canterbury food & wine. It was a full house with 65 guests enjoying the unique dining experience. Steve and The team at Vangionis did an exceptional job and the cooking school was proud to have helped out.



The barn before the makeover



Earthquake

Akaroa was not exempt from the devastating earthquake on September 4th with a few of the older buildings suffering damage. Thankfully the cooking school along with most of town got off lightly and it's business as usual. In fact there have been a number of people heading over the hill from Christchurch who said they just wanted to get out of Christchurch and away somewhere different.

During the recent Al Brown classes many people who come from Christchurch said a day at the cooking school was just the therapy they needed after the recent few weeks. Our thoughts certainly go out to all those who have been effected by the quake.

Al Brown



The cooking school was truly privileged to host the legendary Kiwi chef Al Brown for three days in September. We had 70 people attend over the three days and Al's relaxed style and great stories certainly made for a fun few days for everyone involved. Stories aside the food was outstanding and included locally sourced crab, lamb and paua.

Al has certainly got some exciting projects coming up including a couple of new TV shows. His new series 'Coasters' is set to view on TVNZ later this year. Al has also launched an exciting new range of olive oils, especially a lemon and fennel oil, in conjunction with The Village Press in the Hawkes' Bay. To find out more check out www.albrown.co.nz

Chorizo making



Local restaurateur Steve Bradley from Vangionis restaurant has been making his own chorizo for a few years now. We were lucky enough to spend a day with Steve making his latest batch. Lou met Steve at the local butcher to help stuff the chorizo mix through the sausage machine which was certainly harder than it looks. After hanging for a couple days they went into the cold smoker for three days to give them a lovely smoky flavour.

Originating from the Iberian Peninsula, Chorizo is made from coarsely chopped pork shoulder, pork belly and pork fat seasoned with chilli, paprika and a few other special spices. Chorizo is a very versatile ingredient and is fantastic on pizza, in salads, soups and with seafood.

Feast of Akaroa farmer's market



On Sunday 26th September the very first Feast of Akaroa farmer's market was held at the Recreation ground. There were about 35 stall holders, mostly local producers and suppliers from around the Banks Peninsula. Mother Nature played

her part and it was a lovely sunny spring day. There was a really good crowd of locals and non-locals and some fantastic music made for a great atmosphere.

The cooking school held two cooking demonstrations showcasing some great meat from the local butcher Akaroa Butchery and Deli. Firstly we cooked Lamb Shoulder Steaks with Mint, Feta and Couscous followed by Thai Organic Beef Sirloin on Jasmine Rice with Asian Greens.



Lou demonstrating at the Feast of Akaroa farmer's market

Corporate parties

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.

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

Upcoming classes

'Christmas Banquet' – Sun 24th Oct, Sun 14th Nov

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 4pm and is \$195 including all food & wine plus recipes to take home.

'Spring Harvest' Sat 9th & Sun 17th October

Spring is upon us and the long awaited treats such as asparagus start popping up through the ground. We will be busy harvesting the spring treats and creating some fantastic seasonal dishes that will inspire you after months of long slow cooked delights. We will be pairing the fresh spring produce with lots of seafood, shellfish and local beef and lamb.

The day will finish with a three course spring feast around our large dining table with matching NZ wines. These classes run from 10am until 4pm and are \$175 including all food & wine plus recipes to take home.

NZ Masterchef Brett McGregor at the cooking school

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

Happy cooking,
Ant.

