H HILTFIELDS

Chef Focus — Meera Sodha

Meera Sodha is an award winning cookery writer famous for her extensive, Indian family recipes. Born in Lincolnshire, she grew up eating her family's traditional Indian cooking. Her family's history is diverse & colourful. Meera's grandfather originally came from Gurjurat, India, but left to travel to Uganda under the British scheme to bring Indian's to the country to help build the Ugandan economy by promising prosperity & passports for those who did. He became a successful businessman & lived comfortably in the country until 1972 when the notorious dictator & president of Uganda, Idi Amin, gave all Asians living in the country 90 days to leave. Meera's grandparents, mother & uncles fled arriving in the UK with nothing. They moved to Lincolnshire where, at the time, jobs were available & this is where her family stayed. In this very different world where they now found themselves, food became the one constant & created a sense of home, each dish connected to a memory, experience or story.

When Meera left home for University, she could barely cook. On returning home, she began to learn how from her mum, who had never written a single recipe down. Upon finding this out, Meera began writing down the recipes as her mum cooked them then practiced them herself, becoming familiar with flavours, techniques & properties of ingredients. These inspired her to write her first book, *Made In India*, published in 2014 which became a best seller as well as being named Book of the Year by The Times & The Financial Times. Her second book, *Fresh India*, was published in 2016 & is a celebration of India's love of vegetables & her most recent book, *East: 120 Vegetarian and Vegan Recipes from Bangalore to Beijing* is out now & is already a best

seller. Some recipes in the books include Coriander Chutney, Wild Garlic Chicken Curry, Achari Rabbie, Fennel & Asparagus Pilau, Srawberry & Fennel Kulfi, Mutton & Black Cardamom Curry, Alphonso Mango Sorbet, and many more.

Meera has become a key voice on vegan & vegetarian food. This year, she began writing her column, *The New Vegan*, in the Guardian. Her fresh, fuss-free & vibrant cooking has made her a firm favourite in the food world with celebrity chefs including Ottolenghi singing her praises.

CornerStone: London's Restaurant of the Year

Cornerstone in Hackney Wick has been named as the London 'Restaurant of the Year' at the AA Hospitality Awards. Since opening last year, the seafood restaurant, owned & run by Chef Tom Brown, has gained an impressive reputation with Jay Rayner giving it a glowing review in the Guardian stating "Beautiful fish shown respect". Brown began working under Nathan Outlaw where he honed his skills working with fish & seafood & took a risk in opening the restaurant, but it paid off.

The menu is inspired by the tradition of sharing, so small plates made of simple seafood that showcases its versatility & flavour. Some dishes on the menu include: Salmon Pastrami; Oysters: Raw with Seaweed Hot Sauce, or Pickled with Celery, Horseradish & Dill; Grey Mullet Tartare, Egg Yolk, Seaweed & Soy; Crab Crumpet, Rarebit, Worcestershire Sauce; Cornish Ray Wing, Yakiniku Sauce. The restaurant has an open kitchen & a large bar serving up exceptional spirits, beers & wines.

Instagram: @cornerstonehackney Website: www.cornerstonehackney.com

In Season

- Apples
- Apricots
- Artichoke
- ♦ Aubergine
- ♦ Beetroot
- Blackberries
- Blueberries
- ♦ Broccoli
- Butternut
- Squash
- Carrots
- Celeriac
- Cucumber
- ♦ Fennel
- ♦ Figs
- Grapes
- ♦ Leeks
- ♦ Mackerel
- Mussels
- Nectarines
- Peaches
- Pears
- Peppers
- ♦ Plums
- Pumpkin
- Rocket
- Scallops
- Sweetcorn
- Tomatoes
- Venison



The Georgian Townhouse

Recently, a member of the team visited The Georgian Townhouse, Norwich. The stunning hotel & restau-



rant sits just outside the city centre & creates a secluded feel. Though on a busy road, the vibrant plants & traditional feel of the building make it feel like you're a world away.

The hotel opened as it is now seven years ago following a huge refurbishment which saw the impressive building, once four terrace houses, become a key place to go in the city for all events. The dining area is large with stripped wood floors & panelling with strong, vibrantly coloured

stocked bar

Lot's of local gins and other spirits at the well walls, & the impressively well-stocked bar offers drinks to suit all needs including local ales, ciders & spirits, wines & cocktails. The all-day dining

menu features globally inspired dishes with small plates, sharing platters, brunch dishes, mains & desserts all using local produce & includes:

- Confit Chicken Leg & Pistachio Terrine, Apple & Chilli Chutney, Pista chio Crumb
- Butternut Squash & Sweet Potato Falafel, Maple Tahini Dressing, Pump kin Seed Pesto
- Chipotle Marinated Baked Tofu, Pineapple, Guacamole & Salad
- Piri Piri Spiced Chicken Wings, Creme Freche Dip
- Roasted Chicken with a Lemon, Hazelnut, Thyme & Honey Glaze
- ◆ Red Lentil & Beetroot Burger, Beetroot Bun, Vegan Cheddar, Harissa Mayonnaise, Asian Slaw & Sweet Potato Fries
- Loch Duart Salmon Supreme, Pickled Vegetables, Saffron Potatoes, Spinach, Garden Pesto Dressing



The open, stylish bar at the front of the Georgian Townhouse

• Garden Salad of Tenderstem Broccoli, Asparagus, Quinoa, Pomegranate, Alfalfa, Soya Beans, Roasted Beetroot, Lemon Oil Dressing

In addition to the menu, they also offer private dining, BBQ's & buffet for various occasions & evens throughout the year. Visit www.thegeorgiantownhousenorwich.com for information.

Our Eyes On.....

• Flamboyant TV Chef, Gino D'Acampo is launching an Italian range into Iceland. The range will all be made in Italy using traditional methods then frozen to preserve quality and flavour. The supermarket said that the range will bring the 'authentic taste of Italy' to the home and will include pizzas, sugos (sauces), pasta and desserts, will all be free from artificial ingredients, colourings and flavourings. Keeping in line with Iceland's family friendly prices, the range starts at £1.50 for products such as flatbread.

• Nestle have launched a trio of dairy-free lattes: coconut, oat & almond. Launching exclusively in Tesco, they're described as the world's first 'plant-based soluble coffee mixes'. Dairy free coffee has been booming since the popularity of vegan & plant-based diets became mainstream. The launch comes at a time when the sector is constantly growing, but most products alternative milk coffees available are pre-mixes from brands Alpro & Starbucks as well as labels including Califa Farms who have a Salted Caramel Cold Brew & Mocha Noir Cold Brew flavours. Nestle are the first brand to bring dairy-free soluble mixes to the market & we expect more products to appear on the shelves over the coming months following the boom in both plant-based diets and the growth in craft coffee.

• Pret A Manger has launched it's new autumn menu to help us prepare for those chillier days. The new range includes sandwiches, soups, hot boxes, hot drinks & snacks. 24 items have been added to the seasonal menu & these include: Brie & Bacon, Salt Beef & Pickles, Mozzarella Pesto & Roasted Tomato Focaccias; Spicy Chorizo & Red Pepper, Soft Cheese & Feta Omlettes; Mushroom Risotto; Ginger Snap Biscuit; Pecan Caramel Cookie; Rhubarb Lemonade; Ginger Kombucha; & the drink of the season, the Pumpkin Spice Latte is back too. Lot's of additions to the menu have also been made vegan friendly. The menu is in Pret stores across the country now.

Vermouth

One of the biggest drinks trends of the year has been the huge increase in popularity of vermouth-based cocktails such as Negronis, Manhatten, the Boulevardier & the Dirty Martinis. This is evident in bars & restaurants as well as Google searches which are up by over 30% showing the growth in interest. As well as the rise in popularity of cocktails and a lot of people making these at home, the general gin trend has also played a part in the resurgence of vermouth with its aromatic botanicals. As with gin, it's the distinctive blend of herbs, roots, barks & spices that give each vermouth its character when added to the relatively neutral base of fortified white wine.

Traditionally, there are two varieties of Vermouth, but manufactures have developed an additional variety due to demand & to add diversity to the category:

• Sweet, also known as red, rosso or rojo, is rich, robust & sweeter than white varieties. Tradi tionally, it is made with a red wine base which is then fortified with a high proof alcohol, usually brandy, infused & then sugar is added up to around 15%.

• Dry, made from white wine grapes, has no sugar added in the process. Again, it is fortified & infused with botanicals, usually more citrusy & herbaceous than sweet vermouth.

• Blanc or Bianco vermouth sits somewhere in-between dry & sweet & vary be tween brands with flavours ranging from floral to herbaceous, to rich & spiced. It can be made with white grapes or a combination of white & red grapes & are very versatile.

In the last year, many new labels of vermouths have hit the shelves making the category much more diverse & exciting with regional flavours being added to create unique products. Italy have had the monopoly on vermouth production historically as the drink was first created in Turin. Vermouths made here gained DOP in 2017 to preserve the traditional methods & it's production history. However, the craft-spirit fever that has engulfed many spirits has done so with vermouth & it is now being produced globally. Spain particularly has grown massively as a producer of the drink with many brands now available in the UK, such as Rojo Classico, Dorado Amargo Suave, & Forzudo brands gaining popularity. Vermouth pop-ups & bars are becoming more commonplace showcasing the drinks flavours & versatility.



Otto's Lavender Cocktail

During a recent visit to a cocktail bar one the team tried out a couple of the specials available including an Otto's Lavender made with Otto's Athens Vermouth, lavender & a citrus twist as well as an Italicus Negroni using the Bergamot Liqueur instead of Campari in the classic gin & vermouth cocktail.

Rick & Morty's Survival Rations

Official Rick and Morty merchandise from the colossal hit adult swim TV show, to keep you safe and prepared on your perilous journeys through space and time all you need is...sauce? Yup, a gift set of 4 jars of pickles, sauces and relishes themed around the show and various peculiar episodes to the hilarity of its fans.

If you are a follower you will instantly recognise the nods to the show, the most unmistakeable one being 'Pickle Rick' s3 ep3 where Rick turns himself into a pickle to get out of going to a family therapy session "IM PICKLE RIIICK!" and the season 2 finale where Rick and his family are searching for a new planet to live on after the federation had found him on earth, they settle on a tiny planet after ruling out one where the days are 42 hours long with a sun that screams non-stop, and one where everything is on the cob. Not just corn but everything from mountains to animals and even down to an atomic level. Within the show there are a few notable moments where Rick references McDonalds szechuan teriyaki dipping sauce which was sold in 1998 as a promotion for Disney's Mulan "I want that Mulan nugget sauce Morty". And the creators of the show Justin Roiland & Dan Harmon, with the driving force of their dedicated fans and social media behind them managed to bring it back on a few separate occasions back in 2017 and 2018.

Within the set you have 'Beer and smoke pickle Ricks' gherkins in a beer & smoke brine infused with mustard, fennel & coriander seeds, pepper, dill & chilli. 'Morty's smoky corn relish' a chunky relish of corn, cucumber, pepper, radish & shallot, flavoured with honey, mustard, turmeric & a light smoke. 'Dark matter barbecue sauce' a soy based barbecue sauce ideal for marinating & dipping. 'Ricks special recipe sauce' a sweet and spicy dipping sauce with chilli and Sichuan pepper, now this isn't Mulan's nugget sauce but its just as good.

The gift set is currently available from notonthehighstreet.com, amazon.co.uk, and firebox.com. "And that's the wayyyyyy the news goes!" - Rick s2 ep4 .

Californian Cuisine

The food of California has been a key food trend this summer but the eating habits & food of the American state have been shaping the way we eat for many years.

The state, which has been dubbed as The Land of Milk & Honey, The Golden State, & The Grape State,

has been known for many years for the great variety of produce grown there. Annually it's estimated that more than 300,000 tons of grapes are harvested each year & grows over 200 different crops. The state is the largest producer of the USA's almonds, apricots, dates, figs, nectarines, olives, pistachios, walnuts, avocados, lemons, melons & strawberries, as well as being one of the largest producers dairy products. With such a diverse & successful agricultural sector it's not surprising that the state has come to be known as one of the best food-destinations in the world. The concept of Californian cuisine is relatively new with people only starting to use the phrase around 50 years ago. Originally it referred to the dis-



Palm tree lined streets are the perfect backdrop for the cuisine that screams summer.

tinct style of cooking coming out of innovative restaurants in the state at the time & the farm-to-table movement. In the 1960s', food in California moved away the 'continental cuisine' which dominated at the



Coachella festival puts the spotlight on the food culture of California

sion cuisine in the world.

time; kitchens opened up & chefs began relationships with farmers, seeking out the best produce available & putting locality & seasonality as a high priority, the importance of which spread globally. This array of ingredients gave way to an explosion of innovation & experimentation moving away completely from restrictions of some European cuisines & built on the diverse-ethnic make-up of the state. Modern Californian cuisine is still based on these principles but is much more diverse today with the large migrant population hailing from countries including Korea, Mexico, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, & many others. Second & third generation migrants have combined their families traditional flavours & cooking with that of other countries resulting in some of the most exciting fu-

California is also the heartland of celebrity meaning that health trends frequently originate here & the current global obsessions with plant-based diets, kombucha, & poke bowls are said to have begun here. Though the concepts of many foods aren't new, California is the place which makes them famous, markets them to a wider audience, & in many ways, makes them cool.

Earlier this year, Eleanor Maidment released her book *California: Living + Eating* to celebrate the states food in one place & others leading the California charge in the UK include East London's Violet Bakery; Silo, Brighton, pioneers of zero-waste dining which is said to originally been spearheaded in California); & Bristol hotspot, Root, which channels the West Californians emphasis on fresh produce with its veg-first approach.

Margarita's Comeback

Margaritas have never really fallen out of fashion but in 2019, they have become one of the most popular cocktails, in it's traditional guise but also has been getting revamped, pimped & specialised. It currently ranks as the 8th most popular cocktail with consumers according to Business Insider.

It's thought that the Margarita has been in existence since the mid 1930's. It's origins are unclear but is said to be a tequila version of the Daisy cocktail – Margarita is the Spanish for daisy – a popular American drink which is made with mixed alcohol, citrus juice & grenadine. Other stories suggest that Dallas socialite Margarita Sames invented the drink whilst others trace its roots back to the



legendary Balinese Room in Galveston Texas. Whatever it's origins, drinks historian David Wondrich is sure it originated during this time period.

A classic Margarita consists of blanco tequila, lime juice & triple sec or orange liqueur served in a salt rimmed glass & garnished with a slice of fresh lime. The blend of sour, sharp, sweet & fruity flavours with the hit of salt has made it one of the most popular drinks of the 20th century.

However, the clean & classic flavour has offered a base for flavour fusions & other ingredients. London's DF/Mexico serves up margaritas 3 ways: classic, raspberry, & hibiscus; Cantina Laredo in Covent Garden serves up a watermelon variation & another made with Casa Ambar 100% agave blanco tequila; & Mestizo, Camden, serve up a huge range of flavour variations which include cucumber, jalapeno, ginger, & strawberry.

In 2019, the cocktail has come full circle in many ways. The variations on flavours & ingredients are still popular, especially with sustainability on the rise so swapping out lime for sustainable blends made with seasonal fruits for example, or just adding on-trend flavours – yuzu margarita anyone? – but the focus in the drinks sector on provenance & quality mean that the traditional tequila, lime & orange liqueur blend using exceptional ingredients is the most popular with both consumers & bartenders as it allows the flavours to shine through, particularly that of tequila which is having somewhat of a renaissance. Like gin, we are now appreciating the natural variations in tequilas flavour & these are being put front & centre in classic margaritas on menus across the UK & the rest of the globe.

Celebrate National Margarita Day in 2020 on Saturday 22nd February. If you can't wait until then, create your own using a classic recipe, a variation such as the Tommy's Margarita which replaces the orange liqueur with agave nectar, or add your own twist.

Salt & Time with Alissa Thomoshkina

Recently, one of the lab attended a Russian cookery workshop at Abergavenny Food Festival. The workshop was taken by Alissa Tomoshkina, author of *Salt & Time: Recipes from a Russian Kitchen.* The workshop began with an introduction to Alissa & her background. Alissa was brought up in Siberia close to the border with Kazakhstan. Her love of cooking has existed since childhood & she attributes this love to her grandmother, a Ukrainian pastry chef who was evacuated to Siberia during the second world war, with whom she would cook as a child. Alissa's food celebrates the relatively unknown & unex-



plored food of this region of Russia whilst at the same time putting her own twist on certain dishes inspired by her time in Russia, the UK & Israel. After completing her PhD in Soviet Holocaust & Film History, she began running supper clubs which led on to her cookery writing career.

The first dish created was a Russian cured cod, described by Alissa as 'Soviet-Korean Ceviche'. Fresh, firm cod fillets were sliced thinly & placed in a pickling liquor of sweet wine vinegar – Belazu's Moscatel wine vinegar was used on the day – with salt, sugar, thinly sliced onion & toasted coriander seeds. After curing for 1 hour, the fish was mixed with shredded carrot, pepper, fresh parsley, & red onions.

Soviet-Korean Ceviche

Inspired by her time in the Middle East, Alissa's second

recipe was a Russian take on Dukkah, the spice & nut blend eaten throughout the region. This involved toasting black peppercorns, coriander seeds, fennel seeds, caraway seeds & sunflower seeds until they popped & grinding them with salt. Rye bread was then thickly spread with butter & dipped into the spice mix. This dish had it's roots in the tradition of Bread & Salt, where a tray of specially baked bread with salt would be presented to important guests as a welcome.



Russian Dukkah



The final dish was a simple but delicious cour-

gette & onion dip. Onion & courgette were sliced thinly & fried in raw sunflower oil until browned & slightly caramelised. Whilst cooking, 3 garlic cloves, chopped, were added. Once cooked, dried mint, salt, the juice of 1 lemon, & a handful of chopped dill was added. This was all mixed together vigorously to create a textured dip. Raw garlic was added at the end for a more punchy flavour but this was optional & served with rye or sourdough bread.

Al- Alissa taking the class issa's food smashes all preconceptions & out-dated ideas of what Russian food is like. It is not dull & boring as it generally considered in the UK, but fresh, vibrant, explosively delicious & has a much greater variation than it's given credit for. Due to Russia's vast size & the multiple borders it shares with countries from Europe, the Middle East & Asia mean it's cuisine shows influence from across half the globe creating really uniquely flavoured dishes not found elsewhere.

Insects: The Solution to Feeding the Future?

Rapid global warming & climate catastrophe are at the forefront of the global consciousness. The threat to our environment & our lives is real & scary meaning that people are looking desperately for solutions to the problems that climate change can bring. The consequences will be dire unless something is done, & one of the most serious impacts is on the food we eat. We're already struggling to feed all the people on the planet. Add in desertification, temperature & sea level rise & the resultant damage to the food chain & the land that we rely on to grow crops, an alternative to current food sources is needed. A suggested solution is to turn to insects as a source of food, but how?

Around 2 billion people around the world eat insects already as both delicacies & in their raw form. There are about 1.4 billion insects for every human in the world, & they provide high quality protein, fibre, fatty acids, & micronutrients such as copper, iron, and selenium. Insects are available to everyone therefore are not restricted to just the rich or poor, they take up little space, need minimal water & their carbon footprint is a fraction of that compared to livestock. Beetles are currently the most consumed insect on the menu followed by caterpillars, bees, wasps, & ants. Locusts, grasshoppers & crickets follow with dragonflies & flies also being eaten in certain parts of the globe.



Could insects like crickets & locusts be the solution to future food shortages?

In the Western world, eating insects is considered a taboo subject & their consumption is looked upon negatively as they're often perceived as unclean & causes of disease. In addition, a barrier to the consumption of insects in this area of the world is legislation. In the UK, there is currently no set list of insect species deemed suitable for human consumption, but this is changing. The Food Standards Agency (FSA) have made movements to compile a list of insects that are suitable for humans & in 2017 the Swiss government removed restrictions on selling insects & insect-based products allowing supermarkets to sell mealworms, locusts & crickets in edible form.

So, will we be seeing more insect based foods on our shelves? Maybe. There isn't much movement in that direction in the UK at present, however there is a greater movement towards including insects in animal feed, which goes someway to tackling the impact producing animal feed has on the environment & it's contribution to the climate problem but with the growing pressure of climate catastrophe, the addition of insects to our daily diets is looking more & more likely.

Don't Miss

◆It's National Curry Week from 7th-14th October. The week long celebration of everything spice began in 1998 to drive awareness and appreciation of the growing Indian restaurant industry in the UK whilst at the same time raising money for charity. Founder, Peter Grove, had three core objectives when he set out his curry vision: honour the nations favourite cuisine, celebrate and support the Indian restaurant industry, and raise money for poverty focused charities. To celebrate, the event encourages people to visit their local curry house offering a 25% off voucher at partaking venues, or host your own curry night using their official recipe book, *From Bombay to Britain* featuring signature recipes from 50 of the UK's best Indian restaurants & give a small donation to the charity, Curry for Change. Visit <u>www.nationalcurryweek.co.uk</u> for more information.

• It's the month for Okctoberfest. The traditional German celebration has migrated to the UK & now annually events take place all over the country to celebrate the festival. London is celebrating with three events: 3rd-6th October at Mill Wall park, 24th-26th October in a Halloween event at Olympia, and in Central London on 15th-16th November. Open in Norwich is holding it's own Oktoberfest celebration on the 11th & 12th. The traditional event in Germany take place across a 16-18 day period with the largest celebration happening in Munich, Bavaria with a huge range of entertainment including parades, food, music, family days, concerts, and more which ends on 6th October.

• It's International Coffee Day on Tuesday 1st October. The day is a global celebration of the beverage & aims to recognise the millions of people across the planet, from farmers, roasters, baristas, coffee shop owners, and more – who work hard to create & serve coffee. It's estimated that 3 billion cups of coffee are consumed globally everyday but many people in it's production lack the recognition & support to continue to sustain the industry for the future & International Coffee Day educates people about coffee & through pledges aims to protect coffee farmers & producers by securing them a living wage. Visit <u>www.internationalcoffeeday.org</u> for more information.

Sauce Ideas

- ♦ Fig & Hibiscus Chutney
- Garlic, Lemon & Rosemary Glaze
- Mozzarella, Pesto & Roasted Tomato Crumb
- ♦ Brie & Bacon Pellet
- Rosemary, Thyme & Tarragon Butter
- Wakame & Miso Glaze
- Chipotle Corn Chowder Dip
- ♦ Ginger Snap Glaze
- Bacon & Spinach Cream Sauce
- Tamarind & Coconut Curry Sauce
- Coriander Chutney
- Indian Spiced Tomato Chutney
- Caramelised Onion & Ginger Chutney
- Guava Jam Style Glaze
- Black Cardamom & Turmeric Butter
- Mango & Cinnamon Lassi Style Dip
- Pumpkin Seed Pesto
- Lime & Coriander Hollandaise
- ♦ Chipotle & Pineapple Marinade
- ♦ Lemon, Honey & Thyme Glaze
- Passion Fruit, Chilli & Pink Peppercorn Salsa
- Apple & Date Chutney
- Mushroom XO Style Sauce
- Avocado Matcha Custard
- Dark Chocolate, Passion Fruit & Olive Oil Drizzle
- Negroni Drizzle
- Vermouth & Lemon Dressing
- Smoky Corn Relish

- Russian Dukkah Butter
- ♦ Courgette, Onion & Mint Dip
- Russian Pickling Brine
- Carrot & Caraway Vinaigrette
- Russian Herb Dressing (Dill, Parsley, Chives)
- Blackcurrant, Honey & Spice Glaze
- Cumin & Fennel Dressing
- Classic Port Gravy
- ♦ Apricot & Lemongrass Compote
- Sherry Vinaigrette
- ♦ Sour Cherry & Armagnac Glaze
- Vermouth & Pomelo Dressing
- Mushroom & Tarragon Ragu Sauce
- Celeriac, Apple & Truffle Salt Sauce
- Beetroot, Blackcurrant & Honey Ketchup
- ♦ Yuzu Tartare Sauce
- Loveage Bloody Mary Sauce
- ♦ Rose, Cherry & Calamansi Curd
- Pea & Chive Hummus
- Chorizo Jam Style Chutney
- Blackberry, Cassis & Lemon Thyme Curd
- ◆ Turmeric & Coconut Custard
- Seaweed Hot Sauce
- Yakiniku Style Sauce
- Strawberry, Lemon Verbena & Vanilla Compote
- Blackberry & Cucumber Margarita Glaze
- Raspberry, Hibiscus & Tequila Drizzle
- ♦ Spiced Beer Brine
- Szechuan Teriyaki



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