

# ***Green Cow Chef Writes....***

This April was very similar to last April, and indeed the one before that. I really enjoy the month, not just because my favourite herb - wild garlic - is at its best, but April is usually pretty warm. It started well with the first swallow appearing (on his own) on the 4th, a few days later he was joined by a handful of others - these birds symbolise the start of spring and summer. The damson blossom lit up the hedgerows and orchards of Whitbourne from the start of the month, with pear and apple blossom just after, and primroses and celandines popped up in the blossoming hedgerows. I also like this month because I have recently discovered a new carp fishing lake and these longer warm evenings often find me by a lake, or waiting (with the 12-bore) for pigeons to come in and roost.



*This years' lambs are doing well. You drive through their field on the way to the restaurant*

After a lot of searching, I have finally found a place with enough rabbits for me to 'harvest', unfortunately that place is my mother's orchard, and rabbits (especially the young "cute" ones) are a protected species there... shameful really as we own two spaniels and a greyhound, and rabbit is one of my ultimate culinary delights. Rabbit is very easy to deal with once shot; simply insert a sharp knife into its stomach and pull out the insides (keep the liver!). The skin can then be separated from the flesh and pulled over the rabbit's saddle and back legs - this is easier with younger rabbits, which are more succulent and milder in flavour, old bucks may as well be used for dog training! Once skinned the rabbit can be separated into saddle, shoulders and legs - roast the shoulders and make a stock out of them. The legs should be confit in bubbling fat scented with thyme and garlic until the flesh falls off the bone. The saddle should be boned out and possibly smoked then sliced into a salad with chive dressing, toasted walnuts and figs if you wish. Perhaps sear the livers and deglaze the pan with Madeira, add some softened shallot and porcini and serve on sourdough. Yum!

April, the month for new growth and life has also (ironically) been a very busy month for our meat stocks too, in that a lot of our wonderfully looked after animals on the home farm have made their way into the butchery room and my chiller. A large Beef Shorthorn is hanging in our chiller as we

speak, the forequarters were butchered last week and so next week we will butcher the loin and legs ready for restaurant use. I have been cooking a lot of lamb lately, as is tradition, and I still don't think there are many things more mouth watering than a pulled apart shoulder of lamb with capers, anchovies, sea salt and rosemary. I have also made a lot of sausages out of the older sows kept on the farm. The younger woodland pigs have also featured heavily on my menus. Jack, the gamekeeper, has continued to supply me with muntjac (venison) which because of its small size is well suited to making burgers and sausages (both of which can be bought at Whitbourne village shop). I have also cooked a lot of woodpigeon this month (email me if you need any inspiration here!).

We have been very busy in the kitchen with a handful of private Sunday lunches and mid-week events, and I continue to enjoy working with a local Michelin starred chef who is giving me plenty of ideas. April had wild garlic and nettles, which although still edible in May are best eaten a bit younger. This month has elderflower and possibly gooseberries and of course our old friend asparagus (the smaller stems are delicious raw), see Hugh F-W for plenty of asparagus ideas. May is already shaping up to being another busy month and the summer is looking good too with private events, parties and weddings dotted along our calendar. I must also thank my mother who planted all of my salads and herbs this year, also the Care Farm ([longlandscarefarm.co.uk](http://longlandscarefarm.co.uk)) for attending to the new outdoor landscaping developments.

Thank you for your continued support and hopefully this damp, windy start to May will blow over and we can all enjoy the early summer sun, a nice glass of fizz and maybe an elderflower fritter or two... See you at the restaurant soon (we still have a few spaces left for Friday...). See [www.greencowkitchens.co.uk](http://www.greencowkitchens.co.uk)

Best Wishes,

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