

RIVERFORD ORGANIC FRUIT & VEG BOXES IN OXFORDSHIRE



The period leading up to Oct 8th 2004, the South Oxfordshire launch of the Riverford Home Delivery service for organic produce, was a busy time in the life of any new business venture. This was particularly true for one that based its future not on an astonishing new technological breakthrough but upon an age old tradition of produce grown without the aid of artificial assistance, so often a part of today's "modern" supermarket society.

Trevor and Helen Wood launched their new business, based in Frilford Heath, with the belief that the traditional taste of fresh grown produce, "like your grandparents used to grow", was a real aspiration and growing need of today's consumer. Knowing where your daily intake has come from, what has been done to it and, as importantly, what it can do for you, is a growing interest amongst many consumers today.

So, how has the last 4 months' experience in launching such a new business venture matched up to expectations? Trevor explains that the first year business plan was based on achieving 350 customers by the end of the first year however, by the end of month 4 the business had achieved more than 575 registered customers and continues to grow rapidly each week. "The challenge today" says Trevor, "is not one of finding new customers but how to sensibly manage the logistics of delivering high quality customer service whilst growing quickly". "The answer", he feels, "is a simple one, of always having the time to spend with your customers, talking with them and responding to their needs in a way that provides personal service with quality deliverables – another traditional way of doing things!"

"Clearly, we have been delighted with the response from all of our customers in the area and word of mouth recommendations have proven to be at the heart of the success our service has enjoyed since we launched", comments Trevor. "We must now build on this solid start and not lose sight of an important core value for us to provide quality organic produce through a high quality delivery service that our customers thoroughly enjoy". Riverford Organic Vegetables is a co-operative of farms around the UK that have been farming organically since 1990 having started conversion from traditional farming methods in 1986. Riverford foster natural systems by using crop rotation and green manures, working positively with nature whilst having the minimum impact on our environment. We are what we eat and it is important to feel a connection with and a trust in our food that is sometimes denied by today's modern farming methods, mass retailing techniques and their demands upon suppliers and growers.

"We want people to share in our and our customers enthusiasm and enjoyment for good food and believe this will be an ever increasing requirement of tomorrow's marketplace as knowledge and understanding of how we can influence the health of our bodies continues to grow", says Trevor.

Why not try a couple of these seasonal tasty recipes to set those taste buds racing.....ENJOY!

TREVOR AND HELEN WOOD



Contact: Riverford Home Delivery on 01865 390871 or 0845 600 2311(local call) or visit www.riverford.co.uk

RECIPES

Jerusalem artichokes + leeks, bacon and sizzled sage.

Ingredients: 500g jerusalem artichokes
2 leeks, sliced at an angle into 1" pieces
50g streaky bacon
1 tbsp lemon juice
salt and pepper
4 tbsp olive oil
handful of fresh sage, coarsely chopped



Method: Bring a saucepan of slightly salted water to the boil. Peel the artichokes and slice them thickly. Drop them into the water and simmer briskly for 15 minutes. Meanwhile, steam the leeks for 3 minutes, until they are just tender and still bright green. Brown the bacon over moderate to high heat until crisp. Drain the artichokes and put them in a warmed serving bowl. Sprinkle with the lemon juice. Scatter the leeks and bacon over the top and season with sea salt and plenty of pepper. Heat the oil in a small skillet until very hot. Add the sage and sizzle for 30 seconds - it crisps as it cools. Pour the oil and sage over the vegetables and serve straight away.

Greens stir-fried with ginger,

Roughly chop and rinse greens or a green cabbage. Get some oil really hot in a heavy-bottomed pan or wok. Add ginger, salt and pepper. After stirring for a few seconds add the cabbage and toss in the oil for about 2 minutes over a high heat. Add a little sesame oil and/or some lightly roasted sesame seeds and serve immediately.

Cabbage with smoked bacon,

Fry the bacon until it starts to crisp. Add finely chopped green cabbage and toss in the bacon fat until the greens are wilted. Season if necessary and serve immediately.

A "FETISH FOR FRESHNESS "AT THE WELLINGTONIA RESTAURANT

How do we make this happen? Our pesticide free kitchen garden is full of fruit and vegetables lovingly tended by our gardener of 11 years - "Mr Broad". Wherever otherwise possible we use locally produced organic produce. Combine these two ingredients with a truly passionate chef - Charles combines French Michelin star culinary skills with British and European influences, the the result is stunning.

We would like every one to use our restaurant from a light lunch to a grand dinner and have developed menus and prices to fit every occasion. To accompany this a well balanced wine list with a mark up that is well below most restaurants and finally but also so important to you caring staff.

PETA LLOYD



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