



Salad of Jerusalem Artichokes, Red Onion, Hedgehog Mushrooms, Chickweed and Goat's Curd

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**Chef's tip:** You may forage for your own chickweed or alternatively use a similar cress or leaf from the greengrocer.

Serves 4

- 200g Jerusalem artichokes**
- 1 red onion (peeled and cut into 8 segments)**
- 100g hedgehog mushrooms**
- 100g chickweed (or alternative leaf)**
- Goat's curd (a good dollop for each portion)**
- Dressing:
  - 4tbsp olive oil**
  - ½ tbsp grain mustard**
  - 1tbsp cider vinegar**
  - Salt and pepper**

Pre-heat oven to 160C. Peel artichokes, cut into even sized pieces about the size of a chestnut. In a hot pan add a little olive oil, add the artichokes, season. Cook over medium heat for 4 to 5 minutes until they are golden brown. Remove from pan, place on a tray.

Add the onion into the pan, season, caramelise gently on both cut sides, remove and add to same tray. Place tray in oven and cook until artichokes and onions are tender.

Finally turn up the heat in the pan and add the mushrooms, sauté for 2 minutes, season then drain on a tray with a paper cloth.

Blend ingredients together to form dressing. In a bowl combine all ingredients with the chickweed, add dressing to lightly cover, check seasoning and then divide into 4 bowls, add a generous spoon of goat's curd on top and serve.

### Ox Cheeks, Pickled Walnuts, Crushed Swede and Carrot

Serves 4

- 4 ox cheeks**
- 1 pint ale**
- 2 red onions sliced finely**
- 1 clove garlic**
- Small bunch of thyme**
- Bay leaf**
- 1 star anise**
- 2 pints beef stock**
- ½ jar pickled walnuts (washed peeled and chopped)**
- 1 sprig flat parsley**
- 2 carrots**
- 1 swede**
- Butter**
- Salt and pepper**

Clean the beef cheeks of any major sinew on the outside. Cover with the ale and allow to marinade overnight.

Drain the cheeks well and reserve the ale. Put a solid bottomed casserole pan on high heat add a little oil. Season the cheeks well and then place in the pan and caramelise well on each side. Remove the cheeks from the pan and add the red onion, garlic, thyme, bay leaf, star anise and cook until the onions become caramelised. Place the cheeks back in the pan and then cover with the ale and stock and bring to a steady simmer. Cover with a cartouche and tin foil and place into an oven at 140C for 2 hours.

In 2 separate pans add the chopped carrots and swede, cover with salted water and cook until tender. Drain well, mix the 2 vegetables together, add a generous amount of butter and mash with a vegetable masher, season and reserve to be reheated later. Take out the cheeks from the oven and add the walnuts.

Cover again and cook for a further 1 hour or until very tender. Check seasoning, add chopped parsley. Serve in a bowl with a large spoonful of the crushed swede and carrot.

# Hidden TREASURE...

Foraged food has been around for a few years but is fast becoming the hot new thing. And after a foraged feast at The Olde Bell at Hurley **HILARY SCOTT** can see why...

FORAGING is the new organic said one of our food experts in last month's food trends for 2011.

And almost immediately after I was invited to The Olde Bell in Hurley which has a new team in the kitchen – and, guess what? Yes, they're into foraged food.

Great, I thought, I get to try the new trend for the year almost immediately.

But after I did I realised this is not a "trend" that will be replaced next year. Like organic before it, foraged food is here to stay and if you want a lesson in what to do with your gatherings once you've found them, book a table at The Olde Bell and pay attention.

And even if you're not the slightest bit interested in doing any sort of gathering, you'll thank me because the food at The Olde Bell is simply terrific.

I mean, who'd have thought I'd be spooning chickweed into my mouth and raving? It seems slightly barmy, normally I'm ripping it out of my garden path and cursing.

But what executive chef Warren Geraghty and his team do with their foraged food is amazing.

Warren has worked at a string of fantastic restaurants including Chez Nico, Pied à Terre, Restaurant Neat in Cannes and L'Escargot with Marco Pierre White. He has come to The Olde Bell from West in Vancouver and he's got an impressive team.

Head chef James Ferguson trained under Gordon Ramsay and Angela Hartnett, was sous chef at L'Escargot and head chef at Margot and Fergus Henderson's Rochelle Canteen.

Pastry chef Jason Farr also worked at L'Escargot for four years followed by London's oldest restaurant Rules where he mastered his style of modernising classic desserts.

But Warren and his team also want to grow their own and inbetween some sublime courses, we went out into the impressive garden which Warren has had planted up in

the hope of having a substantial vegetable and fruit supply starting this summer.

It's just all so impressive – prepare for a short history of the world if you ask for the history of the inn.

It dates from 1135 (reportedly Britain's second oldest inn) and was originally the guest house for the monks from the priory down the road. A bell would be rung at meal times so the monks could join the guests, hence the inn's name.

Amazingly, considering it's been standing 875 years, it has remained an inn throughout history. From Henry 1 through the Hundred Years War, the Crusades, Joan of Arc, the Reformation, the Tudors and Walter Raleigh, Cromwell and the union of crowns to the American civil war... you get the picture.

Wars, famine, turmoil, pestilence and all, the Olde Bell has been slaking thirsts and providing a haven for the traveller and for the locals in this historic part of Berkshire.

And the history literally seeps out of the walls – glance into a corner of the bar and you'll see a tiny door which leads you to an underground passage to the priory which has a whole amazing history of its own.

The bar, restaurant and other buildings you can hire for weddings are simply stunning. In fact the inn likens itself to a village with the main building for overnight guests and the auxiliary buildings for private gatherings.

Designer Ilse Crawford, whose portfolio includes Soho House New York and the Grand Hotel Stockholm, has created an unlikely but eye-catching marriage of medieval and modern and it's just beautiful.

But back to the food again – you see this piece is just like the Olde Bell, there's just so much to say about it.

We had one of the freshest-tasting salads – sweet slices of Jerusalem artichokes with shards of cooked red onion, hedgehog mushrooms (a wild mushroom not unlike a chanterelle), chickweed and goat's curd. The



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honeyedness of the artichokes and the sharp tang of the curd was mellowed by the onion and mushrooms and given zing with the chickweed.

The fish course was skate 'knobs' (cue bad joke – in fact the knob is apparently is either a bit of the tail or the cheek, said Warren, but whatever it is it's a fine cut and it certainly is a talking point), onion puree, black garlic, brown shrimps and wild sorrel. Soft buttery skate and the shrimps – so small, they were just like tiny bursts of fantastic fishy flavour – married brilliantly with the subtle onion and garlic (black garlic has an almost molasses-like richness and is not as strong as white garlic).

The main was a real rib-sticker of a dish – ox cheeks, pickled walnuts, crushed swede and carrot. The cheeks melted in your mouth and the gravy was as dark and rich as The Olde Bell's past.

Desserts were fabulous not just because they were a real taste of England but with thoroughly modern recipes – treacle tart and chocolate and orange sponge pudding, both with thick cream or custard, and rhubarb trifle – but because they came served in antique glass bowls and dishes and looked quite magnificent.

With a very impressive wine list, a very reasonable lunch menu and a bar menu that includes home-made pork pie, a ploughman's with choice of cheeses and a whole Brixham crab, The Olde Bell has something for everyone. And yes that includes chickweed...

■ The Olde Bell Inn, High Street, Hurley. 01628 825 881. www.theoldebell.co.uk.