



Monday 5th September 2022

Dear Customer,

It's feeling distinctly autumnal up here - grey, wet and mild. The hand has hovered over the thermostat several times but have managed to desist, there's a long winter ahead. By all accounts, electricity is going to be cheaper than gas so one bar of the portable 3-bar fire will be my first port of call before firing up the boiler.

We have sweet Cabbice cabbages, equally suitable chopped into a salad or cooked in the normal way. And we have figs from the South of France, picked ripe from the trees, please get them straight into the fridge.

Here are a couple of tasty recipes you could try this week:

Crunchy Cabbage Salad

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| 350g cabbage , shredded | 3 carrots , coarsely grated |
| fresh parsley , roughly chopped | 2 apples , quartered, cored and sliced |
| 3 tbsp toasted pine nuts | 1 tbsp pumpkin seeds |
| 2 tbsp each sunflower seeds and linseeds | |
| For the dressing: | |
| 2 tsp grated root ginger (optional) | 1 tsp clear honey |
| 2 tbsp lemon juice | 4 tbsp olive oil |

Prepare all the ingredients for the salad and mix them in a large bowl. Put all the dressing ingredients into a small bowl. Season and whisk until slightly thickened. Pour over the salad and toss until evenly coated.

Plum Tart

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| 500g shortcrust pastry | 100g ground almonds |
| 5 Hen Nation eggs | 142ml organic single cream |
| 100g organic butter, melted | 150g golden caster sugar |
| 500g plums, halved and stoned | 2 tbsp demerara sugar |

Roll the pastry out to the thickness of a £1 coin and line a 23cm loose-bottomed tart tin. Chill for 30 minutes. Heat the oven to 180C/ Gas 4. Line the pastry with parchment, cover with beans and bake for 15 minutes, lift out the beans and parchment and bake for 5 minutes. Whisk the almonds, eggs, cream, butter and sugar until smooth and pour into the pastry case. Arrange the plums in the case cut-side down, pushing them into the custard mixture, they should fit fairly close together. Sprinkle the top with demerara sugar and bake for 25-30 minutes or until the filling is just set and the plums are cooked.

It's Tuesday morning, it is the morning the woman who fellow students at Oxford described as obnoxious and opinionated: the woman who told a fellow student that she hoped she would drown; becomes our leader. I just hope that the position and power she fought to gain, now gained, might humble her into a more decent human being. Many lives, all our lives, hang on the decisions she will make. 'Elizabeth Mary Truss, PM..... we are watching you.' Things have been bleak but this is the bleakest yet. No words about climate change have been uttered.

Meanwhile she is planning to turn Britain into China's pig factory farm.....as she simultaneously wants to go to war with them. The woman is a mess. She is deeply worrying. Yep. Another thing to worry about, making that just about everything.

Nothing of interest to report here. The steering 'went' on my 14-yr old, otherwise still perfectly fine, car. The local garage replaced the steering pump then found it wasn't the pump but the pump hose that was leaking. They put it on order - 6 months to get the part. I called breakers yards all over the country, to no avail. I couldn't live 6 months up here with no car so I bought another car, exactly the same model and year as my existing car, just a different colour. That way I would know exactly where all the controls were, the handbrake, how to move the seats, open the boot etc. Eventually original car came back, so now I have two identical cars. I've got used to having two. I re-did my insurance and got 2 for the price of 1. It means I can now abandon a car and walk home if I want to, safe in the knowledge that I have another car there if I need it and can collect the other one back at leisure.

Of course, they get recalls at the same time and both have been called in for airbags. It's like having twins. So I booked car number 1 in with the dealership and thought I'd better have a service and health check at the same time. I had to drive 30 miles to the dealership where they told me they didn't have the airbags – the principal reason I took it there – they were on order. They gave me a spanking new courtesy car with a button for a handbrake, driving controls on the steering wheel and cruise control where the indicators should be. I'd only driven a few miles and the icons of 3 people appeared on the giant screen of a dashboard. Jesus, I never want a new car ! Next day I went to collect mine back and as I was driving out the car park there was a clunk. I ignored it. I got home and as I drove into my drive and there was an even heavier clunk. I called them. They said I should 'pop' it back. Pop back 30 miles and pick up the wretched courtesy car again. No way. I told them they needed to send someone out. I was in the garden when the RAC man arrived. I was soaking wet, I'd been in the garden in a drizzle that turned into torrential rain. In the torrential rain the RAC man had to haul my car up and inspect it. He was now soaked through. He couldn't find anything. He told me to drive it out and drive back in again. I did and it suddenly dawned on me that it might not clunk. 'please clunk, please clunk'. It didn't. I glided silently into the drive. 'Hang on' I said, 'I'll do it again'. This time I went right back down the road and came back up as fast as I could, doing a sharp right into the drive then braked hard. 'Did you hear it ?' I heard it, a faint clunk, but he didn't and said there was nothing wrong with it.

I hope you have a good week.

Kind wishes, Isobel