



Monday 29th January 2018

Dear Customer,

I hope this finds you well. Grey and windy here but thankfully mild. I hope we have seen the last of the snow for the winter. We have broccoli in the bags this week. It is delicious roasted in an oven at 200C/ Gas 6. Chop into florets, drizzle with olive oil and scatter with some chopped garlic and red chilli. Roast for 12-15 minutes then drizzle with a little balsamic vinegar to serve.

Chargrilled Broccoli and Cauliflower with Harissa

½ head broccoli
5 tbsp harissa
olive oil
½ cauliflower
handful toasted pine nuts

Separate the cauliflower and broccoli into florets and slice into medallions 1cm thick. Season with salt and grill until nicely charred and cook through – about 10 minutes. Toss with the harissa, sprinkle over the pine nuts and drizzle a little olive oil.

Broccoli, Chilli and Garlic Pasta

head broccoli, cut in florets
5 cloves garlic
400g pasta
fresh basil leaves
100ml olive oil, plus some to serve
1 tsp chilli flakes
60g pine nuts, toasted
salt and freshly ground black pepper

Boil the broccoli in lightly salted water until tender. Meanwhile heat the olive oil in a separate pan and gently cook the garlic and chilli for 2-3 minutes or until the garlic is golden brown. When the broccoli is tender, scoop out and add to the pan with the garlic and chilli along with 120ml of the broccoli cooking water. With the back of a fork crush the broccoli with the garlic to form a coarse puree. Return the pan containing the cooking water back to the boil and cook the pasta in it to al dente. Drain thoroughly and tip into a large serving bowl. Top with the broccoli puree and drizzle over the additional olive oil. Scatter with the toasted pine nuts and basil leaves. Toss until evenly distributed and season with freshly ground black pepper.

Cauliflower and Parsnip Bake

3 parsnips, roughly chopped
1 small leek, sliced
2 Hen Nation eggs
1 tsp mixed herbs
1 large carrot, roughly chopped
½ cauliflower, broken in florets
5 tbsp fromage frais
2 slices bread, spread with margarine

Preheat the oven to 180C/ Gas 6. Boil the carrots and parsnips until they are soft and steam the leeks and cauliflower until tender. Drain and mash the parsnips and carrots and spread over the base of a lightly greased ovenproof dish. Layer the leek and cauliflower over the carrot mix. Beat the eggs in a bowl, stir in the fromage frais and herbs and season with some black pepper. Carefully pour the egg over the vegetables covering them evenly. Lastly, chop the margarine -spread bread into cubes and sprinkle over the top of the vegetable layers. Bake in a hot oven for 30 minutes until the bread is crisp and golden brown and the egg has set.

The sheep have been taking a bit of a hammering this winter on Ernest's land. I've been getting as much food into them as possible but could do with moving them. It's so hard to find sheep grazing in these parts. In the paper I saw an advert for horse livery with grazing and I thought it was worth a call to see if they had enough land to accommodate sheep. It led me to a family with 4 different farms in the area growing mainly arable crops but they did have grazing. I was shown a big swathe of grassland alongside the river Swale and an area of grassland surrounded by woods – both areas connected by a grassy farm-track. Two deer galloped past, then a hare, then a fox. It was delightful. They have said I can rotate them between the two. It is so much more sheltered there and the grass will start growing sooner. I can move them when I like. I haven't told Ernest yet, he won't be pleased, despite his making it clear the other week that they are only there because I have nowhere else for them to go. So, the sheep are on the move again.

Myfa is for the moment much better than she was. She has finished her antibiotics and she is being weaned off the steroids. I'm hoping that she is through whatever it was. My problem now is how to get her mobile again as her muscles have been wasting and she won't walk anywhere, not even as far as the grass verge outside my house. She has elbow dysplasia through wear. I had a supportive brace made for her which helps a little but it's a mechanical problem so I need to see a specialist to see what can be done.

There were two highlights to my week. I'd bought a reconditioned remote control on ebay for my vintage B & O tv. It arrived and it actually worked so I can now increase the volume and hear the tv even when the kettle is on and the wind is blowing. The other highlight was the delivery of our very first Izzy Lane tufted wool rug sample. I had no idea what colour it would be or what the texture would feel like until I saw and felt it. I had emptied the barn of all the various bags of alpaca which I had bought over the years from pet alpaca flocks, the boxes of dog hair which came from Greenland from the Greenland breed of dogs of the Arctic explorer, the bags of wool from the generic sheep breeds and Swaledales which I have rescued along the way, as well as what was left of the Wenelsydale and Shetland fleeces. I sent it all to the scourer to put into one big pot, one blend. Without me seeing it, it then went to the carpet spinner and then to the rug maker in Turnberry. The result is a stunning, soft and luxurious deep tufted pile in a pale grey / taupe.

So if anyone is interested we can do any size or shape, they won't be cheap of course, but totally special and unique and will last more than a lifetime. You can email me at isobel@izzylane.co.uk

Three highlights actually – the snowdrops and aconites have come out ! Maybe four, I hope you never again see plastic coming from Farmaround. Many of us are disappointed in the organic industry as a whole and certain organic producers at their lack of attention to this – still prepacking in plastic. We are stopping all lines which come in it until they sort out an alternative. And good grief, there's another highlight - I saw a review online of Box Schemes for the Evening Standard in December, and verdict was Farmaround came out tops - for price, choice of fruit and veg, and for remaining true to our core credentials. Something you already know of course 😊. That was really nice to read.

Hope you have a good week,

Kind wishes, Isobel