

Juliet's Food Diary

"Hold onto your drinks, it's going to be a bumpy night..."

As seductively drawled by Bette Davis in All About Eve, it's not just a great line but in her hand she had a fabulous drink. A Gibson, dry gin martini with a cocktail onion, has always been my cocktail of choice. I like a drink that could lead to regretful behaviour.



Photo – Wullie Marr Photography

I was invited to attend a celebration of Scottish seafood at the Merchant's Hall in late August and was introduced to the most genius food and drink pairing: a fish supper with a Gibson. A fish supper without sauce is unfortunate but without a pickled onion, sacrilege! Arbikie excelled

themselves in the fabulous cocktails on offer and although I'm not the biggest vodka fan, their chilli vodka made an almost mind-blowing accompaniment to a sublime Lobster Bisque.

I was sat next to Justin Maule, chef extraordinaire and CEO of Wild

Fig catering, I was eager to hear the gossip from one of his latest

gigs: catering for the upcoming Netflix movie Outlaw King. Apparently

Netflix are extremely strict about their cutlery and plastic is pretty

much banned. So no sea turtles were harmed in the making of this film.

And what about Chris Pine, Justin? How does he have his chips, is he a

salt and sauce kind of guy? Does he eat his lunch in his pants?

Justin's lips are sealed. Don't you hate it when a chef won't spill

the beans. What happened with Robert the Bruce stays with Robert the

Bruce it seems...



Marks & Spencer opening on Princes Street in 1957

No Ordinary Centenary, an M&S Centenary

100 years ago something exciting happened in Dundee. What could that possibly be, I hear you ask! Marks and Spencer opened their first Scottish store in 1918. Now there are almost 100 M&S stores in Scotland with the latest one opening in Oban this year. To celebrant their Scottish Suppliers M&S held a dinner party at the Edinburgh Cookery School, featuring a trio of Smoked Salmon, their best selling Scottish produce, and beef from Scotbeef, who can trace your beef back to the cow it came from. The only thing that would make me happier about that is if I could eat the one that tried to kill me in Dumfries five years ago.



Hamish the herbologist

Herbologist Hamish Martin was in attendance to showcase his Rose and Lavender colour changing gins. Hamish tends to over 600 naturally grown herbs and flowers in his Secret Herb Garden located on the outskirts of Edinburgh near Hillend. Hamish tells me he has five children, so no wonder he needs to make his own gin. I was lucky enough to be given a bottle of his Lavender infusion to take away and entertained some guests the following weekend with a quick but delightful summer trifle:

Strawberry, Lavender and Mascarpone Trifle (serves 4)

1 punnet strawberries, hulled and quartered
50 ml Lavender Dry Gin, available at M&S
2 tbs castor sugar
1 small tub mascarpone cheese
1 tablespoon M&S scottish heather honey
100ml double cream

4 M&S scottish caramel shortbread petticoat tails

Add the sugar and gin to the strawberries and leave to macerate for at least a couple of hours. Mix the mascarpone, honey and cream. Divide the strawberries with some of their juices into four glasses, top with the cream mixture and finish off with a triangle of shortbread.

Hamish's Secret Herb Garden is open to the public and has a lovely coffee shop. You can also get married there! I'll need more than a bottle of gin to even contemplate that...

Christmas Comes Early

I never miss an opportunity to visit the lovely Caledonian Hotel, or the Waldorf, as it's known these days. There may have been some rebranding in recent years but the old girl retains her sumptuous Edinburgh charm. I love a grand hotel, especially at Christmas, so imagine my delight at being asked to sample some of the Caledonian's festive menus. Expect to find such delights as Jasmine Confit Salmon with Clementine and Endive and Roast Haunch of Borders Roe Deer with Celeriac and Red Currants at the Pompadour and Highland Game Terrine or Roast Scrabster Cod with Shellfish Risotto at the Galvin Brasserie.



At £35 per head for three courses I'd say dinner at the Brasserie is

pretty good value but will most definitely be tempted to upgrade to the luxurious splendour of the Pompadour for £49 or £75 with wine pairings. I'm getting far too lazy to order wine these days, I just want someone to bring it! As usual I try to find the most fun guest in the room and end up chewing the venison burger with a couple of ladies from a nearby Solicitor's office. The last thing I remember is being invited to apply for something called 'Tuesday Club'. I recall some mention of 'hazing'. I'm as game as most of the canapés I've eaten, yet I have a suspicion what happens at Tuesday Club stays in Tuesday Club...