

FOOD HERO



SEA to PLATE at Outlaw's Fish Kitchen

The Wellbeing Team joined Outlaw's head chef Tim Barnes for a lobster lunch in Port Isaac, to talk about low-impact seafood and high-impact dishes.

There's something in the air in Port Isaac. Perhaps it's the smell of freshly-landed fish and salty sea, but there's also a spirit to the place too: a cool, of-the-moment energy that dances alongside the village's rich history. And, with over 700 birthdays to its name, this fishing community certainly has history.

Today, it still feels a bit like stepping back in time, with few cars, winding lanes and white-washed cottages, outwardly unchanged for centuries, perched imperfectly on its steep, cobbled banks.

Set in a protected bay along the rugged north Cornwall coast, you'll find the village's working harbour. Boats still come in daily, with many of the catches going no further than a 15th-century, grade II-listed fisherman's cottage just a few steps away from the sea. It's here that Outlaw's Fish Kitchen resides. Just

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one of renowned chef Nathan Outlaw's seafood establishments, this is the laid-back sister of his eponymous restaurant at the top of Port Isaac. Nathan has cast the net of his fishy empire wide: he also has a pub up the coast in Rock and restaurants in the five-star Capital Hotel, London, and – perhaps most incongruously – the ‘world's most luxurious hotel’ Burj Al Arab Jumeirah in Dubai. It's his humble Port Isaac establishment that we're here for, though.

Though with a Michelin star to its name, it's perhaps misleading to call Outlaw's Fish Kitchen ‘humble’. Certainly it is small and cosy, with only eight tables available in its

Interview: Emma Winterschladen. Photography: Georgina Glynn Smith



Outlaw's Fish Kitchen head chef Tim Barnes and Calum Greenhalgh of Fresh From the Sea with Port Isaac catch of the day: lobster



Outlaw's Fish Kitchen head chef Tim Barnes and Calum Greenhalgh of Fresh From the Sea



low-ceilinged, wonky-walled space. But don't let a lack of pretension belie the talent, ingredients and skill behind each dish. We're met by head chef Tim Barnes, who has been with Nathan for over eight years, after first coming to work as a pot washer one summer. Since then, he's trained with Nathan and is one of the UK's best up-and-coming chefs. The focus here is the seafood - with an exquisitely crafted, minimalistic menu designed around the fish. As for the board menu,

it changes daily and is dictated by the tides - and weather. 'It all depends on what we get in,' Tim says. 'Fish is one of those things where you can't guarantee one day from the next - sometimes you'll have loads and sometimes the sea will be rough, and no one will be out.' It's this intimate connection with the sea that ensures Tim and his team can be flexible. 'We are ingredients-led, and know what works, which means we can adapt to what comes in. Seafood is the hero in

all the food we make, so if the fish isn't good, then the dish isn't good.'

In fact, while we're chatting, in comes Calum Greenhalgh, the local lobster fisherman and owner of Fresh From the Sea. A one-man show, Calum heads out most days in his boat *Mary D*. The whole thing, Tim says, is the epitome of sustainable fishing: 'Calum only goes out when he needs to go out, so he's not got thousands of pots. He does enough to supply us and a few others, but never tries to take too much.' The result is a true 'sea-to-plate' experience. 'Calum will walk through the restaurant at midday and hand-deliver his lobsters, with guests watching. Within minutes everyone will be ordering lobster!'

Tim goes on to say how, with all the fish they serve, every effort is made to buy local from inshore day boats that are certified by the Responsible Fishing Scheme. 'We're very strict on

our standards - we want to be as low impact as possible.'

Low impact, and - it turns out - totally delicious. As we talk, plate after plate arrives straight from the kitchen. From word-heavy choices such as 'cured salmon, pickled mushrooms, seaweed salad cream' to the more understated 'crispy cod, chilli jam' - each is a cornucopia of fresh flavours and textures. 'It's the best of Cornish produce. We source local wherever

we can,' Tim says as we all tuck into baked hake with cider onions, anchovy and tarragon butter. And then - the hero dish of the day arrives: griddled lobster with seaweed and lime butter. Plump, juicy, lick-the-plate-clean good - and with a deep umami kick. 'The butter keeps the meat tender and moist.' That this is one of their most popular dishes makes sense. 'Sometimes you've got to keep it simple, respect the ingredients and let the flavours do the talking. We use a lot of Cornish seaweed - sea lettuce and dulse mainly. We used to forage our own, until the swans came and ate it all.' As our meal rounds to an end, he goes on to tell us his top chef's tip for a deliciously light snack: egg-washed sea lettuce, dried out and cooked in a slow, low oven: 'It makes the most perfect seaweed crisps - but beware, they won't last long!'  nathan-outlaw.com

'Sometimes you've got to keep it simple, respect the ingredients and let the flavours do the talking'



Lobster risotto balls, basil and orange mayonnaise

MAKES ABOUT 20

Serves 10 as a starter

- 2 live lobsters, about 800g each
- 1 litre vegetable stock
- 250g carnaroli rice
- 1 bunch spring onions, finely sliced
- 100g Parmesan, freshly grated
- 1 orange, zest, finely grated
- 30 basil leaves, finely sliced
- 1 medium organic egg, beaten
- 150g plain flour
- 500g dried breadcrumbs
- Sunflower oil for deep-frying
- Sea salt and black pepper

FOR THE BASIL AND ORANGE MAYONNAISE

- 2 organic egg yolks
- 1 orange, zest, finely grated
- 30ml white wine vinegar
- 450ml light olive oil
- 4 spring onions, trimmed and sliced
- 20 basil leaves

Note: If you'd prefer to buy your lobster meat cooked and pre-prepared, start at step 4 of the method.

- 1 Put the lobsters in the freezer 30 minutes before cooking, to sedate them.
- 2 Bring a large pan of well-salted water to the boil. To kill the lobsters instantly, place them on a board and insert the tip of a strong, sharp knife firmly into the cross on the back of the head, then plunge them into the boiling water. Bring back to the boil and cook for eight minutes.
- 3 Remove the lobsters from the pan on to a tray and leave until cool enough to handle. Twist and pull the claws, legs and head away from the tails. Put the heads into a pan with the vegetable stock. Crack the claws and extract the meat. Using scissors, cut

open the tail shell along its length. Pull the shell apart and remove the tail meat in one piece. Cut this meat in half lengthways and remove the dark intestinal tract. Cut the tail and claw meat into small pieces, put in a bowl, cover and refrigerate.

- 4 For the lobster balls, bring the stock (and lobster heads) to the boil. Add the rice with a pinch of salt and bring back to the boil. Lower the heat and simmer until the rice has absorbed all the stock. Take off the heat and discard the heads. Stir in the spring onions, Parmesan, orange zest and some pepper. Spread the rice out on a tray and cool in the fridge.
- 5 Meanwhile, for the mayonnaise, put the egg yolks, orange zest and vinegar into a blender or small food processor and blend for 30 seconds. Then, with the motor running, slowly add the olive oil in a steady stream. If it gets too thick, add a teaspoon of water, then continue. Transfer to a bowl, stir in the spring onions and basil, then season to taste. Set aside.
- 6 Once the rice is cold, stir in the sliced basil and lobster meat. Break off pieces and roll into balls roughly the size of a golf ball. In a bowl, mix the egg and flour together with salt and pepper until smoothly combined. Place the breadcrumbs on a tray. Heat the oil in a deep-fat fryer, or other suitable deep, heavy pan to 160°C/320°F.
- 7 Pass the lobster balls through the egg mix and then into the breadcrumbs, turning to coat all over. Deep-fry in the hot oil, in batches if necessary, for about a minute until crisp and golden. Drain on kitchen paper and season with salt. Serve hot or cold, with mayonnaise on the side.

Roasted Port Isaac lobster, seaweed and lime butter

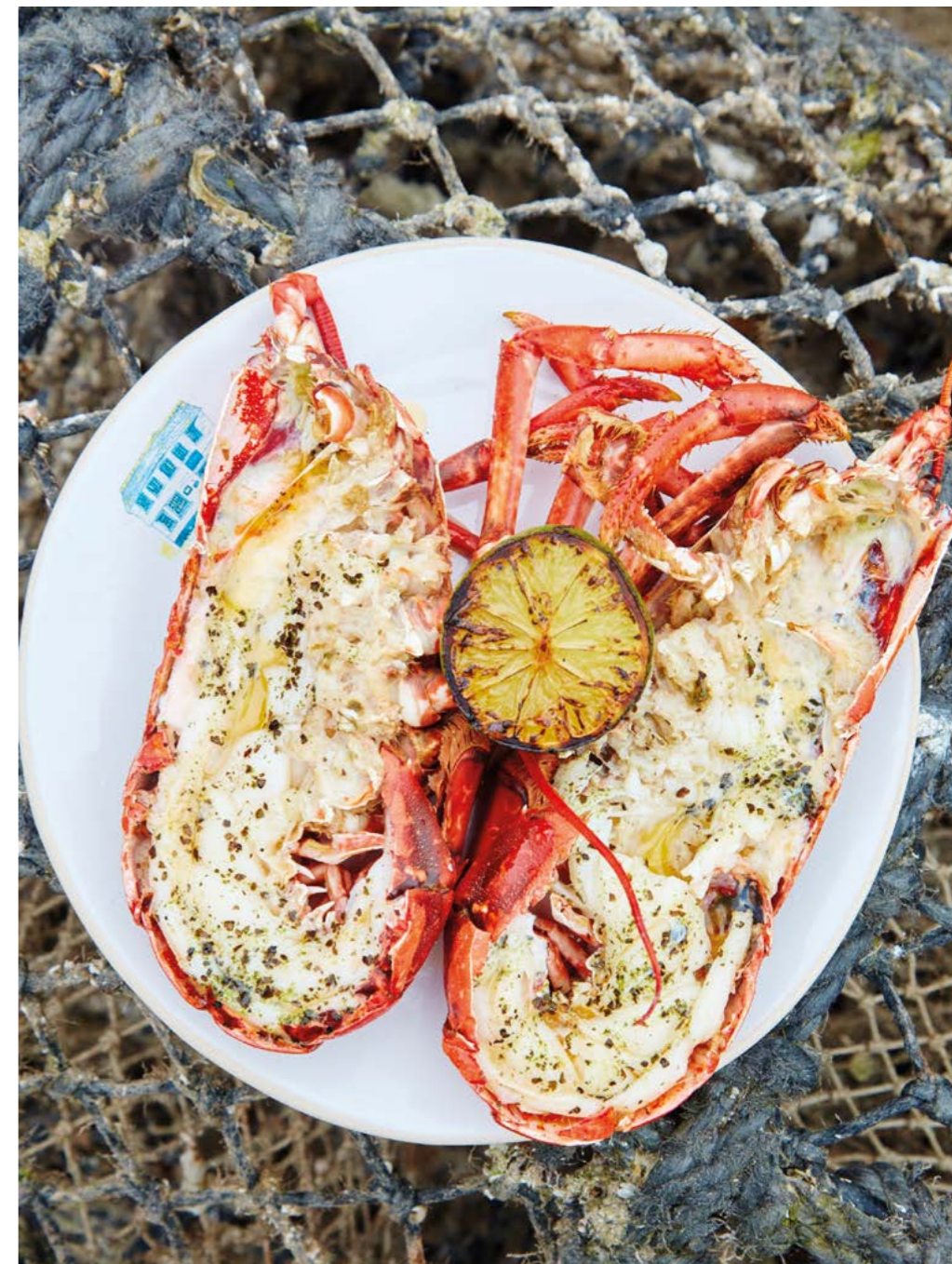
SERVES 2 as a main

- 2 live lobsters around 750g each

FOR THE BUTTER

- 250g unsalted butter, softened
- 3 tbsp dried sea lettuce (or dried seaweed mix)
- 1 shallot, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 garlic cloves, peeled and finely chopped
- 2 limes, zest, finely grated (reserve the juice to serve)
- Sea salt and black pepper

- 1 Put the lobsters into the freezer for 30 minutes prior to cooking, to sedate them.
- 2 To make the flavoured butter, put the softened butter into a bowl and add the seaweed, shallot, garlic and lime zest. Mix well until evenly combined and season with salt and pepper. Place the butter into a flat-based container (like a small Tupperware container), cover and refrigerate to firm up. Once firm, turn out the butter and cut into small cubes, for ease of use later. Place back in the container and refrigerate.
- 3 To kill the lobsters, remove them from the freezer and firmly insert the tip of a strong cook's knife into the cross on the back of the head. Now carefully cut the lobsters in half lengthways, from head to tail. Remove the stomach sack from the head and the dark intestinal thread running along the length of the tail. Crack the claws and lay them and the rest of the lobsters on a tray ready for cooking.
- 4 Drizzle the lobsters with oil and season with salt. Place the tray into a preheated hot oven, around 220°C/425°F/gas mark 7 for four minutes. Remove from the oven and



place the cubes of butter along the lobster bodies. Place back in the oven for a further four minutes until the butter has melted and is bubbling.

- 5 To serve, place the cooked lobsters on the plates and pour any remaining butter and juices from the tray over the top of the claws and body. Squeeze over some fresh lime juice and serve. Garnish? A cold glass of Albariño will do just the job.

Risotto balls recipe from Nathan Outlaw's Home Kitchen (£20, Quadrille)