

# Producer: The Metfield Bakery

THE baker Stuart Oetzmann worked as a chef for the Roux Brothers, Anthony Worrall Thompson and Sally Clarke before going home to Norfolk in 1999 and setting up business, first as the Handmade Food Company, making delicious pork pies, which he then transformed into The Metfield Bakery, taking over an old-fashioned baker in Dereham.

Fingers crossed, from today, he will have his own website from which people can order his ever-growing range of bakery and *charcuterie*, and copy his own recipe for the perfect pork pie (although, I would look for stockists and buy one from him).

As well as the bread (try



Old English heaven: Stuart Oetzmann's pork pies are mouth-watering

his country cob, stuffed with poppy, sunflower, sesame and pumpkin seeds), he's working on a whole range of utterly English cakes and puddings from 18th-century writers

such as Hannah Glasse and Eliza Acton—lardy and Eccles cakes, Bakewell and apple tarts and sticky gingerbread. He's also started his own pig farm with Gloucester Old

Spots, Large Blacks, Oxford Sandy and Blacks and, any minute now, a few Tamworths. The farm of more than 20 acres is only up the road, so the pigs are fed with waste from the bakery, stale bread returned by his stockists and vegetable trimmings.

'I am very interested in British *charcuterie*, such as Bath Chaps, brawn and black puddings, as well as ham cured in cider and honey plus bacon and ham that's dry salted or cured in molasses. There's an incredible heritage in this country.'

His new website ([www.metfieldbakery.com](http://www.metfieldbakery.com)) has recipes, details of the farm and its history, a forum and blogs. 'People can come back to us with their own views.'

## NEW NOW ► DINE AT THE DAIRY

The Dairy, part of the Rothschild fiefdom at Waddesdon (as opposed to the National Trust bit), is well worth a visit for its decor, gardens and food. There's a chance on April 22 when you are offered a four-course Sunday lunch for £45 with selected wines available (booking is essential on 01296 653226). The nearby Five Arrows hotel has themed dinners throughout the year, including France on March 18, Italy on April 22 and Austria on October 21. £55 each or £85 each for a double overnight ([www.waddesdon.org.uk](http://www.waddesdon.org.uk); 01296 651727).

## HOW TO BUY ► SUGAR

Sugar will soon join salt, potatoes and tea with special varieties and blends. We will want to know where it comes from, its type and its various uses. It will be sold by cane variety and country.

White sugar is highly refined from cane or sugar beet, and comes as granulated (coarse), caster (fine) and icing (crushed). Decorating sugar and sugar crystals have large grains, and can be coloured. There's also flavoured sugar with added spices such as vanilla or cinnamon. Common brown sugar is actually refined white sugar with molasses. I'd avoid all of them.

The best sugars are unrefined and of cane, which is pressed and cleaned. You can buy 'golden' granulated, caster and icing which have a caramel taste and are golden rather than stark white; there is also cane demerara, originally from Guyana, dry and coarse; light and dark muscovados, fudgy in taste; and molasses sugar, soft, dark brown and the richest of all.

All these are sold by Billington's ([www.billingtons.co.uk](http://www.billingtons.co.uk) for stockists), and come from Africa. There's also a Fair Trade range.

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## THE BEST EVER RECIPE FOR... PERFECT RHUBARB AND SCALLOPS

This is the season for coral-coloured forced rhubarb, but the stems can do more than make fools and crumbles. This innovative idea comes from Jeremy Round's *The Independent Cook* (1988, republished by Pan, 2001). He suggests the stalks could stand in for sorrel in other recipes.

12 fresh scallops  
Salt and pepper  
30g butter  
90g forced rhubarb, cut into 2cm long, ½cm thick batons  
3tbs water  
75ml double cream  
Chervil to garnish

Cut the scallops in half, keeping the coral on one half. Season. Heat the butter in a frying pan and sauté the scallops for 1½ minutes on each side.

Remove and keep warm. Put the rhubarb into the pan with the remaining butter, the water and a pinch of salt. Bring to the boil, then simmer for 2–5 minutes until cooked but not mushy. Remove and keep warm. Add the cream to a pan and cook until slightly thickened. Arrange the scallops on warm plates, spoon the sauce over and sprinkle with chervil.

I'd eat this with nothing but warm country bread to soak up the juices. Serves four as starter, two as a light meal. If rhubarb can truly double up with sorrel, it might be worth inventing a lovely pink soup.



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