



THE BLANC EXPRESS

JUST WHEN you couldn't imagine a train trip to Paris or Lille getting any more enticing, along comes Raymond Blanc to add his *je ne sais quoi* to the on-board culinary experience. In his new role as Culinary Director he aims to offer Business Premier customers some seasonal, sustainable produce in mouthwatering dishes. Among the Blanc family recipes on the menu will be mackerel salad and chocolate *délice* with praline custard. Tickets please!

● For ticket information and to see the Raymond Blanc menu, visit www.eurostar.com

US food and wine publishers will be guests of honour at the Paris Cookbook Fair 2013, taking place at Carrousel du Louvre, 22 - 24 February

For perfect pâté



FOR MOST of us humble French foodies, a *confit* usually refers to duck cooked in its own fat. But it turns out that fruit and vegetables can be slow-cooked in a *confit* style, to pack extra flavour and punch. A tasty *confit* accompaniment to pâté on sourdough toast has just reached the shelves thanks to Lucullus Confits, purveyors of gourmet pâtés and terrines who use only the finest ingredients. Take your pick of fig or onion and white wine flavours.

● Available in the chiller cabinet, next to pâtés, exclusively at Waitrose. Price £1.99 for 100g



Desert island dish



Ever wondered what floats a top chef's boat? Henry Harris reveals his ultimate French menu with fine wines

MY IDEAL MEAL with the peace, time and tranquility to enjoy would start with roast woodcock on toast, washed down with either a white burgundy like Domaine Coche Dury or a Chenin Blanc 47. Next course would really

have to be my favourite *côte de boeuf* – properly aged, of course – with Béarnaise sauce, *pommes frites* and a simple green salad. My wine choice here would be an Echezaux 2008 from Mugneret, which I'd slowly sip and then continue drinking as I rounded off my meal with a nice ripe Époisses cheese. Perfection!

● Henry Harris is head chef at Racine, 239 Brompton Road, London; Tel: 020 7584 4477; <http://racine-restaurant.com>

Boursin cheeses (you know the ones – '*du vin, du pain...*') have launched a limited edition version of their popular soft cheese with fig and nuts. It's a luscious blend of sweet, succulent figs and crunchy nuts, combined with its signature crumbly soft cheese. Available now in Tesco, Asda and online at Ocado priced £2.20 for 150g



We ask bloggers living in France to spill the *haricots blancs* on their favourite local restaurant. Jacqui Brown kicks us off in Deux-Sèvres



La Prairie Auberge

WHAT MAKES La Prairie special is their focus on seasonal, local produce that is home prepared, including their speciality of locally caught, home smoked trout. Depending on your chosen menu (prices from €18) they serve at least three courses, coffee and wine, but the portions are perfect so you never leave feeling uncomfortably full.

We always enjoy the house apéritif, a Charentais cocktail, which is a mix of Cognac, orange liqueur and sparkling wine, which on our last meal here was followed by a starter of filo pastry parcels filled with local goats' cheese, served with salad and a warm honey dressing.



To follow was a delicious homemade smoked trout quiche. The wine served with this was a Loire rosé, then a Loire red for the main course of quail in Pineau with lentils and endives. The quail was tender and moist, and although I am not a huge fan of endives, they did go very well with the meat and lentils. The cheese plate has a selection of *fromages* that always includes a local goats' cheese while the dessert is Madame's speciality, seasonal and homemade, and like the dining experience here, never disappoints. Jacqui Brown writes

www.frenchvillagediaries.com;

● More info: www.laprairie-hanc.com