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Traditional Cheese Co.

Traditional Cheese Company have been supplying premium cheeses to the Irish market for over thirty years.

As well as supplying Irish cheeses to both the retail and foodservice markets, they are also one of Ireland's largest importers of European cheeses.

In our last issue we invited our readers to submit their favourite cheese recipe and be in with a chance of winning a delicious cheese and wine hamper from Traditional Cheese Company.

We are delighted to announce the winner – Nick Murphy, a student at Waterford Institute of Technology and currently on placement in Culloden Estate. Nick has created a simple goat's cheese dish with a classic accompaniment of beetroot and textural additions of pecans and granola crumb.

A great recipe to use as a starter or for a light lunch, give it a go and tag us in your photos @yeschefireland

OUR COMPETITION WINNER... NICK MURPHY

Nick Murphy tells us about his inspiration for this recipe and what he loves about being a chef.

This dish is inspired by a dessert I had last summer, it was a quenelle of fresh cream with poached rhubarb which leaned up against the quenelle almost like the cream was supporting the structure and with a shortbread crumble underneath as the foundation. The dish ate beautifully, fresh and simple produce carefully put together to create a wonderfully seasonal dish. Nothing fancy or posh just good honest food treated with the respect it deserved.

This is what I wanted to portray in my dish, beetroots picked and cooked at the peak of their ripeness, married together with silky smooth goat's cheese that just melts in the mouth. I just try to be the best I can be and keep food simple and the way nature intended it to be, without taking too much away from the natural shape, flavour and texture of the food and to use fresh seasonal and sustainable produce and let the food do the talking.

I always liked food as a kid, I was always in the kitchen stuffing my face with anything I could get my hands on, most of the time it was done behind my mother's back, or so I thought. My father was a carpenter and spent most of his weekend fixing things around the house. My brothers and I would try to help

him the best we could, however I was not blessed with the hands for carpentry, so the majority of the time I was the one who was sent in to make the lunch or dinner.

From there I became fascinated with cooking, watching cooking programs, reading cook books, trying new ingredients, herbs, spices and flavour combinations. I got my first job in a kitchen because college said it would be the best way to learn the skills needed in the culinary industry. I started in The Bailey in Enniscorthy, a few minutes away from my house, under a very good head chef - Paul McClelland, who mentored me and shaped me and allowed me to grow into the chef I am now.

I love being a chef because you have the freedom to experiment with different food, flavours and create art on a plate. A plate is a chef's canvas, it's truly amazing what can be done with a few simple ingredients, especially in Ireland where we have an abundance of top quality produce such as beef, game, fish and vegetables at our front door.

You never stop learning new and exciting things in this industry. Chefs such as Massimo Bottura, Rene Redzepi and Simon Hulstone are all inspirational chefs with enormous talent who I look up to and try to take bits and pieces from their attitude on cooking and incorporate it into my own cooking style. I'd love to work in Michelin and have to cook that calibre of food every day, that's what I strive for, that's what I want for the future, that's why I cook.

HAVE A GO AT NICK'S RECIPE ON NEXT PAGE.

GOAT'S CHEESE, SCORCHED GOLDEN BEETROOT, PICKLED CANDY STRIPPED BEETROOT, PURPLE BEETROOT SPHERE, CANDIED PECANS AND GRANOLA CRUMB

INGREDIENTS

For the cheese
 500g goat's cheese
 250ml whipping cream
 For the beetroot
 1 large golden beetroot
 1 large candy stripped beetroot
 1 large purple beetroot (for pickling)
 Lemon oil
 Salt

METHOD

Crumble the goat's cheese into a food processor, add the cream and season with salt, whip until silky and a smooth consistency is achieved.

Add a tablespoon of salt to a large pot of water and bring to the boil. Place the beets into the pot and allow to simmer gently an hour or until cooked through. Peel and place the beets into iced water to cool.

Slice the golden beets, season with lemon oil and salt and blowtorch until blackened evenly. For the purple beetroot using a Parisian scoop, make five spheres and set aside.

Combine the white wine vinegar, water, sugar, salt, star anise, bay leaf, clove, peppercorns and cinnamon stick. Bring to the boil, then reduce heat and simmer gently. Once all flavours are combined remove from the heat and allow to cool. Take the striped beetroot, portion and place in a vac pack bag and compress in the pickling liquor.

Salt the walnuts and dust with icing sugar and toast for 1 minute in a dry pan. Add the honey and place on a baking mat on a tray, cook in a medium oven for 3 minutes

Place the oats, brown sugar, cinnamon and salt into a mixing bowl add honey and bake for 15 minutes until golden brown. Remove and mix though then return to the oven for an extra 5 minutes. Remove from the oven, allow to cool then blitz.

Serve as shown.

Nick is a student at Waterford IT, his lecturer Michael Quinn said

"People like Nick are the future of Irish of food, he has a hunger for learning and I have seen him blossom and grow in his years with us. He has put a huge amount of work into his years here and now he is running with it, we are all proud of him."

For the pickling liquor
 4 cups white wine vinegar
 2 cups of water
 5 tbsp sugar
 2 tsp salt
 2 star anise
 1 bay leave
 3 cloves
 4 peppercorns
 1 cinnamon stick
 For the candied pecans
 50g pecans
 10g icing sugar
 50ml honey
 For the granola crumb
 50g oats
 10g brown sugar
 A pinch of cinnamon
 20ml honey



Nicholas Murphy,
Mitre Restaurant at
the Culloden Hotel & Spa

