

# berry blue

From time to time we'd all like someone to wave a magic wand and help us put on the perfect party. Thankfully, people such as **Michael Dart** from Berry Blue Creative Food are on hand make your wishes come true...

**I have always had a passion for cooking since I was a child.** I left school and within a few days I started work as a chef in a small bistro in my home town of Romsey, Hampshire. I have worked in many independent high-end restaurants throughout my 11 year career. I felt Berry Blue was the right place for me because I am passionate about using quality, seasonal produce to create interesting and exciting dishes.

**The main challenge, and one we relish, is always coming up with fresh, innovative dishes using seasonal produce.** Sometimes the produce we order doesn't turn up or the crop fails due to the weather, so we have to think on our feet and come up with something new. The reward is definitely seeing people enjoying our food. We want the food to be a memorable part of any event.

**We don't just provide food, we can also advise on party themes, décor and table design.** We make sure the event runs seamlessly and always work closely with the client to offer a bespoke service that fits with their event.

**The Berry Blue farm in Gloucestershire was a Grade II farmhouse renovated by Louise Brown, owner of Berry Blue.** It has a large vegetable patch, orchard and free range chickens. We do things like pick gluts of fruit and turn them into jams and chutneys to use later in the year. Having the farm also means the business is very eco-friendly because food waste either gets composted or fed to the chickens and we keep air miles down by using local food.

**Our ethos is simple; to use local, seasonal, fresh produce.** We have always grown all the food, anything we can't get from the farm we try and source from within a 60 mile radius and if it is an imported product, such as tea or sugar, then we buy Fairtrade.



**One of our most memorable events has been the open days we catered for at Jekka's Herb Farm in South Gloucestershire last year.** If you haven't heard of Jekka McVicar she is a renowned herb grower with 14 Chelsea Gold awards. Last year we were exclusive caterers for her popular open days. We also catered for a carbon reduction seminar for a firm of lawyers. Every fruit and vegetable used in the dishes came from our farm and the meat was all sourced locally. It was great to extend the theme right down to the food served.

**We are really pleased to be catering for Jekka again this year and will be creating even more delicious herb infused dishes.**

We are working towards Soil Association 'Food for Life' accreditation to recognise our use of local produce. And look out for details about our cookery courses, which were a huge success. They are held at the farmhouse where we teach people how to use seasonal produce in their food. Join us on Facebook and Twitter to be first to hear about the cookery school dates. ■



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