

Raymond Blanc to open Oxford Castle Food & Wine Festival

Two celebrities from the world of food and wine will be opening the Oxford Castle Food & Wine Festival on Saturday 17th September. World-renowned restaurateur Raymond Blanc OBE, together with wine writer and broadcaster Susy Atkins, will officially welcome visitors to Oxford Castle for the Festival.

Raymond Blanc OBE comments: "In my hometown of Oxford, I am delighted to support the Oxford Castle Food & Wine Festival. Food connects with each part of our life; family, society, health, environment. It is harvest time and we are reaping the rewards of what we have seeded. It is marvellous to see that food is such a celebration."

Raymond Blanc OBE will be signing copies of his new book 'Kitchen Secrets,' from his hit BBC2 TV Series, and later in the day, Adam Johnson, Development Chef at Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons and co-star of 'Kitchen Secrets' will be cooking up recipes in the Festival demo kitchen.

Susy Atkins will also appear later on Saturday to present a tasting session of great wines for under a tenner. Originally from Oxford, the star of BBC1's 'Saturday Kitchen' will show how easy it is to enjoy wine on a budget with wines that can all be bought locally.

Throughout the weekend the whole of the Oxford Castle site will be filled with stalls, talks and kitchen demonstrations of all things local, seasonal and tasty, plus a few surprises in the Guest Producers area.

"Bring an appetite for discovery and a palate for temptation," is the advice that Festival Director, Sarah Mayhew, is giving to visitors planning to attend this year's Food & Wine Festival.

An important showcase for the region's produce, food and wine purveyors, and culinary talent, more stallholders and participants than ever are expected this year, with some returning, such as Fat Man Chilli and Fabulous Vodka plus a host of new arrivals. Among them is Tom Ellis, the Oxford-based 22-year old owner of Champagne supplier First Class Products, who will be bringing a selection of personal favourites, including a 2004 Grand Cru Vintage that he has just introduced to the UK market.

Oxford's youngest biscuit maker from The Good Biscuit Company will be offering the perfect accompaniment to a hot brew with a mouth-watering selection of home-made biscuits, all using local ingredients. Chocolatier Fiona Sciolti will be bringing her delicious selection of handmade botanical chocolates which use English fruit and flowers to excite the palate.

Charitable organisations involved include Oxfam's Grow campaign, where visitors can sign up to help fix faults in the global food system, and global relief charity Shelter will be showing how they help feed, clothe and shelter people in distress situations. Cancer relief centre Maggie's will be bringing a

pop-up kitchen, serving up venison burgers and sausages to support its new centre in Oxford.

“The Food & Wine Festival is a real celebration of all the delicious produce this region has to offer,” adds Sarah Mayhew. “The ‘slow food’ movement is gathering momentum across the county, and we’re keen to highlight produce that has either been produced in the region or carefully selected from further afield by a new generation of culinary experts. Anyone who is passionate about food, or would simply like to try something new, should come along and explore.”

Oxford Castle Food & Wine Festival, Saturday 17th and Sunday 18th September 2011. 10am til 5pm. Entry FREE. There are some places available for stalls - call 01865 201 657 or email sarah.mayhew@topgroup.co.uk.

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