

A MESSAGE FROM JOHN BREWER

We're celebrating the start of the new fresh mussel season with some exciting new developments at Isle of Shuna.

As you'll discover in this newsletter, we're launching a new grading for our Demlane Shetland mussels. Recognising that there's a healthy demand for larger size mussels, we're producing a new Jumbo brand, with the smaller shellfish now sold under the Super label.



The new mussel season has brought greater media interest in the health benefits of seafood, and mussels in particular. On page two we take a look at the latest theories that show why we should all be including more of them in our diet.

Meanwhile at our base in Shetland, our new high-care unit is about to come on stream, opening the way for innovation and expansion in our added-value product ranges.

In this edition you can also find out more about Hodgson Fish, the family-run firm that distributes Demlane mussels across the north east of England, and there's also news from top seafood chef - and long-time Demlane supporter - Roy Brett. Roy, formerly Rick Stein's right-hand man in Padstow, tells us about his new challenge as chef partner for Dakota, the stylish new boutique hotel chain that's attracting as much attention for its great food as its cool and comfortable accommodation.

Jumbo mussels are here

The new mussel season brings with it a great new development in Isle of Shuna's Demlane product range.

We are delighted to be offering our fresh Shetland Demlane mussels for the first time in two sizes: new Demlane Super and Jumbo mussels.

Offering a larger grade mussel alternative means more choice for our customers, but with no compromise in the quality and freshness that are the established hallmarks of our shellfish.

"We've had increasing interest from existing and potential new customers in the food services sector, both in the UK and overseas, in a larger mussel offering," says Isle of Shuna Managing Director John Brewer. "We are pleased to be able to respond to the market with our new Demlane Jumbo mussels right on time for the new season.

"This kind of product grading is already well-established on the Continent and we are pleased to be introducing it for the first time in the UK."

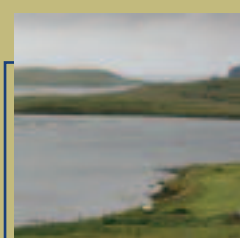
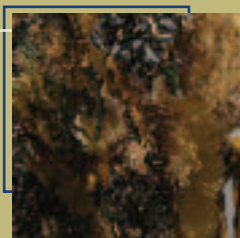
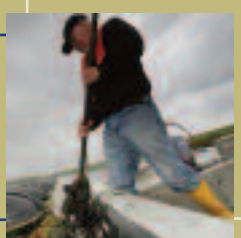
The larger mussels offer both a slightly different flavour and a more robust character that makes them well-suited to different cooking methods and recipes. They require a slightly longer cooking time, so by sorting them in our new grading process, our customers can be sure of a more consistent cook quality, with less risk of any



smaller mussels being overcooked.

The seawater around some of our sites in Shetland has very energetic nutrients, which allows the mussels to grow to a larger size and means we have a ready supply of Jumbo size mussels on our ropes. We have invested in new machinery at our processing facility that automatically separates the different sizes ready for packaging.

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INCREASING OUR CAPACITY AT WALLS



Building work for Isle of Shuna's new food processing facility on Shetland has been completed and already the facility is attracting great interest.

The food processing unit has been designed and constructed to the highest standards, creating a high-care environment that enables us to increase our capacity and take advantage of new opportunities in the market place.

The factory has already received technical visits from two major UK multiples which wanted to see for themselves this exciting new project.

Our goal is to use it to extend our value-added range, as it provides us with the resource we need to prepare cooked or ready-to-cook dishes, such as barbecued mussels.

It is a new area of business for Isle of Shuna and we are enjoying the learning curve, confident that it will bring rewards both for us and for our customers.

Capacity is such that we have the potential to increase volumes 10-fold to 10,000 packed goods a year, all prepared and readied for shipment on-site, adjacent to the mussel farm.



Mussels – a healthy option

The new mussel season is upon us, and the health-giving properties of mussels is also in the news again...

There was a time when public perception was that mussels were bad for us – there was a misconception that they were high in cholesterol and brought a risk of allergies or food poisoning. But thanks to optimum processing and supply chains and research into shellfish and our health, mussels are a more popular dish than ever.

Recent studies have shown mussels are very good for us and a valuable source of protein, B vitamins and that all-important Omega 3. Mussels contain more polyunsaturated fatty acids than any other shellfish, and more than many fish. Shellfish in general are also excellent sources of vitamins A and D, and some B vitamins, and the iron content is similar to red meat. Mussels also contain important minerals such as magnesium, copper, selenium and zinc.

The claim that eating seafood is good for the brain was for years dismissed as mythology. But during the past few years scientists have proved

that the fatty acids in certain types of seafood do indeed help the development and function of the brain. Dr Alex Richardson, senior research fellow at Oxford University, has found that the higher the concentration of omega3 in the blood, the better one's concentration.

And beyond that, the latest scientific studies have shown these fatty acids provide a wide range of benefits, from sharpening mental response, boosting immunity and fighting heart disease and mental illnesses such as schizophrenia, depression and dementia.

Health experts are concerned that too few of us in Britain eat enough seafood, putting us at risk of developing illnesses and mental disorders. A fifth of the human brain is made up of fatty acids, so it's easy to see the connection.

A high seafood intake has also been shown to have beneficial effects on rheumatism, arthritis and osteoporosis. Eicosapentaenoic acid (EPA) and docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), the omega3 fatty acids found in seafood such as mussels, have an anti-inflammatory effect and reduce the platelet activity that causes clotting, while helping to lower blood pressure.

The British Heart Foundation recommends that we eat at least two portions of seafood a week. John Stein, professor of neurophysiology at Oxford University, and the brother of seafood-specialist chef Rick Stein, comments: "Fish is undeniably good for the brain: it can help dyslexic children to read, can increase concentration in kids with attention deficit disorder, and enhances co-ordination. There are even indications that it can improve the social functioning of autistic children."

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Jumbo mussels are here

IDENTIFYING DEMLANE'S NEW FRESH MUSSEL SIZES

- Demlane Super Mussels number approximately 55 pieces-plus per kilogram and are available in 5kg white nets and 25kg shipping boxes, both branded with our new Super logo in blue.
- The Jumbo size give approximately 44 to 55 pieces per kilogram and are offered in 5kg blue or green nets and in 25kg shipping boxes, carrying the Jumbo logo in green.



ONLY THE BEST FOR ROY BRETT

ROY BRETT IS ONE OF BRITAIN'S FINEST AND MOST PASSIONATE CHEFS WHEN IT COMES TO SEAFOOD. HE'S THE MASTERMIND BEHIND THE DAKOTA BAR AND GRILL RESTAURANTS, WHICH ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF BRITAIN'S NEWEST AND MOST TALKED ABOUT BOUTIQUE HOTEL CHAIN.



He's also a fervent ambassador for the qualities of Demlane mussels and admits: "When Demlane mussels aren't available in the kitchen, I can tell you I am not a happy man!"

Roy joined Dakota as Chef Partner at its launch two years ago and has set about creating menus and an ambience that make the grills much more than just a convenient place for hotel guests to dine. He's successfully worked to make them destinations in their own right for local people looking for fine food, served well in great surroundings. Based at Dakota Edinburgh, his responsibility extends across the group.

He brings unmatched experience to the job, having joined the company from the world-famous Seafood Restaurant in Padstow, where he worked for many years as Rick Stein's right-hand man. His impressive CV also includes Le Caprice, Pied à Terre and The Savoy in London, as well as the job of executive chef with the Malmaison hotel group. Joining Dakota reunites Roy with Malmaison founder, Ken McCulloch.

"After working for Rick for so long, I didn't think there could be another employer who would be so fulfilling to work for, so it was my intention to open my own restaurant," said Roy.

"The opportunity to come here, back to my home town of Edinburgh, and open Dakota Forth Bridge was a dream – a wonderful view over the Firth of Forth and working with the finest shellfish."

Seafood dominates the Dakota menu (although meat and vegetarian dishes are available, too) and Roy emphasises that freshness is the key to success, a quality that makes Demlane mussels his top choice.

"That's the number one priority and it means sourcing local produce wherever possible. I have been using Demlane mussels for almost 15 years now, they are superb to work with – their shells are thin and clean which means they take very little time to cook and they are wonderfully moist and juicy. Their natural flavour comes through perfectly."

And he's keen to ensure his restaurant guests know where their shellfish are coming from, specifying on the menu that Demlane mussels are used in the moules frites.

Roy is looking forward to the new Demlane Jumbo mussels this season and plans to have them on the Dakota menu straight away: "We are getting more demand from customers for

larger mussels and the new Jumbo size will be perfect both for serving simply and using in some new dishes we will be creating."

The restaurant is contemporary but warm in character, and Roy is keen that it's a place where people feel they can relax and enjoy their food, rather than being overly formal.

"I believe in the Elizabeth David style of elbows-on-the-table enjoyment and that's all part of wanting to make the restaurant that's here for the local community to enjoy, not just our hotel guests."

To realise that ambition, Roy leads a team of 18 in the kitchen, with a similar number working front-of-house.

"It all comes down to your core ingredients – using simple fresh products, and consistently serving them well – and having a team that understands and appreciates the experience our guests have when they come to dine here."

DAKOTA HOTELS – FACT FILE

- The first Dakota Hotel opened in Nottingham in 2005
- Further hotels were launched in Glasgow (Eurocentral) and Edinburgh (Forth Bridge) in 2005 and 2006. A fourth venue is due to open in Farnborough, Hampshire, in 2008.
- All share a striking black granite construction that makes them an unmistakable contemporary landmark.
- The business takes its name from the legendary Dakota military aircraft. Developed into the DC3, this aeroplane helped open up air travel to the mass market.
- Dakota was created by Ken McCulloch, who pioneered the boutique hotel concept with the Malmaison chain. Interior design is masterminded by Ken's wife, Amanda Rosa.
- The emphasis is on modern style and comfort at reasonable prices – a flat rate of £89 per night is charged for all rooms.
- The Dakota Bar and Grill is a key feature of each of the hotels.
- For more information and reservations: www.dakotahotels.co.uk or call 0870 442 2727.

SPANISH UPDATE

Did you know Isle of Shuna is now importing a new type of mussel from the Galicia region of Spain on the Atlantic coast?

The mussels from this region are produced by 850 different producers from across 1100 different farms. They are a popular choice in seafood markets across Europe as they grow all year round, apart from two difficult months in April and May, when it's the spawning season.

And the mussels are proving popular with Isle of Shuna customers, who are taking advantage of this exclusive supply. The mussels have a different flavour and colour from our native

ones, and are slightly bigger in size. As well as exporting to the UK, the farming co-operative in Galicia sells its produce to markets in Spain, Italy and France and hopes also to target countries such as Russia and Slovenia in the near future.

"These mussels are ideal during the Shetland and Scottish closed season," says John Brewer from Isle of Shuna. "It means our customers can consume quality shellfish all year round."





DIDIER DEVILLE'S CATALAN-STYLE MUSSELS (SERVES 6)

INGREDIENTS

1kg of Demlane mussels, cleaned & debearded
 Half a glass of Oloroso (very dry) sherry
 Half a glass dry white wine
 Salt & freshly ground pepper
 A pinch of smoked paprika
 A pinch of dry chilli
 A pinch of saffron strands
 A pinch of fennel seeds
 3 shallots, finely sliced
 2 bay leaves
 Half a chorizo, sliced
 3 cloves of garlic, finely chopped
 1 red onion chopped
 1 tin of chopped tomatoes
 A handful of cooked chick peas
 A handful of spinach leaves
 2 tbsp virgin olive oil
 1 tbsp of freshly chopped parsley
 1 lemon, quartered

METHOD

Steam the mussels until opened, and strain and reserve the cooking liquor. Sauté all ingredients in frying pan until softened. Add mussels in shells, cooking liquor, olive oil, and sherry. Simmer for a few minutes. Season to taste and add parsley or lemon to garnish. Serve with toasted ciabatta, grated with raw garlic and sprinkled with olive oil.

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YOUR BUSINESS

Hodgson Fish

Efficient, reliable distribution is a vital link in the chain of supply from our mussel beds to our customers. We need to be sure our products arrive with their essential freshness intact, which means careful handling and prompt, temperature-controlled transportation are essential.

Hodgson Fish is one of the best-respected names in the seafood business in the North East of England, a long-established family concern that is responsible for distributing Demlane mussels to customers across the region.

The Hartlepool-based company has been working with us for about 10 years, during which time it has seen rapid growth in the popularity and demand for our product, as Alan Hodgson explains: "At the time we started with Demlane, we had not been selling that many mussels, and most of those were dredged rather than farmed. Since then there has been a remarkable change and today we are handling about one-and-a-quarter tonnes every week."

Demlane mussels are meeting the demands of an ever-greater number of quality restaurants and hotels in the area. Hodgson Fish delivers to some of the region's most popular tourist destinations: its territory extends to a 75-mile radius, taking in towns such as Scarborough, Ripon, York, Hawes and Pateley Bridge.

"We admit to having had some concerns when we learned Demlane was about to move into new ownership," says Alan, "but we are very happy indeed with the way things have developed.

"It has been good for our business, in particular because Demlane provides full traceability for its products, an important factor in today's food industry. The quality of the shellfish, too, is consistently high."



Alan Hodgson (right) makes a delivery of Isle of Shuna mussels to Didier Deville, Head Chef at Ruskins Restaurant

Alan represents the fourth generation of his family in the fish business, his great-grandfather having started his own smoked herring enterprise in Hartlepool almost 100 years ago. His early ambitions almost came to nothing when his smokehouse was destroyed in the first Zeppelin bombing raid on Britain in World War I. But his son followed his example by opening a wet fish shop in 1916 in the premises where the family continues to trade today. Alan joined the company in 1969 and has run the business since his father retired in 1974.

Hodgson Fish operates a fleet of eight refrigerated delivery vehicles, on the road every day from 4am to 5pm. In addition, it has three retail fishmonger shops and even has its own trawler, bringing in a regular catch of North Sea langoustines.

Alan is joined in the business by his wife, Anne, son Peter and daughter Jill. It's Jill who has masterminded the latest business development, the new 19-bedroom Douglas Hotel in Hartlepool. In its restaurant, Ruskins, you will of course find Demlane mussels on the menu, prepared by French chef and seafood specialist Didier Deville.

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