

## Spring has sprung... well, almost!

'Taste of the Heart' Gold Award 2009  
Heart of England Tourist Board

'Best Wine List'  
Taste of Birmingham Awards 2007

'Newcomer of the Year'  
Taste of Birmingham Awards 2006

What a great pleasure to see the back of all the snow this winter. Flowers and shrubs are beginning to bud in gardens.

But as we write this in mid-March, we are finding that the fruit and veg from around Britain, which we might expect to see now during our weekly visit to the horticultural market, is coming in very slowly to the stalls.

The rhubarb, mainly from Yorkshire at the time of year, is only just appearing, and even that is not in great quantity yet. Only purple sprouting is widely available, and the quality is a bit stalky and patchy even now.

The simple fact is that the ground is still very hard, it has been an exceptionally cold and long winter, and we are experiencing quite late frosts. One of the main concerns is that the frosts might continue once the fruit buds appear in the lovely orchards surrounding us in Warwickshire and Herefordshire.

Visit the National Trust's web site for details of the Trust's Full Bloom Festival. This celebrates the blossom trail and highlights the role of orchards for British

wildlife. It starts in Cornwall on April 25, wends its way through the West Midlands, and ends in Cumbria on May 9.

[www.nationaltrust.org.uk](http://www.nationaltrust.org.uk)

Our fish mongers are bemoaning the great easterly winds that are keeping many of the fishing boats either anchored in port, or coming back with light catches. But still plentiful for us is superb brill which we occasionally serve with a light chowder, and delicious squid with its salad bursting with Spring flavours of fresh tomato, mint, garlic and lemon.

If the weather is good to us, we shall see newly harvested Epicure potatoes and Sharpe's Express coming our way from mid May to the end of July. The Epicure are the first new potatoes of the year from the Carroll family's Tiptoe Farm in Northumberland. Round and flowery, this variety is delicious boiled and steamed. Sharpe's Express are bright white and shaped like a pear. As well as boiling, you can roast these to delicious effect.

Save the Staffordshire Hoard for the West Midlands - Join the battle to save the greatest hoard of Anglo-Saxon gold ever found

Over 1500 beautiful Anglo Saxon objects were unearthed last July in a field in Staffordshire by a metal detector enthusiast. They included fragments of helmets, sword hilts and rings. This exciting find, mostly associated with warfare and all of fine craftsmanship, will help to re-write our pre-Norman period of British history that still remains obscure.

A total of £3.3 million must be raised by the end of April in order to secure it for the Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery where it will be displayed for all the world to see. Much of this has been raised through funds and donations, but this is your chance to be a part of our West Midlands heritage and help to keep the Staffordshire Hoard here. Pledge a contribution at Opus restaurant when you next pop in, or you can call **0844 415 4004** to pledge your support.

Opus is proud to be the first corporate sponsor of the wonderful BMAG, with a World Heritage collection.

Flavour  
Spring 2010

OPUS  
Restaurant

### Open:

Lunch: Monday-Friday  
Dinner: Monday-Saturday

**OPUS Restaurant**  
54 Cornwall St  
Birmingham B3 2DE

**Reservations & private dining:**  
0121 200 2323  
[opusrestaurant.co.uk](http://opusrestaurant.co.uk)

# Huntsham Court Rare Breed Dinner with Richard Vaughan

Tuesday, May 25 at 7.00pm

Straight from their 350 acre farm in the Wye Valley, in the shade of Goodrich castle, Richard and Rosamund Vaughan are travelling up to Opus in May to host a dinner of their fine rare breeds of beef, pork and lamb.

The breeds they raise have been carefully chosen. 'Huntsham meat has been produced with superior taste and texture as the primary considerations', says Richard.

Opus has worked hard to find farmers who have this refreshing emphasis on quality and flavour and focus on caring animal husbandry.

At Huntsham Court they raise the very rare breeds of Longhorn beef, Middle White pork and Ryeland lamb.

The Longhorn cattle is the breed which made England famous for fine roast beef; sadly it is now a rare breed.



The flavour of the Middle White pig is exceptional, and all of Richard's pigs are bred, free range, on the farm. We serve it here as loin and belly.

The Ryeland sheep is a breed that was developed in Ross-on-Wye, known for its full flavour and texture. It is a handsome breed with its thick, curly white wool.

Join us for a four course dinner with wine at £65 per head, including service.

Call: **0121 200 2323**

# Taste of Birmingham

Friday, July 16, Saturday, July 17 and Sunday, July 18

This year, Opus will be back for the foodie extravaganza in the park!

For three days in July, we will exhibit three different dishes that represent a taste of Opus at our stall in Cannon Hill Park. Meet some of our passionate producers, and get a taste of the summer.

'Taste' is an al fresco celebration of food and restaurants in the city. Visitors can sample dishes from 16 different restaurants and watch cookery demos, and meet regional suppliers.

For more information, visit [www.taste.visitbirmingham.com](http://www.taste.visitbirmingham.com)

# Masterclass Cookery Course and Dinner

Saturday, May 1 and Saturday, June 26

Join our Saturday 'Masterclass Cookery Course' for a unique one day cooking session in the kitchens of University College Birmingham, followed by a relaxed four course dinner at Opus in the evening.

If you are a keen cook or have a special foodie friend, join us for the only 'hands on' cookery course in Birmingham. As spaces are strictly limited, book early!

*"Adam, our training chef was brilliant and I learnt so much, can't wait for the next."*

The day runs from 10.00am to 4.00pm in the College's impressive kitchens where you will learn to prepare a three course menu like a professional under the guidance of the Chef

Adam Pickett, learning key kitchen skills. Then, in the evening, time to cast aside your apron and relax with your fellow chefs over a four course dinner with wines at Opus, prepared by David Colcombe and our talented brigade. The 'Masterclass' package costs £150 all inclusive. Invite a friend to the dinner at an additional cost of only £50.

Phone **0121 200 2323** for details. To book, please contact Maureen Thompson at UCB on **0121 243 0141** [m.thompson@ucb.ac.uk](mailto:m.thompson@ucb.ac.uk)

The College of Food is located five minutes from Opus at Summer Row, Birmingham B3 1JB.

For more details about the College of Food at UCB, click on [www.ucb.ac.uk](http://www.ucb.ac.uk)

