



TABLE

TABLE: Cooking with Economy & Grace

At Spring we have a passion for cooking with economy and grace.

Ours has always been a very elemental approach to food and cooking...

Use only the best and do as little as possible to let the natural flavours of the ingredients shine in every dish we make.

Privileged to work with some of the most beautiful produce and ingredients from producers and farmers who share our passion, we have increasingly worked to ensure that little to nothing is wasted in our kitchens and bar. This was the inspiration behind our Scratch Menus, for which we challenged ourselves to use leftover ingredients from every service, to make new and equally enticing dishes for the next – without compromise to taste or quality.

For TABLE, we set ourselves a bigger challenge. We wanted to see how deep we could dig, not only using our own leftovers but ‘leftovers’ from our growers, farmers and purveyors.

Many generously donated their produce, including that which otherwise could not be sold. From frost damaged cauliflower and pullet eggs to buttermilk (produced as a bi-product of butter- making process) to cheese ends.

Community dining is about knowing that we are all equally deserving of the same sustainably delicious and nutritious food. TABLE celebrates uniting people of different backgrounds and social means through the joy of being able to eat well together and the simple act of giving thanks to all involved in its preparation. The chefs, the wait staff, the producers and farmers.



“The menu really formed itself through the leftover discoveries we made at Spring and the donations offered. As we began to gather little scraps of this and that it just seemed to find its own rhythm.” Skye Gyngell



THE FARM



“It’s normal for growers at the high-end of the market place of perfection to lose up to 40% of produce to waste, due to cosmetic spoilage, frost damage and even size. When Skye began the Scratch Menu at Spring, we were immediately able to reduce the waste to 25% - since TABLE, we’ve reduced it to only 15%. As a grower, being thrifty is thrilling”. Jane Scotter

Skye's relationship with Jane Scotter and Harry Astley at Fern Verrow, who grow biodynamic vegetables and fruit for Spring, is a collaborative process between chef and grower, in continual pursuit of flavour, colour and texture. Our culinary journey for TABLE began last October when Skye briefed Jane, who walked the then near empty fields and beds for any vegetables that may not have been picked during the harvest. Gleanings included grapefruit-sized beetroot that were sent to Spring for preserving. Other vegetables included cabbages slightly cosmetically spoiled with marks but otherwise 95% edible; cauliflower slightly frost damaged but 90% edible; spinach leaves with holes but no less tasty.

Without TABLE all of this produce would otherwise have gone to waste, nevertheless as compost - but for growers, it is more important to cover costs by selling as much produce as possible (which also sustains employment of farmhands for as long as possible every season). Jane now calls the spoiled vegetables her 'seconds'. Invaluably, they provide greater choice for her customers and additional income for Fern Verrow.





The Menu

“One of the greatest challenges of TABLE was staying true to our ethos: using mainly leftovers and otherwise wasted produce and ingredients, while creating delicious, nourishing food for 1,000 people during the week. The community dining concept, however, enabled us to serve dishes family style, and really helped us in our task. We could focus on preparing and assembling dishes of individual ingredients, or simple combinations, and our guests could chose from them as they preferred. As chefs, initial trepidation at the scale of the challenge quickly gave in to our culinary curiosity. One of our proudest achievements has been our coffee milk labneh, for which we take left over milk from making lattes and cappuccinos in the restaurant to make yogurt, which we then strain to make labneh.” Hussein Sarhan

MENU

Pickles and ferments

Yesterday's porridge sourdough bread

Beetroots with coffee milk labneh

Soft herbs, leaves and flowers

Remilled rye and oat crackers

Montgomery cheddar ends and potato empanadas

Venison, buttermilk and spices

Broken rice, nettles and lemon leaves

Cauliflower leaves

Pullet eggs and celery salt

~

Nespole Basbousa and spent coffee grounds





“The broken rice was something that Hussein came across - we loved its texture! It is nuttier and courser than regular rice and we just wanted to infuse it with layers of subtle flavours to really showcase it and do it justice. We fell in love with it and wanted others to as well. We added our leftover buttermilk (a bi product of making butter in house) and any Kefir butter that we had left over at the end of the day. The nettles were foraged. I wanted their chlorophyll flavour to permeate and enrich the rice and the lemon leaves (leftover from the lemons we get in) added a fragrant top note that seemed to work well.” Skye

Gyngell

“When we decided to use venison from Heckfield Farm for Table, the idea for broken rice came to me, because it is something I remember growing up with. (I grew up in Dublin, but my dad is Egyptian, and owned a pharmacy when I was a child, so I remember us always having huge bags of rice in the kitchen, which, as a business owner, he would buy from a cash and carry.) Broken rice is a bi-product, and a consequence of the harvesting, drying, sorting, and milling processes. But in reality there is nothing wrong with it. It has exactly the same nutrients as unbroken rice, but the fact that it is fractured does make it behave differently as it is cooked. It takes less time, and must be washed well, because it can be starchy. Since it is broken, however, it does take on flavours easily. When it came to seasoning the rice, I knew that we always had extra lemon leaves at Spring, and that they could be used (like bay leaves) as an aromatic. Skye suggested putting in nettles (we had a lot), which added a much deeper flavour, and literally on the morning of the first day of Table I noticed bags of lemon balm, and lemon verbena that had been sent to us from Fern Verrow, so I added those too. I also used surplus lemon zest from Spring, and buttermilk (again, Skye's suggestion, and a departure from more typical yoghurt), which came from our own keffir butter making as well as La Fromagerie, who sourced it in turn from their butter supplier. My aim was to create a really fragrant rice with a lot of interest and texture, especially for those guests at Table who might not eat meat. But I knew that Skye also wanted to elevate ingredients that might otherwise be considered poor man's food.” Hussein Sarhan

“Mindful of the large amount of waste created in the shelling of peas in the restaurant, chef Hussein and Ed were convinced that a product so green and fresh must still have life, so the idea of Pea Pod Juice was born. Their challenge – how to retain the flavour and intense colour of the pods? After much experimentation, including juicing and with different degrees of dilution, Ed discovered that by making a concentrated cordial with a cold-cook method, he was able to retain the emerald green colour of the pods. For freshness, he added lemon. To finish the cordial and to add some sweetness, he incorporated a second-flush fresh mint syrup, made from collecting the fresh mint which the bar brews for tea and infusing that in a simple sugar syrup” Ed Procter





“Re-visiting old recipes and reinventing them using ingredients that would otherwise go to waste has been a revelation.” Sarah Johnson





Our original porridge sourdough bread, baked fresh daily at Spring is more moist than most, with a slightly ‘custardy’ texture. Ordinarily, making breadcrumbs from leftover bread would be an easy solution, however, given the bread’s moistness, making breadcrumbs was not going to be a straightforward process.

Our baker Sara Johnson, challenged herself to develop a method that would enable her to do so. The solution? To dry the sliced leftover bread in several stages before ‘blitzing’ in a Vitamix several times to produce a coarse mill, the texture of semolina, creating our own re-milled flour. Sara then found a North African recipe for basbousa, in which she used our re-milled flour in place of breadcrumbs.

The Blank Canvas



TABLE

Start
Roasted Potatoes
Coffin with lemon
Hot honey, cream and cheese
Dried bread for and salted butter
Crispy potato and mushroom tart
More cheese, herbs and potato crisps

Main
Pasta, butter and cheese
Mushrooms, onions and cheese sauce
Bread
Fried eggs and onion oil

Dessert
Fruit, honey and cream

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Joanna Travis, Spring's Events Manager, had the challenging role of bringing the TABLE vision to life. Fundamental to this was the need to create collaborative partnerships within the local community –with the Somerset House Trust, Makerversity and Photo London. This immediately brought conviction and goodwill to the enterprise with Somerset House providing the space and with Makerversity and Photo London helping to connect with an even wider community. Julie's Bicycle and Hubbub gave invaluable support from the outset, while sustainable lifestyle guru, Carole Bamford gave her generous support as TABLE's Patron.

Other equally invaluable and essential partnerships were formed in order to bring the cavernous empty space to life as a communal dining room for the week. Sophie Ashby (Studio Ashby) came up with the idea of creating a scaffolding structure in order to make the room feel smaller and more intimate. Rachel Thomas (Mini Title), donated the use of the giant, colourful stuffed vegetable props from a Gourmand shoot – aubergine, artichoke, garlic, lemon, radishes and sardines. Paul Nulty generously shared their lighting expertise with the pendant lighting from Joanna and Sandy and Simpson and Sand, while The Atlas Works gave us beautiful glassware made from recycled glass.

TABLE

MAY 17th – 21st 2017

TICKETS

£15/£20





As with the menu, the décor of the room evolved naturally as donations of the props and lighting generously rolled in. It then took the Spring TEAM, Sophie Ashby, Stephanie Johns and Williams Scaffolding two days to create the TABLE dining room.

TABLE would also not have been possible without the goodwill and dedication of the many volunteers who worked throughout the week to whom we remain deeply grateful.

We look forward to re-creating TABLE soon with an even wider group of collaborators. If you would like to be involved, please contact Joanna (joanna@springrestaurant.co.uk).

WITH THANKS TO

Fern Verrow

Heckfield Park farm

Tilly's Farm

La Fromagerie

Mon's

Photo London

Somerset House

Studio Ashby

Stephanie Johns Design

Paul Nulty

The Atlas Works

Hubbub

Julie's Bicycle

Simpson and Sand

Toast Ale

Foodcycle

Williams scaffolding

The Gourmand

Rachel Thomas at 'Mini Title'

Makerversity



THANK YOU