“I can’t honestly tell you how many times I came across the magic word ‘verjuice’ before I looked it up. And then the penny dropped. This was the obvious product for us to make as vignerons and for me to use in the restaurant. As a cook I have the facility of being able to ‘taste’ what I read about and I knew this was an ingredient I could really embrace.”

Maggie Beer

Verjuice

Verjuice, the juice of unripe grapes, has the tartness of lemon juice and the acidity of vinegar without the harshness of either, which makes it an extraordinarily versatile ingredient. Used widely during Medieval European cooking (including in Britain where it was made from plums, crab apples and even sorrel) it was also once a staple of French provincial cooking and in 1856 is believed to have replaced vinegar in Dijon mustard. Verjuice is also referred to in the 16th Century Libro de Guisado (Catalan) where it is listed as a primary sauce ingredient in fish dishes. It is also known in Italy as agresto, in Iran as abghoor and in Lebanon as hosrum.

Now enjoying a worldwide renaissance, largely due to the efforts of Australia’s Maggie Beer (grower, producer, cook and author) it is wonderful with game, poultry, seafood and vegetables and is particularly useful in sauces and dressings. Its delicacy also makes it an invaluable ingredient for desserts - particularly with quinces, strawberries and soft or stone fruits.

Today, verjuice is mainly produced in the New World wine territories - Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and the USA (California and New York State) - and by one Spanish producer. As it is particularly difficult to obtain in the United Kingdom, limited supplies of verjuice will be available to purchase at the event.

Maggie Beer

Maggie Beer is one of Australia’s culinary treasures. Renowned for her love of regional produce and for championing traditional methods, Maggie has spent much of the last twenty years working to develop and raise the profile of regional produce in Australia. During this time, she has worked with Australia’s most respected chefs, growing and developing produce and products previously unavailable to them.

She operated the Barossa Valley’s famous Pheasant Farm restaurant with her husband, Colin, for fifteen years, making verjuice for most of that time. Since closing the restaurant in 1993, she has established a kitchen in Tanuda to develop regional products. Visitors to the Barossa Valley (South Australia) can sample these and local produce at Maggie’s thriving Farm Shop near Nuriootpa.

Maggie is also a writer, having written for The Australian and best selling cooking books: Maggie’s Farm; Maggie’s Orchard ‘Cooking with Verjuice’ and Stephanie Alexander & Maggie Beer’s Tuscan Cookbook. Her own story is one of passion, determination and incredible generosity. We are delighted that we are finally able to enjoy her company on these shores.

www.maggiebeer.com.au

The Event

Petersham Nurseries Cafe & Slow Food London have great pleasure in inviting you to the UK’s first Verjuice Taste Workshop and Lunch.

Sunday 22 January
12.15 Verjuice Taste Workshop with Maggie Beer

In this workshop we’ll learn about the history of verjuice and why it is an indispensable ingredient in the kitchen as Maggie demonstrates its uses. The workshop will include a tasting of verjuice from different countries (including Britain) and of Maggie’s extraordinary products, including Desert Pearl, a non alcoholic sparkling wine that won critical and popular acclaim in Australia this Christmas.

£30.00 / adult
£25.00 / Slow Food member

2.00 Lunch

Three courses prepared by Maggie Beer and Petersham Nurseries Cafe’s incredibly talented chef, Skye Gyngell and her team, using seasonal local and regional produce to prepare dishes that truly demonstrate the extraordinary versatility and delicate flavour of verjuice (including dessert made using rare verjuice aged by some of Maggie’s English friends).

Inclusive of wine & tea/coffee
£60.00 / adult
£50.00 / Slow Food member

Copies of Maggie’s book, Cooking with Verjuice, will be available for sale on the day.

Who Should Attend?

Chefs, specialist retailers, producers and those who simply love to cook.
Verjuice ~ Recommended Reading

Beer, Maggie. *Cooking with Verjuice*. Viking, Australia. 2001


BOOKING FORM

Please complete and return the booking form to:

Wendy Fogarty c/- Petersham Nurseries Cafe
Petersham Nurseries, Church Lane (off Petersham Road), Petersham, Surrey TW10 7AG

Tel: 0208 605 3627
Email: cafe@petershamnurseries.com
www.petershamnurseries.com

Cancellation Policy: Refunds cannot be given for cancellations received less than 72 hours in advance of the event. Thank You.

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: ___________________________________________
Post Code: _________________________________________
Contact Tel. No.: ___________________________________
Email: ____________________________________________

I would like to book: 
[ ] places for the Verjuice Taste Workshop @ £30.00/Slow Food Member and £35.00/adult
[ ] places for the Verjuice Lunch @ £50.00/Slow Food Member and £60.00/adult

Please note that the lunch features a set menu - if you are vegetarian, please specify & introduce yourself on the day: ____________________________________________

Payment Methods:
Cheques: made payable to Petersham Nurseries
Credit Card (please tick): [ ] Visa [ ] Mastercard [ ] Switch [ ] Other: ____________________________ (American Express & Diners Club not accepted)

Start Date: MM __ YY __
Expiry: MM __ YY __

Card Number: ____________________________________________
Cardholder's Name: _______________________________________
Signature: _______________________________________________