



Go crazy for Kentish cobnuts



Does anything say Kent quite like cobnuts? For 300 years, farmers in England's Garden have been cultivating the extra creamy cousins of the hazelnut. One of the finest plantations is Potash Farm, the only grower in Kent with Soil Association certification. As well as selling the golden, dehusked nuts during the summer season, it also sells a range of other cobnuts throughout the year – two of which we tried this week. The moreish golden Toasted Cobnut Brittle is all rich syrupy flavours with a crunch that is punctuated by the creamy cobnuts (£4.45, 150g). The more savoury, smoky Cobnut and Cheese biscuits are well paired with a full-bodied red wine and make great party nibbles. (£4.95, 200g) kentishcobnuts.com



Visit an East End gin den

Housed down a back alley in an old clothing warehouse in Bethnal Green, east London, it may be, but Bistrottheque does have its charms. Not least its new bar. The Bistrottheque Gin Den, which has been designed for the restaurant-cum-cabaret by funky interiors company House of Hackney, channels the spirit of 19th-century London's numerous drinking dens with low-lit, dark decor that gives a Dickensian feel to proceedings. The gin served is Bombay Sapphire and while some of the cocktails are a little tricky (blue-dyed sugar dusting, anyone?), they are, on the whole, well done. It may be a little out of the way, but is well worth a visit. bistrottheque.com



Strawberry and pear cassis

Jo Hilditch is the queen of British cassis. Her range of dark, fruity mixers have won her two gold stars at the Great Taste Awards, a Waitrose Made in Britain prize and a profile on the BBC's *Countryfile*. And she has added two new flavours. Her British Poire, a 13 per cent pear wine, is a delicious summer tippie which avoids the cloyingness of its French counterpart through the addition of rosemary, a sprig of which is left in each bottle to steep. Equally pleasant is the 13 per cent Fraise cassis which has an intensely sweet strawberry flavour. £8.95, britishcassis.co.uk



Cut down on chopping time

Where most elements of home cookery can be described as relaxing – fun even – chopping endless bits of veg certainly isn't one of them. But what's the alternative? A new, affordable machine from Tefal – Fresh Express – aims to take the boredom out of food preparation; and it seems to work rather well. It has five different barrel heads – coarse and fine shred; thick and thin slice; and a grater – which attach on to the 150w motor unit, making short work of everything from hard vegetables to soft cheddar. Its real genius, though, is in its construction. As only the detachable barrel comes into contact with the food, that's all that needs to be washed. A great time saver.

