

Food news by Carolyn Hart



**GADGET GUIDE** A casserole means easy big weekend lunches – slow braises of inexpensive cuts of meat with herbs and a strip of orange rind whose aromas invade the home like a favourite scented candle. None of this can happen without a pan that can transfer from hob to oven made from a heavy material that will distribute heat evenly, preventing the contents from burning. A well-fitting lid allows steam to circulate rather than escape, so there will be the maximum quantity of juices. There are specialists in these pans, most famously Le Creuset, but another French manufacturer, **Chasseur**, has always made a great equivalent. Chasseur pans are made from cast iron then enameled, once to prevent corrosion on the rim, and a second time for durability. They are available in six colours, ranging in size from 0.35-litre (10cm diameter, £23.44) to six litres (28cm, £82.60) from Pots and Pans (01877-339900; pots-and-pans.co.uk). Pots and Pans also sells Le Creuset plus, for the real traditionalist, Mauviel copper casseroles. **Rose Prince.** See Weekend for Rose Prince's Shop Local

**NATURAL HIGH**

Southern Alps started life as a kitchen experiment by Lotte Garner, who wanted to feed her children tasty, healthy food. When her children's friends started nicking her homemade packets of dried fruit out of her children's lunchboxes she decided to expand operations. The result is bags of slow-dried fruit, nuts, and nine blends of muesli. Dry fruit, from £1.35, muesli from £3.95, available at Fresh & Wild, Harrods and Tesco (southern-alps.co.uk).



**SOMETHING ABOUT MARY**

Not the first time a bloody Mary has been dispatched by a reigning monarch – though this one comes in a bottle stamped 'by appointment to Her Majesty' (just add the vodka) and makes a spectacularly rich and spicy cocktail, a bracing accompaniment to a grim perusal of the Sunday papers. Big Tom tomato juice, £2.29 for 75cl (bigtom.co.uk), available at Sainsbury's, Tesco and Waitrose.



**WHO ATE ALL THE PAELLA?**

As if there were not enough Brits in situ already, Spain is determined to round up a few more through Viva España, a vast show devoted to Spanish art, culture, sport, fashion and food. This year the organisers have included a cookery theatre, wine tastings and on-site restaurants run by L-Restaurant, the chic Kensington tapas bar. Viva España 2007 at Olympia, London, March 16-18, tickets £8 in advance, £12 on the door (0870-906 3769; vivaespanashows.co.uk).

**BARNSTORMING**

BigBarn is one of the few websites that does what it says it's going to – locate your nearest organic food shops and producers. Type your postcode into the site and a map of your neighbourhood pops up, giving details of names, addresses and type of produce. More than 7,000 producers – vineyards, butchers, fish shops, fruit and veg and farmers' markets – are listed, and all of them will shortly be able to sell their food through BigBarn's online shop (01234-871005; bigbarn.co.uk).



**BIG TOM**

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