

While it was the ocean lifestyle that first drew Porthminster Beach Café supremo Mick Smith to Cornwall, it is the 'world class' local ingredients that keep his culinary inspiration alive.

Mick's culinary journey to St Ives has seen him span the globe. Having grown up a stone's throw away from world-famous surf along the Great Ocean Road in Victoria, Australia, he left his hometown of Warrnambool to sink his teeth into the bright lights of Melbourne's foodie scene. After a period of travel around Asia, always indulging in his two greatest pleasures – cooking and surfing – Mick settled in London, working at The Sugar Club in Soho with Peter Gordan.

But with the siren song of the ocean calling, it seemed like a natural progression, both personally and professionally, to say goodbye to city life in 2002 and set up home in St Ives. There he ploughed his talent into the multi-award winning Porthminster Beach Café and Porthminster Kitchen. Focused on creating innovative dishes using the bounty of Cornwall's soil and sea, Mick has always worked with Glynn Valley-based Trewithen Dairy due to its excellent versatility and unwavering quality.

During his 15 years within Cornwall's restaurant trade, this is exemplified in the vegetarian recipe featured here: Set Trewithen Double Cream with Umami Flavours, which is on the Porthminster Kitchen menu. "The inspiration for this recipe came from me trying to develop a vegetarian dish that encompassed all the flavour senses: sour, salty, sweet, bitter, earthy and rich," Mick explains.

"Trewithen Dairy's double cream was the perfect ingredient to infuse these flavour profiles. I use local products

wherever possible. I love Trewithen Dairy and consider the brand a fantastic showcase for Cornwall, especially the clotted cream, which is fantastic for many of our desserts. My boys can't get enough of Trewithen's natural yoghurt either, particularly the toffee and apple flavour with some fresh pineapple chunks!"

"Cornwall is such a great place for chefs, because it is top when it comes to quality ingredients," Mick continues. "We have the Atlantic Ocean, which provides us with an abundance of fresh seafood, and we have the farms that rear and produce amazing quality, from fantastic beef to an amazing array of dairy products. We get it all before it goes anywhere else, so the best stuff is on our doorstep."

Porthminster Beach Café is located right on the beach with uninterrupted views of the sea, St Ives and right over to Godrevy lighthouse, offering sensational culinary inspiration. Drawn to the ocean's power and beauty, Mick would not want to be based anywhere else, and feels incredibly lucky to have such amazing access to the sea for surfing and fishing with his wife Dianne and two sons Bobby and Louis.

"Given that I work such long hours in a bustling environment, running my restaurants, it is important for me to be able to unwind in naturally soothing surroundings," he says. "I spend many a weekend foraging near the cliffs at Porthminster, or relaxing on Porthmeor Beach. It is the perfect work/life balance; I'm eager to get hectic in the kitchen shortly afterwards to make the most of my foraged finds!"

Visit www.porthminster.kitchen and www.trewithendairy.co.uk

the ingredients

vegetarian umami

(makes 14)

- 700g double cream
- 160g finely grated thermos manchego cheese
- 135g of egg yolks (preferably pasteurised)
- 12 small smoked (or 6 large) shiitake mushrooms
- 2 sheets of konbu
- 1 whole head of black garlic

the method

- ▶ Infuse all ingredients at 55°C for 15 minutes
- ▶ Blitz all ingredients until cream darkens considerably
- ▶ Strain
- ▶ Wait for bubbles to settle and pour into sprayed, small ramekins until three-quarters full
- ▶ Steam at 86 degrees with nothing else in the oven for 10 to 12 minutes until set and refrigerate
- ▶ Consume within five to six days

Set Trewithen double cream with umami Flavours

garnish

To garnish this dish, I often make little citrus pearls with yuzu or lime. These little bursts of flavour cut through the richness! I also tear up shiso cress (an aromatic Japanese herb that we grow in our garden) and lastly, for a bit of texture, I like to soak enoki mushrooms in soy sauce then dust them in cornflour and fry them to make them crispy!

UMAMI DELIGHTS

PORTHMINSTER EXECUTIVE CHEF MICK SMITH SETS THE ST IVES STANDARD WITH HIS SET TREWITHEN DAIRY DOUBLE CREAM WITH UMAMI FLAVOURS

Words by **Sarah Harrington**, photographs by **Mike Searle**

