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Smoothie operator

Healthy drinks king Joe McCanta reveals his favourite organic elixirs to **CHLOE SCOTT**

Joe McCanta knows a swig or two about organic cocktail mixology, juicing and vinos. Hailed by The New York Times for being at the 'epicentre of organic cocktails,' the expert on all drinks fruity, boozy and bursting with nutrients reveals his top six tipples. You can see him in action at Saf (the critics love it), in London's Shoreditch, where he mans the bar. www.safrestaurant.co.uk, tel: 020 7613 0007. His personal site is www.pursip.com

My favourite... natural wine

I keep going back to the same wine. I am a seasonal drinker but **Cos Cerasuolo di Vittoria** is special. I discovered it five years ago in Cerasuolo, a small region in Sicily. It's a red wine, a blend of stainless steel-aged Frappato and oak-aged Nero d'Avola. It showcases the best of biodynamic wine. No synthetic fertilisers are used in its production. The wine's flavour bursts with liquorice, cherry and hints of cranberry. *Cos Cerasuolo di Vittoria, 2005.* Visit www.winesearcher.com

The breakfast booster

Vitamineral Green, also called Nature's Living Superfood, from www.kiki-health.co.uk, is brilliant. I used to be a coffee fiend but this really sets you up for the day. I don't need to eat for a few hours after having this. It's packed with every enzyme you can imagine. I think there are 32 natural supplements in it.

The most delectable organic cocktail

I love showcasing fruit and veg in my cocktails at Saf. The Julian is my creation. First, we use **Juniper Green organic gin** (available from www.junipergreen.org or most supermarkets). Their gin and vodka

is really pure; many customers don't get the usual headache effects drinking these. We make a blueberry juice gin – put blueberries in gin to infuse for four days, agitating daily. In September, you can try blackberries or sloeberries [see our foraging sloe gin recipe overleaf].

To make: Muddle four quarters of fresh lime, 1tbsp fresh blueberries, 4 thinly sliced cucumber wheels and 40ml agave syrup (unrefined sugar is fine). Add 60ml blueberry-infused gin. Shake with 2/3 ice cubes. To make the syrup, we mix one part organic raw agave syrup with two parts filtered water. **Ed's note:** Agave nectar, from cacti, is a lesser known super food, but readily available in supermarkets. It contains saponin, which fights cancer.

I'm a purist...

I love late 1800s classic drinks. It was all organic then. Pesticides only came about in the 1970s and 1980s. **Sazerac** is one of the earliest cocktails. Bartenders hotly debate the best recipe but mine uses six-year-old rye whisky and **La Clandestine Absinthe** (so it's best). A man named Peychaud, an 1830s pharmacist and apothecary, mixed brandy, absinthe and a dash of bitters made from herbs and tree barks. I use **Peychaud's bitters** and the absinthe gives it a beautiful, pure aniseed flavour. Any specialist cocktail bar should be able to serve this, even if it's not on the menu. Sazarac separates the men from the boys.

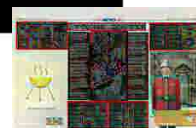
For cordials, the best is...

Rocks Organic; add them to soda water. There is Organic chamomile and blueberry and elderflower, among others. They're available nationally

at health stores and delis. Or visit www.rocksorganic.com or call 01189 342 344.

The top health-busting lemonade

We sometimes make preggatinis. If you're pregnant or can't drink, you still want to drink something beautiful. I love **ginger-shiso lemonade**. **To make:** Muddle 1 fresh Shiso leaf, 50ml ginger-agave syrup (if you don't have this use 1tsp sugar), 50ml lemon juice, 1tsp freshly grated ginger.



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WHAT TO DO WITH TRICKY VEG

The granddaddy of **veggie** box delivery schemes, **Abel & Cole**, celebrates its 20th birthday this year.

The vegetables are renowned for boasting strong flavours because they're harvested organically and seasonally. However, many urbanites are unfamiliar with old-fashioned characters such as pumpkins and marrow. 'They just sit in my fridge, while I use up all the potatoes and carrots - I don't know what to do with them,' whine my friends. Here are some recipes for the next time you're stuck.

■ *For organic goodies and schemes, see www.abelandcole.co.uk*

*Having worked under Raymond Blanc, Brook Hall cookery school's Steve Bulmer knows a thing or two about organic food. Here is his **sumptuous pumpkin soup**. The recipe is courtesy of Kenwood. The Kenwood Chef range starts at £199.99. www.kenwood.co.uk*



Slice **3kg to 4kg pumpkin** in wedges, remove seeds and skin and dice. Add flesh and **1 large onion**, finely chopped to a frying pan. Sauté for 3 minutes, then add **1tsp salt** and sauté for further minute. Transfer to a saucepan. Cover with **750ml water** and **250ml milk**. Add **grate nutmeg**. Simmer for 20minutes. Then liquidise in blender. Serve with **bacon brioche** or **bacon bits** on top.



Sally Clarke, the doyenne of seasonal cooking, whose mentor is the admired Alice Waters of California's Chez Panisse, shares her favourite recipe (**smoked fish with beetroot, mustard leaves and horseradish**), which comes from her book, *Recipes From A Restaurant, Shop & Bakery*, published by Grub Street (available from www.amazon.co.uk), www.sallyclarke.com

Scrub **1kg beetroot** well, simmer in salted water until tender, about 20 to 30 minutes. Cool and peel under cold water. Halve or quarter them, trimming the tops and bottoms. Marinate them in **2tbsp olive oil, Maldon salt, pepper** and



1tbsp of balsamic vinegar.

Peel, grate and chop **150g fresh horseradish** and mix with **300ml double cream**, lightly whipped, then season and add the **lemon juice**. Toss **olive oil, salt** and **pepper** with **150g salad leaves** in a salad bowl. Arrange **400g sliced smoked salmon** and **300g smoked eel** (if you can't get this, use any smoked fish of your choice) on salad plates and place the leaves opposite. Place the beetroot carefully in the centre, as the colour bleeds into the other ingredients. Sprinkle with **dill sprigs** and **chives**. Finish with a **lemon wedge** and **spoonful of cream**.

RECIPES TO TRY AT HOME

Barnsley chops with baked shallots

'Barnsley chops are an underused cut. They're great just cooked on a griddle plate or use them as a summery barbeque main course,' says Mark Hix, who recently opened his Oyster and Chop House in London's Clerkenwell to much acclaim. The former Ivy and Le Caprice exec chef suggests serving the feast with Gaymer's Orchard Reserve Stewley for a fine organic drink.

Preheat the oven to 200°C/gas mark 6. Put **500g shallots**, with the skins on, into a roasting tray and bake for 45 minutes. Leave them to cool then top and tail

them with a sharp knife and gently squeeze out the shallot flesh and discard the skins. Meanwhile, heat and lightly oil a griddle pan or heat a grill to the hottest temperature. Season **4 x 200g chops** with salt and freshly ground black pepper and grill for four to five minutes on each side for pink, or seven to eight minutes for medium. Meanwhile, put the shallots into a frying pan with **100ml lamb or beef stock** (a cube will do) on a high heat and reduce the stock until it has almost evaporated. Add **1tbsp butter** and **1tbsp parsley**, lightly season with salt and pepper and stir well until the butter has melted into the liquid. Serve spooned over the chops or separately.



TOP TOOLS FOR JUICING



The Eva Solo citrus squeezer is a stainless steel cupola with a 0.6-litre mouth-blown glass jug.

■ £31.95,
Silver Nutmeg.
Tel: 01254 820 478,
www.silvernutmeg.com

Flash in yellow, this Kitchenaid blender has an 1.25-litre glass jar.

■ £114, *Silver Nutmeg.*



With a fruit filter to trap pips and seeds, Philips Professional Blender also blends and crushes. It holds 1.5 litres of juice and has illuminated switches.

■ £69.95.
Tel: 08456 049 049,
www.johnlewis.com



We love Easy Health juicer – no electricity needed.

■ £29.95, *Ecoutlet.*
Tel: 020 7272 7233,
www.ecoutlet.co.uk



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