Good Things In Store In September At This Year's Thame Food Festival: 26th September 2015, Thame, Oxfordshire

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The Thame Food Festival in Oxfordshire is back on 26th September with another stellar line-up including food legends Raymond Blanc and Sophie Grigson alongside Breton baker Richard Bertinet and winner of BBC One's MasterChef 2013, Natalie Coleman, as well as an array of local and artisan food and drink stalls.

Visitors can travel into town on a traditional London Routemaster bus and make their way from one end of the High Street to the other as the festival takes over the whole of Thame. Shop for local produce including charcuterie, cakes and cheeses; enjoy the hot street food stalls and see the chefs in action on the live demo and interview stages, hosted by festival patron TV chef and writer Lotte Duncan. Raymond Blanc's right hand men from Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, Adam Johnson, Mark Peregrine and Benoit Blin, will also be out in force on the day.

A first for this year is the Big Thame Bake, where home bakers of all ages can put their baking skills to the test and battle it out to be named the festival's best. Local cookery writer Jane Hornby, BBC Good Food Magazine columnist, baking author and Women's Institute Cookery School tutor, will put bakers through their paces on the day, alongside Great British Bake Off Winner 2013 Frances Quinn. They will be joined by bake-off celebrities numbering Miranda Gore Browne and Luis Troyano plus local cake making and decorating experts Jenny Walker and Norma Laver from Thame's Piece of Cake to decide who is crowned the winner. Afterwards there will be cake decorating master classes to enjoy along with reviving cups of tea and delectable cakes in a vintage pop-up tea shop.

Other features for this September include a Belazu pop-up restaurant serving authentic Mediterranean food in Christchurch in the Upper High Street, with all proceeds being shared between the Belazu Foundation, which supports schools in Morocco and the Isis School in Oxford, and the Thame Food Festival itself, plus the event's annual cook-off between the Raymond Blanc Cookery School and Aylesbury College. Joe & Seph's, stalwarts of the event will also be making a welcome come-back with their fantastic handmade popcorn.

This year's festival also features some fantastic foodie events in the run up to the day, including the chance to take in the glorious gardens at Raymond Blanc's fabulous Oxfordshire country house hotel, Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons on Wednesday 1st July when the two-starred Michelin restaurant serves up a special visit and lunch in support of the food festival.

Walk through the inspiring two acre plot with the expert gardeners at your side, admiring the tranquil Japanese tea garden, the elegant English water garden and the extensive vegetable and herb gardens before a four course lunch with selected wines in the unforgettable setting of La Belle Époque private dining room, for an exclusive price of £195 a person.

With Thame less than an hour away from London, either by train from Marylebone on http://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/ or a short drive from town through lovely countryside, the festival is the perfect day out for foodies from the capital and beyond.

Make a weekend of it while you stock your larder and fill your book shelves by holing up in one of the lovely country pubs with rooms in the area or the luxurious surroundings of Raymond Blanc's Le Manoir at Great Milton, to ensure you make the most of all the good things in store at this year's event.

The Thame Food Festival takes place from 9am to 5pm on Saturday 26th September 2015 in the heart of Thame town centre. For more information, to book any of the special festival events and to sign up for the Big Thame Bake, please go towww.thamefoodfestival.co.uk.

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Notes to editors:

For more information and images, or to arrange an interview with the festival patron or any of the participating chefs please contact Sarah Pracey on 07985 112 777 or email sarah@praceypr.com

Thame Food Festival is a Community Interest Company

The festival started in Thame in 2008 to promote and celebrate the wealth of wonderful food producers, food retailers, chefs, food and drink experts, restaurants and cafés in the local area. This remains the raison d'être of the event. The festival also showcases the town, which is a beautiful historic market town in Oxfordshire.

The festival has grown each year and in 2012 was formally constituted as a Community Interest Company. All local businesses are encouraged to take part in the event, benefiting from increased footfall in town whilst the festival is on and afterwards from repeat visits, whilst food related businesses get a new and different opportunity to promote what they do. The entire community benefits from having such a large and vibrant event on its doorstep.

None of the directors who oversee the organisation of the festival gets paid, but provides skills and contacts for the benefit of the event. The festival depends upon sponsorship and support from the community and is hugely appreciative of this.

The festival is grateful for the support of its 2015 sponsors, who number Belmond Le Manoir aux Quat'Saisons, AGA, Rectory Homes, Wellers, Withy King, South Oxfordshire District Council and Peach Pubs (The Thatch & The James Figg, Thame).

Local cookery writer Jane Hornby is the author of *What to Bake & How to Bake It*, recently published by Phaidon Press. www.janehornby.com

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