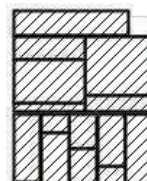


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food & drink

THE MENU

JOE McNAMEE



SERVING UP THE LATEST FOOD NEWS

Chocolate — from home and away

You'll recognise The Menu this Easter by the chocolate-smearing head on him and you can be sure much of his consumption will be of splendid chocolates from his much-loved Chocolate Shop (chocolate.ie), in the English Market. And while many of the products will be sourced from around the globe, he'll also be consuming chocolates from fine Irish chocolatiers as well, including chocolates from The Kingdom. The Menu has always been very partial to Benoit Lorge's range, the Kenmare-based Frenchman's selections always proving most fine and flavour-some (lorge.ie).

On his last visit to The Chocolate Shop, The Menu was especially taken with the gorgeously liveried Skellig Chocolates Easter egg range — another fine Kerry chocolatier. Handmade of solid chocolate — another bonus point as The Menu always feels hollow easter eggs to be something of a swizz — they come in two weights, 400gm and 1kg and flavours include: Strawberry & Champagne; Hazelnut Praline; Limited Edition Teeling Irish Whiskey; Irish Sea Salted Caramel; Honeycomb & Marshmallow; and Mint, with a signature mint truffle centre ■ skelligschocolates.com

Partner chocolate with whiskey or beer

A drop of finest Irish Whiskey so often makes a splendid partner for good chocolate so a pairing masterclass, Teeling Whiskey & Chocolate Pairing (April 1) is thoroughly recommended especially as it features Chapter One pastry chef Darren Hogarty and your pre-ordered event pack and tickets

(€50 in total) includes four Teeling Samples (50ml), premium chocolate samples, Mason Jar and Cocktail Ingredients, Whiskey Glass, Recipe Card and Tasting Mat. reservations@teelingwhiskey.com

Of late, another favourite chocolate pairing of The Menu's has been a limited edition beer from Porterhouse Brew Co. Although to call Around The Clock a 'beer' is almost a misnomer for it is a stout that has undergone an especially prolonged maturation of 365 days in Dingle Whiskey Distillery bourbon and sherry casks, the process yielding a quite extraordinary concoction, a rich, velvety mouthfeel and deep, complex flavours of stewed fruits, marzipan and cacao. ■ porterhousebrewco.ie

Sweet treats

An Easter edition of their Comfort Kit from the ever-splendid Pudding Row (puddingrow.ie) in Sligo (delivery nationwide) is always chock-full of wonderful treats, edible and otherwise, in-

cluding chocolate hearts filled with salted caramel from Mayo chocolatier Noo Chocolates.

When it comes to putting on the nosebag, The Menu has a list as long as his arm and also his other arm and then the arms of another dozen or so especially long-armed citizens and up near the top of that list is a return to Ballymaloe House for some of their legendary hospitality and chef Dervilla O'Flynn's wonderful iteration of Myrtle Allen's culinary ethos but in the meantime a finish-at-home box from the legendary kitchens, Ballymaloe At Home: Easter Feasting, also including some sweet delectables from top pastry chef JR Ryall, is an extremely adequate compensation, even more

so if you add wines selected from the wonderful Ballymaloe cellar by sommelier Samuel Chantoiseau.

■ ballymaloe.ie

Easter Sunday Family Feast — delivered

On foot of colleague Leslie Williams' splendid review of Bujo Burger and aware as The Menu is of the enormous talent that is Bujo Culinary Director Gráinne O'Keefe, The Menu reckons their special Easter Sunday Family Feast is well worth a punt, feeding four to six people, with three meal kits in one for €90 (nationwide delivery, April 2). Easter Sunday roast includes 21-day aged Irish

striploin is served with duck fat roasties, creamy garlic and nutmeg potato gratin, roasted root veg and apple pie.

A dessert kit with six servings features Bakers Chocolate Brownie and Salted Caramel Sauce while the Mini-Masterpiece Burger Kit which Leslie so raved about includes six beef patties, brioche buns, cheese, pickles and Bujo Secret Sauce. A Bujo Gift tea-towel and brief instructional video from Gráinne surely seals the deal!

■ bujo.ie

Cheers to cocktails

The Twelve Hotel's Limited Edition Easter Cocktail Box, €90, includes six delicious cocktails, complete with chocolate eggs and bunnies in which to serve the two chocolate-flavoured cocktails (Baileys Espresso Martini and The Grasshopper, served in chocolate, topped with The Twelve's own salted caramel sauce or chocolate and Baileys sauce). Price includes delivery nationwide. www.thetwelvehotel.ie

TODAY'S SPECIAL

After Valentine's Day and then Mother's Day, it seems The Menu has been eating nothing but chocolate of late and what's more, he is not complaining.

Though he usually features Irish products in this spot, the origins of chocolate are a little bit

further out of the parish and in the spirit of acting local and thinking global, he is happy to bring news of a new Irish charity.

Proudly Made in Africa, supporting sustainable job creation in countries such as Madagascar, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya, and promoting the message of 'trade, not aid' as the optimum solution to African poverty.

Through their online shop, PMIA supports, connects and promotes African businesses producing organic, fairly traded, environmentally friendly, award-winning products, while also supporting female empowerment, living incomes, and environmental habitats.

Retailing a range of goods including organic teas, spices and cocoa beans to handmade soft toys, natural soaps, and Moyee Coffee, the world's first Fair Chain coffee.

And how does all of this connect to the above? Well, PMIA also retail chocolate, including international award-winning MIA chocolate produced bean-to-bar in Madagascar and even amongst the wealth of fine chocolate tastes in recent times, The Menu was especially taken with MIA's Dark Chocolate (65%) with Baobab Powder and Salted Nibs — a well-balanced chocolate with notes of citrus and smokey cocoa and a savoury saline crunch via cocoa nibs all resolving in a fruity finish.

■ proudlymadeinafrica.org



Bujo Easter Sunday Family Feast



Top left: international award-winning MIA chocolate produced bean-to-bar in Madagascar. Above: Skellig Chocolates Easter egg range.