

# Home, sweet home

Cornwall's culinary king, **Nathan Outlaw**, chats to *Anna Turns* about how food can connect a family, how he's taking his seafood style to Dubai and why he always loves coming home to Cornwall. Photos by *David Loftus*.



Sherry trifle, "nothing better, but leave it in the fridge until you're serving."



The kitchen is often the heart of any home, and none more so than in the Outlaw household. Nathan Outlaw and wife Rachel have two children, who he has always encouraged to join him in the kitchen from an early age: "My daughter, Jessie, who's 11, is a really good cook and I'll be surprised if she doesn't become a chef. My son, Jacob, cooks if there's something he likes to eat at the end of it. Neither likes washing up much though," laughs Nathan. "I think because they've always been involved and I've shown them how to do different things, they've naturally become interested. Jacob opted to become semi-vegetarian last summer; he still eats fish. Jessie eats anything. Both will try new things and always have done."

For some families, mealtimes can be tricky, but Nathan and Rachel have successfully managed to avoid making food a battleground with their children: "My wife and I decided right from the start that we'd offer whatever the meal was and if they didn't eat it, that was up to them. We've never cooked different things for each one – except for a veggie option for Jacob now if the main ingredient is meat." And they've never made them eat everything, but they aren't allowed to fill up on rubbish if they don't eat their meal. "I think once you give a child the choice of leaving something they're not keen on for something they like, you're setting up a battle and making life hard for yourself – I know it sounds harsh, but it's true."

While Nathan believes that every meal should be an occasion, his work takes him away to London and



Niçoise salad, "classic and a favourite since my very early days as a chef"



Barbecued ribs with summer veg slaw, "messy to eat but really yummy."

Dubai a fair bit, so long family lunches are a key time for his family to connect. "We treat Sunday as a special occasion, even if it's a BBQ in the summer. We always sit at the table, too. It's so important and really nice to take time to catch up while eating. We all like a good old-fashioned Sunday roast, sometimes substituting fish for meat, but always with crisp roasties and loads of veg. Pudding, if it's my choice, is always trifle."

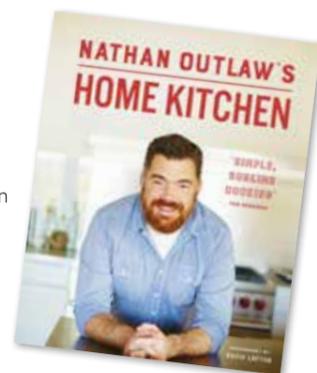
His latest book, *Nathan Outlaw's Home Kitchen*, is his first non-seafood cookery book, so it's the first time he's been able to publish a trifle recipe in hardback. Does he get frustrated that he's labelled a seafood chef when he's clearly so accomplished, versatile and capable of cooking much more? "Not at all. I probably wouldn't be where I am today if I hadn't specialised in seafood cookery. Mind you, it does make me laugh when people think I can't cook anything else."

Nathan's five restaurants include Restaurant Nathan Outlaw in Port Isaac, which is the only fish restaurant in the world to have two Michelin stars. He's racked up a total of four Michelin stars to date and has two other restaurants in Cornwall, and he travels up to Outlaw's at The Capital Hotel in London every fortnight. He also visits his restaurant Al Mahara ('the oyster shell' in Arabic) at the seven-star Burj Al Arab Jumeirah every six weeks, where he aims to bring the very best seafood cookery to the United Arab Emirates in an accessible and affordable way. Much of Dubai is opulent, and fine-dining is often associated with excess. Perhaps Dubai is an extreme contrast to a Cornish active outdoors lifestyle, but his pared-down approach to seafood seems to be taking off there: "My food looks simple but it's the quality of the ingredients and the complex flavour combinations that make it special. Our front-of-house staff are trained to explain this if necessary. There is no reason to change the essence of what we do out there. Good food will always be appreciated, wherever it's served."

Home time is all the more precious when work involves trips away, and Nathan especially enjoys family walks with the dog, Bud. "In the summer, we might hit the beach, usually somewhere quiet that only the locals know," says Nathan, who adds that a meal will be a main feature of any day off, too. "I enjoy what I'm doing but coming home is always good – Cornwall is where I belong." **M**

Nathan Outlaw is cooking Sunday lunch as guest chef at The Seahorse in Dartmouth on 9 July. £85pp. [seahorserestaurant.co.uk](http://seahorserestaurant.co.uk)

*Nathan Outlaw's Home Kitchen* by Nathan Outlaw. Photography by David Loftus. (Quadrille, £20).



# Bites

## Awards for Bovey Castle

Situated in 275 acres within Dartmoor National Park, Bovey Castle's Great Western Restaurant has been awarded three rosettes by the AA for culinary excellence.

Head Chef Mark Budd honed his skills at some of the finest hotel restaurants in the world before returning to his home county of Devon. He is developing a herb garden on the estate and introduced an outdoor ceramic oven to slow-cook dishes such as Old Spot Pork and Crackling. Looking to the future, he is working in conjunction with the Bovey Castle estates team to bring Dexter cattle to the estate. His aim is to start putting this pedigree beef on the menu.

According to AA Senior Hotel & Restaurant inspector, Garry Baldwin MIH, "Mark uses the finest ingredients the South West and the UK can offer, ensuring dishes are created with flair and imagination, while keeping a sense of fun and, indeed, credibility to the hotel and its surroundings. Congratulations to Mark and the team."

Bovey Castle was acquired by the Eden Hotel Collection in 2014, and has undergone an extensive £3.5 million refurbishment, encompassing general restoration work throughout, plus considerable work on the spa, brasserie, restaurant, public areas and bedrooms. [boveycastle.com](http://boveycastle.com)



## Eat on the Exe

Michael Caines has realised his dream and opened a new "unashamedly top-end" country house hotel overlooking the Exe estuary, with a menu to reflect these waterside surroundings. Sense of place is at the heart of the luxury 21-room Lympstone Manor: "Each bedroom is named after a bird species that lives on the estuary, and interiors are designed with the hues of that bird's colours. Original artworks by Kurt Jackson and Rachel Tolle bring the estuary into the rooms."

Of course, food is of utmost importance, and Michael has a team of 18 chefs producing exquisite tasting menus. "Excellent food and a connection with this landscape through our produce underpins our approach," says Michael, who has introduced the estuary tasting menu (£130pp), showcasing fresh seafood and ingredients sourced directly from the Exe and nearby coastline.

It has taken three years to breathe life back into the 18th-century building, and Michael has plans to plant a 15-acre vineyard at Lympstone Manor later this year: "This south-facing slope down to the estuary is in the top 5% of the country in terms of climate suitable for wine-

making, and in a few years we'll be producing our own Champagne. We also plan to be the largest single area vineyard in the UK," says Michael, who hopes Lympstone Manor will be a new benchmark for hotel luxury.

[lympstonemanor.co.uk](http://lympstonemanor.co.uk)



Dark chocolate and confit orange mousse, confit orange sorbet