

Waitrose

Kitchen



APRIL 2015



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recipes and
ideas for
spring

SO TASTY & FRESH!

Scandinavian dishes to make you feel great



Gravadlax salmon
open sandwich
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WEEKEND WONDER

Sabrina Ghayour's
glorious Persian feast

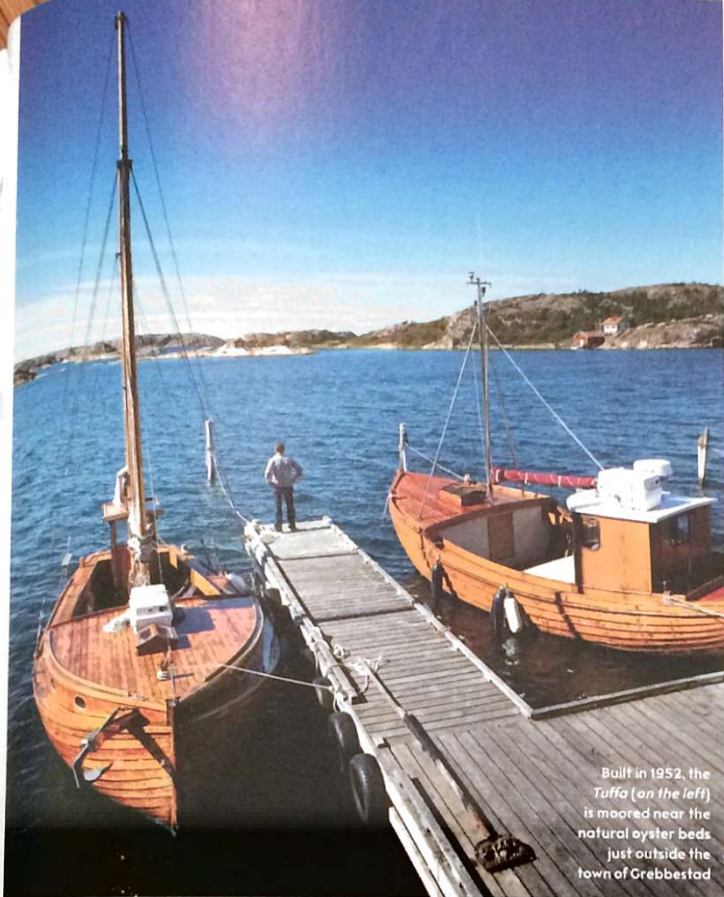
EVERYTHING YOU
WANTED TO KNOW
ABOUT WINE BUT
WERE AFRAID TO ASK
Our brilliant new wine course



SANDI TOKSVIG WHY EVERYONE SHOULD GO DANISH
SPEEDY PUD! RHUBARB AND MAPLE CHEESECAKES
CLARE SMYTH THE VELOUTE THAT CHANGED MY LIFE



Per (right) and his brother Lars out on the deck of the *Tuffa*



Built in 1952, the *Tuffa* (on the left) is moored near the natural oyster beds just outside the town of Grebbestad

THE KING'S OWN OYSTERS

Per Karlsson stands on the deck of his sailing boat, the *Tuffa*, a look of immense concentration on his face. In his left hand is a freshly shucked oyster shell and in his right hand a razor-sharp knife. After a minute, Per takes a gulp and a broad smile extends across his face. "Eating an oyster is like a kiss from the sea," he announces, chucking the shell overboard. "You have to let it linger in your mouth for a long time so you can taste all of the flavours."

Per's business is wild oysters – dredging them from their beds on the shores of Sweden's shellfish capital Grebbestad, and running a conservation group dedicated to his molluscy mates. His brother Lars is the third-fastest oyster shucker in the world (30 in two minutes 45 seconds), and together they run 'safaris' like this – sailing the coastal shallows, teaching their guests the art of savouring fresh oysters.

Because of the cold water temperatures along Sweden's Bohuslän Coast, seafood here grows more slowly, absorbing more minerals and becoming more delicious in

the process. Here, the passage of the year is still marked by the changing menu of the oceans. Locals talk fondly of fishing for mackerel on midsummer nights, when the sun barely dips below the horizon. And then there are short winter days, waiting for a catch by a hole in the sea ice with the blinking lamps of lighthouses for company.

Lars throttles the engine, and we sail past tiny islets – chunks of rock visited only by sunbathing seals. From the city of Gothenburg in the south to the Norwegian border in the north, the Bohuslän Coast is dotted with thousands of islands like these. Seen on a map it looks as if Sweden were quietly disintegrating into the sea; nautical charts are full of big red marks showing where doomed ships met their end. Seen in real life it's a more peaceful proposition: a Nordic Riviera of pebbly beaches and scarlet holiday homes.

Soon we moor up beside Per's timber boathouse, where he teaches me the craft of oyster shucking – the delicate skill of using a knife to open up an oyster without opening up an artery in the process – and



Shucking an oyster shell, and (above) the interior of the Karlssons' 19th-century boathouse

the proper way of consuming them (with a noisy, reverential slurp). Eating a native oyster makes for a strange sequence of flavours: first the tang of saltwater, then the silky meat of the oyster itself, and finally the aftertaste – a sweet, subtle flavour that lingers around the palate until bedtime.

"Every oyster is different," explains Per. "Some are sweet; some mineral-rich. This is the reason why I never tire of them."

Per isn't alone in his passion for Swedish oysters. In the 17th century, the Swedish crown proclaimed all oysters were its property, and should henceforth be shipped to Stockholm. Legend goes that someone in the royal court ate a bad oyster and spent a long and rather reflective period on the royal lavatory. They emerged and decreed that oysters were to be the property of the masses once again. And Swedes up and down the land were very relieved. »