





# Highland cottage industry

The chance discovery of a derelict cottage on Mull has taken Dave and Jo Currie on a journey that has ended in culinary success

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**B**ack in 1996, Dave Currie and his wife Jo were on the last day of a holiday on Mull, and were exploring the back streets of its capital, Tobermory, when they came across an old semi-derelict cottage.

To most people it would have looked like a wreck; to the Curries it looked like an opportunity. So Dave quickly scribbled down the telephone number written on a yellowing piece of paper sellotaped to the window.

For the two experienced hoteliers, that moment was the beginning of a voyage of discovery that has seen their new home, which they named Highland Cottage, establish itself as one of the best-known boutique hotels in the islands. For Glasgow-born Dave, who went to University of Strathclyde, Scottish Hotel School but really learnt how to cook on Iona, where his aunt was in charge of the kitchen at the St Columba Hotel, it was like coming home.

In food terms, the result has been a hugely successful restaurant that has won a whole

succession of awards. Chief amongst these was a fine dining gong at the 2009 Scottish Hotel Awards, but the mainstay has been their status as one of less than eighty two-rosette restaurants in Scotland.

One of the reasons for the Curries' success at Highland Cottage has been the easy availability of top quality ingredients. Whether it's scallops from Tobermory Bay, crabs from Croig on the west coast of the island or mussels farmed at Inverlussa on Loch Spelve, Currie has some of the best produce in the world on his doorstep.

That has been reflected in the menu, which is dominated by seafood but also boasts organic meat and game, much of it from the island but also from the mainland.

The food on offer in the Curries' dining room is best described as classic Scottish dishes built around the finest raw ingredients, but with interesting twists – the starter on the following page that pairs scallops with chilli, grapefruit and capers being a classic example. ▶

**Above:** Dave and Jo Currie.  
**Left:** Hand diver scallop ceviche.



## Hand diver scallop ceviche, chilli, grapefruit and capers

*This is an interesting and a little different method of preparing the scallops. Ceviche is a Central American way of 'cooking' scallops by marinating them in lime juice and – in our case here – capers. The process of marinating turns the scallop meat opaque giving it a cooked appearance. With any dish involving raw shellfish, the ingredients must be impeccably fresh.*

**Note:** This is an ideal dinner party dish as everything is prepared well in advance and the marinade can be added up to an hour before service. Make sure not to add the scallops to the vinaigrette too soon. More than 1 hour and they could well 'overcook'.

2 tablespoons capers – drained, well-rinsed and chopped  
 2 tablespoons juice of fresh grapefruit  
 1 tablespoon juice of fresh lime  
 2 tablespoons juice of fresh orange  
 Quarter cup of extra virgin olive oil  
 One half small red pepper, cleaned, seeded and cut finely into dice  
 1 tablespoon minced chilli  
 200g fresh diver scallops – rinsed, dried and 'hinge' removed  
 2 bunches rocket  
 Flesh of 2 pink grapefruit – carefully segmented  
 Salt and pepper to taste

**Method:** Prepare the vinaigrette/marinade by whisking together all the ingredients except the scallops, rocket and grapefruit.

Slice the scallops horizontally into 2 or 3 slices depending upon their thickness and place them in a medium bowl. Toss the scallops in the vinaigrette and leave for no more than 1 hour. Set aside and prepare the plate(s).

**To serve:** Fan the scallops equally on to each plate. Toss the rocket with the grapefruit segments, salt and pepper. Place a small mound of salad in the middle of the plate and drizzle the remaining dressing around and over the grapefruit.

## Baked breast of guinea fowl, black pudding and bacon, colcannon, wild mushroom sauce

*Guinea fowl is an interesting alternative to chicken. It has more of a gamey flavour and is matched up here with some traditional ingredients to give an interesting combination.*

250g chicken breast  
 1 egg  
 Half a teaspoon salt  
 400ml double cream  
 125g black pudding, pan-fried, cooled and diced  
 50g ham or cooked bacon – diced  
 4 guinea fowl breasts

**The guinea fowl method:** Place chicken breast in food processor and whizz. Add egg, salt

and mix – make sure to scrape down sides. Add cream slowly with machine running. Pass mixture through fine sieve. Add black pudding and ham to mixture to make the stuffing and leave to chill for 1 hour.

Place the stuffing between the skin and the flesh of the guinea fowl and pan fry skin side down until golden brown. Turn over and seal flesh on other side. Place in suitable oven-proof dish and cover with foil. Cook at 180°C for 25 minutes. Check if cooked. If all okay, remove foil and cover with clingfilm. Allow to rest.

**Note:** The stuffing recipe will make more than enough for 4 breasts. Freeze the remainder and use next time around.

### The wild mushroom sauce

50g unsalted butter  
 1 medium onion – finely chopped  
 10g Porcini mushrooms – covered in warm water, soaked for 2 hours, then drained  
 200g dark gilled mushrooms, finely sliced  
 150 ml Madeira  
 300 ml chicken stock  
 100 ml double cream  
 Salt and pepper to taste

**Method:** Heat a non-stick frying pan until hot. Add the butter and onion and fry the onion for 2-3 minutes until soft. Add the drained mushrooms and sliced mushrooms and cook for five minutes. Add the Madeira and reduce till it is almost gone. Add the stock and reduce by a half, add the cream and simmer for 10 minutes or till the sauce thickens. Season to taste with the salt and pepper.

### Colcannon

Simply mix well equal amounts of well-mashed potato and sauted leeks.

**To serve:** For the best impact, spoon a portion of the colcannon onto the centre of a large white plate and carefully place a guinea-fowl breast on top. Spoon the sauce generously to form a circle round outside of the colcannon.

## Parfait rusty nail with red berry compote

*This is an unusual take on a well-known whisky-based liqueur which makes for a delicious dessert. As it is a semi-frozen parfait, we sometimes refer to it as an 'alcoholic ice-cream'. It is always a favourite with our diners.*

### The parfait

1 leaf of gelatine – water to soak  
 4 tablespoons water  
 100g sugar  
 4 egg yolks  
 2 25ml measures Drambuie  
 1 25ml measure any decent blended whisky  
 300ml double cream – whipped to 'soft peak'  
**Method:** Soak gelatine leaf in water and allow to soften – 2/3 minutes. Place the water and sugar in pan and allow to melt. Boil until the mixture reaches 126°C. Remove from heat and add the pre-soaked gelatine leaf. In a separate bowl, whisk the egg yolks until pale yellow, add the gelatine mix with the machine running and

*'The process of marinating turns the scallop meat opaque, giving it a cooked appearance'*

**Left:** Baked breast of Guinea fowl in a rich mushroom sauce.



continue mixing until volume doubles in size. Add the Drambuie and whisky and fold in the cream. Use clingfilm to form the base of each ring, leaving the top open. Pour mixture carefully into each ring and place in freezer until set. Serve straight from the freezer.


*Note:* The ideal rings are open-ended metal food rings – approx 6cm across and 5cm deep. To remove parfait cleanly from ring, warm the outside of the ring gently without over-melting it – heat of your hand will often suffice – and slide parfait carefully out of the ring to serve.

### Red Berry Compote

500ml water  
500g sugar  
1kg bag of frozen summer fruits  
Zest of 2 oranges  
Cointreau to taste

**Method:** Place water and sugar into a suitable sauce pan and bring to the boil. Keep boiling gently until reduced to the consistency of a syrup.

Place the frozen fruits into a large bowl and add the orange zest and 2 or 3 measures of Cointreau to taste. Pour over the hot syrup and leave until the fruits melt and the Cointreau infuses. Cover with clingfilm and refrigerate.

**To serve:** Place each parfait on to the centre of a suitable open dessert dish and carefully spoon the compote round the edge to form a ring. To finish the parfait off with a bit of a 'flourish', pipe a swirl of whipped cream on the top. 

**Above** Parfait rusty nail with a red berry compote.

### FIELD FACTS

Highland Cottage Hotel, Breadalbane Street, Tobermory, Isle of Mull, PA75 6PD  
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[www.highlandcottage.co.uk](http://www.highlandcottage.co.uk)



## Wine to dine

Forth Wines' Tom Clarkson on which wines go with Highland Cottage Hotel's recipes.



### Starter **Hand diver scallop ceviche, chilli,**

**grapefruit and capers:** There are a lot of fresh flavours and textures in this dish, with the stand out being chilli. The secret to matching a wine with this dish is choosing something that won't be overpowered by the spiciness, and more traditional pairings like French Sauvignon Blanc or Muscadet may lose out to the intense flavours. A great match with this dish would be a southern French Viognier, with its aromatic and fruit forward nature. Alternatively, New World Rieslings, notably ones from Clare Valley in Australia, have pronounced citrus flavours but also have enough weight to stand up to more spicy flavours.

### Main **Baked breast of guinea fowl, black pudding and bacon, colcannon, wild mushroom**

**sauce:** The classic partner to game is Pinot Noir and guinea fowl is no exception. This wine varies greatly in style between the classic 'farmyard' fleshy aromas of Burgundy through to the more powerful, darker, fruit driven wines of California and New Zealand. As this dish has some very rich flavours on top of the guinea fowl it would be worth hunting out a weightier style. New Zealand Pinot Noir, particularly from the Martinborough region, is gaining critical acclaim for the styles it produces and the complexity of these wines will certainly match this dish. Another possibility of a good match would be a premium single estate South African Pinotage (itself a crossing between Pinot Noir and Cinsault), which would complement the noticeable 'gamey' flavour perfectly.

### Pudding **Parfait rusty nail with red berry**

**compote:** This is a difficult dish to match with wine as there is a considerable amount of spirit flavours in the dish. To cut through and complement these flavours I would plump for a Pedro Ximenez sherry. This is an intensely sweet dark dessert sherry produced from sun-dried grapes. The concentrated sweetness produces a thick black wine with strong flavours of raisins and molasses. I have always found it a great accompaniment to ice cream as the sublime combination of the two work perfectly together.