

PUB'S ALLOTMENT BARTER SYSTEM

PAYS MORE THAN LIP SERVICE TO USING FRESH LOCAL PRODUCE

Alan Hill, Chef Patron of The Devonshire Arms at Beeley on the Chatsworth Estate, pays more than lip service to using local produce. His latest venture is a successful barter system in conjunction with some of his regulars. Customers that grow their own produce are encouraged to offer Alan their freshly harvested fruit and vegetables in return for which he gives them vouchers to spend on drink at the pub.

As one customer put it, "I love gardening and have always grown my own vegetables but the downside is that everything comes to harvest at the same time. There's far too much for me to eat and you can only give away so much to friends and family. This is a great enterprise – we enjoy a 'free' pint or two and the pub gets freshly picked produce grown right on the doorstep which, in my case, is completely free of chemicals and sprays."

Alan Hill has always flown the flag for freshly cooking everything to order using the best local, seasonal produce. "This is just what I've always done since learning to cook at home; it's not just some fashionable marketing bandwagon to jump on. You can really taste the difference when something as down-to-earth as a carrot has been freshly dug out of the ground and simply cooked."

He continued, "The barter system has evolved over the summer and it has proven to be really interesting to see what people are growing locally in their own gardens and allotments. And word has spread with customers offering me all sorts of exciting produce that has been lovingly nurtured right here on our doorstep. Two boards are strategically positioned outside the inn with my "wish list", which can include anything from greengages to marrows, and those local growers with a glut are enjoying seeing the fruits of their labour on my menus. Together with my own kitchen garden, which is geared towards growing "vintage vegetables" such as Swiss chard and leaf spinach, you really can't get much more local than this."

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