

Food from the farm

Oleifera: farming's healthy product

Originating in the Scottish Borders, a farmer-owned cold-pressed rapeseed oil company is going from strength to strength.

Sue Richmond of Lincolnshire's Kenyon Communications, tells us more

OLEIFERA WAS created by a collection of farming families, all dedicated to producing rapeseed oil of the highest quality. In the beginning there were twelve farms involved, all based in Northumberland and the Scottish Borders. The original Oleifera brands, Naturally Northumberland and Brilliantly Borders, reflected the provenance of the seed produced between these growers. Recently, Oleifera has partnered with a group of like-minded Nottinghamshire and Lincolnshire farmers to create a third brand, Essentially English.

Oleifera stands out from the rapeseed crowds, not just because it's produced using the very best seed, but also the

aftercare which is taken in the storage, crushing, filtering and bottling of the oil. The result is a collection of three exceptional oils, each with subtle variations in characteristics that are due to the differences in soil type, rainfall and climate between the farms.

Sales of Oleifera have gone from strength to strength since the first bottles were sold in Northumberland in November 2006. It became clear very quickly that production levels were going to struggle to keep up with demand. The original press was producing twenty cases of oil a week but it was all being taken by existing customers. A new press was purchased, which gave a massive

increase in production and, from that moment on, the business expanded rapidly.

Oleifera was launched in Scotland in April 2007 using rapeseed grown on the Scottish side of the border. The Scottish oil proved to be just as successful as the Northumberland-grown oil in its first summer.

After two years of considerable growth and with popularity for the product spreading far beyond the reaches of Northumberland and the Scottish Borders, the group of farmers started to look for other partners to continue to expand and get the recognition that their oil deserved. In the autumn of 2009, the perfect partners were found in Colin Bower, Jon Hammond and Tim Bradshaw. Colin and Jon farm the fertile soils of Nottinghamshire, whilst Tim's farm is on the edge of the Wolds in Lincolnshire. Colin, Jon and Tim approach their farms in a very similar way to the original growers, taking every care to produce the very best crops. The oil produced from the East Midlands' farms forms the latest edition to the Oleifera family - Essentially English.

Oleifera have also been working very closely with Lincolnshire's local food champion and TV chef, Rachel Green and over the last year, Rachel has been busy concocting a variety of recipes to highlight the range of uses for cold-pressed rapeseed oil in everyday cooking. Oleifera can be used for deep-frying fritters, producing a salad dressing, baking cakes or an impressive meal-in-minutes stir-fry. And, of course, for making the crispiest roast potatoes and vegetables - perfect for impressing your guests over the coming festive season.

Not only is Oleifera extremely versatile, it's also British and, uniquely,

Roast potatoes, parsnips and shallots with pancetta and bay leaves

1.5kg potatoes, medium sized, peeled
900g parsnips, medium sized, peeled
2 tbsp plain flour
1 tbsp fresh thyme, chopped, plus a few sprigs
6-8 tbsp rapeseed oil
12 shallots, peeled
200g pancetta, roughly chopped
6 whole bay leaves
Sea salt and black pepper

Preheat oven to 200°C/Gas 6

Method:

1 Cut any large potatoes in half and all of the parsnips in half lengthways, cook the potatoes in boiling salted water for eight minutes or until par-boiled. Meanwhile cook the parsnips in the same way in another pan for four minutes. Drain the potatoes well then return to the pan and cover, shake the pan to roughen the edges of the potatoes.

2 Drain the parsnips and toss them in the flour, chopped thyme and seasoning.



3 Pour the rapeseed oil into a large roasting tin and heat in the oven; you need around 1cm of oil in the tin. Add the potatoes and turn them over in the oil using a slotted spoon. Roast uncovered for 15-20 minutes, remove the tin from the oven and turn the potatoes, add the parsnips and shallots and turn them in the oil too. Roast for a further 35-40 minutes then turn all of the vegetables again, add the pancetta.

4 Increase the heat to 220°C/Gas 7 for a further 15-20 minutes, adding the thyme sprigs and bay leaves for the final ten minutes. Sprinkle with a little sea salt and black pepper and serve immediately.



**Jon Hammond and
Lincolnshire's Rachel
Green promote the
farm-pressed oil**

the only cold-pressed rapeseed oil officially endorsed by a chef.

The health benefits of cold-pressed rapeseed oil are definitely something to shout about as our bodies need balanced quantities of fats, proteins and carbohydrates in order to stay healthy (although certain

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Cold-pressed rapeseed oil contains just 6 per cent saturated fat
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fats should be consumed in only very small quantities). Oleifera rapeseed oil is taken from the first gentle pressing of the seed, giving you the full benefit of rapeseed's healthy properties.

We should consume less saturated fat, which can contribute towards high

cholesterol, diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Cold-pressed rapeseed oil contains just 6 per cent saturated fat, where most olive oils have 14 per cent and most sunflower oils around 10 per cent.

Rapeseed oil also contains mono-unsaturated fats (59 per cent) and polyunsaturated fats (30 per cent) as well as Omega 3, 6, 9 (essential fatty acids) which are all known to help lower cholesterol. One thing to remember, however, is that not all cholesterols are bad for you.

There are good cholesterols (HDL) and bad ones (LDL). Rapeseed oil contains polyunsaturates, which are high in linolenic acid and lower LDL without depleting HDL. As with all natural oils, rapeseed oil does not contain harmful trans fats either.

Omega 3 is also recommended because it is thought to improve brain and eye function, and therefore of particular benefit

to young children. It is rare that any of us have enough Omega 3 in our diets because there are few foods that contain it (unlike Omega 6, which can be found in a number of food sources) and a higher level of Omega 3 is therefore recommended. The correct ratio of Omega 3 to Omega 6 naturally occurs in rapeseed oil.

Vitamins E and D are also found in cold-pressed rapeseed oil. Vitamin E acts as an antioxidant to fight the effects of ageing toxins or 'free radicals' as they are known and Vitamin D is good for bones and for bolstering the immune system.

Essentially English will be available very soon and with an impressive new 31cm bottle, the stockists will doubtless be delighted with the appealing shelf size bottle. Contact Oleifera for further information, kristy.sugden@Oleifera.co.uk, telephone: 01159 660713, and visit the website, www.oleifera.co.uk