



FOOD PRODUCER



## Producer of the month: Butterville Farm

POLBATHIC, ST GERMANS  
SOUTH EAST CORNWALL

Words by **Julia Bryan**, photograph by **Howard Oates**

**R**obert and Gill Hocking have earned a glowing reputation for their boutique bed and breakfast enterprise at Butterville Farm. The traditional farmhouse, set in 15 acres and surrounded by rolling South East Cornwall countryside, offers a tranquil retreat from life's travails.

One review from contented visitors, published on Butterville's website, states: "Peaceful, welcoming, comfortable, lovely place and organic, home-grown, hand-made food. What else could one want? Great, thank you". It is clear from the start that good food, produced organically if at all possible, is an essential part of the Butterville experience.

The Hockings aim to serve produce at breakfast that is in season, home-grown, home-made or sourced from organic suppliers in the area wherever possible. Gill bakes bread and makes jam from fruit grown at Butterville. From an extensive breakfast menu, guests looking for a healthy, wholesome start to the day in the summer and autumn months have the choice of sun-ripened, flavourful tomatoes, grilled and served on Gill's home-baked toasted brown bread.

Robert (pictured) is in charge of overseeing tomato production at Butterville Farm. Organically-grown, these old-fashioned tomato varieties ripen into different shapes, sizes and colours, ranging from the traditional red to yellow, pink, purple and black. Included in this

cornucopia are the pink-shaded Gregori's Altai and yellow-hued Brandywine varieties, alongside the familiar favorite, Gardener's Delight.

"We grow heirloom varieties which produce a much tastier crop but don't crop as well as the modern commercial types and have a shorter shelf life but, for us, quality and taste come first. We hunt out long-forgotten varieties and then test grow to select the tastiest," explains Robert.

"Many people grow tomatoes but to get those special flavours they need to be organically-grown and fed with lots of compost. It helps also to only give them fresh spring water which has none of the chemicals associated with mains water and adds to the beautifully clean, lingering flavours."

Butterville Farm is part of a small group of organic growers in the area, certified by the Soil Association, which produces fruit and vegetables on a small scale. To ensure freshness, their produce is picked young and delivered within hours to customers, including Fifteen Cornwall at Watergate Bay in North Cornwall.

The growers' produce includes, in season, baby salad leaves with edible flowers, courgettes, Glen Ample and Polka raspberries, Gariguettes strawberries, Ben Conan blackcurrants, baby broad beans, borlotti beans, herbs (from apple mint to tarragon), samphire and nettle tips. **CT**

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