

Back on his farm in Goosnargh. Ian hatches, rears and sells thousands of partridges, pheasants and wild ducks for shoots. But this work is seasonal, ending when shooting begins in the Autumn. That's when he turns his attention to his food processing plant, buying back most of the birds from the shoots. They are plucked, dressed, packed and refrigerated or frozen, then sold to restaurants, butchers and private buyers.

Maintaining quality is vital, though not always easy when your product is a free-range creature shot out of the sky. "Consistency is what chefs want from me and that's what I give them" says Ian. This husbandry of the birds appeals to Ian's gentle nature, collecting the eggs, incubating them, hatching them, then rearing them through their various stages of development until they are sent to shooting estates. That's six weeks for duck, seven for pheasant, twelve for partridge.

"We've really got to look after them. The better they're bred here, the more we have to distribute and the better birds they'll be. Pheasants especially, don't rear in the wild very well and if they're left to their own devices there would be a lot less of them."

Paradoxically, Ian likes the idea that the birds he

rears, unlike farmed chickens, have a chance to get away and live on the wild. And, of course, many do!

Throughout January, Nigel will also be featuring Pheasants, Wild Duck and Partridge from Whitewell, Dunsop Bridge, Scorton and other parts of Lancashire and Cumbria.

GAME SEASON

Grouse	Aug 12th – Dec 10th
Pheasant	Oct 1st – Feb 1st
Partridge	Sept 1st – Feb 1st
Woodcock	Oct 1st – Jan 31st
Mallard/Teal/Widgeon/Goose	Sept 1st – Jan 31st
Hare	Aug 12th – Jan 31st*
Snipe	Aug 12th – Jan 31st
Roe Buck	Apr 1st – Oct 31st
Roe Buck (Scotland)	Apr 1st – Oct 20th
Roe Doe	Nov 1st – Mar 31st
Roe Doe (Scotland)	Oct 21st – Mar 31st
Red Stag, Sika Stag	Aug 1st – Apr 30th
Red Stag, Sika Stag	Jul 1st – Oct 20th
Fallow Buck (Scotland)	Aug 1st – Apr 30th
Red Hind, Sika Hind, Fallow Doe	Nov 1st – Mar 31st
Red Hind, Sika Hind, Fallow Doe (Scotland)	Oct 21st – Feb 15th

For further information on the game season and all aspects of shooting, visit www.basc.org.uk or www.gameson.org.uk

* Hare cannot be sold between March and July



Ian Banks · Eaves Green Game Farm · Goosnargh · PR3 2FE

Tel 01772 865300


THE THREE FISHES

Mitton Road
Mitton · nr Whalley
Lancashire · BB7 9PQ
Tel 01254 826 888
www.thethreefishes.com

THE HIGHWAYMAN

Burrow · Kirkby Lonsdale
Lancashire · LA6 2RJ
Tel 01524 273 338
www.highwaymaninn.co.uk

the clog 
AND billycock

Billinge End Road
Pleasington · Blackburn
Lancashire · BB2 6QB
Tel 01254 201163
www.theclogandbillycock.com

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

IT'S ALL IN THE GAME

There can be little doubt that this part of the world reigns supreme as the food capital of Britain. And one of the reasons is the enviable supply of game available from our rich, wild and spectacular moorlands and forests.

But while much of the year is given over to the work of breeding, rearing and husbandry, this is the season when the fruits of that labour...those delicious and distinctive gamey flavours...find their way into dishes of outstanding character.

Our much admired abundance of game can be divided into two major groups...the feathered variety which includes Grouse, Partridge, Pheasant, Wood Pigeon and Wild Duck, and the four-legged variety which includes Hare, Rabbit, Wild Boar and Deer.

Almost all game is hung to develop flavour and to tenderise the flesh. Birds are hung, unplucked, in a cool place while deer are hung for a period determined by their age and the flavour and texture required. Some deer, for example, are hung for only a few days while others are hung for a fortnight, by which time they've developed their strongest, most gamey flavour.

With the peak period for game now upon us, Lancashire's and Cumbria's Pheasants, Wild Duck, Partridge and Deer will all be lending themselves to mouthwatering creations. But whether the preference is for the furred or the feathered variety, when supply – and the law – permits, they're eagerly awaited in the kitchens of those restaurants skilled in capturing their unmistakable tastes and textures.

Pheasant, in season from October 1st to February 1st, has a milder flavour than Grouse to which it is often compared although, if the birds are not hung, the flavour is similar to chicken. Grilling or roasting are the favourite options for cooking.

Partridge, also in season until February 1st, develops

more flavour if it has been well hung. Casseroling or roasting are the traditional methods of cooking.

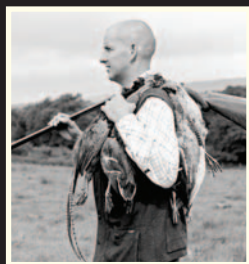
As for Venison, it's hung and matured in different ways depending on the breed. But when it comes to cooking, most cuts (except shoulder and shin which are best braised) should be cooked quickly and allowed to rest before serving. The haunch, saddle or leg can be roasted or sliced into steaks while chops from the ribs can be fried or grilled. Even more good news...that dark red and strong flavoured meat is very lean and impressively low in cholesterol. So now you can feel even better about treating yourself to something wonderfully delicious.

Game on...as they say!

IAN BANKS - EAVES GREEN FARM

Nigel Haworth has long been an admirer and customer of Ian Banks, and this season he'll be creating dishes featuring Ian's magnificent Red Deer, mostly reared around Crossthaite.

Ian has shooting rights on about 400 acres near the village of Caton on the South Bank of the River Lune where Red Deer and Roe Deer have roamed for countless years. Deer stalking is a new venture for Ian, who traditionally has reared game birds on his farm.



IAN BANKS - EAVES GREEN GAME FARM

A former gamekeeper at the Duke of Westminster's great estate of Abbeystead, Ian has learned to understand the lie of the land and the changes that happen to the terrain, Silence and patience are imperative.

If there is the slightest movement, a scent on the wind will alert the deer, but if you stay completely immobile they will carry on grazing. Stalking must be wordless!

Continues overleaf







