



One woman, two pans



Bampton's gold medal-winning preserve maker started her business to raise money for charity and make use of a garden glut

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'One woman, two jam pans,' is how Jeannie Murray describes herself. Cumbria's only artisan gold medal winner at this year's World's Original Marmalade Awards, held at Dalemain House near Penrith, explains that these hardworking pans are usually "one on and one in the wash". That's how her business, Jeannie's Kitchen Garden, has grown from a



small stall at the gate of her Bampton home, to supplying retailers in Penrith and the Eden Valley, plus selling online, with her website due to go live this month.

She entered the festival earlier this year on a whim having bumped into its founder Jane Hasell-McCosh on the train to Edinburgh. Some of the proceeds from her jam, marmalade and chutney have always gone to Hospice at Home Carlisle and North Lakeland and the festival supports the same cause.

It was in the artisan section for marmalade with interesting additions that she found success, winning gold for her version, flavoured with Islay malt whisky and Hebridean seasalt.

The salt crystals, produced on the Isle of Skye by wind-drying seawater, are sprinkled into the mix at the final stage.

"I put the salt in when I'm bottling," says Jeannie. "So that people get the crunch."

"I think the judges thought there was a lot going on with the smoky peat flavour of the whisky and the bite of the salt and the citrus. I like the mixing of sweet and sour, a bit like Middle Eastern cookery."

Many of her core products make use of clever flavour pairings: the Really Raspberry jam contains the berry liqueur Chambord and there's also rhubarb and rose or plum,

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rum and walnut jams.

Jeannie, originally from Edinburgh, says she was a late convert to the art of preserving, only taking it up seriously after she and her husband, Richard Wright, moved to their stylishly converted chapel home in Bampton, near Shap, eight years ago.

They run the London-based company New Design Group together, supplying design-led, contemporary furniture to commercial customers.

They stepped back from the family business 18 months ago leaving more time for the cottage garden cultivated in the field behind their home, helped by part-time gardener Arnold Roze, who also lives in the village.

Jeannie says: "With the veg garden I used to have gluts of veg. I would sell them at the gate and make a contribution to Hospice at Home. That grew - we get a lot of walkers on the Coast to Coast - and I started making

jams and marmalade."

Despite being a novice, Jeannie says her mum and granny made jam and she inherited a family copy of a Constance Spry cookery book which is full of tips.

She's not willing to share all of them, but one is to macerate the fruit and sugar overnight, which reduces cooking time and suspends the fruit in syrup, improving texture.

Jeannie says that products must look as good as they taste. It's for this reason that her Proper Piccalilli is hand cut.

"Each vegetable is cut into different shapes - it's got to have visual appeal and texture so when it's on the plate it's not just a homogenous yellow mess."

She loves the attention to detail required and describes preservers as "a bit of a breed apart."

Meanwhile the effect of that gold medal is being felt with Jeannie's products now being stocked at J & J Graham of Penrith, as well as shops and tearooms in Askham, Shap, Morland and Bampton.

"It's painstaking, but I find it therapeutic," says Jeannie. "In the winter, when the weather's filthy outside, there's nothing nicer than making marmalade."

www.jeannieskitchengarden.com