

Every other month, Ric Smith and Steve Downey of specialist ingredients supplier Ritter Fresh share their sourcing expertise and hand-pick an exclusive recipe to show off the best seasonal produce



The scarlet empress



RIC SMITH
Head of sales
Ritter Fresh

Okay, the carabineros prawn isn't really called 'the scarlet empress', but it does seem a wholly deserved title for this magnificent prawn, which is at the absolute top of the pecking order when chefs and gourmands are asked for their opinion.

Just look at them with their wondrous shiny crimson coats of armour. They are not only huge but are the most incredible hue of red, which does not change an iota when cooked. However, it is not just their size and colour that makes these darlings stand out from the crowd - a vast crowd at that, with over 2,000 species across the globe - they are universally acknowledged to be the best tasting of all prawns.

Their firm white flesh has a flavour more robust and distinct than any other prawns or langoustine and they hold highest rank in the area off Morocco and Spain, where they are caught in the wild. People over there will suck and squeeze the heads to extract every last drop of

heavenly moisture. If this is not your dining room scene, then please remember the exquisite sauces, soups and stocks they can yield.

The word carabineros translates as 'police' in Spain and Portugal, and is affectionately attached to these prawns with their bright red shells matching the uniforms of the Spanish

customs police. The French prefer 'crevette imperial' and here in the UK I have seen them referred to as 'cardinal'. All pretty lofty titles nonetheless.

I think most would agree that one of the outstanding characteristic of a truly great ingredient is that you don't need to do anything to improve its natural flavour, and that is just so



Red devils: striking carabineros prawns have strong plate appeal

here. Not only do they have wonderful visual 'plate appeal', hard to better in my opinion, they are mouth-wateringly delicious.

Cooked with best-quality salt and olive oil, simply on the plancha, and served with top-notch bread and a glass of chilled wine, there is no better meal to be had.

We all like a good prawn. All around the world they are eaten in vast quantities, with sales figures in the US alone quite staggering. To repeat myself, we all like a good prawn but this is not just a prawn. This is *the* prawn, the mighty Plesiopaneaus Edwardsianus, and Ric at Ritter Fresh is now supplying them.

Below is a recipe from Dale Osborne, who is only too aware of the quality of the ingredient he has got his hands on.

Tel: 0845 850 9970
Fax: 0117 938 0672
Email: Orders@ritterfresh.co.uk

Ritter Fresh
specialists in meat, fish and game

CARABINEROS WITH CITRUS AND PINK PEPPERCORN VINAIGRETTE, CREATED BY DALE OSBORNE

Bistrot Bagatelle,
34 Dover Street,
London W1S 4NG

Serves 4

- 4 large carabineros prawns
- 50ml ginger beer
- 50ml ginger juice
- 50g pink peppercorns
- 1 lime
- 1 orange
- 1 lemon
- 1 pink grapefruit
- 500ml virgin olive oil
- 5g Maldon salt
- 100g fennel
- Fennel top
- Amaranth cress



Brawn star:
Dale Osborne

► Make the dressing. Pre-soak the pink peppercorns in the ginger beer. Peel and grate the



fresh ginger, then squeeze in a J-cloth to get the juice. Grate and reserve the citrus zest. Segment the citrus

fruits and chop, squeezing the residue for juice. In a bowl, whisk citrus juice, ginger juice, segments, zest

and peppercorns. Slowly add the olive oil while whisking to emulsify, and season with the salt.

► Steam the prawns whole for 2 minutes, then chill in ice.

► Cut each prawn in half, clean and dry any excess water from the head. Brush with olive oil. Charcoal grill for 1 minute each side.

► Spoon the citrus and pink peppercorn vinaigrette over the grilled prawns. Garnish with blanched paysanne of fennel, picked fennel top and amaranth cress.