

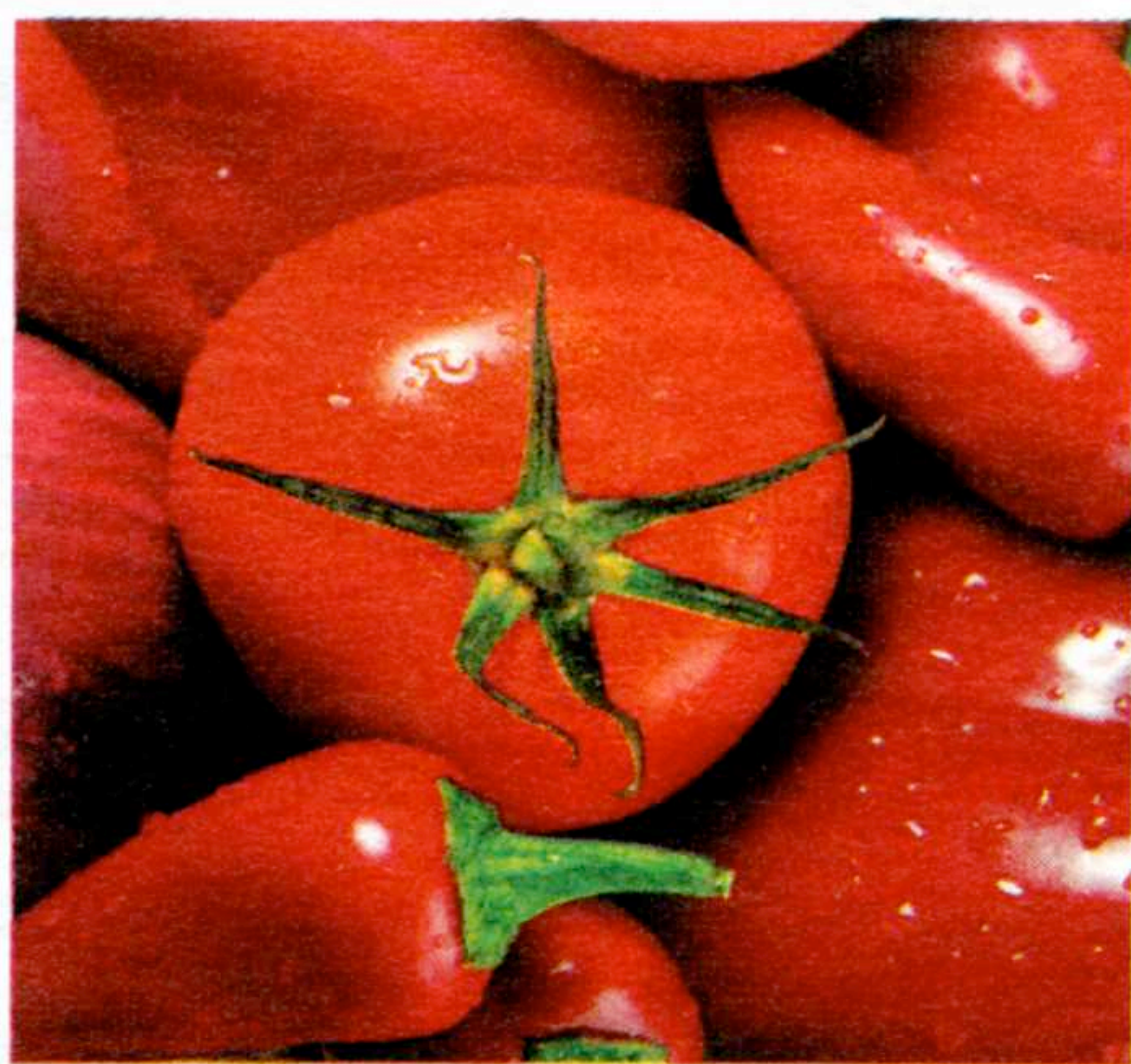
Food & drink notes

By Charles Campion



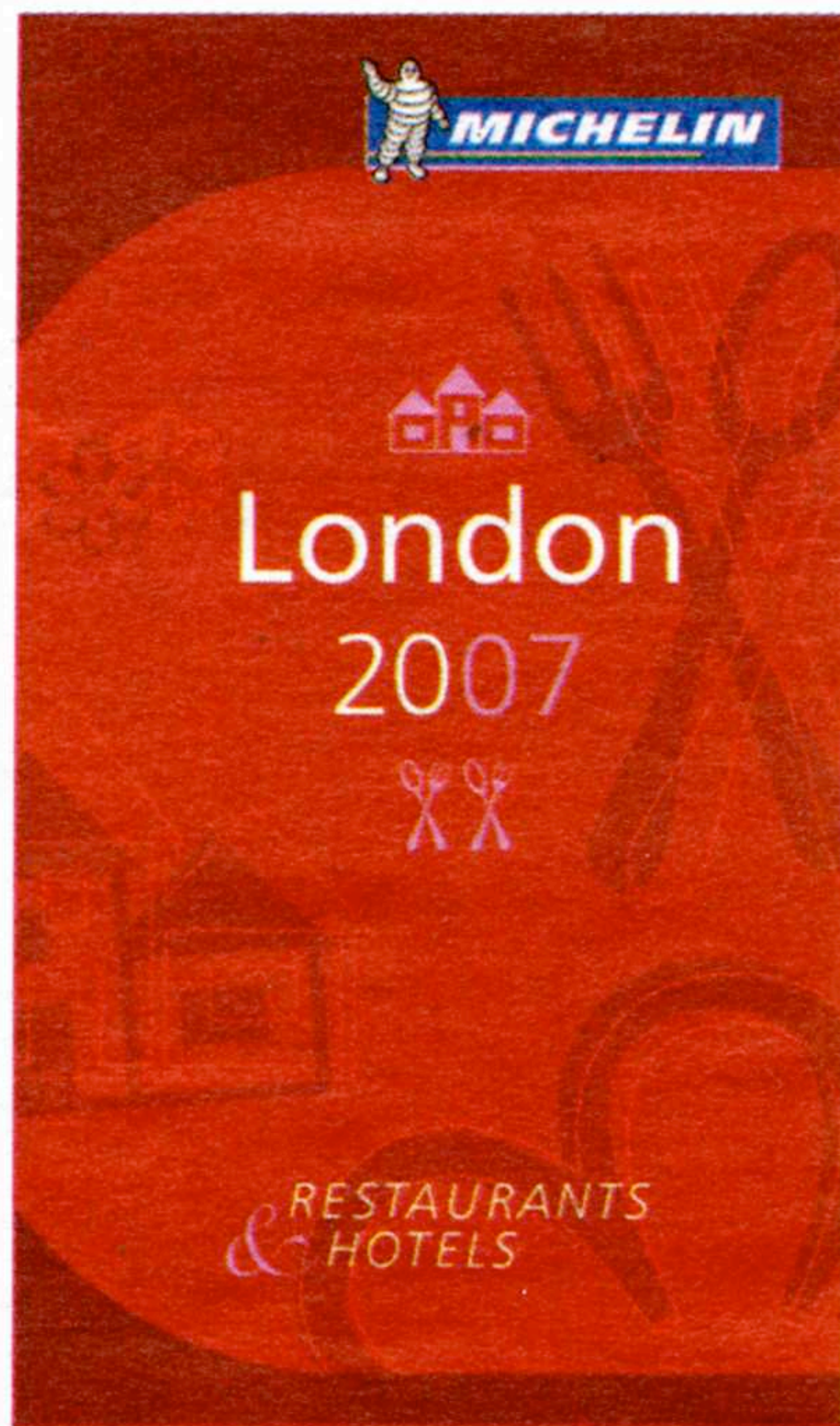
School holidays

"Holidays for people who love food," it says on the front of *On the Menu*. For once the hype rings true. These are holidays first and foremost, with the cooking-school element taken seriously, but not dominating. Enlisting names like Rosemary Schrager and Valentina Harris, *On the Menu* offers three- to eight-day breaks in Australia, France, India, Indonesia, Italy, Jordan, Mexico, Morocco, Spain, Thailand and Vietnam. A holiday in Tuscany might include a visit to a local Pecorino factory - a fine way to get to know the local cuisine. *On the Menu*: call 08708 998844 or visit www.holidayonthemenu.com



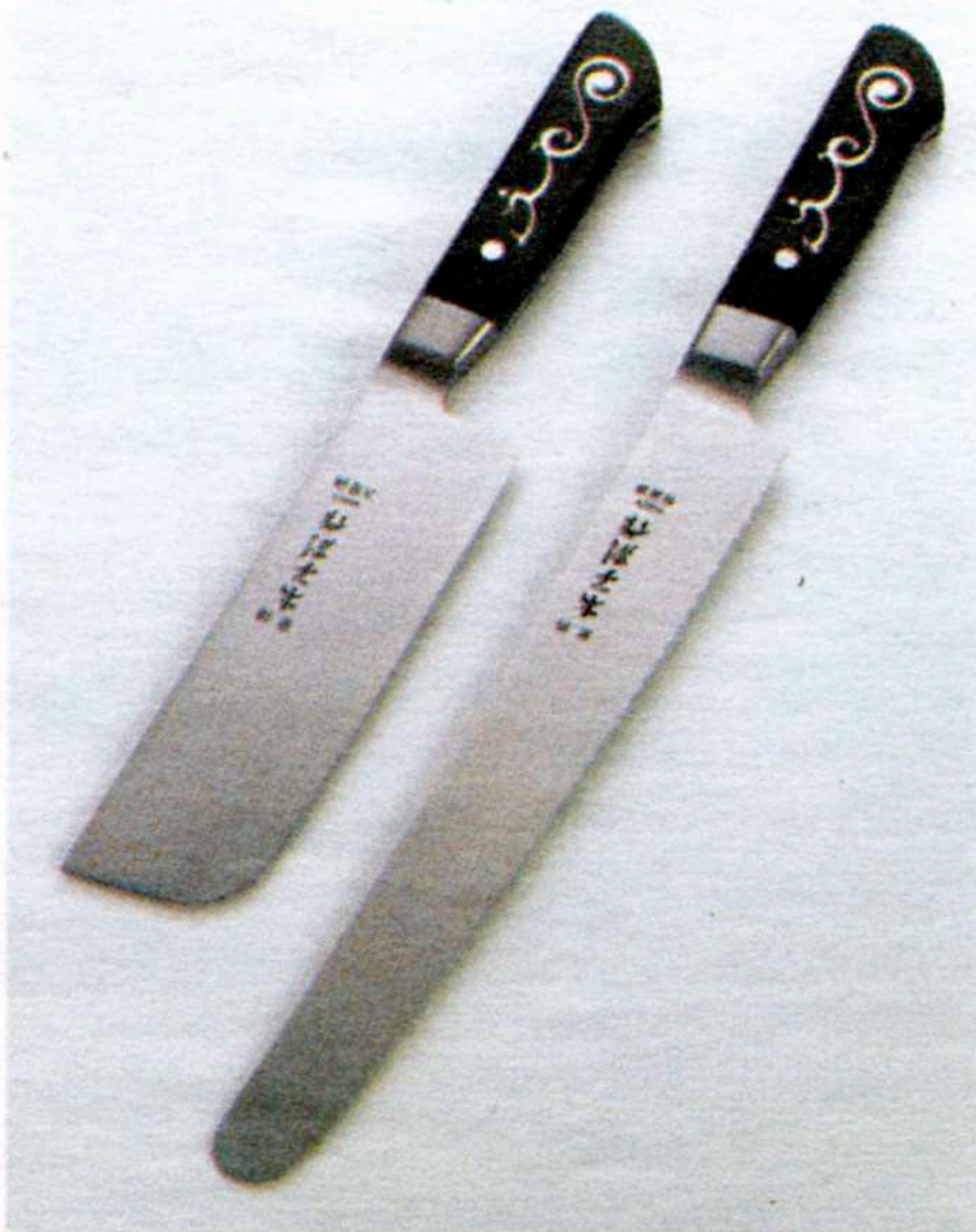
Star attractions

There is nothing that appeals to ambitious chefs as much as the prospect of a Michelin star. *The Michelin Great Britain & Ireland Guide 2007* hit the shops last Monday and with it came a newcomer - *The Michelin London Guide 2007*. The new book follows the format of the *New York Michelin* and rather than the terse listings of the traditional guide there are colour pictures, brief entries about most restaurants and longer comments on those that are starred. This year, four London restaurants were elevated to one-star status: La Noisette in Chelsea, Benares in Mayfair, Arbutus in Soho and L'Atelier de Joël Robuchon in Covent Garden. Pétrus in Belgravia went up to two stars and there were no new three-star establishments. *'The Michelin London Guide 2007'*, £9.99, and *'The Michelin Great Britain & Ireland Guide 2007'*, £15.99, both published by Michelin Maps and Guides



Seriously cutting edge

Among top chefs there is a continuing fascination with Japanese knives - perhaps they all nurse a secret wish to be Samurai warriors? Whatever the psychology behind it, one restaurant star has been spotted paying £2,500 for a particularly fine sushi knife. Ever eager to exploit an opportunity, Japanese knife-maker I O Shen has produced a reasonably priced Japanese blade (triplex steel, multi-layered to hold a fine edge longer) with a European-style handle (for better grip, and with a special ornate tang designed for durability). They do need looking after (sharpen them carefully and never put them in the dishwasher), but they're a joy to use. The latest and most covetable knife in the range is an extra-long 270mm bread knife - for even slices and less crumbling. *I O Shen vegetable knife*, £39.95, and *bread knife*, £34.95, available at good cook shops and www.knifewizard.co.uk



Top seed

If the word crispbread brings to mind long, boring days spent trying to diet, forcing yourself to munch through thin, spiky sheets of almost-cardboard, you need to make the acquaintance of Dr Karg. Although he sounds as if he should be a character in a US sci-fi series, Dr Karg is a trademark of the Karg family bakery in Schwabach near Nuremberg. With 12 bakers' shops, the Kargs have set about the task of making "Breads of distinction". For once these are crispbreads developed for their taste rather than their calorie count - and they are delicious. Each slice is substantial and crunchy and packed with good things - the excellent "classic 3-seed" variety contains 27 per cent seeds. Other varieties include organic cheese and pumpkin, and organic roasted onion. *Dr Karg crispbreads*, available at Waitrose and selected Tesco stores, £1.69 for a 200g pack



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