What a Three-Course Forgotten Fish Menu Actually Tastes Like



There is a moment, somewhere between the first bite of a dish you have never tasted before and the realisation that it is extraordinary, when a forgotten fish stops being a sustainability concept and becomes simply dinner. A very good dinner.

This is the experience that Marstang Mad & Vin offers its guests week after week — and it is, in its way, the most powerful argument in the Forgotten Fish project's entire portfolio. More persuasive than any statistic about bycatch volumes. More memorable than any infographic about marine biodiversity. Because it is direct, sensory, and entirely delicious.

A recent menu at Marstang opened with a delicate preparation of small silver fish from the Ærø waters — lightly cured, served with a fermented cream, pickled cucumber, and a dusting of dried seaweed that brought the sea quietly into the room. The fish in question was not one that appears on wholesale price lists or in the fish counters of Copenhagen's better supermarkets. It was a forgotten species, caught that morning by a local fisherman who supplies Marstang directly. In the hands of Marstang's kitchen, it was a revelation.

The main course that evening was a whole roasted fish — again, a species most guests would not have named — served with white bean purée, a sauce built from the fish's own bones and juices, and early-season greens from an organic farm a few kilometres from the restaurant. It was the kind of dish that makes you understand why people travel to Ærø for a meal. Not because it is elaborate or technically showy, but because every element on the plate is exactly where it should be, and none of it could exist in quite this form anywhere else.

Dessert, on this occasion, returned to the sea obliquely — a panna cotta made with local dairy, topped with a sea-buckthorn compote from the island's coastal shrubs, sharp and bright against the cream's softness. The meal ended as it had begun: rooted in place, honest about its ingredients, and quietly remarkable.

'We never try to hide what something is,' Camilla says. 'If it's a fish people haven't heard of, we tell them. We tell them where it's from, what it's like, why we chose it this week. And almost always, they're glad we did. The conversation about the fish is part of the meal.'

This is, ultimately, what the Forgotten Fish project is building toward — a European catering culture in which forgotten species arrive at the table not as a challenge to be explained away, but as a story worth telling. Marstang tells that story every week, in three courses, on an island in the Danish sea. The rest of Europe is invited to follow.

> *"The conversation about the fish is part of the meal. Almost always, guests are glad we told them what it was and where it came from."*