

February 9, 1994

Food Notes

By Florence Fabricant

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You never know what will spill next from the fax machine. Last week there was a message for Alan Obsatz, the owner of Butterfield Market, 1114 Lexington Avenue (78th Street), from Paul Jackson, the assistant to the master of the household. The household in question was none other than Buckingham Palace.

It seems the royal yacht Britannia is arriving in New York tomorrow for six days of what the message called "commercial functions" before sailing off to the Caribbean on the 16th for "royal duty," and Butterfield Market was recommended to help with provisions.

"We're doing the fruits, vegetables and dairy," Mr. Obsatz said. The order was heavy on beets, asparagus and firm tomatoes. Mr. Obsatz had a little trouble figuring out items like capsicums (bell peppers), swedes (rutabagas) and round lettuce (Boston). He could not accommodate the royal appetite for Bromley apples but had no problem with Granny Smiths.

Phyllo, taramosalata, Greek yogurt and whole milk in pints, but no heavy cream or butter, were on the list. "They also want us to supply English cheeses like Stilton, double Gloucester and huntsman," he said, "and tons of Philadelphia cream cheese."

And bagels? Smoked salmon? "I have no idea," he said, adding that he is the only New York purveyor.

To celebrate this windfall with regular customers, Mr. Obsatz has priced everything English at 25 percent off for a fortnight, starting tomorrow, through Feb. 23.