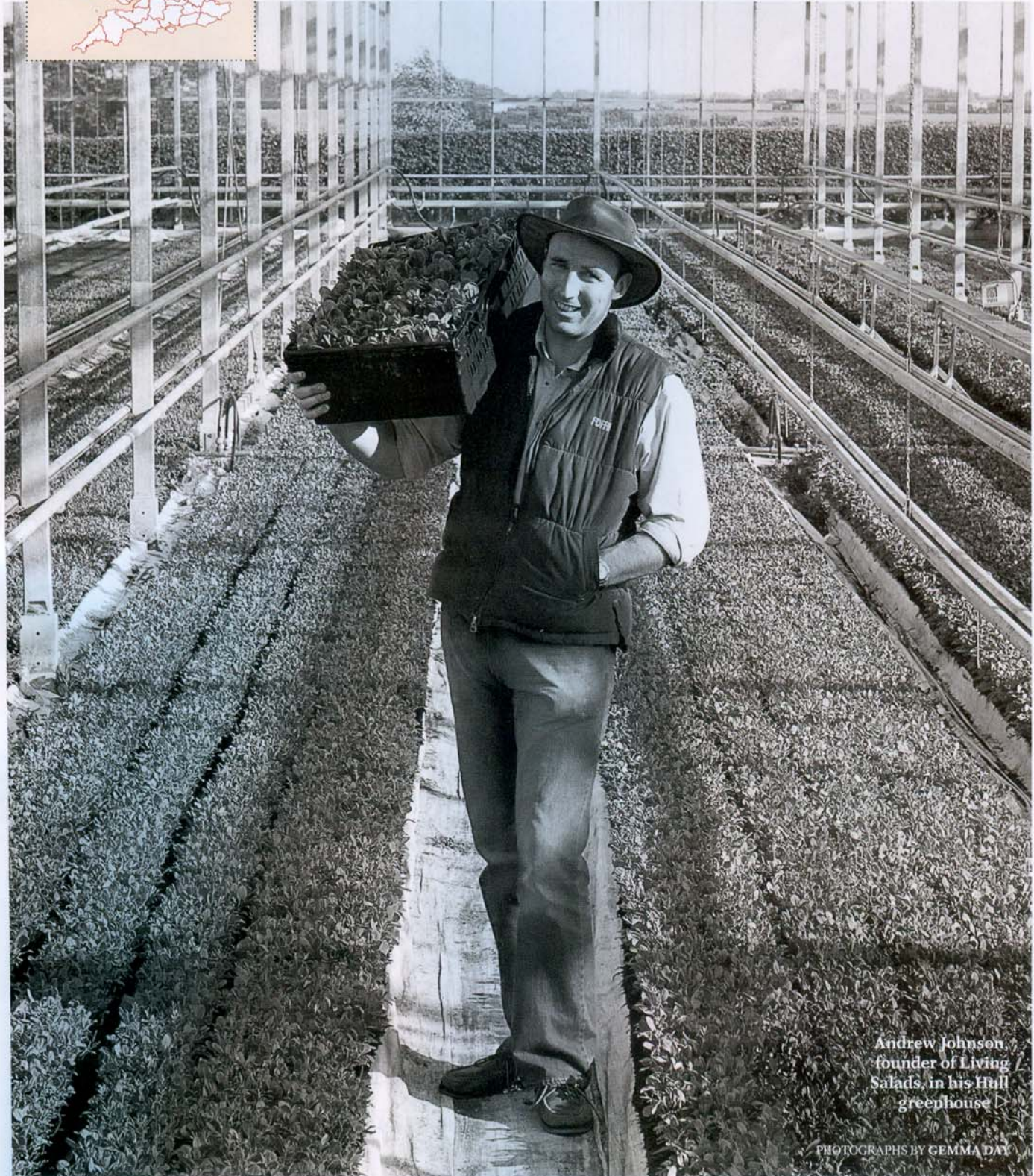




Made in Britain

The Yorkshire Wolds: Continuing our series celebrating British producers and regional specialities, Clarissa Hyman explores the wild and rugged Yorkshire Wolds to discover living salads, heavenly breads and award-winning beers



Andrew Johnson, founder of Living Salads, in his Hull greenhouse

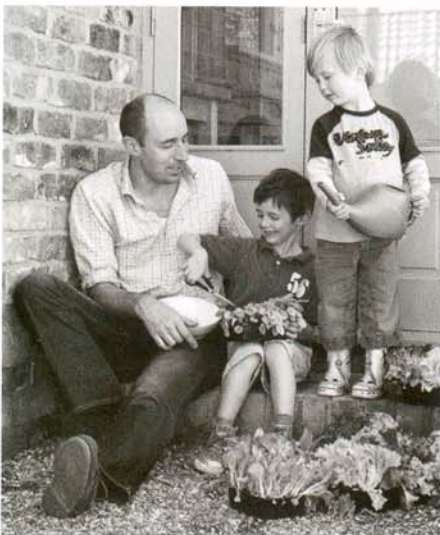
PHOTOGRAPHS BY GEMMA DAY



A cut above

Snip. Snip. Pick. Snip. Once you start snipping, picking and nibbling at a Living Salad box, it's hard to stop

For those without allotments or the green digits needed to cultivate even a window box (I have only to look at a seed catalogue and it wilts), the taste of garden-fresh, crisp, juicy salad leaves – still growing: how pastoral is that? – is a revelation. Especially compared with those bags of air-freighted leaves, deficient in vitamin C, washed in chlorine, packed in a modified atmosphere and soggy after a few days. Instead, you can graze on sap-filled, baby pak choi or



shiny red-veined sorrel leaves, and have a fun way for children to eat healthily. The sons of Living Salads' founder Andrew Johnson, Freddy, six, and Albert, three, are Living Proof. As Andrew says, the trick is to involve them – letting them water or snip a few leaves encourages children to munch willingly on something they would normally reject as far too, well, green.

While working for a multinational salad company in Portugal, Andrew would pick wild rocket straight out of the fields and knew the taste was startlingly different to any bagged leaf. On his return to England, he saw the market growing for fresh boxed herbs, and after a few nerve-wracking years of research and development, he launched Living Salads in 2006. A commercial greenhouse near Hull proved the ideal location for the salads, grown without additives or pesticides, which last up to ten days on a windowsill. Located between the Humber Estuary and the North Sea, horticulture here benefits from acres of light and a local microclimate of fairly mild winters and cool summer sea breezes. Andrew says the sun comes out every day, even when clouds loom at all points of the compass, and the resulting "phenomenal solar uplift" means he can grow salads year-round with moderate energy costs.

"How often do we eat something that's been harvested a few seconds before?" beams Andrew. It's simply brilliant. And here's a tip: give the stumps to a pet rabbit. It'll go hopping mad with delight.

Living Salads are sold by Waitrose. Visit www.livingsalads.co.uk.

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