

Ten tips for timeless style

Lisa Armstrong **times2**

THE



TIMES



Max 20C, min 7C

Wednesday September 2 2009 timesonline.co.uk No 69730

Newspaper of the Year **90p**

+
20

THE TIMES Wednesday September 2 2009

News

Oyster harvest is the pearl in a rainy summer

West Mersea The oyster harvesting season got off to a good start yesterday thanks to plenty of rain early in the summer.

As the first shells were picked out of the fertile Essex creeks, David Gladwell, right, one of a handful of native oyster cultivators in Britain, said he was fortunate that there had been rain before July or the haul might not have been so plentiful. Mr Gladwell, with his wife and two daughters, harvests oysters every year on September 1. The shellfish end up on the plates at some of London's top restaurants as well as going on sale in Harrods.

Native oysters grow well in the creeks because of the combination of

shallow waters, nearby marshland, seawater and rainwater. "We've got a really good quality this year," said Mr Gladwell, 41. "We had quite a bit of rain before July and the mixture of the rain and seawater makes for better breeding. It is in the hands of nature. In other years there has been no rain at all."

Native *Ostrea edulis* oysters are dredged from the River Blackwater and laid in the warm shallow creeks for "fattening" in March. They are ready for harvesting by September, when the Gladwell family trawl through the oyster bays in their boat to collect them. The oysters are then purified and dispatched to other parts of Britain.



CHRIS RADBURN / PA