

## TOP TOUR: Purple pleasure on the farm



■ **Lorna Alexander from the farm** Picture: Grant Falvey pd844943

VISITORS to Kent's countryside have grown use to seeing fields of yellow rapeseed, but now the garden of England is adopting a new colour - the purple haze of lavender. Hundreds of people attended Castle Farm, near Shoreham, at the weekend for its lavender open days.

They were taken on tours of the farm's 55 acres of lavender, shown the different varieties and watched as the plants were processed in the farm's distillery to make essential oils.

Owners William and Caroline

Alexander took the decision to diversify in herb production in 1987. Mrs Alexander said: "We produce two types of oils - lavender which is used mostly in the pharmaceutical industry and for aromatherapy, and lavandin, which is used as an insect repellent and in toiletries because of its strong scent."

Visitors were also able to buy lavender ice cream, lavender cakes, lavender shortbread and lavender cheese at the farm's Hop Shop.

■ The Hop Shop can be contacted on 01959 523219.