



## CATERING SCOTLAND



SCOTTISH CATERING AND HOSPITALITY NEWS IN SCOTLAND ★★

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### **New Edinburgh restaurant marks return home for gifted young Scottish chef**

Scottish chef Tom Kitchin is opening a new restaurant on the waterfront in Leith, showcasing the skills he has learned from more than a decade of working alongside such culinary superstars as Pierre Koffman, Alain Ducasse and Guy Savoy.

The Kitchin, owned and operated by Tom Kitchin and his fiancée Michaela Berselius, features a menu emphasising the freshest, seasonal produce, locally sourced wherever possible. "'From nature to plate' is how you could sum up our philosophy," Kitchin says.

After serving his apprenticeship at Gleneagles Hotel, Edinburgh-born Kitchin developed his skills by working in the kitchens of some of the world's most famous chefs. He spent nearly five years working for the legendary Pierre Koffman in the three-Michelin-starred La Tante Claire in London, during which time Koffman became both a friend and mentor. Kitchin also

worked at the three star Restaurant Guy Savoy in Paris, and spent two years at Alain Ducasse's renowned three star Louis XV restaurant in Monte Carlo.

Those experiences and skills have marked Kitchin out as one of the rising stars of his generation of chefs, and when he and Berselius decided to open their own restaurant, they chose Leith's Commercial Quay as the location.

"I am very proud of my French training," Kitchin says. "Not many chefs anywhere have had the kind of experiences and training I have had, and particularly for a Scot it is very rare. However, what I am going to be doing is bringing these French techniques to bear on Scottish produce in a way which is approachable, appealing and not at all stuffy."

The couple have created a restaurant with two completely distinct and complementary areas. At the front, facing across the water to the Scottish Executive building, is an airy, conservatory-like bar. Comfortable chairs and a sweeping curve of bar make it a comfortable oasis for a drink and light bar snacks. Follow the curve of the bar around and a short passageway walled with a glass-fronted wine cellar leads through to the dining room, where above a slightly raised platform is a touch of pure theatre: a large glass window opens directly onto Kitchin's brightly lit work space, framing his activities as if on a stage.

Kitchin says that placing himself on centre stage is a way of emphasising that everything that is served is freshly prepared by him. "This is a chef's restaurant, and anyone coming here for a meal has a right to expect it will have been prepared by the chef."

The restaurant features the plates and cutlery from La Tante Claire, sold to Kitchin by Pierre Koffman at a "friendly price" after he retired and closed the famous restaurant three years ago.

Berselius - who has an equally impressive background in restaurant and hotel management including several years at the ultra-luxury Burj Al Arab hotel in Dubai - is in charge of all aspects of front-of-house. She says creating the separate bar area was part of a conscious effort to limit the number of covers served each night, so that they could concentrate on the quality of the food.

"We are very conscious of the need to pay attention to all the details, of both the food and the service. The restaurant will be informal, welcoming and the food will match that atmosphere."

She says: "We see the waterfront area as having a great deal of potential. We are very

confident that people in Edinburgh will travel for good food, and Leith is only 15 minutes away from most parts of the city. Martin Wishart is showing that Leith is a venue for very fine food, and while our restaurant is more informal and relaxed, the food we offer is of that quality."

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