



Words
Hilary
Armstrong

The Kitchin

Forget the corny name, Tom Kitchin's Leith opening has all the credentials to be a hit

For those still mourning the closure of Pierre Koffman's **La Tante Claire**, and eagerly anticipating the opening of his rumoured brasserie, be content for now with the chance to hold the three-star restaurant's cutlery in your hands again, and to eat off those esteemed plates. For a job lot of old gear from La Tante Claire has been passed on by Koffman to his protégé, 28-year-old Scottish chef Tom Kitchin.

At the beginning of June, Kitchin and his Swedish fiancée, Michaela Berselius, opened their first restaurant, The Kitchin, a 60-cover venue in a former whisky distillery on the waterfront in Leith, near Edinburgh. As first-timers they're in no position to turn down such a helping hand from an old pal, but that's not to say they haven't got a good, solid base on which to build their restaurant. Take their killer CVs: Kitchin was at Gleneagles before spending two years with Koffman. From there, there was a year at Guy Savoy, Paris, then two at Alain Ducasse's Le Louis XV. Not

to mention a stage chez Bras, and two years as JCB boss Lord Bamford's private chef (a position previously held by Tom Aikens). Berselius is no slouch either; she has experience at The Savoy and Burj Al Arab in Dubai.

The imprint of Ducasse is strongly felt on the Kitchin's first, summery menu, with natural, seasonal Mediterranean flavours to the fore. This is spelled out on the menu, with the legend under the logo reading 'From Nature to Plate'. The point being, with the quality ingredients Kitchin buys (mainly from Scottish suppliers), any meddling is redundant. Like the Louis XV alumnus he is, Kitchin is confident enough to serve a globe artichoke simply done on a set lunch menu (£15.50 for three courses). The à la carte offers more haute dishes, like a Tartare of Mackerel with Quail Egg, Cucumber and Beetroot Dressing; De-boned Chicken filled with Artichoke and Spinach, served with Potato Gratin and a Light Tarragon Jus; Fillets of Red Mullet with Fine Ratatouille.

The Kitchin is a cool space, decked out in dark wood and shades of grey



by Scottish design company Cubit Design, with hand-printed wallpapers by Jocelyn Warner. It's well-placed to pick up business trade at lunch, while evenings should bring foodies to an area already doing well, thanks to esteemed neighbour Martin Wishart.

With hand-me-down plates, a brigade of just three and a comparatively short menu and wine list, Berselius and Kitchin are starting out cautiously. But they have big ideas, ambition and the experience to shore it all up. Koffman's cutlery should fit in nicely. **📍**

WHERE? | The Kitchin, 78 Commercial Quay, Leith, Edinburgh, EH6 6LX. 0131 555 1755. www.thekitchin.com

