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Chefs special

MICHELIN-STARRED TOM KITCHIN
LAUNCHES OUR CELEBRATION OF THE
FIRST TASTE OF EDINBURGH FESTIVAL

FASHION Scarves for summer | **TRAVEL** Orangutans in Borneo | **PLUS** Claire Macdonald and Rose Murray Brown

Brilliance is served

Scotland's culinary excellence is showcased next month when Taste of Edinburgh comes to town. Here, some of the chefs taking part in the inaugural food festival share their cooking philosophy and an exclusive recipe or two

BY BABY SOUTAR

Tom Kitchin

WITH HIS CHARISMATIC CURLS AND carefree blue eyes, Tom Kitchin, 29, appears so laid back, but almost hormonal. It's obvious and with Michelin who looks around one. Midway through our conversation she comes over, looking through. "Dible 14 are desperate to speak to you, please come over and chat to them," she pleads. Fair-weather-love. Kitchin folds off the interview and heads over to answer for a bit later. This is what it was he like to be a Michelin star-winning chef (he got the gig in January) and owner of The Kitchin, Leith's current go-to restaurant for special Scottish fare with a French influence. Earlier this month he became the youngest ever winner of the prestigious Scottish Chef of the Year award. Is he taking the title, despite his uncharismatic appearance?

"I suppose it is quite a bit of pressure, it was such a shock because we weren't really like a Michelin star at all. It was never in my mind that we were going to get one because the restaurant was so young. It has been two and a half years since it opened."

He says all this in an Edinburgh accent with French inflections. This background is a contrast from working for almost a decade alongside some of the world's most famous chefs, including Pierre Koffman at the three-star Michelin La Tour d'Auvergne, Rosemary Gray Stone in Paris and Alain Ducasse's Lutèce XV restaurant in Monte Carlo. He was inspired to open his restaurant in Scotland after working with our local ingredients, beef and venison and thinking "why the hell don't we use these ingredients at home when people pay a fortune to ship them over here?"

The restaurant has been open barely a year and the war was awarded after only six months. Why such a feat? "Well, there's a lot of people in our philosophy. I



am passionate about sourcing the product, I want to know where the fish and langoustines are caught and where every vegetable has come from."

Kitchin's menu offers the most varied seasonal "high level" with most ingredients and "high level". "It's not as glamorous as it sounds," he says. "I want food that gets people talking. People are bored of seeing standard salmon and mountain chicken breast," he says. And don't expect inflated prices.

"People who haven't dined in Michelin restaurants before need not be afraid of coming to The Kitchin. The restaurant isn't tragically expensive, there are no obnoxious, stiff laws in place and you can dress as casually as you like," he says.

So, leave your black tie at home when you come to his Sunday demonstration at the Taste of Edinburgh festival. He's now setting up a food business, with such a small team, he'd love "to move into a space in the Maudslayi when I should be in my own kitchen."

That's what we like, a conscientious chef.



TOM KITCHIN'S SCALLOPS AND ASPARAGUS
West coast hand-dived scallops wrapped in parsnips with roast spring oranges and herb beurre blanc.

SERVE 1
2 slices of finely cut parsnips
2 hand-dived scallops
4 spears of asparagus

For the sauce
100ml white wine
1 shallot
16 crushed peppercorns
1 tablespoon of cream
1/2 tsp unsalted butter
salt
1 spring onion
sherry and oil for garnish

1 Wrap the parsnips around the middle of the



scallops (ensuring the parmesan is all the way around).
 2. Heat a cast-iron skillet to sear & broil the parmesan during roasting.
 3. Remove the asparagus by shaking off the sticky sauce.
 4. Place the scallops in a hot frying pan with olive oil and sear until golden.
 5. In another pan heat the scallops with the parmesan until the parmesan starts to brown. The parmesan will then give great texture to the scallops.

To make the sauce:

1. Place the white wine in a pan.
2. Slice the shallot.
3. Add the sliced shallot and the coarsely pepper-corn and reduce until dry.
4. Once dry, add a tablespoon of cream to stabilize the sauce.
5. Whisk in the butter.

6. Add salt and a dash of lemon vinegar if needed.
7. Pass it through a sieve.

To dress the plate:

1. Place the roast asparagus on the plate.
2. Place the seared scallops on top.
3. Drizzle with sauce around the asparagus and scallops.
4. Garnish with sprigs of chervil and dill.

MACKEREL TARTARE

Slices of mackerel with soft egg, cucumber and tartar sauce. Served with crusty whole wheat toast.

SERVES 1

- 1/2 fresh mackerel
- 1/4 finely chopped shallot
- 1 teaspoon finely chopped dill
- 2 teaspoons light soy sauce
- 1 teaspoon rice vinegar

See O'Connell's scallops and asparagus, above; mackerel tartare, above right



oil and pepper sliced cucumber to fit a mouth.
 1 teaspoon olive oil
 2 cooked beetsteaks, blotted to make a pale olive terrine
 1 quail egg
 sea bough bread, thinly sliced

1. Place the mackerel, discard the skin, and cut the flesh away from the bones.
2. In a chilled chopping bowl, finely slice the mackerel. Or use a chopping board and transfer to a bowl.
3. Add the chopped shallots, dill, soy sauce and vinegar. Add salt and pepper to taste.
4. Transfer mixture to a chilled cucumber terrine. Top with the beetroot purée and a little crème fraîche.
5. Cook the quail egg for 2 minutes 40 seconds, pull it on an oil bath to cool, then peel and slice for a garnish.
6. Put the thinly sliced bread in a warm oven and drizzle. Serve with the mackerel tartare.

Stuart Muir

FOR YOUNG MUIR, THE 14-YEAR-OLD head chef of Harvey Nichols' luxurious Forth Floor restaurant and brasserie, there are no tomatoes and thyme in the kitchen - it's a hard-working but relaxed environment. "I don't cheat because that's immediately so good when you've got a good team working for you," he says.

Being a pleasure fisher certainly would suit his time, and hopefully it means that when he sets up the Forth Floor's menu at the Taste of Edinburgh event he'll have his team of 22 chefs behind him all the way, rather than pulling together the chefs that they've recruited using only the best of Scottish produce. He sees being head chef as very much an egotistical effort: developing the menu takes a lot of teamwork. "I usually come up with an idea, then talk to the chefs about how we can build them and develop the dishes together," he says. "It's not about my sole ownership of each dish."

His involvement in Taste of Edinburgh is yet another addition to what must be the perfect curriculum vitae for any chef. Muir was previously head chef at such seasonal restaurants as The Edinburgh and The Old Course Hotel in St Andrews, and earned a Michelin star early in his career when he was a young chef at Woodhouse Lodge near Perthshire.

But his no-expense-saver rule - Muir's personal chef, originally from Stranraer, and his home country provide his seasonal larder. "I do love local produce," he says. "If it's Scottish and I can get my hands on it then I'll buy it."

"I love Scottish produce on the Forth Floor menu and harvest menu throughout the year, changing how they're prepared from season to season. Fish,

veal from Aberdeen is another favorite, as well as the best beef and veal lamb from Kinross. However, the most popular item on the menu at the moment is my Scottish lobster with pink grapefruit."

The quality of meat and fish are of paramount importance to Muir, and much of the produce he uses at Harvey Nichols is organic. Logically, however, his enthusiasm for finding consumers organic food might not extend to catering for the masses reported at Taste of Edinburgh.

"I've really into organic food but, unfortunately, it all depends on availability and, as apparently there'll be an incredible 1,000 people going to this event, it

"If it's Scottish and I can get my hands on it then I'll buy it"

might not be so easy to source enough organic produce for that amount of customers," Muir says. So once he'll try his best though.

Despite the decreasing chance that it'll be demanding for a taste of Forth Floor grub, Muir isn't fazed at all and is looking forward to briefly dipping off his grub menu food from Martin Wishart and Dalriada.

The three courses that'll be served as visitors at Taste of Edinburgh are currently in development but expect "seasonal-style food, using seasonal, wild and local fresh produce" with ingredients including some of his favorite signature dishes. These include salmon,

Grilled John Dory with bone-marinade chips and curry sauce, right



as a starter and fresh sea-bass for a main, shows his "light, summery flavors". And maybe, if we're lucky, to avoid all the sea-food items we'll get some of Muir's special chocolate pudding as dessert.

"It'll be really good too," he says. "But so long to the winter steps first."

"For me it's not another day at work, but with the added opportunity to be out in the fresh air of the Meadows. Edinburgh has completely transformed over the past ten to 15 years and the restaurant scene is vibrant and highly regarded."

"It really is the perfect time for people to demand."



BBQED JOHN DORY WITH HOME-MADE CHIPS AND CURRY SAUCE

Serves 2

For the herb butter:
25g butter
25g parsley
25g Parmesan

Mix all 3 together.

For the curry sauce:
200ml chicken stock
200ml pineapple juice
1/2 tsp onion
1/2 dessert spoon curry powder
200ml cream

Reduce the stock and pineapple juice with the onion and curry powder, add the cream and reduce for a further 5-10 minutes.

1 fillet John Dory
1 baked potato
50g cabbage
50ml cream
20g parmesan
1/2 tsp mustard

- 1 Place the herb butter under the skin of the fish.
- 2 Pan fry the John Dory in a little oil and butter.
- 3 Peel the potato and cut it into thick wedges. Deep-fry them.
- 4 Drain the cabbage in the cream and add the parmesan.
- 5 Season the tomatoes and also deep-fry them.

Start with
at leasting
Michele,
above; polenta
and lemon
cake with
lemon thyme
ice-cream,
right

6 Place the fish on a plate, layer the potatoes to the side and pour the curry sauce around the plate.

POLENTA AND LEMON CAKE WITH LEMON THYME ICE-CREAM

Serves 6

For the cake:
400g butter
400g sugar
1 vanilla pod
6 eggs
4 lemons (juice and zest)
220g polenta
1/2 teaspoon baking powder
1/2 teaspoon salt
400g ground almonds

- 1 Melt the butter and the sugar until creamy and soft. Add the vanilla and then the eggs, one by one.
- 2 Zest the lemons and squeeze the juice, then add to the butter and sugar mix.
- 3 Fold the polenta, baking powder, and well ground almonds slowly into the butter and sugar mix.
- 4 Grease an 8in springform tin and fill with the polenta mixture.
- 5 Cook at 180C for 1 hour.

For the ice-cream:
500ml cream
500ml milk
1 vanilla pod



1 lemon
1 egg
250g sugar

- 1 Beat the cream, milk, vanilla, lemon juice and lemon thyme together.
- 2 Whisk the eggs and the sugar until fluffy.
- 3 Slowly, and whisking constantly, add the cream mixture into the eggs.
- 4 Leave it to cook down for 10 minutes then put it into an ice-cream maker.