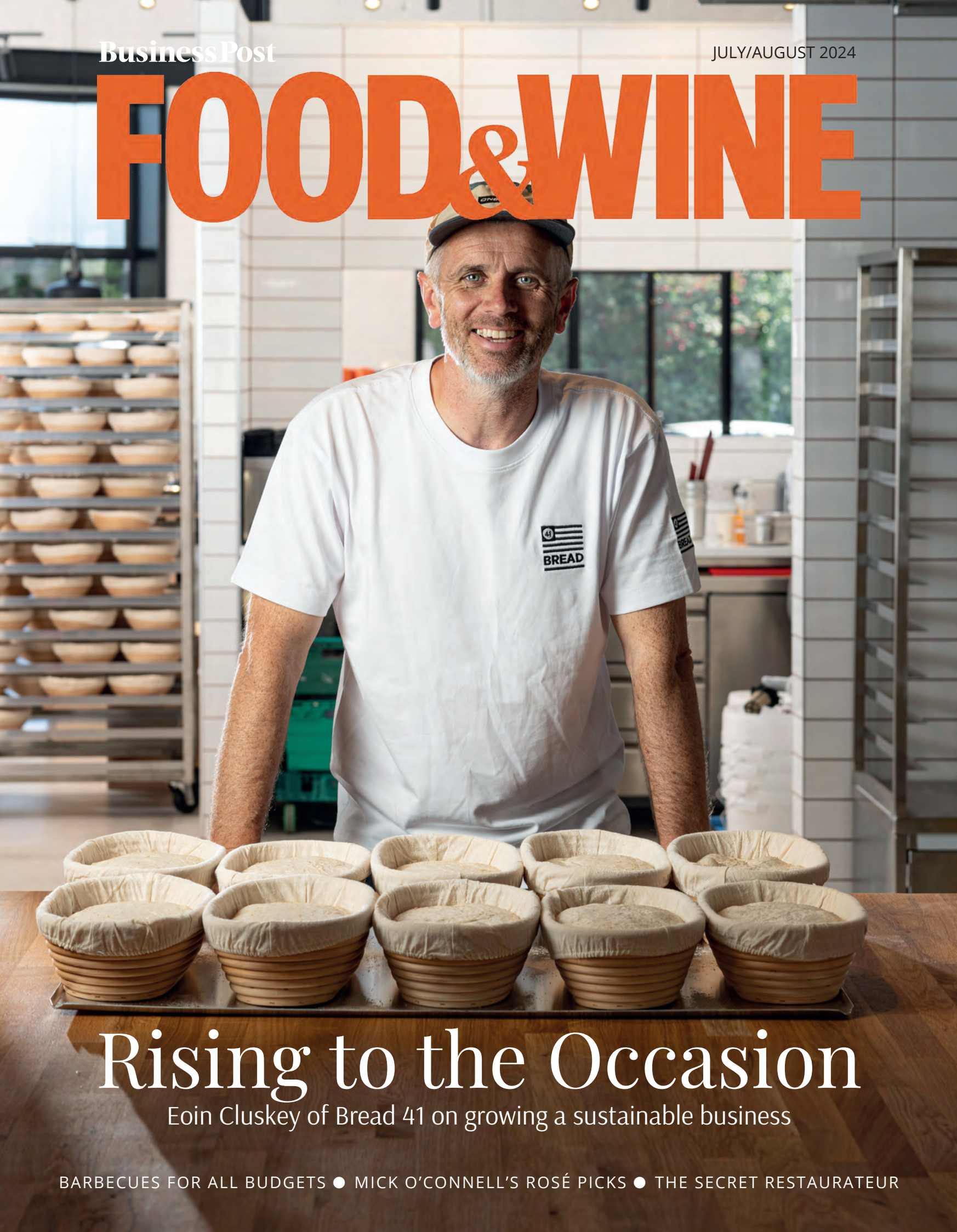


FOOD & WINE



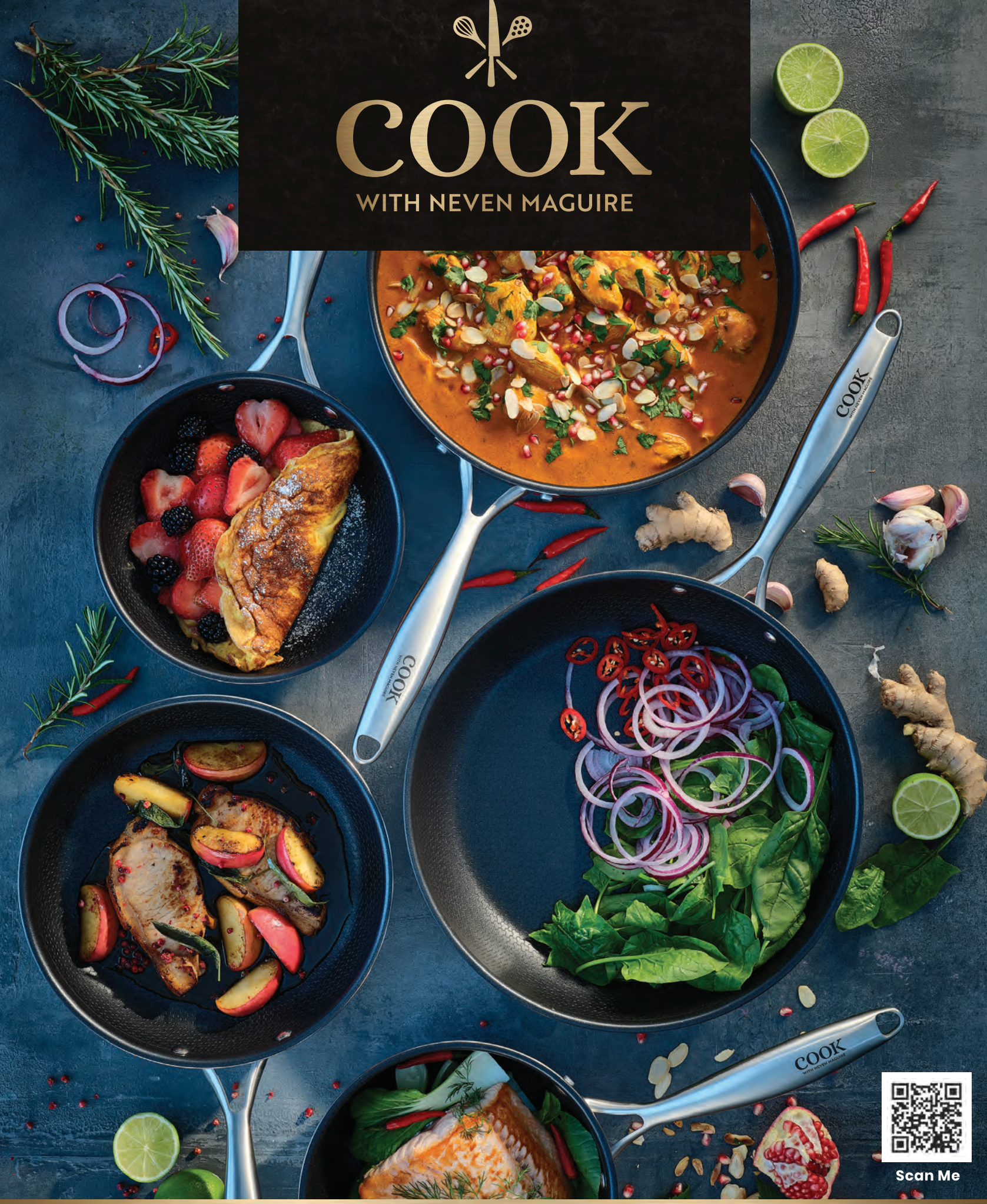
Rising to the Occasion

Eoin Cluskey of Bread 41 on growing a sustainable business



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Rosé wine is a celebrity must-have these days, so grab yourself a bottle and ride that wave, says Master of Wine Mick O'Connell

Welcome to the summer 2024 edition of Food&Wine, an edition which attempts to provide a little sunshine even though the weather is – as yet – not really playing ball. There are some separate but interconnected themes woven through the magazine: fish, family, sustainability to name a few.

Jordan Mooney's interviews with Eoin Cluskey of Bread 41 and Aishling Moore of Goldie provide some fascinating insights into the day-to-day realities of running sustainable businesses.

Moore also touches on the importance of team work and the atmosphere in the kitchen, something Stephen Gibson, the chef/patron of Pichet in Dublin, also discusses in his thoughtful piece reflecting on fifteen years of running a restaurant.

From the macro to the micro: we also have Moore's guide to cooking fish on the barbecue, Alex Meehan's look at the best barbecue equipment to buy whatever your budget, and Oisín Davis's recipes for three cocktails perfect to serve at your outdoor cookouts.

James Vaughan of Vaughan's in Liscannor features in this month's In The Kitchen slot, while in wine, Mick O'Connell sets his sights on rosé. We may not be able to afford to buy a vineyard like some celebrity rosé producers, but we can certainly enjoy testing out Mick's recommendations.

And what is summer without fish and chips? That's a question posed by our secret restaurateur, who wants us to remember to support our traditional chippers this season. Here's to a sunny and delicious summer.

UNTIL NEXT MONTH,
GILLIAN

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Cover Image: **Ruth Calder-Potts**

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SUMMERTIME FAVOURITES

A zesty risotto, an unusual fruity salad, a dip to savour and creamy cheesecake bars are all on the menu this month.

Recipes by JORDAN MOONEY
Photography by DEAN CARROLL

This month, I'm sharing some of my favourite recipes that I think you might like to try this summer. They're fresh and light, but pack in a lot of flavour. I hope you like them as much as I do.

HOT SMOKED SALMON RISOTTO WITH LEMON AND PEAS

Serves 4

This isn't a traditional risotto – I apologise to all of the Italians reading this recipe – but this is a version that I've worked on over the years and really love. In autumn I'll swap out the peas, salmon and lemon for squash or pumpkin and sage, and in winter I tend to opt for mushrooms and chicken. The flavour formula here is something you can really tailor to your own palate, while the mascarpone adds a little extra creaminess that I just love.

INGREDIENTS

Rapeseed oil
1 large Spanish onion, peeled and finely diced
Salt and pepper
Butter
4 large garlic cloves, peeled and chopped
300g arborio rice

HOT SMOKED SALMON RISOTTO
WITH LEMON AND PEAS





1 small glass white wine
 3 lemons
 1.5l vegetable stock, hot
 250g frozen peas
 125g mascarpone
 1 bunch dill, torn
 75g Parmesan, finely grated, plus extra to garnish
 200g hot smoked salmon

METHOD

1. Heat a good glug of oil in a pan over medium heat, then add in the onions with some seasoning. Cook out until really soft and golden, around 10-15 minutes, then add in the garlic and a good knob of butter. Cook out lightly for a couple of minutes, then add in the rice. Cook, while stirring, until the rice has turned translucent on the edges.
2. Deglaze the pan by adding in the white wine with the juice and zest of one lemon. Cook while stirring until the liquid evaporates, then add in a ladleful of stock and reduce the heat a little. Continue stirring the rice and adding the stock a ladleful at a time until the rice is al dente and the risotto itself is quite creamy and loose – you don't want it to fully absorb the whole last ladle of stock as this is what helps keep it creamy.
3. Next, toss in the peas, mascarpone, half the dill, the Parmesan cheese and more lemon zest. Taste and adjust to your liking with more Parmesan, lemon zest and juice, and seasoning as needed. You want it to taste fresh and zesty, so I encourage a good bit of lemon here.
4. Divide the risotto between serving bowls, then flake over the hot smoked salmon. Finish each with a drizzle of olive oil, more dill, lemon zest, and Parmesan, then enjoy.

WHIPPED FETA DIP WITH SPICED NUTS AND PITA CHIPS

Serves 2-4 as a starter or snack

I made this dip for a gathering two years ago and it has become very popular since. This version, with spicy nuts and pita chips, is inspired by one that was devoured at a friend's 30th birthday party last year, but I also like to serve it simply with just a little hot honey, olive oil and Blanco Niño tortilla chips.

INGREDIENTS

For the feta dip
 200g feta
 100g Greek yoghurt
 30ml olive oil, plus extra to garnish
 20g honey
 1 large garlic clove, peeled
 Salt and pepper

For the pita chips
 2 thick pita breads



WHIPPED FETA DIP WITH SPICED NUTS AND PITA CHIPS

Dried mixed herbs
 30-40ml olive oil
 Salt and pepper

For the spiced nuts
 30g butter
 30ml hot sauce – I used Cholula
 Good squeeze honey
 Dried rosemary
 Salt and pepper
 1 tsp paprika
 60g cashew nuts

To serve
 Mini peppers and cucumbers, or other vegetables of your choosing, halved
 Fresh rosemary, to garnish

METHOD

1. First make the whipped feta by placing all of the ingredients into a food processor and blend together for a few minutes, scraping down the sides every now and then. You probably won't get it completely smooth – I never do! – but blitz until you're happy with the smoothness and consistency. You might need to add a little more olive oil to get to where you want it to be, which is totally fine, just don't overload it. Once you're happy with the consistency and seasoning, scrape out the dip into a serving bowl, then cover and leave in the fridge for about an hour. Longer is fine too, but in that case you might want to

- leave it out of the fridge for a little bit before serving in order to soften a little.
2. Preheat the oven to 180C and line two baking sheets with parchment paper. Split the pita breads in half so that you have four thin pieces – not four pockets. Cut each piece into triangles, then drizzle over or brush with olive oil to coat both sides. Season each side well with salt and pepper, and dried mixed herbs to taste – you can experiment here, I like to add dried garlic and chilli flakes – then place onto one of the lined baking trays.
3. Bake for about 10-12 minutes, turning halfway through, until golden and crispy. Remove from the oven and cool.
4. For the spiced nuts, melt the butter in a bowl in the microwave. Mix in the other ingredients, excluding the nuts, adjusting until you're happy with the level of heat and seasoning. Mix in the nuts to coat, then tip everything out onto the other lined baking tray.
5. Bake for about 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. They're done when the nuts have crisped up and the spicy mix has turned sticky and glossy, coating the nuts well. Remove from the oven and leave to cool on the tray.
6. To serve, arrange your feta dip alongside the veggies and pita chips. Garnish the dip with a good drizzle of olive oil, some seasoning and rosemary, then scatter over the nuts and tuck in.

SUMMER SALAD
WITH HONEY BAL-
SAMIC CHICKEN,
QUINOA AND
GOAT'S CHEESE



SUMMER SALAD WITH HONEY BALSAMIC CHICKEN, QUINOA AND GOAT'S CHEESE

Serves 3-4

I based this recipe on a salad I had in Philadelphia when I was 22. My friends and I were waiting for the bus back to New York after a trip and ended up in a bar where I ordered this random salad containing pecans, strawberries and chicken. The combination baffled me initially, but the whole thing really worked and I can honestly say that I think about that specific dish on a fairly regular basis – it was that good. This is my attempt at recreating it.

INGREDIENTS

80g pecans
25g sugar
2 tbsp water
1 punnet strawberries
1 punnet blueberries
1 bag mixed leaves, about 130g
150g goat's cheese

For the chicken

300g chicken breast, about two large breasts
Salt and pepper
3 tbsp balsamic vinegar
2 tbsp olive oil
1 tsp wholegrain mustard, or more if you like
Good squeeze honey

For the dressing

60ml balsamic vinegar
1 tbsp honey

1 lemon, juice and zest
1 tsp wholegrain mustard
2 garlic cloves, peeled and minced
60ml olive oil

For the quinoa

1 tbsp olive oil
150g quinoa
300ml vegetable stock, hot
1 bunch fresh basil, finely sliced
1 lemon
Salt and pepper to taste

METHOD

1. First, prepare the chicken. Butterfly the breasts and season with salt and pepper. Next, whisk together the rest of the ingredients in a bowl big enough to fit the chicken. Add the chicken to the bowl and massage in the marinade, then cover and leave in the fridge to marinate for at least 30 minutes or up to a day.
2. To prepare the quinoa, first place it in a sieve and rinse really well. Add the oil to a pot over a medium heat, then add the quinoa to toast and remove any water. Stir and cook for about two minutes, then stir in the hot stock, reduce the heat to low and leave to cook for about 12-15 minutes or until all of the water has been absorbed and the quinoa is tender. Tip the quinoa out into a bowl or dish and leave to cool, then mix through the basil, zest and juice of the lemon, and salt and pepper to taste. Reserve until needed.
3. To make the dressing, whisk together the honey and wholegrain mustard with the balsamic vinegar, zest of one lemon, and garlic cloves. Slowly stream in the olive oil, whisking constantly to emulsify. Whisk in a little lemon

juice to taste, then stir in a little water to thin out the consistency if necessary. Toss half of the dressing through the quinoa, then reserve the rest.

4. Next make the candied pecans. Preheat the oven to 180C and line a baking sheet with parchment. Add the water and sugar to a pot over a low to medium heat, then allow to cook gently until the mix has formed a light syrup and the sugar has dissolved. Stir in the pecans, then tip out onto the lined baking sheet. Use a spoon to spread the nuts out a little from each other; then place into the oven for 5-6 minutes, then allow to cool at room temperature – this will help the sugar to set and fully candy the nuts. Reserve until you're ready to use.

5. To cook the chicken, place a frying pan over a medium heat. Add the chicken and pour over the marinade. Allow to cook for about 4-5 minutes on each side, basting with the marinade which will reduce and get really sticky, coating the chicken. Once cooked through, remove the chicken from the pan and allow to rest before slicing thinly. If the marinade has caught on the pan or burned, add some water when you've removed the chicken then place back over the heat and allow to bubble for a few minutes – this will loosen it and make it much easier to clean.

6. Slice the strawberries, then add to a large bowl with the blueberries, mixed leaves, quinoa and chicken. Add as much dressing as you like, then add the pecans and toss everything together well to dress and combine. Divide between serving bowls, then break up the goat's cheese and scatter on top before tucking in.

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BAKED BLUEBERRY CHEESECAKE BARS

Makes 15-18 bars

These picture perfect bars are surprisingly easy to make. The ginger biscuit base gives the whole thing a hint of spice that I love while the lime and blueberries bring great freshness. You can use other berries in place of the blueberries depending on the season and your preference – I love blackberries during early autumn.

INGREDIENTS

300g ginger biscuits
100g ground almonds
4 tbsp flaked coconut or almonds, optional
4 limes

200g melted butter
700g cream cheese
210g sugar
1 tbsp vanilla extract
3 eggs
125g blueberries, plus extra for garnish
250g sour cream

METHOD

1. Preheat your oven to 180C and line a large rectangular tin, or two square tins, with parchment paper or tin foil.
2. Crush the biscuits, then mix with the butter, almonds, coconut, zest of two limes, and the melted butter. Press the mix into the bottom of the tin, then bake for 15 minutes. Allow to cool.
3. Reduce the oven temperature to 130C. Fill a baking dish with water and place at

the bottom of the oven.

4. Beat the cream cheese with 200g of the sugar, then stir in the vanilla and zest of one lime. Beat in the eggs one by one, then stir in the sour cream and juice of one lime.
5. Blitz together the sugar and blueberries, then strain out the seeds.
6. Pour the cheesecake mix onto the cooled base, then dot over the blitzed blueberries. Swirl, then add in a handful of fresh blueberries.
7. Bake the cheesecake for about an hour until the centre is still a little wobbly. Cool in the oven with it turned off and the door open, then cool in the fridge before slicing into squares. Garnish with fresh lime zest. **FW**



BAKED BLUEBERRY CHEESE CAKE BARS



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EWIN CLUSKEY

Having just opened a new premises in Greystones in Co Wicklow, Eoin Cluskey of Bread 41 is setting his sights on further expansion, writes JORDAN MOONEY

A labour of
LOAF

PHOTOGRAPHY BY RUTH CALDER-POTTS

Eoin Cluskey is on a mission, and it's a tasty one. "I want to get everyone in Ireland eating real bread. That's what drives me, and that's why we're expanding," the founder of Bread 41 explains of the company's newest location, a café and bakery in Greystones in Co Wicklow.

The original Bread 41 opened on Pearse Street in Dublin city centre in 2018, and has become an incredible success. Known for its long-fermentation sourdough breads and picture-perfect pastries, it still attracts long queues six years after it was set up.

It's become a part of Dublin's culinary fabric, but Bread 41 now has its first outpost beyond the capital. Located on Eden Road, a tiny side street sandwiched between the Dart line and the main street in Greystones, the new Bread 41 is housed in the former Davis Motors site.

A family-run business, the mechanic shop closed in 2021 after 50 years in operation and went up for sale with an asking price of €475,000. Cluskey, who's originally from Cabinteely in south Co Dublin but who now lives in nearby Bray, stumbled upon the 'for sale' sign on the art deco-style building in 2022, and knew it would be the perfect location for an all-new Bread 41.

"We secured the building in two weeks and we first got it, it was a shell full of 380 tonnes of soil. There was a lot of work to do, which explains why this has been in the works for two years," Cluskey says as we sit in the sun-drenched space a couple of days before the



LEFT: FRESHLY BAKED CROISSANTS
ABOVE: CHEF RUTH SUTTON IN THE KITCHEN

bakery officially opens.

Painters are still working on the facade of the property, sheeting covers the windows, boxes are everywhere and the shelves are bare of any baked goods. As he gestures around describing the renovations he and his team have undertaken, the space is slowly cleared out to reveal a modern bakery that's reminiscent of Levain in New York as well as the bakeries Cluskey frequented during his time in Australia.

Massive skylights in the high ceilings and windows scattered around the space echo the original fittings. Stark white-painted brick walls, the majority of which were restored from those found in Davis Motors, give way to chevron-style rust-coloured flooring in the seating area.

"We wanted to work with as many local people as possible, so I contacted Brian Tyrell from Bear Creation, who's from Greystones. It was really important for me to not just say 'oh we want this, this and this', but to see what he could do and work with him to create the furniture," says Cluskey.

"He sourced local wood to make everything from scratch, and we worked really closely alongside him."

The result is a wraparound spindle bench and two-top tables made with ash and olive ash, as well as a larger long table made with fallen oak from the nearby Killruddery estate. Bespoke and unique, Tyrell's creations also

include display shelves that will house loaves of bread and baguettes.

In addition to the selection of breads on offer, there will be sandwiches, topped focaccia and the full range of pastries from the Pearse Street store on offer. Coffee is from local firm Never A Day's Trouble, and as is the case in town, takeaway drinks will only be served in keep cups.

Greystones natives might remember the two old school petrol pumps that could be seen outside Davis Motors. Cluskey was determined that they would remain as a nod to the building's past; they're currently being restored, but he expects them to be back on-site in August.

All of this has been a big part of Cluskey's vision from the very beginning. When he first bought the site, he was approved by the council to knock it down and rebuild a completely new structure if he wanted. Instead, he brought in the Heritage Council to take a look at both the building and his plans for restoring it.

Cluskey and his business partner Stephen McKenna spent about €1 million on the project, and now it's of heritage interest, so it can never be torn down and replaced.

"Restoring and rebuilding a space like this means you have to bring the energy up to an A rating. We've got there and we're installing solar panels on the roof too," Cluskey says. "We're also working with a company called CoolPlanet to keep track of our emissions and bring them down."

A software system that gives companies real-time analytics to make data-driven decisions on decarbonisation, CoolPlanet works with lots of bigger companies on their



FRESHLY BAKED BREADS WILL BE DISPLAYED ON BESPOKE SHELVES FROM BEAR CREATION



THE NEW BREAD 41 FEATURES BRIGHT, AIRY SPACES, PLUS A VIEW INTO THE KITCHEN AND LAMINATION SPACE

energy and carbon goals. Bread 41 is one of the smaller Irish businesses that has engaged with it, and the systems it has put in place mean that every element of the business can be tracked daily.

As Cluskey explains it, if one lightbulb is on its way out, it will start to use more energy to continue shining. That will be reflected in the analytics, and they can then intervene early to ensure energy consumption doesn't increase unnecessarily.

On a tour through the kitchen, which customers will be able to see into from the main floor, chef Ruth Sutton points out a screen on the side of a proving press which displays a real-time graph tracking the energy output.

While they're still getting to grips with the technology, Cluskey says this is going to revolutionise how the company, which is B-corp certified, manages its energy and carbon outputs.

"We're going to be able to monitor everything, like a live feed of how much water we're using, and then see where it goes so that we can constantly improve. It's really important to me that we're a bakery that makes constant improvements, so we're getting better, better, better as we go," he says.

"I want us to get better every single day and when I say that, I mean everything is better. Like what hours are we working, can they be better? How are we working? Can we work smarter? We're big fans of the lean mentality here, in

that we make two second improvements every single day to make things better for the team. It's a Japanese concept invented by Toyota and it works for lots of businesses, but it's really helped us."

Making things better for the team was part of the driving force behind this initial expansion. Cluskey says that he and the team plan to have four Bread 41 outlets open within the next year, but Greystones was an area he always wanted to set up shop in.

Being by the sea in a beautiful area with lots of foot traffic was, of course, a big reason, but Cluskey also had his team in mind when he looked towards expanding.

"I think there should be a bakery on every street in every town"

"Ruth, who I trained as a baker, lives in Wicklow, so when we got this spot, I knew that it would be closer to home for her. She'd be able to come in and run it without having to travel so much, which I thought would be great. I'm not sure if I'll be able to get her out of town now, but looking after the team and their interests was in my mind when I started to look at expansion," he says.

"The vision is to grow and scale the business sustainably, and I mean that in terms of our staff. My job now really is to develop and grow the business, not to be in the bakery every day making bread, so it's not about me. I want

people to come in and think that everyone in our team is brilliant.

"For far too long, the industry has just been ignoring that, so I want to bring the focus onto them so that everyone can see that we're a great team who really works well together to create something special. I want harmony and I think we're getting there. We just brought in our first junior apprentice, a 16-year-old named Charlie, so now we're starting with the next generation."

As he explains his vision, which centres on real bread, Cluskey indicates that Greystones is just a starting point for Bread 41. With the likes of Scéal Bakery, which opened earlier this year, and Firehouse Bakery – where Cluskey

actually worked for about three years and helped to set up – nearby, you might think that the competition is too high in the area, but

he's confident that there's enough space for everyone.

"We all do different things in different ways, and that's the good thing about being a bakery. We might all bake bread, but we go about it in different ways with different methods and different flavours, so that's what you'll see with all of us here right now," he says.

"To be honest, I nearly wish there were more bakeries here. I think there should be a bakery on every street in every town where you can pop in to get your fresh bread every day and get to know the person making it. That's my dream." **FW**



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IRISH STRAWBERRY AND LEMON TART

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CELEBRATE STRAWBERRY SEASON

Celebrity chef and *Dunnes Stores Simply Better* brand ambassador **Neven Maguire** shares three delicious desserts that highlight Pat Clarke's Simply Better Irish King Strawberries while they're at their best.



IRISH STRAWBERRY AND LEMON TART

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS

500ml *Simply Better Single Source Irish Jersey Cream*
1 jar *Simply Better Sicilian Lemon Curd*
250g *Simply Better Irish King Strawberries, sliced*
50g pistachios

For the sweet shortcrust pastry

175g plain flour
100g butter, diced and chilled
50g caster sugar
Pinch of salt
1 *Simply Better Free Range Corn Fed Egg*
Half tsp *Simply Better Organic Irish Jersey Milk*
Zest of half a lemon

METHOD

1. To make the pastry, place the flour, butter, sugar and salt into a food processor and blend for 20 seconds. Add the egg, milk and lemon zest and blend again just until the pastry comes together – do not overwork the dough or the pastry will be tough. Wrap in cling film and chill for 1 hour.
2. Preheat the oven to 180°C (350°F/Gas Mark 4).
3. Roll the pastry out thinly on a lightly floured work surface. Transfer the pastry to a 23cm (9in) fluted loose bottomed flat tin ensuring the pastry is pushed into the edges of the tin. Transfer to the freezer for 10 minutes to firm up.
4. Remove the tart tin from the freezer. Line the pastry with baking parchment and fill with baking beans or rice. Bake for about 15 minutes or until the pastry is firm, then remove the beans or rice and cook for about 5 minutes more, until golden brown. Remove from the oven and allow to cool completely.
5. Whip the Jersey cream in a bowl until you achieve soft peaks then fold in the lemon curd. Pour the lemon cream into the cooled pastry case. Arrange the sliced strawberries on top and scatter over the pistachio nuts. Keep chilled until ready to serve.



KING STRAWBERRY MILLEFEUILLE

NEVEN TIP: This is best served within an hour or two, but leftovers will keep for up to 2 days in the fridge.



KING STRAWBERRY MILLEFEUILLE

Serves 6-8

INGREDIENTS

1 packet *Simply Better All Butter Puff Pastry*
Flour for dusting
2 tbsp icing sugar, plus extra for dusting
2 cartons *Simply Better Irish Original Cream Cheese*
1 carton *Simply Better Single Source Irish Jersey Cream*
4 tbsp *Simply Better Handmade Strawberry & Marc De Champagne Preserve*
1 punnet *Simply Better Irish King Strawberries, hulled and sliced*

- ### METHOD
1. Cut the pastry into three equal pieces and then lightly flour the work surface. Take each piece and roll it out to a rectangle that is about 14 x 25cm. Put on to two baking sheets lined with parchment paper, then dust with 1 tbsp of the icing sugar and chill for 30 minutes.
 2. Preheat the oven to 200°C (400°F/Gas Mark 6). Put a sheet of parchment paper on top of the pastry rectangles and then cover with another baking sheet. Bake for 25-30 minutes until crisp and golden brown.
 3. Remove the pastry from the oven and leave it to cool a little, then carefully lift off the baking sheet and peel off the parchment.
 4. This is an optional step. Slide each pastry rectangle on to a chopping board and using a large sharp knife and a ruler, trim down each rectangle to 12 x 24cm in size. Brush off any excess crumbs with a pastry brush. Leave to cool.
 5. Softly whip the cream cheese, cream and remaining 1 tbsp of icing sugar, then transfer half to a disposable piping bag and snip off the corner (or you can spread on with a spatula). Spread half of the strawberry preserve on to one piece of the pastry and then either pipe blobs or spread half of the cream mixture right up to the edges. Top with half of the strawberries and dust with a little icing sugar. Repeat these steps, refilling the bag when you need to, then finish with the rest of the strawberries and a dusting of icing sugar.

LEMON POSSET WITH MACERATED STRAWBERRIES

Serves 4

INGREDIENTS

600ml *Simply Better Irish Jersey Cream*
100g caster sugar
Juice and zest of 1 lemon
1 large passion fruit
1 vanilla pod, seeds only
4 *Simply Better Handmade Irish Butter Shortbread*, to serve

For the macerated strawberries

1 punnet *Simply Better Irish King Strawberries*
1 tsp *Simply Better Balsamic Vinegar of Modena*
1 tsp vanilla extract
1 tbsp chopped basil or mint
2 tbsp *Simply Better Wexford Blackcurrant & Lime Cordial*

METHOD

1. To make the lemon posset, place the cream in a saucepan with the sugar, vanilla pod seeds, passion fruit seeds, lemon zest and juice. Bring to the boil and simmer for 2-3 minutes then transfer to a jug.
2. Pour into 4 stemmed glasses and place in the refrigerator to set overnight.
3. To prepare the macerated strawberries, quarter the strawberries and combine in a bowl with the balsamic vinegar, cordial, vanilla and mint or basil. Leave to infuse, overnight is best.
4. To serve, spoon some of the macerated strawberries over the lemon posset and serve with a shortbread biscuit.



LEMON POSSET WITH MACERATED STRAWBERRIES

SEAS OF CHANGE



From eliminating cling film to constantly adapting menus to take account of availability, chef Aishling Moore, the co-owner of Goldie in Cork, is making her restaurant sustainable as well as welcoming, writes JORDAN MOONEY

In the recently refurbished upstairs section of Goldie in Cork city centre, Aishling Moore is reflecting on the realities of running a business. “I never really had any ambition for it, but I know now that it’s important for me to be seen as a person who is leading a business, a person with a profile,” she says.

“I want Goldie to be a place that you come to eat and have a great time, then you leave feeling happier than when you came in. That’s our goal, and if I have to have some sort of profile to achieve that, then I’m okay with that.”

Moore is a co-owner of Goldie, along with the Market Lane Group. First opened in 2019 to much acclaim before shutting up shop during the pandemic, since reopening it’s been awarded a Michelin Bib Gourmand.

In the past year alone, Moore has released

a cookbook, *Whole Catch*, won best young chef at the Food&Wine Restaurant of the Year Awards, travelled to New York to take over the kitchen at The Dead Rabbit pub with Mark Moriarty, started a weekly column with the *Irish Examiner* and much more.

All of this has meant that she often needs to pop out of the kitchen mid-service to take selfies with diners and say hello, something she’s had to learn to balance with her actual kitchen duties.

“We’ve a really small kitchen and a small enough team, so when I’m here, I’m actively cooking. I’m really lucky to have a brilliant team and I love what I do,” she says.

“I always say that we’re a please and thank you kitchen, we’re very good at communicating with each other directly and making sure everyone feels respected.



AISHLING MOORE. PHOTOGRAPHY: CLARE KEOGH

having an even split of male, female and other gender identities if possible, as well as different nationalities and age profiles. Good representation helps create a good ecosystem, and I want to have society represented in our building. I'm in a position to be a leader, so that means I have to lead by example."

A thirst for knowledge and the open sharing of it is a driving force for Moore, who often welcomes chefs from other restaurants into her kitchen in order for them to learn more about seafood cookery. Moore herself didn't know a huge amount about preparing seafood before Goldie opened, outside of the flat-fish filleting that was taught in her college course, so she immediately dove into an intense education.

"The day after my business partners and I had the first conversation about Goldie, I went straight to the English Market, bought a load of fish and then just absolutely butchered it, I ruined it. I realised very quickly that I was going to have to do lots of research, so I

just spent hours looking at the techniques I needed to know," she says.

"I knew I would be able to creatively put together a menu when I nailed the techniques, how we would formulate everything to offer a good casual restaurant that doesn't take itself too seriously. We aren't elitist and we want to do the work for the customer. You won't find any crab hammers or cracking things at the table here."

Moore and her team go through over 150 kilos of seafood a week, and a huge focus is using it as sustainable as possible.

"I make sure to dry and preserve a lot every week so that we're taking as sustainable an approach as possible," she says. "We use up every bit of the fish and shellfish so that we minimise our waste."

That sustainable approach has often meant inventing new ways of working with seafood, including drying out the meat, experimenting to make crackers with bones, using meat from monkish heads and more.



Communication is the number one issue we have in this industry and I've tried really hard to create a better system here."

Now 29, Moore started cooking at 19, before becoming head chef at Elbow Lane, also within the Market Lane group, when she was 22, then opening Goldie two years later.

"I'm not sure that I would recommend my career path to anyone – it has been quite intense – but I've loved it. I've been lucky that I haven't had any issues really with bad teams or with being a woman in the kitchen, though when we first opened, it took about two and a half years before I received any CVs from women," she says.

"On the floor we had great women, but nobody in the kitchen. It wasn't an abnormal split exactly, but I certainly do believe in

"Communication is the number one issue we have in this industry and I've tried really hard to create a better system here"



Through these and other changes – Goldie has completely eliminated cling film, one of the biggest sources of single-use plastics in most kitchens, for example – Moore and her team have developed their own ways of preparing and storing seafood, something she’s immensely proud of.

To help further her sustainable mission, the menu at Goldie is constantly changing depending on what seafood is available.

“People who write their menus three months in advance are part of the problem, because there is a supply and demand issue when it comes to seafood. If you say that turbot will constantly be on your menu, then you’re asking for 20 kilos of turbot every day for your menu. But turbot is a wild animal, and there are so many factors that affect what comes in, like the winter storms,” says Moore.

“Our menu changes hourly sometimes, depending on what we have, but we have to be clever about it. We’ll create a dish, say a hake schnitzel, to start, but then we might go to pollock, cod, whiting or haddock tail based on our stock. The schnitzel is what stays on the menu but the garnish changes depending on the species of fish we use. That’s how we’ve been able to achieve consistency and create a restaurant that you can rely on, but in as

sustainable a way as possible.”

Moore muses on the things she’d like to achieve, noting that she’s ticked off quite a lot of her list already. She wouldn’t say no to a Michelin Green Star for her sustainability efforts, but her real focus is catching up on some of the things she missed during her twenties.

“I really care about the sustainability side of things, because it’s my generation’s problem to solve. I want to run a good food business that is as sustainable as a business as it is with the food it uses. I want the restaurant to support itself, not be supported by unpaid interns who don’t get paid. A lot of people get taken advantage of in this industry and I’m not about that at all. I get a lot of satisfaction from running a good business,” Moore explains.

“Lots of people ask me what’s next for me, but really, I’m really happy. I love coming to work everyday. I love my job. I’ve loved learning more about publishing and writing lately since I’ve done the book and started the column. I won’t be giving up this restaurant for anything, I want Goldie to be here for years to come, to have a career with real longevity. I think my 10 year plan is to continue improving, and improving myself.” **FW**

goldie.ie

BARBECUE IT BETTER

Seafood is under-represented at our summer soirées. Here, Aishling Moore shares her top tips to help you make the most of it this barbecue season.

“The great thing with fish is you can cook it the whole way on the barbecue, none of this ‘start in the oven and finish on the barbecue’ stuff, which is such a waste of energy and money.

Lobster is great on the barbecue: go straight between the eyes to get two halves, then leave it in the shell. Let the shell side sit on the barbecue and just watch it cook, it’s beautiful, but so easy.

I use this method for langoustines too, because the shells are such good conductors of heat and will never stick to the barbecue. That’s the same for mussels, clams, oysters and the like.

Oysters are one of my favourites to cook on a barbecue because you can crack them open and keep an eye on them while they cook. Throw in a knob of butter or make a nice little herb and fish sauce dressing with a squeeze of lime, it’s fab.

Monkfish is brilliant for the barbecue, as are any of the similarly meaty fish. If they’re meaty like that, you want to marinate them. I love a tandoori yoghurt marinade for monkfish, there’s one I have in the book that I do with mackerel that I absolutely love.

John Dory is another brilliant barbecue fish because the skin is so tough and resilient, it gets so crispy and delicious to eat, but it is very expensive.

People often worry about fish sticking to the barbecue so to troubleshoot that, you need to make sure the fish is really firm and tight, and the flesh is quite dry. Quality is everything, so if you get something that’s a little less firm, it might not be the best for your barbecue.

If you’re really worried about it sticking, get a sheet of seaweed like kombu, then soak in water until it’s pliable. Place it on the barbecue and put the fish on top, then it won’t stick at all and you’ll get a little bit of extra flavour. You won’t get that aggressive char, but you will get that lovely smoke.”

FX's The Bear is back and streaming exclusively on Disney+ now

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SEASON THREE OF THE BEAR FOLLOWS CARMY (JEREMY ALLEN WHITE), SYDNEY (AYO EDEBIRI), AND RICHIE (EBON MOSS-BACHARACH) AS THEY AND THEIR TEAM CONTINUE ON THEIR JOURNEY TO ELEVATE THEIR FORMER NEIGHBOURHOOD BEEF SANDWICH SHOP TURNED FINE DINING RESTAURANT IN CHICAGO. AFTER A TUMULTUOUS OPENING NIGHT, THE TEAM AT THE BEAR ARE PUSHING HARDER THAN EVER TO ACHIEVE EXCELLENCE AMIDST EVER-CHANGING CHALLENGES. EVERY SECOND COUNTS AND IN SEASON THREE, WE SEE WHETHER CARMY AND THE BEAR HAVE WHAT IT TAKES TO MAKE IT TO TOMORROW.



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Smoke for sale

No matter how much or how little you have to spend, there's a way to get grilling this summer, writes ALEX MEEHAN

Summer is here, and the call of the garden cookout is strong. But a trip to the barbecue section of your local garden centre can be intimidating. Prices vary widely, and you can spend anything from €50 or so for a simple kettle grill, right up to several thousand euro for what amounts to a full outdoor kitchen set-up.

But do you actually need to spend all that money to get something good? What about gas versus charcoal – is there a difference and if so, what is it? Is it worth splashing out on something expensive if it's going to sit outside for nine months of the year, not being used?

We asked some barbecue experts for their advice on what is and isn't worth paying for, regardless of your budget.

THE ENTRY LEVEL GRILLER

Andy Noonan is the organiser of the Big Grill, one of Europe's largest barbecue festivals, with the next event scheduled to take place in Dublin this August 22-25. His first piece of advice for grillers on a budget is simple.

"Charcoal, always charcoal – gas can work, but charcoal is always better. And whatever barbecue you get, make sure it has a lid. This is crucial for allowing you to cook things thoroughly, not just searing the outside of meat. It immediately raises your game," he says.

Mini charcoal kettle grills can be found for under €50, rising to between €200 and €300 for models from established brands like Weber.

"You can do anything and everything on a kettle barbecue. It can function as an outdoor oven, you can sear on it, and you can smoke on it if you put a bit of effort in," Noonan says.

So if a cheap kettle grill can technically do everything a premium version can, why pay more? Noonan says it's down to build

quality and longevity. Paying a bit more should get you a grill made of higher quality materials that have been put together a bit better.

"If you spend a bit more and look after what you buy, it should last years. You can spend a lot on these things, easily getting into thousands of euro, but to be clear you can also just get a metal bucket, bang some holes in the bottom and use a rack from your kitchen to get grilling for half nothing," he says.

"After that, the other single biggest other factor to impact the quality of your cook

basic kettle barbecue, because you can do everything on them," she says.

"You can get cheap ones but a good one will fall into the middle price bracket. They're not huge, don't take up much space, aren't heavy and a good one can be really versatile."

For Pat Conway of Smokin' Soul in Wexford, a boutique manufacturer of plate steel grills, there's been a big change in attitudes to cooking outdoors in Ireland since the pandemic.

"Covid made people realise that their garden could become part of their house, and the cost of living crisis sealed the deal. People wanted new ways to entertain friends and have a social life without spending a fortune," he says.

Smokin' Soul's grills start at around €800 and go up to about €3,000, so they're not entry level equipment.

"Grilling is for everyone. Yes, we sell nice ones, but actually grilling isn't something you need money to get involved in – a budget barbecue can be had from under €100. The Weber kettle is the gold standard, but you can also get knock-offs for a lot less," he says.

"That's what I started on myself, because it was what was available. But you can also dig up some sod in your back garden, throw down some stones, get a couple of bricks from Woodie's, light a fire and borrow a roasting rack

from the oven in the kitchen. You can have lots of fun with a set-up like that."

MOVING UP THE BARBECUE LADDER

It can be worth investing in better quality equipment if you think you'll get the use out of it. There has been an explosion in popularity of kamado-style grills in recent years, and with good reason. These insulated ceramic cookers, which originated in Japan, can reach extremely high temperatures while also holding heat for a long time.



GENEVIEWE TAYLOR: PICTURE: JASON INGRAM

is the charcoal you use, and of course the quality of the meat and ingredients."

Genevieve Taylor is a live fire and barbecue expert from Bristol in England who has written 13 cookbooks, including multiple bestsellers on outdoor cooking. Her most recent book is *Scorched*, a guide to grilling fish, and she's taking part in this year's Big Grill event in Dublin.

"I firmly believe that you don't have to spend loads to get a really good bit of kit, and if I could only have one piece of equipment, it would probably be that



ANDY NOONAN



PAT CONWAY (LEFT) AND HIS BUSINESS PARTNER JIM O'BRIEN OF SMOKIN' SOUL. PICTURE: PATRICK BROWNE

“The main brands are Big Green Egg and Kamado Joe, but there are others around and Weber makes one now as well. You can even occasionally see small ones in Lidl and Aldi,” says Andy Noonan.

“The more expensive brands tend to come in at around the €1,200 to €1,500 range, but they’re bigger, can be used to feed more people and are great for smoking. The main thing you get with one of them, and from spending more in general, is more space to cook more food at the same time. While a cheap kettle barbecue is perfect for ribs, burgers and chicken, they’re not really good for anything that requires a long, slow cook.”

For Genevieve Taylor, a Kamado Joe-style grill would also be a step up. “They are brilliant if you’re interested in low and slow-style cooking or smoking,” she says.

“They cost a lot and tend to be big and quite heavy, but they make getting consistent results easier. Cheaper grills can work fine but you have to be prepared to work a little bit harder at fire management.”

The bigger cooking area found in a larger grill has a secondary benefit – it allows food to be further away from the fire so indirect heat can be used. This opens up the world of slow-cooking.

At the other end of the spectrum is the Japanese hibachi grill.

“If you like hot and fast, this is the way to go. These are typically small, made with ceramic brick, and are fantastic for searing smaller amounts of food on skewers. You can get one for between €350 to €800, depending on size,” says Pat Conway.

Once you’re into this price range, it’s important to look at the materials used in the grill you buy. Conway points out that even pricey equipment can end up being

cheaper in the long run, on a cost-per-cook basis.

“Up and down the country, back gardens are full of rusting barbecues that were impulse purchases made because it was a bank holiday, the weather was nice, and someone said ‘let’s have a barbecue’. They were hugely expensive because they were only used a few times, and then abandoned,” he says.

According to Conway, in order to get anything with real longevity, you need to be prepared to spend above the €300 to €350 price point. Under that, and the construction of what’s available probably won’t stand the test of time.

“Above €400, you tend to find the outer

undoubtedly an Argentinian asado-style system, built with grilling surfaces that can be moved up and down.

“It uses chains and pulleys to allow you to move cooking cages up and down. To complete the set-up, I’d add an offset smoker. These used to be only really found in the US but now they’re here too, and there are people making them in the UK, and of course the Smokin’ Soul guys in Wexford do one too,” he says.

“That way you’d have the complete package – direct heat for searing, variable height for slower cooks, and then the offset for long, slow smoking of the odd lamb shoulder.”

According to Pat Conway, what you’re

“There are a lot of people for whom grilling is a real passion”

skin of the grill will be thicker, the paint used on it will be better quality and the screws will be a bit tighter. If you regularly cook on it, then on a cost-per-use basis, there is real value for money,” he says.

WHEN MONEY IS NO OBJECT

When Genevieve Taylor was refurbishing her back garden, she put in her ultimate cooking accessory, an outdoor stone oven.

“Our big purchase was a brick and cement pizza oven. I absolutely love it and love cooking in it. It’s a wonderful thing to have, but you need to be living somewhere where you’re planning on staying because you can’t move it,” she says.

For Andy Noonan, the dream is

buying when you spend big on this kind of set-up is a level of construction that means each grill will probably outlast its owner.

“They’re hand-made and made to order. They cost, but they’re a once-off purchase. We’re seeing people come to us who are happy to spend because they’ve tried out the other price points and understand what they’re buying,” he says.

“They are buying more surface area, more ease of use, better control of heat, better quality and better consistency of food coming off the grills. It’s not just rich people blowing cash for the sake of it – there are a lot of people for whom grilling is a real passion, and who are happy to save up for something really special.” **FW**

A Taste of **SUMMER**

The **Dunnes Stores Simply Better** collection has a well-deserved reputation for award-winning food and drink. Behind the scenes it also champions small Irish producers, helping them to grow while doing what they do best.



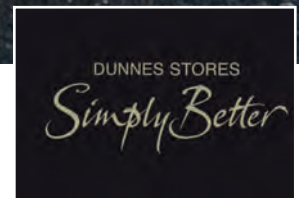
IT'S SUMMER AND MOST DEFINITELY ICE CREAM SEASON, SO THIS MONTH WE CAUGHT UP WITH DANIELA MORELLI OF NORTHERN IRELAND'S MORELLI ICE CREAM. SHE TOLD US ABOUT THEIR AWARD-WINNING ICE CREAMS AND THE FAMILY THAT HAS BEEN MAKING THEM FOR GENERATIONS.

The Morelli family story is truly one worthy of a film script. Travel, adventure, love, wars and strange twists of fate all conspired to bring members of an Italian family to Northern Ireland's Causeway Coast a century ago.

"No two days are the same and on the whole, ice cream is such a fun product to work with – you're putting a smile on people's faces"



STRAWBERRIES & CREAM ICE CREAM



Great Uncle Peter Morelli was one of nine brothers who left Italy on foot in the early 1900s in search of work. After time in Paris and London, Peter followed his brother Joe to Northern Ireland and opened a café in Coleraine. Renowned for his fish and chips, Peter also sold homemade ice cream in the Summer months. He met and married a local girl called Annie and when they decided to expand the business Peter's nephew, Angelo (Daniela's grandfather) came over from Italy to help.

Five generations on and the Morelli family business has grown from those beginnings to a much-loved institution. Now, there are Morelli ice cream parlours and cafés across Northern Ireland serving "Ireland's most famous Italian ice cream".

It's also possible to enjoy the Morelli's award-winning ice cream at home as a few years ago, the family embarked on a collaboration with the Dunnes Stores Simply Better team. They launched a range of Irish-made ice creams onto Dunnes Stores shelves in 2022.

"It was quite a long time in the making," Daniela, Morelli's Sales & Marketing Manager, says. "It was probably a good year before we got on shelf, but the Simply Better team are great to work with. They're very passionate about what they do and they really believe in the Simply Better brand. It was a great fit for us – and we could get passionate about it as well because it was a range



specially made for them.

"It pushed our boundaries a little bit too, which we found exciting," she adds. "I remember the day the Simply Better team came up to the office in Coleraine and we did a full tasting of the products that we had shortlisted for them. It was great to get the team's feedback."

That feedback was clearly positive as Morelli currently has five ice creams in the Simply Better range. "At the moment, we have Simply Better Irish Made Madagascar Vanilla Bean Ice Cream, Simply Better Irish Made Butterscotch Ice Cream, Simply Better Irish Made Caramelised Hazelnut Ice Cream, Simply

Better Irish Made Strawberries & Cream Ice Cream and Simply Better Irish Made Mixed Irish Berries Ice Cream," Daniela says. "The Madagascar Vanilla Bean is the best seller, closely followed by the Caramelised Hazelnut."

And her own favourite? "I like the fruity ones," she laughs. "The Mixed Irish Berries one is really nice. It's made with fruit from Wexford Home Preserves, who also work with Simply Better, so it was kind of a collaboration. Their products are outstanding, they're really good."

Ice cream fans will be delighted to hear that the Morellis will soon add two more flavours to their Simply Better range – and they sound incredible. "We've got a Rum and Raisin and we've got a Triple Chocolate one," Daniela says. "That one is made with Belgian chocolate pieces and chocolate sauce, and it has a chocolate base too, so it really is a triple whammy!"

Great ingredients are at the heart of Morelli ice creams, both in their own brand and their Simply Better range. As Daniela points out, they opt for the very best ingredients possible.

With such a focus on quality, it's little surprise that Morelli ice creams have picked up a number of prestigious accolades over the years – including Great Taste Awards. "We're really proud of that," Daniela says. "At last year's Irish Quality Food & Drink Awards, we won gold – jointly – for two products, our Simply Better Irish Made Caramelised Hazelnut Ice Cream and Simply Better Irish Made Butterscotch Ice Cream, which was brilliant."

While it's wonderful to win awards, Daniela points out that it's feedback from the customers and the people who buy their products that really keeps them motivated. "The Simply Better shoppers will communicate with you and will tell you what ones are their favourites. It's lovely to get that feedback," she explains. "We did the PTSB Ideal Home Show with Simply Better last year and we got talking to lots of Dunnes customers. It was great."

Not every family business gets to celebrate a centenary but the Morelli family's passion for what they do and commitment to quality has seen the brand succeed. What does Daniela love most about what she does? "The free ice cream is good," she laughs. "I guess, being a family business, it's very rewarding because, obviously, it's ours. No two days are the same and on the whole, ice cream is such a fun product to work with – you're putting a smile on people's faces."

These family traits are also why their growing relationship with the Simply Better team is such a success. "We're all working towards the same goal," Daniela says. "Working with the Simply Better team has taken us out of our comfort zone and made us try things that are a little bit different and it's had a really positive outcome."

"I think the Simply Better team are quite creative, and they want their suppliers to be creative as well. That's been a huge plus for us," she adds. "Not only that, but I also like the idea that they collaborate. They put Simply Better producers in touch with each other to see if there's anything that we can do together, or they make suggestions. We use products from a few of the other Simply Better suppliers like Co Meath's What's For Pudding? in our products as well. It's nice to have the link and make new connections that way."

"The Simply Better team are very well respected and they're very approachable. It's like a big family when we all get together really, it's nice," Daniela adds. And if the Morellis know about anything, it's family. And ice cream, of course.



LOOKING BACK TO MOVE FORWARD



STEPHEN GIBSON.
PHOTOGRAPHY BY BRYAN MEADE

Stephen Gibson of Pichet in Dublin, which opened in 2009, reflects on the good, the bad and the ugly of his years in the kitchen

Running a restaurant for fifteen years has involved a mix of happiness, challenges and life lessons. Looking back, would I change anything? Probably not – the good, the bad, and the ugly of all the years have contributed to the growth of Pichet, as well as my own personal growth.

THE GOOD

THE PEOPLE

One of the best parts of Pichet has been the people. From our loyal regulars to our dedicated staff and suppliers, the relationships we've built are priceless. Dublin thrives on its community, and it's been amazing to see how our little restaurant has become a part of that.

We've lots of regulars at Pichet and we see all sorts of characters come in the doors. It's so nice to see people who have kept coming back to us; maybe I've done a few things right.

I've had so many talented chefs come through the door and work in the kitchen, and it's such a buzz to see them succeeding in their own ventures now. Working with other chefs, watching them grow, tackle new challenges and succeed, has been deeply rewarding.

CREATIVE FREEDOM

When Pichet first opened, it was my opportunity to create my own menu and kitchen the way I wanted. It was always about creating the dishes I actually wanted to eat when I went out myself, and it's been amazing to watch it evolve from having one cooker and one oven – and being a café kitchen-style restaurant – to what it is today. I was only able to do this gradually as we became successful and could afford to invest in it to make it what we wanted.

Over the years, we've hosted themed nights, collaborated with guest chefs and joined food festivals, each event adding a new layer to our business. A particular high point has been the guest chef nights we call Friends of Pichet. This is where we welcome chefs that Harry Quinn, my head chef, and I have worked with over the years, and have them create a dinner menu with us.

These collaborations are always great for pushing creativity because they bring a totally different style of food into our kitchen for one night. It's great getting the opportunity to work with chefs I worked with maybe 15 or 20 years ago and see how far they've come or evolved in their career.



“Having a restaurant is like having a bold child that needs attention all the time”

THE BAD

FINANCIAL HEADACHES

Running a restaurant is such a financial juggling act, and from the initial investment to ongoing expenses, the pressures were always there. There were times when making payroll felt impossible, and when unexpected costs like equipment breakdowns or a sudden dip in customers added to the stress.

Managing these financial challenges required careful planning, smart budgeting and some tough decisions along the way. Opening in a recession meant I took a strict approach to budgeting from the outset, which worked to our advantage in the long run.

We were only really able to afford such a great location because places were closing down all over Dublin, and the rent was very reasonable at first. It was a risk, and I think we were possibly a bit mad jumping in at that time.

But in some ways it gave us an advantage because we had a clean slate to be whoever we wanted to be. We were able to market ourselves as affordable casual dining, or as we called it “a modern take on a classic bistro”.

Things were very tight at that time, I only made it work by putting the business first, and taking a very small salary for what seemed like a very long time.

COVID

The pandemic was a huge challenge for the entire hospitality industry, and it was a point in time when I really felt my mental health was hugely impacted. During the second lockdown, I wondered if dining would ever reopen or if the industry would ever come back in any meaningful way.

I would consider myself a normally chilled out, relaxed person – I take the view that no matter the problem, we’ll sort it out – but the impact of the restaurant and kitchen being closed or restricted for so long took its toll on me.

Putting aside the serious financial difficulties hospitality suffered during that time, the uncertainty and inability to do what you love every day created a lot of anxiety and anguish. I’m so happy to say I came out the other side with my wife and family closer than ever.

THE UGLY

PERSONAL SACRIFICES

Running a restaurant isn’t just a job; it’s a lifestyle. The long hours, physical demands and constant stress took a toll on my personal life. Family events, holidays and personal time were often sacrificed for business.

Aspiring restaurateurs need to understand that success often comes at the cost of personal time and well-being. Even when you have a day off it’s not much of a day off, because as an entrepreneur you have stuff on your mind, emails coming in, people looking for you on the phone. And you’re always thinking about the next week.

Having a restaurant is like having a bold child that needs attention all the time. It took me a few years to realise that and many years to find the a balance.

THE LESSONS I’VE LEARNED

PRIORITISE YOUR WORK-LIFE BALANCE

The restaurant business is demanding, and I’ve worked crazy hours to make things work over the years. As I mentioned before, while the pandemic was a huge struggle for my mental health, it also opened my eyes to the importance of family and personal life.

I realised that to bring your best self to your work, you have to take time out and prioritise the other things that fulfil you. For me this was spending time with my wife and kids and any free time after that, cycling and going to gigs.

STAY FLEXIBLE

One of the biggest lessons for me has been the importance of adaptability. Being able to pivot quickly – whether it’s changing the menu, adopting new technologies, or shifting business models – is essential for survival and growth. I’ve never been rigid in my style and if I ever felt like some part of the business wasn’t working, I was happy to explore and try new ways of doing things.

CUSTOMERS ARE EVERYTHING

At the end of the day, it’s all about the customer, and ensuring a memorable dining experience keeps them coming back. This means not just great food, but also exceptional service, ambiance and value for money.

Value for money doesn’t mean cheap – it means giving your diners an experience worth coming for or worth paying for. Listening to customer feedback and constantly striving to improve their experience has been key to building Pichet to what it is today.

WHAT I’D DO DIFFERENTLY

EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY EARLIER

We didn’t have things like OpenTable or ResDiary fifteen years ago, vouchers were handwritten on pieces of card, and even Facebook, never mind social media, was not yet seen as a marketing tool for businesses.

Technology can streamline operations and enhance the customer experience. From reservation systems to inventory management and social media marketing, tech plays a crucial role. Adopting these tools sooner probably would have made my life a little bit easier, but I’m glad I have them now.

BALANCE WORK AND LIFE BETTER

Focusing on your work is a great thing, and success comes from passion. But being able to take time out and recharge will keep you motivated over the long run. Prioritising my personal well-being and setting boundaries could have helped me mitigate burnout and maintain a healthier lifestyle.

What would I say to anyone considering going into the restaurant business? It’s not just about loving food; it’s about facing challenges head-on and staying committed through thick and thin. Your passion and grit will drive you through the toughest times, but if you’re not prepared to work hard, rethink your plans.

The culinary world is vast and always evolving, so continuous learning – through education, mentorship or hands-on experience – is so important. Stay curious, embrace new trends, and never stop honing your craft.

And finally, build a support network. Surround yourself with mentors, peers, and advisors. Their guidance, encouragement, and shared experiences are invaluable. **FW**



Family ties

James Vaughan, the third generation of Vaughan to work in the family business, took over the kitchen at a young age having trained under his father, writes ALEX MEEHAN

A first head chef's job is a big deal for any culinary professional, but being trusted not to crash a thriving business at the age of just 21 must be particularly daunting. But that's exactly what happened for James Vaughan in 2021, when he took over the kitchen at Vaughan's Anchor Inn in Liscannor in Co Clare from his father Denis.

Today he heads up a brigade of eight chefs, running a seafood restaurant that was first opened by his grandparents in west Clare in 1979.

"I had worked in one or two other places before, but basically I trained here under my dad, and when I was 21 they decided to let me take the reins and see what would happen," says James Vaughan.

"I left school when I was 17. I hated it and had no interest in going any further. But to say mum and dad were unhappy would be an understatement. There was war. They said 'if you leave, you're going to go to work', and that was grand with me. I wanted to go full time in the kitchen and I've been there ever since."

The multiple award-winning kitchen is widely recognised as being at the forefront of seafood cooking in Ireland. When the Michelin Guide produced a list of seafood restaurants to watch in 2023, Vaughan's Anchor Inn sat alongside Cush in Ballycotton, Max's in Kinsale and Goldie in Cork city.

The menu is 90 per cent seafood and fish, and the majority of it is caught locally.

"There are no air miles on our seafood and fish – it gets landed, it gets walked for two minutes to the kitchen door, and it goes straight onto plates," Vaughan says. "The restaurant is right in the harbour, so everything is super fresh. If there's a secret to our success, that's it."

Starters on the menu include Castletownbere scallops with carrot, tandoori, bacon crumb and wild garlic oil, as well as Liscannor Bay crab meat and seaweed risotto made with Acquerello rice and aged Parmesan.

Main courses include roasted halibut with brown shrimp, basil oil, summer truffles and Parmesan cream, as well as seared turbot with fondue of leek and lobster, almonds and yuzu hollandaise.

Special mention should go also to Vaughan's fish and chips, which is made using a batter built on a 23-year-old starter, and served with tartare sauce, pea purée and chips so good, they got a special mention from Michelin in its recommendation. These are steamed and then fried in beef dripping.

"The thing with working with all fresh fish



and seafood is that you need to have a bit of knowledge of how to prepare it and what to do with it. I think a lot of places default to buying in frozen because they don't have the experience of knowing how to handle the produce, and they're concerned it's going to be time consuming and difficult," Vaughan says.

"But it's important to be able to take in your produce and process it yourself. We do all of that, with the exception of crab. We used to process our own crab but found we were getting through so much of it that we needed a separate kitchen just for that. Something had to give, but everything else we do ourselves."

Like every other restaurant, the Anchor Inn has faced serious challenges sourcing qualified chefs. However earlier this year the Vaughans decided to try an innovative solution, and sourced three chefs from Sri Lanka via an agency.

"Can you imagine travelling from Clare to Sri Lanka to work in a local kitchen there? What a huge practical and cultural change. But that's effectively what these guys we have done in coming here, and fair play to them," says Vaughan.

"It's been a nightmare finding staff but this year has been the best since Covid because of that. We couldn't get anyone from Europe but there were people willing to come from Sri Lanka, so we said let's do it."

Ireland has a paradoxical relationship with fish, given that



we're an island nation and yet many people profess not to like it. Is the reason perhaps that they haven't met the right chef and had the right dish yet?

"We're lucky, because we're very well known as a seafood and fish restaurant, so people know what we do and what they're going to get. We don't have to persuade them or sell to them that hard," says Vaughan.

"Obviously we have a chicken or beef option on the menu because we know that some people prefer not to eat fish, but speaking generally, this is a place for fish lovers and so that's what we do." **FW**

JAMES' favourite five

1 THE RESTAURANT

Restaurant Patrick Guilbaud in Dublin, every day. We've been going there for years and have never had a bad meal. It's always spot on and is the most reliable restaurant in the country. This is my go-to treat restaurant when I want something special.

2 THE HOTEL

The Cashel Palace is a stunning hotel. It's old school but ultra-modern at the same time. It feels like a luxury property for my generation. This is where I'd go if I had the time to take a weekend break.

3 THE INGREDIENT

I always find myself coming back to shellfish. Yes, there are shellfish dishes on our menu but I also find myself drawn towards using shellfish as secondary ingredients in other dishes as well, and the majority of what I cook has some kind of shellfish element, as a garnish or in a sauce. Crab, lobster, mussels – it always figures.

4 THE COOKBOOK

I have two favourites. Marco Pierre White's *White Heat* is a classic for a reason, but in recent times I've really gotten to love Restaurant Gordon Ramsay: *A Story of Excellence*. He has a lovely touch when it comes to doing classic recipes with modern flair.

5 THE KITCHEN GADGET

It has to be my Thermomix. It really helps and it's a cliché to say it's like having an extra pair of hands, but it's true. I use it for sauces, purées and lots of other fiddly jobs that would otherwise take time and attention when I'm busy in the kitchen.

Rosé all day

Rosé wine is a celebrity must-have these days, so grab yourself a bottle and ride that wave, says MICK O'CONNELL



What do George Michael, AC/DC and pink wine all have in common? The answer lies in the centre of Provence, equidistant from Marseille, Toulon and Cannes, and is a wine-producing estate that has garnered more than its fair share of column inches in tabloids and music magazines.

Nestled in the village of Correns, which bills itself as France's first organic town, you could be forgiven for thinking that the estate would be picking up airtime for its idealistic takes on sustainability and green farming.

Over 30 hectares of vines are farmed organically here at 350 metres above sea level. Terraces are hewn from the hillside and bolstered by sun-baked stones. Manicured rows of vines follow the lines into the horizon.

While this estate has been inhabited since pre-Roman times, it was put on a different type of map in 1979 when Pink Floyd recorded part of their cult album *The Wall* there. The studio went on to receive guests as famous and infamous as Wham!, AC/DC, The Cure and even a band from Limerick called The Cranberries, who were studio-hopping in a ten month recording process for their fourth album, *Bury The Hatchet*.

With artists of this calibre staying on-site and committing their sonic endeavour to tape, one might expect that this is what Château Miraval became most famous for. But in 2008, Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie leased it for a three year period with the option to purchase at the end.

In 2014, the couple wed in the chapel on the site having exercised their buying clause. The estate's fame was guaranteed in the gossip columns for eternity.

Given the list of celebrity wines in the category, it looks like rosé is fast becoming the ultimate accessory: Cameron Diaz (*Avaline*), George Clooney (*Domaine du Canadel*), Jon Bon Jovi (*Hampton Water*), George Lucas (*Château Marguï*), John Malkovich (*LQLC*), John Legend (*LVE*).

However, rosé isn't just about celebrity. Pitt and Jolie enlisted the help of producers who were in the know to handle the wine production reins at Château Miraval. The Perrin family, who were

brought in not only as producers but shareholders, are one of France's foremost winemaking families and the owners of the cult winery Château Beaucastel.

The latter is one of the foremost Châteauneuf-du-Pape producers, and the quality at this domaine is world renowned. Perhaps the Perrin family are wine celebs?

Rosé has long been made as a by-product of red wine production. *Saignée*, the wine production method, exists to concentrate red wines by bleeding off an amount of the wine to allow what is left over to have a greater skins to juice ratio, picking up more flavour and complexity.

The other classic rosé production method is more widely employed. Here red grapes are used – unusually the vast majority of red grapes have white flesh, and this means that the amount of time that the red grape skins spend in contact with the white juice dictates how colourful or not the “red” wine is.

In Provence, one of the most important factors in the production of the wine is achieving the desirable pink colour. Because the colour must be pale to hit the global trend, many winemaking methods must be employed. First and foremost the grapes chosen must be pale-skinned, and usually this means grenache and cinsault being the main event.

Sometimes producers blend in a small proportion of the white variety *rolle*, also know as *vermentino*, which adds body and also lightens colour if used correctly. Light pressing is the order of the day here, first to only extract the most delicate, fine aromas, but importantly not to leech too much colour into the juice.

Most Provence rosé now undergoes direct press – this means the juice has almost no skin contact, so just picks up a tiny bit of red hue. It gets an hour or two of skin contact for pale rosé versus a fortnight for a deep red wine.

While celebrity marriages have come and gone, Château Miraval remains. The studio where so many timeless tracks have been recorded has just received a revamp and redesign to ensure its future stays on the same trajectory as the past. There has even been a new rosé released to celebrate that fact. **FW**

WINE RATINGS

This is the international marking system for wine ratings, a 100-point scale which works on a percentile, rather than a percentage, scale.

95-100:
exceptional, of world-class quality

90-94:
very good quality

88-89:
average, but lacks greatness

85-87:
average to modest

80-84:
below average

70-79:
poor

BELOW 70:
unacceptable quality

**1 CHÂTEAU D'ESCLANS
WHISPERING ANGEL**
90pts, €27 from SuperValu, Dunnes
Stores, Tesco and O'Briens

Now the leader in the category for pale rosé, this is crisp and refreshing with raspberry and pithy peach. It has a small bit of vermentino, called rolle here, in the blend to add texture.

2 STUDIO BY MIRAVAL
91pts, €25 from Mitchell & Son,
Donnybrook Fair and McHughs

Named after the studio at the estate that has just undergone a revamp at the hands of French music producer Damien Quintard and some fella called Pitt. Worthy of no celebrity links, this is crisp, clean and textured.

3 ROCK ANGEL
93pts, €45 from McHugh's, Celtic
Whiskey Shop and O'Briens

Texturally, this is a big step up from its Whispering sibling. Here we have oak aromas filling out the centre of a wine that is rich, creamy and complex. Where other rosés feel like apéritif hour is the height of their ambition, this is very gastronomic.



**4 CHARLES HEIDSIECK ROSÉ
RÉSERVE**
92pts, €95 from WineOnline.ie,
Ely, Clontarf Wines, and World Wide
Wines Waterford

From the wonderful pinot villages at the heart of Champagne, this is bright and refreshing with raspberry compote and gingerbread complexity. Strangely, this is the only region that allows blending of white and red wines to make pink ones.

**5 SYLVAIN PATAILLE
MARSANNAY ROSÉ FLEUR
DE PINOT**
93pts, €55 from Green Man Wines and
64 Wine

Pataille is a wonderful Burgundian producer based in Marsannay close to Dijon. Very much in the low intervention category, this is a wine that thrills with its vibrancy while giving weight enough for diverse cuisine. A delight.

6 MIRABEAU PURE
92pts, €25 from Brown Thomas
and Bradleys

A wine that feels riper than its light 12.5 per cent alcohol would suggest, the concentration and texture comes from a site with altitude which allows slightly later harvest times than the peer group to increase aromatic intensity. Apricot pith, wild strawberry, subtle garrigue are all there.



OISIN DAVIS

Summer SIPPING

Go beyond beer with drinks recipes that will impress your guests, writes OISIN DAVIS

There are only two rules when it comes to summer barbecues in Ireland. The first is that you should not prepare any food that can't be cooked indoors at a moment's notice, given our wildly unpredictable weather. The second is that you should put more effort into the drinks, because a barbecue is the ideal opportunity to dial up the cocktails and try something different. Over the years I've developed a couple of fairly decent summer barbecue cocktail recipes; try them for your next feast.

THE ITALIAN RAPSCALLION

If you're serving spicy chicken, this will temper the heat and keep your thirst at bay. The heavy amounts of citrus here will make the flavours of spicy chicken sing, and it also pairs well with shellfish.

INGREDIENTS

1 part Malfy blood orange gin
1 part extra dry Martini
3 parts San Pellegrino grapefruit
Pink grapefruit wedges, to garnish

METHOD

1. This works best poured into a large jug. Try a smaller modest measure first, such as 50ml of the gin, 50ml of the martini and 150ml of the grapefruit soda, stir together for a few seconds, then figure out how many of them you will need to fill your jug.
2. For each individual serve, fill a long glass with ice, pour in the mix and garnish with the grapefruit wedges.

BUSHAPPLE PUNCH

Makes 18 serves

I'm a sucker for tender babyback ribs and juicy barbecued pork loins, and this apple-forward punch is perfect with them. The key ingredient is the Pom'O, an apple-based apéritif from Cork, while the rooibos tea and cider freshens and lengthens it all out.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: BUSHAPPLE PUNCH, BATCHED MOJITO, THE ITALIAN RAPSCALLION

PHOTOGRAPHY BY DEAN CARROLL

INGREDIENTS

300ml strongly brewed rooibos tea
200ml Irish honey
Zest and juice of three lemons
1 bottle Killahora Pom'O
200ml medium dry sherry
3 x 500ml bottles of Stonewell Dry Cider
Sliced apple and fresh mint, to garnish

METHOD

1. Make up your tea in a pot with at least six rooibos tea bags. Sweeten it with the honey, then zest the lemons with a vegetable peeler and place the zest into the tea.
2. Squeeze the lemons in before stirring it all up and letting everything infuse for a couple of hours.
3. When you're ready to serve, pour the contents of the pot into a punch bowl, using a sieve to keep the solids out. Add the Pom'O and sherry before stirring briskly, then add the cider.
4. For each serve, pour 150ml into an iced tumbler glass, garnishing with an apple slice and a sprig of fresh mint.

BATCHED MOJITO

Makes 14 serves

When it's well made and mixed with love, the mojito is a rather gorgeous cocktail

with such a piquant summery impact, that even when it's lashing rain outside, you still feel like you're on a Caribbean island.

INGREDIENTS

1 bottle of quality rum, try an Irish brand if you can or Havana Club 3 Year Old
150ml fresh lime juice
100ml sugar syrup
50ml water
1 tsp Angostura bitters
2 packets fresh mint
1 litre sparkling water

METHOD

1. Grab a 1 litre bottle and make sure it's clean. Using a funnel, pour in the whole bottle of rum, along with the lime juice, sugar syrup, water and bitters. Put the lid on, give it a good shake and store it in your fridge. This can be done hours in advance, even overnight if you like.
2. For each serve, shake the bottle and pour out 7ml of the mix into a long glass. Tear off three or four fresh mint leaves and, using a spoon, gently press them into the liquid before swirling them around the glass so that their freshness infuses into the rum mix.
3. Fill your glass with ice, top it all up with the sparkling water and give it a wee stir with a straw. Garnish each glass with a sprig of fresh mint. FW

SECRET RESTAURATEUR

Traditional chippers are struggling with rising costs and changing eating patterns, so don't forget to support them when you're on your travels



I always associate summer with good old fish and chips – lounging around on grass or with your legs dangling over an old harbour wall, while stabbing around in a takeaway bag or box with a tiny fork.

Like most things in Ireland, fish and chips have become a bit gentrified over the last decade, and have been transformed into something positively posh in certain settings.

The excellent Fish Shop restaurant, trading on Benburb Street in Dublin since 2015, has the feel of an old-school tapas bar plucked from Spain and has become a firm foodie favourite. Goldie in Cork city started with a similar feel, and has since transformed into an uber-trendy restaurant, earning a Michelin Bib Gourmand in the process.

But what about old-fashioned, family-owned, Italian-style chippers? They seem to be facing some real problems at present.

These small independent chip shops have come under serious strain over the last couple of years, for reasons which will be familiar to fans of this column, namely costs, costs, costs. The price of frying oil has effectively doubled in the last two years, and the cost of fresh fish has risen by between 60 and 80 per cent.

Any restaurant facing price increases from suppliers on this scale would quickly sink, so it's not hard to see why chippers are struggling. And while a restaurant can just change the menu, a fish and chip shop must sell fish and chips. Added to this, the recent Vat hike has hit them just as hard as everyone else.

There has also been a significant change in the business model of independent chippers in the years since Covid. This was highlighted to

me by a tirade The Lawyer recently subjected me to, and which I was only willing to tolerate because I was so amazed that a foodie snob such as he would ever admit to setting foot in a chipper of any description.

He recently visited family in Tuam in Co Galway on a Friday night. After leaving the pub at 11:30pm, he was surprised to discover that both chip shops in the town had already closed.

The following night, he was in Salthill on the evening of a high-profile hurling clash between Galway and Kilkenny. After many drinks were had, his party tried to find a chipper to revive themselves, only to find that the main such business in the area – a branch of a well-known tasty and tempting national chain – had shut its doors at 9pm, despite the streets of the town being thronged with visitors and revellers.

He was puzzled and greatly annoyed by this. He has now made it his mission to survey the chip shop scene in any town he happens to pass through. As I sat down to write this piece, he texted to tell me of a forty-year-old shop in Cork which now closes at 9pm, and recently removed all of its indoor seating.

“How can anyone complain about the state of their business when they refuse to open their doors at the busiest time of the week? Why bother complaining about costs if you're happy to turn away customers?”

Fair point, you might say. But it ignores some significant changes in the trading conditions and business models of chippers in recent years.

First, owners say that the practice of spending hours in the pub, and then descending en masse on the nearest chipper, is a thing of the past. People now drink at home a lot more, and don't stay in pubs for longer than an hour or two.

The near-death of nightclubs over the last decade is further evidence of this. As someone who spent many a night queuing five-deep at the Supermacs in Eyre Square in Galway on student nights out, I can't help but sort of miss this tradition.

Owners of chippers also say that it makes no economic sense for them to open after a certain time. Between 6pm and 9pm, it's said that the average customer order is around €35, often from couples or families.

But from 9pm onwards, the clientele shifts to single people spending no more than a tenner each. The harsh sums dictate that it makes little sense to stay open if the overall spend reduces as the night progresses.

The forced closure of chippers in the early stages of Covid also changed attitudes. Owners realised that they quite enjoyed not having to deal with drunks and yahoos such as The Lawyer at all hours of the night, particularly when the margins were tighter. They decided it wasn't worth the hassle any more.

Time marches on, and businesses change. But let's hope that we can continue to enjoy fish and chips from small independent businesses into the future. Remember to support them as you do your short shorts this summer! **FW**

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