

Tim Bilton -Yorkshire Chef of The Year 2009

Wow what a first year selling our family home, leaving a well payed head chefs position at one of the biggest restaurants in Leeds (Bibis Italianissimo), putting everything that I (we) have worked for in to a rundown country pub and turning it into a gastro pub in the middle of the economic down turn. "Are you mad" well may be, or maybe just someone with an appetite for hard work and a vision to succeed. As a wise man said there is a fine line between madness and genius well only time will tell.

I first started washing up at a well known (at the time) restaurant near Pontefract. Sleeves rolled up washing and scrubbing what seemed to me great big pots and pans, while eagerly watching the kitchens chefs working. I was totally fascinated by these guys searing meat and fish, roasting huge joints and boiling stocks in pans that could hold a small army. It was at this moment that I was totally hooked. I became promoted to the peeling shed well I say promoted most of the KP's (kitchen porters) fell by the way side but I took this as my opportunity to become one of those guys. I would wash and peel sacks of carrots, bags of potatoes, pick and wash the salad leaves, chop bunches and bunches of parsley (the universal garnish for everything back in the ninety's it went on everything) but it was always the best picked lettuce and the finest chopped parsley ever.

It is from here that I fell in love with people like Marco Pierre White, the Roux brothers and of course Raymond Blanc.

By the age of 18 I was training as commis chef under the watchful eye of Raymond Blanc at Le Manoir aux Quat' Saisons in Oxfordshire-not bad for a lad from Ferrybridge. We would work 18 hours a day prepping, cooking then lunch service. Clean down and do it all again ready for dinner service, looking back this was one of the best times in my career. I have my old chef's jacket hung in my restaurant now and always have fond memories every time that I look at it.

Anyway getting back to the first 12 months back in January I won the coveted Yorkshire Chef of the Year 2009 with my dish of

Pan roast loin of Round Green Farm venison served with a little venison cottage pie, summer vegetables and Pontefract cake sauce

Richard and Jenny Elmhirst of Round Green Farm Worsbrough near Barnsley have been farming deer there for nearly 30 years. Venison is one of the world's healthiest meats and farmed venison is more consistent, less gamey, leaner and moist than its wild counterpart. Venison provides higher levels of protein than beef, lamb, pork and chicken, with lower levels of fat and cholesterol; it is also provides a good source of vitamins B12 and B6, both of which are good for a health heart.

If you are not a big fan of oily fish then venison provides an alternative source of omega oils, along with the immunity boosting zinc and selenium.

So the dish that brings together the rich buttery texture of the pan seared venison loin with the rich flavour of the little cottage pie complemented with the summer vegetables and a little drizzle of Pontefract cake sauce, there for giving a great balance to the dish.

I hope that you enjoy the venison recipe

Happy cooking

Tim Bilton