

FOOD

Celebrity chefs put 'great' into cuisine

Vicki Williams

Like London, Hong Kong has a vibrant dining scene which, combined with its eating-out culture, makes it an appealing destination for international celebrity chefs. Some of those championing great British cuisine here are Jason Atherton, Gordon Ramsay and Tom Aikens – all with Michelin-starred restaurants – plus protégés of these chefs, such as Nate Green. Atherton opened his first restaurant in Hong Kong, 22 Ships, four years ago, and has gone on to open Ham & Sherry and Aberdeen Street Social with restaurateur Yenn Wong. It is the latter where his reinterpretation of British cuisine, reinventing traditional dishes with modern techniques, is to be found.

"Great British cuisine has had a massive impact on the world, don't forget many years ago the French used to send their royal chefs to train how to roast meat properly in our royal courts," Atherton says. "We have always had amazing home-grown produce, we have some of the best shellfish and fish products on the planet, and one of the best dairy farming industries."

"No other country has such depth to draw inspiration from." His favourite British dish is Lancashire hot pot.

Also pointing towards produce as a definer is Aikens, who is involved in The Pawn, serving modern British cuisine, and The Fat Pig, dedicated to porcine delights, both in conjunction with Classified Group. "I would say that it's the produce in each region that makes British dishes unique, also we are very lucky to have the ever-changing seasons in the UK that gives us such a variety of produce."

Aiken says traditional British cuisine is a lot about comfort food "probably to compensate for the weather". Among the iconic dishes, which he says, make it a recognisable cuisine,

are: fish 'n' chips, shepherd's pie, blood pudding, roasts with potatoes and Yorkshire pudding, trifle, Eton mess and sticky toffee pudding.

Gordon Ramsay, together with Dining Concepts, has a presence at London House, inspired by a typical English pub, and Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, featuring dishes from the London counterpart showcasing British favourites reinvented. Both restaurants showcase fish 'n' chips, bangers and mash, beef Wellington and shepherd's pie.

Nate Green, a former protégé of Atherton, branched out in June with the opening, in conjunction with Wong, of Rhoda, serving modern comfort food, featuring a menu that changes daily.

"Great British food is about down-to-earth, everyday food, using great produce, and dishes with flavour depth," Green says. "It's working-class food. Rhoda's food is driven by us using whole animals so there is plenty of British influence on the menu, such as faggots, peas and gravy, shepherd's pie, Lancashire hot pot, and Ginger biscuit trifle."

"Some of my favourite dishes to eat are shepherd's pie, fish and chips, brawn, Sunday roast, fruit pies, fruit crumble, the list could go on forever."

Meanwhile, the second edition of the Best of British Festival will enliven Tamar Park from November 8 to 13.

Celebrating the people, food and brands that put the "great" in Great Britain, the six-day jamboree will feature some of Hong Kong's favourite eateries, including Mr & Mrs Fox, Mama San, Tango Steakhouse, Bread Street Kitchen & Bar, Bombay Dreams, Popsy Modern Kitchen, The Pawn, and Jamie's Italian, whose chefs will curate a special menu, topped by a British-Asian fusion signature dish.

Evenings will be spiced up with culinary themes, outdoor cinema screenings, live music, a traditional British pub and family entertainment.



Nate Green says British cuisine is about down-to-earth food.