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People

1969-11

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Recommended Citation

Harsch, Sandol, "Chefs of the Dublin Restaurants: Newspaper Clipping" (1969). *Jackie Needham*. 31.
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Chefs of the Dublin Restaurants

BY SANDOL HARSCH



The Red Bank Restaurant

Chef: Gerard Ferns

Chef Gerard Ferns has been cooking for 35 years. He trained at the Adelphi Hotel, Liverpool.

"In the last twenty years, cooking in Dublin has boomed. People are moving into a higher standard of living and they like better things. I think restaurants have helped educate them about good food, and new foods, but they are looking for new things all the time. A lot of people ask me for recipes, and I give them out. They still come back, because it never tastes quite the same at home.

"Women are amateur cooks, and they appreciate good food. Men are more likely to order grills, but women know more about food. Although they are more finicky about their food. I invent a lot of dishes, and these go on the menu, and women like to know exactly how they are done.

"We have a varied menu. A lot of people order chicken and grills, but we have a wide variety of prawn dishes and a lot of these are ordered.

"Irish fish is excellent, and Galway oysters are the best anywhere. Cooking in Dublin is mainly Continental dishes with Irish specialities like the shellfish. Tourists don't affect our menu much, because Americans usually order grills or broiled lobsters, or our specialities."

Mr. Ferns' favourite meal is fried eggs and bacon.

Chicken du Chef

- 3½lb. chicken
- Salt and pepper
- Flour
- Shallots
- Lardons
- Mushrooms
- 1 clove garlic
- gherkin
- 1 glass red wine
- 1 glass cream
- ½ glass brown stock

Section the chicken, remove the skin. Coat in flour seasoned with salt and pepper, then sauté in butter. When the chicken is ½ cooked, add 2 small finely chopped shallots, lardons, quartered mushrooms, 1 clove garlic, 1 diced gherkin. Remove the chicken when cooked, keep it warm. Add to the sauce: 1 glass red wine, 1 glass cream and ½ glass brown stock. Reduce sauce to ½, then pour over chicken. Serve with croquette potatoes, buttered French beans and toast croutons.



The Gresham Hotel

Chef: Michael McManus

Michael McManus has cooked for 36 years. Trained at hotels in Dublin, chef at the Central Hotel, he then came to the Gresham.

"There's an awful variety of food ordered, but no one dish is especially ordered. People tend to order our à la carte specialities.

"Tourists don't affect our menu much. We're always willing to do any special dish they order. We devise our own special dishes, testing them on the staff before putting them on the menu. People eat out more now. They're more conscious of food, they like to eat things they can't get at home. Some like plain cooking, but a lot like exotic things—flambés done at the table. People are educated by restaurants. They seem to catch on, try new things on the menu. Women are more imaginative than men—they cook, of course, and here they don't pay for the meal.

I eat at other restaurants. If I find something new, I find out what it is and try it. I like Irish food because it's so very fresh. We have a hot-house supplier, so we have quality fresh vegetables all year.

"I think Irish was the first traditional cooking and we have a completely Irish menu. We cook each dish individually, no pre-cooking at all."

Mr. McManus' own favourite meal: Caviare in aspic; lobster claws à la crème with cognac; escalope de veau à la maison with endive au beurre and parsley potatoes; soufflé Grand Marnier.

Escalope de veau à la maison

Take an escalope of veal, pound very thin. Flour with seasoned flour, coat with beaten egg, then dip in white bread crumbs. Seal in sizzling butter, remove and keep warm on side of range. Take 1 clove of garlic, small shallot, diced, sauté in butter. Blanch and peel a tomato, slice into six pieces thick enough not to break, add to the shallots and cook gently. Add ½ cup cream, remove the tomato slices and place them on top of the veal. Whisk two egg yolks into the hot cream, reduce until it is the proper consistency to coat the veal. Then add two dessertspoonfuls of grated parmesan to the cream and pour over the veal and tomato. Sprinkle with more grated parmesan and glaze. Serve with spinach à la crème in tomato shells and croquette potatoes.



The Shelbourne Hotel

Chef: Maurice O'Looney

Chef Maurice has cooked for 32 years. He trained at the Shelbourne and spent a year at the Hotel Royal, Evian.

"Customers seem to prefer meat and chicken dishes, but I think fish is coming in. People who travel are a lot more adventurous about food. They'll take a fancy to something abroad, then come in here and order it. Even if it's not on the menu, I'll do any special dish. "If a customer doesn't like his food, I think it should be sent back. People are still learning about food, and they've a terrible curiosity about new dishes. They like to break into something new. Eating out is more popular, and people are more inquisitive. Restaurants have educated them about good food, and the more they get the more likely they are to try new things.

"There is no comparison between cooking now and 20 years ago. Good food is known, and people expect it. I get requests for recipes, because people want to know what a dish is. Women especially are more interested in food. They order new dishes without hesitation, while men will settle for a grilled steak or chops. But women never look at prices and men do.

"Sauce dishes are coming in, but not necessarily because of tourists. Americans usually stick with steaks. Of course, Continental customers are interesting because they know food so well, and they demand excellence. They greatly help vary the menu by asking for interesting food."

Mr. Maurice's favourite meal: 2 brown eggs, boiled for 2½ minutes, with hot buttered toast.

Chicken Lord Derby

- 2½lb. chicken
- ½lb. boiled rice
- 2oz. chicken livers
- Small diced shallot

Dice shallot, sauté in butter, add the chicken livers with a dash of sherry. When sautéed, add the rice and bind the mixture together with butter. Stuff the chicken with this mixture and roast for 30 minutes. Remove the chicken and keep warm. To the juice in the roasting pan add: 1 cup of cream and a teaspoonful of flour. Whisk together with the chicken juices, reduce by half, then strain over the chicken. Serve with french beans or broccoli.



The Hotel Russell

Chef: Jackie Needham

Acting Head Chef, Jackie Leedham was trained at the Russell where he has been cooking for the last 19 years.

"Eating in Dublin has changed a lot in the last 15 years. Not only do people know a lot more about food, but they like to eat out to try new foods. I think restaurants have helped educate them by offering a greater selection of food. Our menu is much bigger now. We specialise in sauce dishes, and that is what most people order here. American tourists order the plainer grills. I like doing special dishes, but I think people are shy of ordering them. A waiter never minds explaining what a dish is.

"Beef, veal and chicken are equally ordered, and fish is very popular. All Irish food is good, wonderful quality, but Irish fish is the world's best. In the winter our Fish Nights are Everyman's delight — very popular. People order no ham really, and turkey doesn't go well even at Christmas. Curry is not too popular either.

"I enjoy eating at new restaurants to see what they are like. It makes you aware of what's going on. The better the food you serve, of course, the more people learn about food, learn to like it. The more they like it, the more they eat out. It's easier, of course, but I think people eat out both to enjoy themselves and to experiment with new foods."

Mr. Leedham's favourite meal: Moules marinière, paté maison, escalope cordon bleu, mixed salad and sorbet au citron.

Coq au Vin de France (for 3 people)

Section a 3lb. chicken, season with salt and pepper, sauté in butter until golden. Take from the pan and keep warm. Sauté 1 small diced onion, two small diced carrots, then mix them with the chicken. Add a bottle of red wine, cover and cook for about 15 minutes. When ready, remove the chicken, place it in a small dish and keep warm. Fry some diced bacon and mushrooms and put these on top of the chicken. Strain the juice, reduce to two-thirds over a low flame, thicken with beurre meunière to required thickness, then strain over the chicken. Serve with plain boiled potatoes, a few croutons and a green salad.



The Airport Hotel

Chef: James Flahive

Chef James Flahive has cooked for 36 years, was trained in Dublin under Swiss and Italian chefs. Chef at the Airport for 12 years, as well as giving cooking demonstrations, Mr. Flahive is on a weekly Televis programme.

"Customers here and tourists order a wide variety of food, and we'll cook any special dish if the ingredients are available. People eat out more now and they're more conscious of good food. Restaurants have helped them learn about food by offering new, unusual dishes. They like ordering something different — just to try things. People are going in for sauce dishes and fish now. After all, Ireland is surrounded by an abundance of water and we have marvellous fish. Ten years ago people wouldn't eat fish but on Fridays.

"We devise our own specialities and always give a recipe if asked. Women read the whole menu and order what interests them, but men order a grilled steak. If someone is dissatisfied with an order, they should complain. It's worse for a customer to say nothing here and protest later to others. But people don't like to complain."

Mr. Flahive's favourite meal: Irish smoked salmon, chicken consommé, roast fillet of beef Rossigni, broccoli hollandaise, Parisienne potatoes, crêpes Suzettes, Irish cheese.

RECIPES

Pancake Colleen

Melt 2ozs. butter in a saucepan; add 1oz. chopped shallots, 3ozs. sliced mushrooms, 4ozs. shrimps, 4ozs. Dublin Bay Prawns, 2 tablespoons lobster sauce, ½-glass brandy, 2 tablespoons cream and bring to boil.

Fill 4 very thin pancakes with the mixture and fold. Pour over the pancakes 10 ozs. melted butter, sprinkle with grated cheese and glaze.

Pancake batter:

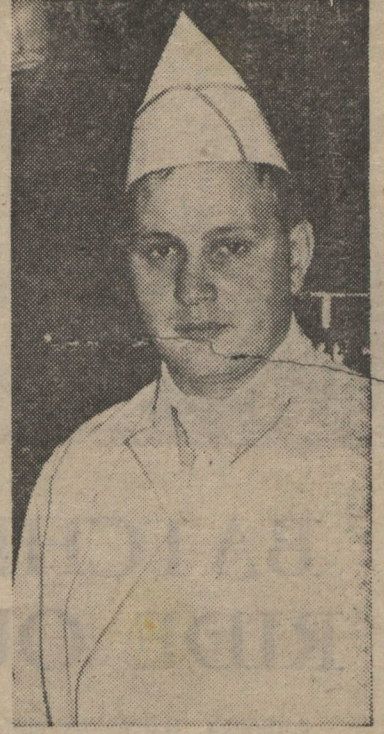
- 6 eggs,
- ½lb. flour
- 1pt. milk
- pinch of salt

Lobster Sauce:

Boil ½pt. Bechamel or white sauce, to which add a ½pt. fish stock. Reduce by ¼. Add ½ tablespoons cream and 1½ozs. lobster butter. Strain through tammy.

Lobster butter:

Reduce to a paste the prawn and creamy parts of lobster. Add their equals in weight of butter and mix thoroughly.



Kilimanjaro Restaurant

Chef: Peter Schulz

Chef Peter Schulz has cooked for 10 years. He was trained in the Hotel Bellevue in Hamburg.

"I think the food ordered here is a wide variety. Food here is good, but vegetables are not quite so good. We have a balance between plain and fancy cooking. About as many sauce dishes as grills are ordered. There is not much change in food preferences but salads are more popular. More meat is ordered than fish, which is very good here. Irish fish is excellent, especially the salmon and the Dublin Bay prawns, which are better than anything else of the same kind. The only trouble, I think, is Irish meat is not hung long enough.

"Up to seven years ago, people here were not too interested in eating out, but now with a higher standard of living they enjoy it, they're interested in good food. Many people ask for recipes because they'd like to try different things at home.

"Restaurants have helped them learn about food because of a wide variety of food they would not find elsewhere. I like to make new dishes to show people different food.

"I think people are shy about complaining. Many will take what they are served and not even complain if they are given a wrong order! It is hard for people to say exactly what they want when they order food, because perhaps they can't quite know themselves. If they don't demand a high standard of cooking, they won't get it, but now they're learning what good food is, and they can ask for precisely what they want."

Mr. Schulz's favourite meal: Chicken curry with a fresh salad.

Chicken Curry

Section a 3lb. chicken and sauté in butter until golden. Remove and keep warm. Add more butter to the chicken juice; then add: chopped apples, onions, celery, leeks and salt, pepper, finely sliced ginger, curry powder and cinnamon. Simmer gently for one hour, then add chicken and 1 tbsp. chutney. Simmer gently for another hour, adjust seasoning, boil rice and serve. Serve surrounded by sliced hard boiled eggs, thinly sliced cheese, sweet and spicy chutney, beetroot, cucumber, onion slices, olives, bananas, sliced tomatoes and sardines. Green salad is optional.

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