



COOKED

BY JAMES FERGUSON

James Ferguson is a familiar face for anyone involved with catering in Guernsey. Now the well-known local chef has started his own business, 'Cooked by James Ferguson'. He describes this time of his life as terrifying and exciting at the same time. gbg spoke to him about the challenges of striking out on his own, and his hopes for the business.

James entered catering straight from school when he started an apprenticeship at a local hotel. From there he's worked in different kitchens around the island before deciding to take the plunge with 'Cooked' at the end of this year.

Spending his lifetime in the kitchen has made it clear to James what is so satisfying about his chosen career, "It's the pleasure in creating a really great dish, and making it look beautiful as well as taste good. I think of it as an art form. I was never good at drawing, but I love to paint pictures on a plate."

It's that kind of creativity which has attracted people to James, and it's the personal input that he wants to retain with 'Cooked'. "The plan with it is to provide corporate and private catering. But I want to do canapés and fresh homemade dishes, I won't be doing huge sit-down meals for hundreds of people."

For James and his small team 'Cooked' is about doing something creative which uses seasonal and local food. The quality of the produce he uses in his cooking is something he's passionate about.

Anyone who has dealt with James knows that his canapés are something special, and they're something he particularly enjoys. For his new business, he hopes that will be an attraction. "I'm very keen to make exclusive canapés for clients that fits in with their event or theme. I

think I can really do something different which will work well for them and will be really interesting."

Alongside the corporate catering, James offers his private catering services to people in their own homes. "You can host a dinner party without worrying about anything except entertaining your guests. I'll do a lot of the preparation in my own professional kitchen and just bring it to your house for the finishing touches. All you'll be left with is a clean kitchen and happy guests."

James only started the business at the beginning of November, but has been overwhelmed by the support people have shown for his new venture. "I put my Facebook page up and went from three followers to more than 500 in just three days. It was absolutely amazing - I felt really loved!"

"I've got a lot of good friends and contacts who have been incredibly supportive, not just helping out with my workload but getting the word out there that I'm here. My background and experience has definitely helped with that, but I know that now I need to make sure I create a good reputation for myself here."

With the business up and running James is now looking forward to the festive season ahead. "Christmas is always very busy in this industry, and I've got plenty of bookings for canapé parties and

private functions. That's great though, I want to be busy and I'm really looking forward to it."

But while he's excited about how busy his new venture is, he's also looking forward to having a little time off, "I think Christmas Day will be virtually the first day that I'll have off from when I started the business, and it will probably be well-needed by then. I'm sure my wife will be pleased to see a little of me as well."

His wife, Angela, has been a huge support to him as he starts 'Cooked'. "She's my chief PA at the moment. I'm absolutely useless with computers and my English skills are atrocious, so she's been



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absolutely amazing at helping out with all the things I can't really do. Cooked is definitely a team effort."

Once Christmas is out of the way, James is looking forward to 2015 and his future plans for the business. He's already looking to take on more staff as he looks to grow the young business. "I have real hopes for Cooked and how it can expand. I've got a fantastic kitchen and that space will allow me to do a lot more than I could have done elsewhere, which is really exciting."

But while there's plenty of opportunity for his business to succeed, James knows how he wants it to develop. "It's really important to me that the business

stays at a size where I've still got time to speak to clients and make sure that they're getting a truly personal service, and exactly what they want. I never want to lose sight of the fact that I need to understand my clients and what they're looking for."

With James's focus on staying local along with his desire to do something different, it's unsurprising that he's teaming up with other Guernsey businesses to offer new services to islanders.

"I've got lots of interesting things on at the moment. I'm working with Aperitif to offer special canapés which complement gin tastings, which is really interesting.

My kitchen will also be home to Nutrition Kitchen, which I'm really excited about. And come the summer, I'll be looking to work with places like the beach kiosks to get some other interesting partnerships."

But no matter who he's working with or what he's doing, James is determined that when islanders see something is 'Cooked' by James Ferguson they'll be confident it's cooked just how they want it.

<http://cooked.gg>