

GORDON RAMSAY
presents
taste
OF CHRISTMAS
In association with *Gordon's*

EXCEL LONDON, 4-7 DECEMBER 2008

In the beginning there was the Word, as Kasha Van Sant discovered when she spoke to Gordon Ramsay

I would like to think that I have a fairly decent relationship with words. I like them, they like me, sometimes we argue, get stuck or lost; but on the whole we're rather a good match for one another. I use them liberally to gauge or engage people or sparingly to offend if need be. And it seems I may have discovered an unlikely kinship with another ambassador of the word. Although Gordon Ramsay is known primarily for his skill as the new breed of 'super chef', a veritable 'Terminator' of the culinary world; it's not his *vol au vents* that spring to mind at first discourse.

Gordon's *mode d'emploi* involves a plethora of words that have become his trademark. In fact turning the air more blue than a Van Gogh could be the Ramsay metronome. Say what you will about the man but he announced his expletive-led entry into the British psyche, heart, mind and often under the skin, with a resounding 'on the spot bouncing' - YES!

Prominently fixed as the British culinary icon that quite possibly makes other 'super chefs' bristle with envy, Ramsay is battling onwards. Single minded, focused, determined to reign supreme, the empire is growing exponentially and I was keen to know what would come next.

"We still have so much to achieve. My aim is to hold three stars in London, New York and Paris. That would be the ultimate. What's next? Early next year we are re-opening The Savoy Grill. The room is going to be mind blowing as is the food. We're going to visit the Escoffier original menu and bring it into the 21st century."

This is strategy, acute perception and deployment of troops at its best. Like

all good generals he knows when to advance and when to retreat, having tested the waters in several markets. Prague, Paris, Tokyo, New York; from operations such as Verre in the ultra trendy Dubai Hilton Creek Hotel to Cielo at the Boca Raton resort in Florida, Ramsay has a list of ventures that reads like an airport destination board. But with fingers in several pies, which country has been the biggest challenge?

"Our recent opening in Versailles was a huge challenge. The team have worked incredibly hard and the results are phenomenal. Ask me again how it has gone in March when the Michelin Guide comes out."

No doubt nails and numbers will be crunched within an inch of their lives but somehow I think not the maestro's - despite being incredibly hands on I suspect the shrewd Mister Ramsay has picked his teams carefully. The common denominator being chef stars that will push through the ranks at his behest. Stuart Gillies - stalwart, Jason Atherton - hungry; Angela Hartnett - reliable, and these are

but a few. With the acquisition of the Tante Marie Cookery School and the 'The Gordon Ramsay Scholar Award' going from strength to strength, fresh recruits will come under the watchful eye of Gordon Ramsay, ready when ripe.

His drive is evident but what motivates the man and makes him get up in the morning?

"On a weekday it's the teams in the restaurants. Each brigade works day in day out to ensure every customer who steps through the door has an experience they won't forget. Every team works as a strong unit, they become your second family. On a weekend it's the children

" My biggest weakness would have to be cars, especially my Ferrari. And my Ducati bike, an amazing machine "

Have a
cracking Christmas



that make me get up on a morning – often literally. Because I’m normally home very late in the week, Saturdays and Sundays are family time. We’ll lie in late, have a lazy brunch and do something together, even if it’s just sitting and watching a film.”

With Ramsay often spotted in the press with A-list Hollywood celebs I wondered what the last film he saw was. A high-octane thriller perhaps? Perhaps not.

“Tana and I took the children to the High School Musical 3 premiere earlier this year. The kids absolutely loved it but I have to admit I did fall asleep half way through.”

Since the sacrifices most successful chefs have to make are well documented, having any time for his family seems an impressive feat. With the impending festive season, dare I ask about Christmas Day?

“I always join the team in Claridge’s on Christmas Day for the lunch service which means I’m normally home for around 4:00pm to finish cooking the family meal. I’m not very good at sharing cooking with Tana, I prefer to be in control but she will start the Christmas lunch and then I’ll come in and finish it off in time for the glory!”

So how does he relax away from work and family?

“I take my motorbike out for a spin or I go running. Running is an incredible stress reliever and on a weekend I’ll often do 15 miles round Richmond Park. Next year I hope to run my tenth London marathon.”

This comes as no surprise, physical and mental fitness are one and the same. And retail therapy?

“My biggest weakness would have to be cars, especially my Ferrari. And my Ducati bike, an amazing machine.”

Fairly humble yet typical choices for the man who is allegedly one of the world’s highest earning chefs. But then he also denies being a sex symbol to some and balks at the thought of surgery or Botox proclaiming, “I don’t know where they would start.”

A tepid Ramsay would have been a shock to the system; an angry Ramsay pushes predictability despite his admission to being “wound up by traffic jams”, a real Ramsay? We will never know as he did not pop out from behind the curtain for long enough to be ascertained. But if my crash course on the psychology of fairytales is anything to go by, then Gordon’s favourite, Goldilocks and the Three Bears is very telling indeed, but that is another ‘Once upon a time...’ It’s now time to get it just right. Somehow I think Goldilocks may have done exactly that. The End.



GORDON RAMSAY
presents
taste
OF CHRISTMAS
In association with *Gordon's*
EXCEL LONDON, 4-7 DECEMBER 2008



Event tickets on sale now at:
tasteofchristmas.com

or call the ticket hotline on 0871 230 5581

BOOKING CODE RWM02. TICKETS ARE LIMITED

To make your fairytale come true, meet Gordon Ramsay at Taste of Christmas, ExCeL where he will be signing copies of his latest book ‘Cooking for Friends.’