

# Ellenborough Park in the Cotswolds and Chef David Kelman

By Maralyn D. Hill





If you do your research or are lucky, you may come across the well-known country manor house hotel, Ellenborough Park, located in England's Cotswolds. In addition to this memorable hotel, Ellenborough Park has a three AA Rosette restaurant with 3200 bottles in their wine cellar and a wine list of 530.

The restaurant's Chef David is fortunate in working with Head Sommelier, Clio Gildici, who has an "Advanced Sommelier" certification from the Court of Master Sommeliers. He is happy to share his knowledge with guests.

Let's get to know David a little better.

David Kelman, executive head chef, respects quality food, and makes a point of buying locally and cooking according to the seasons. His favorite ingredients include quail and lamb, but his idea of a perfect meal is a good glass of wine with cheese, ham and pickles and some fresh crusty bread.

David was inspired to become a chef at the age of 13 and spent more than four years training at Llandrillo College in North Wales.

Since then, David's career has rocketed. He became a member of the Welsh National Culinary Team in 1999, was recently promoted to team leader and captained the Wales squad in the 2012 Culinary Olympics, winning the Silver and Bronze awards.

David has cooked for Wales in other competitions around the world. This

includes winning silver at the American Culinary Classic in Chicago in 2003 and again in 2007, as part of a team of 12 top Welsh chefs, where he headed-up the pastry section.

As an avid fundraiser for children, family man David was involved in Chefs' Night Out in 2011, an event to raise money for the South Wales Children's Hospice, Tŷ Hafan. David's contribution to the auction was to cook a meal for someone in their own home and he raised an impressive £4,700. He also cooked for the Sunrise Walk, which was arranged by the bereaved children's charity, Winston's Wish.

David has been fortunate enough to cook for the Queen twice; once at the state opening of the Welsh Assembly in 2007 and another time at the fourth Welsh Assembly in 2011. David has also cooked for the Prime Minister, David Cameron, in March 2012 at Number 10, as part of St. David's Day celebrations.

David has played a big role in obtaining Three AA Rosettes for The Beaufort Dining Room at Ellenborough Park, Gloucestershire's first ever and only Five Star hotel. The chef is also a finalist for Cotswold Life's 'Chef of The Year' and The Beaufort Dining Room is a finalist for 'Best Restaurant'.

David lives in the Cotswolds and when not in the kitchen at Ellenborough Park, he can be found catching-up with his wife and two children.

**Maralyn: When did you start showing an interest in cooking and**

**how did you get started?**

**Chef David:** It all started when I was 13 and started work as a plate washer in a local hotel, I used to prep fruit salad and other things and really enjoyed working with food.

**Maralyn: What was your families' reaction to your career choice?**

**Chef David:** My family were really supportive in what I wanted to do; they encouraged me to better myself and never tried to push me into a different direction.

**Maralyn: Did you do an apprenticeship or go to a culinary school? If so, could you tell us about it?**

**Chef David:** After I had finished school at the age of 16, I went to Coleg Llandrillo, which at the time, was in the top 5 catering colleges in the UK. I spent 4 1/2 years there, learning hotel management, kitchen and then specializing in pastry. It was a great time.

**Maralyn: Which is your favorite station in the kitchen, the hotline, pastry, etc.?**

**Chef David:** I love pastry, but I can't work in there, as I need to manage the kitchen; you will find me on the hot plate, calling checks, cooking and checking dishes.

**Maralyn: What is your favorite comfort food and is there a particular reason?**

**Chef David:** I would have to say that bread is the one thing I love, whether it is toast, to freshly baked bread, to a door stop sandwich with ham pickles, cheese mayo and salad. You can't beat it.

**Maralyn: Do you have a favorite dessert?**

**Chef David:** It would have to be sticky toffee pudding with vanilla ice cream, that warm sticky pudding with dates and the toffee buttery sauce; you can't beat it on any day of the year.

**Maralyn: What is your favorite type of food to prepare?**

**Chef David:** There are many things I like, but when I have to do veg section, I did enjoy that; the care and attention to detail to make the vegetables for the mains stand out, as something more than just vegetables, and letting the natural flavor sing for itself is something chefs forget about.

**Maralyn: How do you personally view presentation?**

**Chef David:** Presentation is key, if it looks good; clean and tidy is a good start, but the flavor of the dish must be better. There is no point having a dish that looks great but tastes poor.

**Maralyn: What is your favorite cooking utensil?**

**Chef David:** I don't think I have a favorite utensil; I use a lot of different utensils in work, but none really stand out as the best. As long as they are good quality and serve a purpose for a certain job, then I am happy.

**Maralyn: If you could provide one or two tips for prospective chefs, what would it be?**

**Chef David:** When you start out or just finish college training as a chef, don't think you can just jump into a job and be a sous chef and earn loads of money. Start at a really good



until even and flat, roll and straighten the banana in the coriander. Put the banana into the middle of the Chicken, season then roll and wrap in the ham slices, wrap in caul fat then cling film, water bath at 64°C degrees for 25-30mins, remove and rest then toss in a hot pan with butter.

season, then sprinkle with the black onion seeds. Place onto grease proof paper, top and bottom, and then bake between two heavy trays at 180°C for 12mins. Remove from the oven and leave to cool.

### Spiced Potatoes

dirty Maris piper potatoes, cut into a barrel shape, 1 per person  
1 clove of garlic  
thyme  
pinch of chilli powder  
¼ teaspoon turmeric  
¼ teaspoon of crushed mustard seeds  
2 banana shallots sliced  
chopped coriander

Add a little oil into a frying pan, add the potatoes and color a little, then add the spices, garlic, and thyme, fry a little then season roast in the oven. When cooked, drain and place in a warm place.

### Tomatoes

2 serving

Place the tomatoes into a warm oven with the oil, garlic and thyme, and season until they are soft.

### Cucumber and mint

dice one cucumber  
4 leaves of chopped mint  
1 sliced shallot  
4tbsp thick yogurt

Mix all the ingredients together and season.

### Butternut squash

8 large balls of butternut squash  
thyme sprig  
1 clove of garlic crushed  
50g butter

Blanch the squash balls till just cooked.

Then place them into a pan with the butter, garlic and thyme and gently fry with only a little color.

### Button baby onions

8 baby onions

Blanch the onions in their skin until soft, peel, then add them to the pan with the squash

Finish

Garnish the dish with coriander cress. WOW!

Thank you Chef David for the wonderful and insightful interview and recipe. It's easy to see why you have won so many awards.

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place, learn from that chef, stay for a couple of years, then move on, and build on experience and you will climb the ladder. Then, you will be a top chef and earn the wage that goes with it.

Also, always listen to your chef and do things the way he wants; they have the experience, they have the knowledge, and then when you leave, you can choose to use that knowledge or change it to suit yourself.

**Maralyn: Do you cook at home a lot?**

**Chef David:** If you ask anyone about having a chef as a husband, they will always think of what great food my wife must be eating every day. In reality, we are like ships in the night, don't see much of each other and don't cook much either.

**Maralyn: What are the highlights of your career, your "ah ha" or "wow" moments?**

**Chef David:** I am very lucky in my career to date; I have cooked for the queen, Prince Charles, the Prime Minister and on a number of occasions. I've represented my country, Wales, for 14 years in various competitions around the world. I have been voted best chef in my region of work and also been on TV in a cooking competition. So I have been very lucky so far.

**When you go out, where do you go to eat?**

**Chef David:** If and when I go out, I am always with my wife and 2 kids, so where we eat is never an important one, as long as we have quality time together.

**Maralyn: Do you focus on using local products? If so, to what degree?**

**Chef David:** We try to use as much local products in the hotel where the product is good and right for what we need. Not everything local

is the best, but we do have 7 counties around where we work, which I call our local neighbors and where we spread our net wider for the right products.

**Maralyn: How do you work with local growers, if you do?**

**Chef David:** I have one local farmer which I have used for many years. He phones me up and tells me what he has. I will take as much as I can from him- fantastic products.

**Maralyn: Anything else you would like to share about being a chef?**

**Chef David:** Being a chef is great, hard work with long hours, under appreciated by most, but with the greatest satisfaction of any job. To be able to give a guest a memory and an experience that they won't forget is priceless.

**Maralyn: Would you share a recipe with us?**

**Chef David:** This is my main course dish from when I was on Great British Menu on TV.

### Main Course Carrot Puree

2 large carrots  
2 pinches of curry powder  
200ml double cream  
½ clove of garlic

Place all of the ingredients into a Vac Pac bag and seal, reseal into another Vac Pac bag, place into a pan of boiling water, cook until the carrots are soft, remove from the bag and place ingredients into a blender, blend until smooth.

### Chicken & Banana

500g Carmarthen Ham slices  
2 chicken breast (corn-fed)  
100g coriander chopped  
2 large bananas, straight as possible  
500g pigs' caul fat

Remove skin from Chicken, using a meat hammer, batter the chicken

### Quail Egg Bhaji

4 Quail eggs soft boiled 2½mins and shelled  
2 red onions thinly sliced  
1 small green chilli - chopped fine  
1tbsp butter melted  
½tsp. red chilli powder  
½tsp ground turmeric  
2 curry leaves  
6tbsp gram flour  
3tbsp rice flour  
¼ bunch of coriander chopped (Small fryer/Japanese vegetable slicer)

Mix all the ingredients together except the quail egg. Season and leave to settle for 10 mins. Then wrap 4 quail egg in the mixture and deep fry until crisp when needed.

### Chicken Jus

2kg chicken wings  
2ltrs chicken stock  
1 carrot chopped  
½ celery chopped  
½ leek chopped  
2 onions chopped  
2 cloves garlic  
3 tbsp curry powder  
1 bunch coriander stalks  
1 bottle white dry wine

Roast the Chicken wings until golden brown, in a heavy bottomed pan. Sweat off the Vegetables and Garlic, when browned off add the Curry Powder and cook for a few minutes, then add the white wine, reduce all the wine then add the bones, Chicken stock and the Coriander stalks, cook out for 1hr, strain and reduce to the required thickness.

### Black Onion and Crispy Chicken Skin

4 large chicken skins  
100g black onion seeds  
clarified butter  
salt

Using a sharp knife, clean as much fat as you can from the chicken skin. Then brush with the butter,