

Christmas KITCHIN

Star of the Scottish restaurant scene Tom Kitchin is bringing his local produce to London for the first time as Harrods' Chef of the Season

By **AMY BROOMFIELD** / *Photographer* **DAVID EUSTACE**



Tom Kitchin, Harrods' Chef of the Season



FROM LEFT Tom Kitchin baked scallops with red cabbage £xxx; gravlax and honey mustard with rye bread £xxx; steak-and-ale pie £xxx; goats' cheese and beetroot tarts £xxx; smoked venison with celeriac remoulade £xxx; tomato consommé £xxx; tongue and mushroom vol-au-vents £xxx; roe-deer liver parfait and confit onion toast £xxx; smoked salmon and crowdie cheese filo £xxx; Kitchin fruit bread with Strathdon Blue cheese £xxx; **BELOW** Tom Kitchin at The Scran & Scallie

my game, who dived for my scallops and where my beef comes from."

It's these fresh foods that Kitchin will be bringing in-store this winter at his pop-up restaurant (Kitchin at Harrods) and, in his role as Harrods' Chef of the Season, to the traiteur counter. There, his menu will be "real winter cookery", drawing upon seasonal ingredients such as root vegetables and red cabbage, as well as using the finest meat and fish. "There will be Orkney scallops baked in the shell, a special salmon gravlax from the Shetlands and, of course, my famous steak pie," he says.

We experience the pie in question firsthand as he gives us a cooking demo. In the kitchen, his domain, any hint of timidity is gone as Kitchin confidently but effortlessly throws together a warming and huge dish topped with bone marrow – which melts into the filling when baked. He also uses his own-brewed ale, crafted on the Isle of Skye, to give the pie depth of flavour.

So what's Christmas like at home for a chef with a Michelin star to his name? Does he take the lead when it comes to cooking or put his feet up and take it easy? "It's a busy occasion for us. The Swedish celebrate twice as much as I do, so you can imagine the excitement of my four young boys," he says. "Christmas morning always starts with a glass of Champagne and a little smoked salmon before we sit down to open presents."

Clearly, though, food is never far from his mind. As he concludes, "Being a chef is a way of life. It's a love, a passion. I never wake up not wanting to go work; I live and breathe it. On my days off I love just being with the family, taking the boys to football and playing with the twins – but there's always a big family meal involved." ■

Kitchin at Harrods is open from 14th to 20th November 2016; to book, email kitchin@harrods.com or call 020 7225 6800. Tom Kitchin's Chef of the Season range launches on 7th November. Available from Food Halls, Ground Floor



It's the wee small hours of a bright, crisp morning in Edinburgh – early for some, but not for Tom Kitchin and his team. They say you can tell a lot about a chef by their team and, even at this hour, his staff cheerily march back and forth from the kitchen of pub-cum-restaurant The Scran & Scallie, which Kitchin owns with fellow chef Dominic Jack.

As our camera crew sets up, I spy the chef himself in the corner, calmly monitoring both operations. Kitchin catches my eye and comes over to say hello; his manner is friendly and warm, albeit slightly timid. "This used to be an old pizza restaurant," he says, pointing to a vintage brass doorbell at the entrance before the pass. "Everything from this point forward is where we extended the building." He gestures to the walls, which feature framed archaic recipes from Edinburgh's National Library of Scotland that he'd had copied. "Not much has changed," he observes with a smile. "We still use a lot of those same ingredients and techniques."

In another corner are various pictures of his children playing in cobbled streets, inspired by old black-and-white Glaswegian photos. And tucked away is a little space lined with foam mats and filled to the brim with multicoloured toys. "That's where the name came from: 'scallie' [short for scallywag] means kid and 'scran' means food."

The homely interior bears an obvious Scandi-Scottish influence (it was designed by Kitchin's Swedish wife Michaela). Cool blue walls are the backdrop to wooden furniture and tartan upholstery, while a rustic white-painted brick fireplace – complete with woodburner – stands in the centre. Opened three years ago, it's a space Kitchin is clearly proud of, and one that promotes the values he holds dear: family and good food.

"I'm fanatical about my produce. I want to know who dived for my scallops"

The Scran & Scallie is a far more relaxed venue than the chef's flagship restaurant, The Kitchin in Leith, which marks its 10th anniversary this year. "Back then, we were a tiny business with just 20 bottles of

wine on the list and not many staff at all," he says. "Gradually, over the years, it's grown and grown, and we're extremely proud of it."

Kitchin maintains that, despite its considerable success, the business is still very much a family-orientated restaurant. "Some of the guys have been with us since day one; that's the secret to our success," he explains.

When I ask Kitchin about his first foray into cooking, the obvious joke rears its head. "I guess, with a name like mine, it was destiny that I would become a chef," he says. "But the real truth is that I started washing dishes in

a local pub to earn pocket money when I was young. I just fell in love with cooking, and the adrenaline and excitement of the kitchen."

As a young trainee, Kitchin immersed himself in learning the traditions of French gastronomy that gave him the grounding he needed: "I was really lucky to work for some amazing chefs all around the world – Guy Savoy, Pierre Koffmann and Alain Ducasse. Real superstars of the kitchen. For a young Scotsman like me, it was an unbelievable opportunity."

Modest by nature, Kitchin doesn't like to dwell on the fact that, just six months after he opened The Kitchin, it was awarded a Michelin star. At the time, he was just 29 years old and the youngest Scottish chef to earn the accolade. Instead, he focuses on his real passion: the quality of his produce and the sustainability of his suppliers.

"Our ethos is 'nature to plate'," he says. "That's not some strapline that a PR company has dreamed up; I'm fanatical about my produce. I want to know who shot