



SIMPLY BETTER...

Valerie Breese meets a head chef who knows his onions

Colin Woolven is the Head Chef at Leith's newly refurbished King William Restaurant at the Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich. When asked to describe his new menu, his answer is short and to the point: 'Traditional English, with a twist'.

Colin has been with Leith's for a year and in that short time has overseen the transformation of the restaurant from a rather dated establishment to a stunning venue offering lunchtime diners a taste of the finest English cuisine, making it a winning combination.

Colin, like his brother, followed in his father's footsteps when he chose a career as a chef. After discovering at school that his destiny lay in the kitchen, two years at catering college was followed by a three-year apprenticeship and a succession of positions in top restaurants: he's a man who knows his trade.

Several years as part of a well-honed team catering for events like Royal Ascot and private celebrity bashes like Posh and Becks' Pre-World Cup Party, have given Colin the experience to deal with any numbers of guests. A good thing too, as up to 480 wedding guests or corporate diners can be accommodated in the Old Royal Naval College's Painted Hall, while the more intimate, but equally historic, Admiral's House has room for 50 covers.

Colin is passionate about food and can regularly be found at Borough Market checking out what's new and what's fresh. Influenced by chefs like Gordon Ramsay and Heston Blumenthal he says he'd like to take the King William Undercroft Restaurant 'up a notch'. He is certainly well-placed to do just that. As Head Chef he has complete control over the budget and menu and ensures it reflects the seasons and new trends by using only fresh, seasonal and where possible locally produced ingredients.

Menus will change on a regular basis, but for the launch diners will be able to choose from starters like *confit of belly pork with spiced apple chutney* and *pan-fried scallops with crab ravioli* with main courses such as *pan-fried sea bass with rocket mash and broad bean foam*, or *pea and leek tart glazed with goats cheese served with radish and pea shoot salad* and a range of unmissable desserts. In keeping with the rich heritage of the venue and location Colin hopes to create an experience that will have diners returning time after time.

At the heart of it all lies the philosophy of simplicity and quality established by the company's founder, Prue Leith: 'Simply better'.
Leith's King William Restaurant, Old Royal Naval College, Greenwich SE10 9LW. Tel: 020 8858 4143.