

Client: Albert Bartlett
Source: Evening Express (Web)
Date: 17/05/2020
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Two-star Michelin chef Michel Roux Jr gatecrashes north-east food blogger's Sunday roast

What would you do if Michel Roux Jr popped in to say "hi" during Sunday lunch with friends? Some of us have had the luxury of dining in Michelin-starred restaurants and have even caught a glimpse of the talented chefs who run and work at the establishment.

But have you ever had one pop in for a quick chat over virtual Sunday lunch?

Potato firm, Albert Bartlett invited three UK-based food bloggers/influencers to host a lock-in cook-off dinner party, and they had to challenge their friends or family to "Do The Albert Bartlett At Home" via Zoom.

The influencers, who included Kitchen with Cumbers, My Fussy Eater and Foodie Quine, plus their guests, were challenged to rustle up Sunday lunch using products from the company and were given recipe inspiration and shopping lists to help.

Claire Jessiman from Newtonhill in Aberdeenshire who runs Scottish food blog Foodie Quine called on friends, and her family, to get stuck into the challenge.

As a surprise, the company invited Albert Bartlett brand ambassador and Michelin-starred chef, Michel Roux Jr to join the party and record the reactions.

Taking part in three parties throughout the day, he chatted with the participants, scored their meals on a scale of one to 10 and gave them tips for where their meals could have been improved.

Michel Roux Jr said: "Joining a virtual lock-in cook off was so much fun, the enthusiasm was palpable, and I definitely had food envy."

As well as judging their food, Michel also marked them for their table dressing and the presentation of the dish, and then asked them to take a bite to describe the aroma, taste and texture.

Each guest was judged on presentation, taste and effort and given a final mark out of 10 by Michel, before he announced the winner – each of whom scored a perfect 10.

Paul Morrison was the winner of Claire's Sunday roast virtual party, winning with his roast loin of pork and hasselback potatoes with nduja and fennel crumb.

He said: "I cooked a roast pork loin with perfect roast potatoes cooked in goose fat. I also did my version of hasselbacks with an nduja and fennel crumb and an apple sauce cooked out with star anise, and a little sugar and apple cider vinegar. I used Albert Bartlett Apache potatoes and sliced lots of incisions using two wooden spoons to ensure not to go right through.

"I was absolutely star struck to meet Michel as he is one of my food heroes. This is certainly something I won't forget for a long time! And, he has convinced me to try a potato pizza the next time I cook pizzas!"

Host Claire and her other guests came joint second place with scores of nine all around.

She said: "We cooked perfect roast potatoes, domino dauphinoise, 28-day aged grass-fed belted Galloway beef, cooked with indirect heat on the BBQ, and parsnips and carrots with honey glaze.

"My son was on the BBQ, daughter on the roasties, me on the domino dauphinoise and my husband was chief vegetable peeler and washer upper! It was a really nice thing to do via Zoom to beat the monotony of lockdown and having Michel join us was the icing on the cake of a fantastic socially-distanced Sunday lunch with friends."



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