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FOREVER NETHERLANDS

**BART VAN DER LEE**

THE MEAT SECTION MEETS

**CURTIS PITTS**

ANGLING TO  
SUCCESS

# GARY FOULKES

Words Andrew Richardson  
Camera courtesy of Angler Restaurant

GARY

FOULKES

WE GENUFLECT. WE HOLD UP A MIRROR.  
WE REMIND GARY FOULKES OF THE LIST OF  
ACHIEVEMENTS DURING A REMARKABLE CAREER,  
THAT HE RETAINED TWO MICHELIN STARS  
FOR PHILIP HOWARD AT THE SQUARE BEFORE  
WINNING ONE OF HIS OWN AT ANGLER, THAT HE  
WORKED ALONGSIDE SOME OF THE GREATEST  
BRITISH COOKS OF THEIR GENERATION.









Most chefs would feign humility. 'Oh it was nothing,' they'd say, before milking every last drop. But Gary doesn't. Each time we remind him of some achievement, he plays it down. He's not interested in any nincompoopery or buffoonery, in the puffing up of chests or self-aggrandisement that most would indulge in. There's no sense of pride bubbling under the surface, no vanity or ego. He is the tortoise, rather than the hare, the man who has taken him time to get to where he's going.

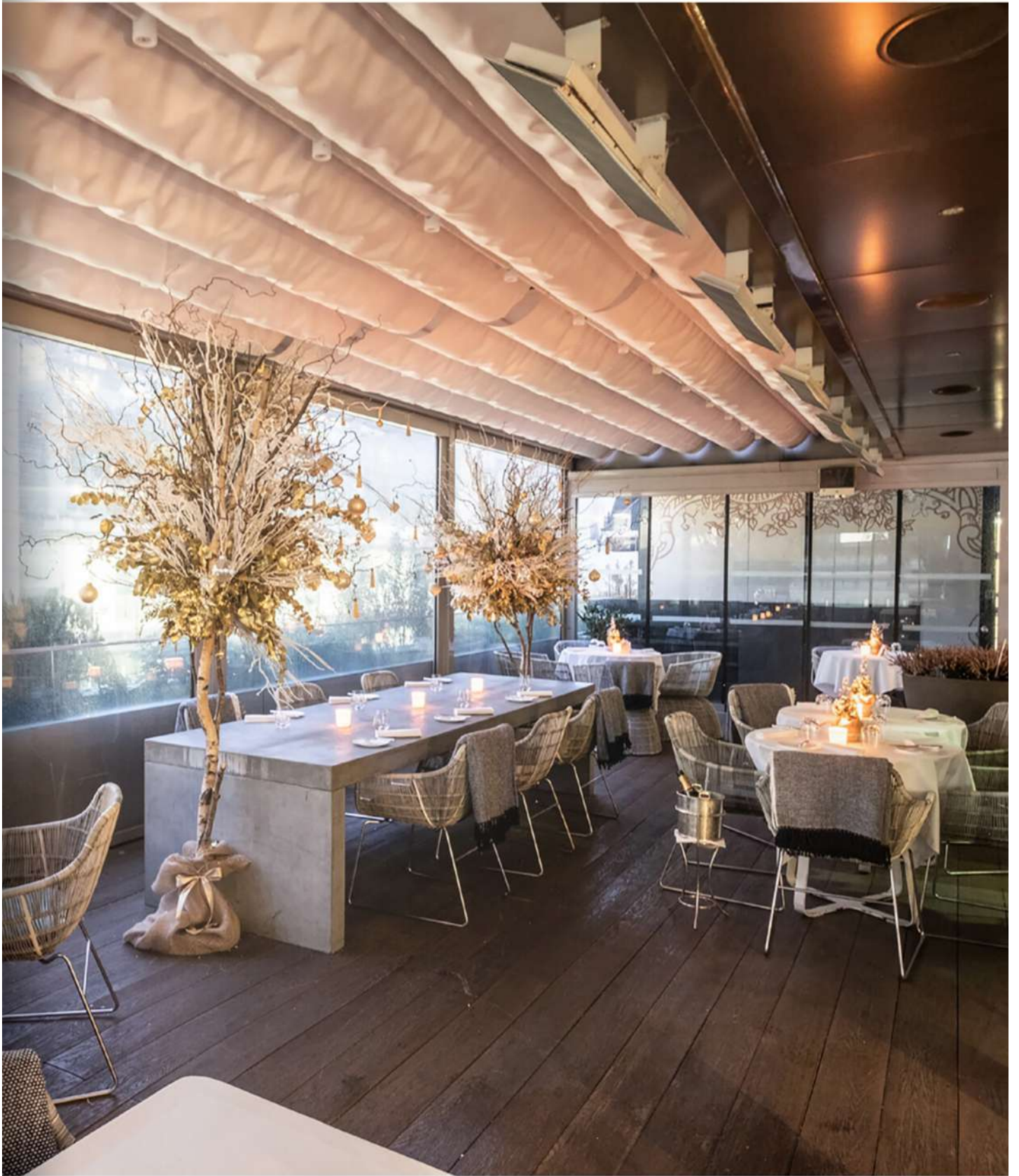
Though there's been no lack of ambition, Gary's more interested in talking about his time away from the kitchen. And, in truth, that's where we learn more about him. No slave to the stove, he

reckons you learn more when you step away, when you have the time to reflect, when you travel the world and find out what other cooks do with simple ingredients. Humble and self-effacing, warm and engaging; he is one of the industry's more pleasant cooks, a exhibit for the prosecution in a case called: Nice Guys Sometimes Win.

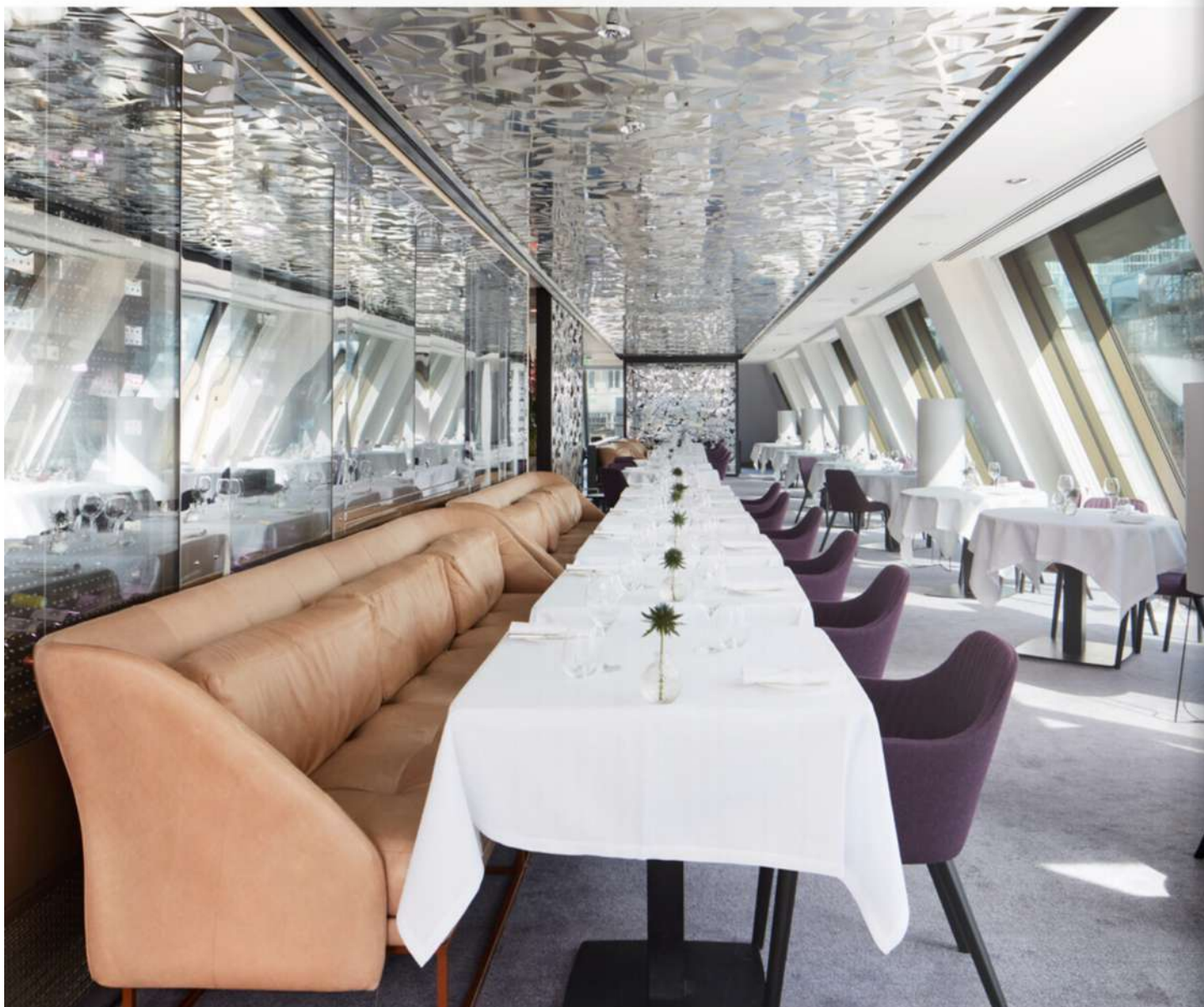
He's been assiduous in carefully selecting the chefs for whom he wanted to work. The list is notable for most being decent, well-balanced individuals, rather than ranters and ravers, narcissists and bullies. So, to recap, Gary began his career in 1996, aged 17, as a Trainee Chef at The Chester Grosvenor, Cheshire, while studying Catering at West Chester College.

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On completing his course, Gary took a full-time position as a Commis Chef at Rhodes & Co in Manchester with Gary Rhodes, where he remained for three years, gaining a promotion to Chef De Partie. In 2000, he moved to Neat, with chef Richard Neat, in the Oxo Tower in London, before taking a role as Chef de Partie at Michelin-starred Aubergine a year later, under Head Chef William Drabble.

In 2003, Gary moved to The Vineyard at Stockcross as Chef de Partie, progressing to Sous Chef during his two-year tenure with John Campbell. He then shifted back to the capital in 2005 as Junior Sous Chef at Phil Howard's

two Michelinstarred restaurant The Square, remaining there until 2009. International travel then lured him to tour Europe, India, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Australia and the USA for two years, and when he returned in 2011, Phil Howard re-appointed him at The Square, this time as Head Chef.

Gary joined D&D London as Executive Chef of South Place Hotel in 2016, where his responsibilities include the hotel's Michelin-starred restaurant Angler, room service, banqueting and events, as well as the more casual restaurant South Place Chop House. Since joining Angler, Gary has retained the

Michelin star and developed his own modern European menus which focus on fish and seafood. Angler was awarded a score of 6/10 in the 2020 Waitrose Good Food Guide.

This has been the oddest year in his 25-year career. "But it's not just odd for people in hospitality. It's been odd for everyone." And there he goes again, shifting the spotlight away from himself, from his industry, onto others. He's just a cook; he's not a rock star. "There have been ups and downs. The pluses on an industry level are that people have been thinking on their feet and re-inventing themselves and taking themselves out of

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their comfort zone. I think some people are doing better now than they were before."

At Angler, lockdown has provided time to think. They've come up with new food ideas and service was exceptional in between lockdowns. "The feedback was great." Gary's food is renowned for its lightness, simplicity and fearless flavours. "There are some dishes where you have to go hard or go home, but the majority of my dishes are quite light and have lots of flavour. Some dishes can be perceived as being simple but there's a lot of work to get there. It's difficult to make something with four or five elements that is absolutely immaculate.



If you are cooking pure, simple food everything has to be spot on otherwise you get found out. You can't cover up with the eighth, ninth or tenth element if you're simply not using them."

We reflect on the journey he's taken to his own Michelin star. Working as a kid at the Chester Grosvenor was a shock. For the first couple of weeks, he wasn't sure whether he wanted to stay. "I didn't know whether it was for me." Soon, he'd changed his mind. Cooking had become everything he'd ever wanted to do.

"I'm quite pedantic and I liked that if the chef showed you something, that's how it had to be

– there was no freelancing, it was binary." He also loved the camaraderie. "I remember everyone going out together on a Thursday and you'd hear the stories about who'd done what. That was the kind of environment I related to. I am definitely not one of those people with romantic stories of my grandmother making food. My grandad and mum could cook but I can't pretend my family inspired me to work in a kitchen."

Simon Radley – another of the industry's nice guys – proved to be an impressive first mentor, while his second, the late Gary Rhodes, was similarly influential. "Working under Gary at Manchester was a massive thing for me. Seeing





his love for food and his understanding of it was inspirational. A lot of chefs cook food but not all of them understood it. Gary understood food. I learned so much about simplicity and the quality of the ingredient and the finish on the plate. It was important to have good mentors at the start of my career."

Having learned the need for good sourcing and the importance of respecting quality ingredients, he moved to work with one of the greatest of his generation, Richard Neat. Neat had cooked with Marco, Raymond Blanc and Joel Robuchon, among others, and had earned two stars before the age of 30 at Pied a Terre.

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"He's one of the most talented British chefs around with an amazing, amazing palate. His execution of the dishes was incredible. He was cooking really heavily-influenced French food."

"Back in those days, you had to go to London to work with guys who were that good. Now it's changed. Now they are dotted around the country."


One of the most notable characteristics of Gary's career was that he stayed at chef de partie for much of it. That was by choice, rather than any lack of ambition. "I just wanted to learn and that was the best way of doing it. I knew I'd eventually get there."

Next up was William Drabble. "Billy was a fantastic cook. He was all about absolutely delicious food with little fuss. That's a recurring theme with the chefs I worked for, I guess. It's based on the product and everything being done being properly. Billy is brilliant."

John Campbell was very different and Gary considers him to have had the biggest influence on his style of leadership. "Billy was gutting grouse but John taught me how to organise things, how to get the best out of people and how to conduct yourself. He's an incredible efficient individual. John he was a great manager, probably the best I've worked for. He knew what motivated people and how







to get the best out of people. Some people need an arm around the shoulder and others need a kick up the arse. That team who were at The Vineyard towards the end has gone on to do great things."

He travelled in between stints at The Square. "The square is my favourite place. It was the one that was the most influential on the food I cook now. Rob was the head chef when I started there. He's a fantastic cook. I learned an awful lot from him. He'd worked at the best restaurants, iconic places, and to be able to work next to someone like that and get his knowledge was remarkable. Working with him and Phil – I sound like a broken record – but the

money they spent on produce and the respect it was given and how it was cooked... well, I was blown away every day. Again, he started down at chef de partie before promotion to sous." For two years he travelled, enjoying an extended honeymoon that became a food pilgrimage of markets across south east Asian and Japan. "If I was in charge of the world for the day I'd make sure everyone went travelling."

Then Phil Howard called him to say Rob was moving. We didn't have enough money to retire so we had to come back. Rob Weston was moving to La Trompette and did Gary want to spend his life in flip flops or get back to work? Gary got on the plane.

He learned to deal with pressure, meeting the high expectations of discerning guests. He was given the room to have his own dishes on the menu. "You have to find your own way when you're running the kitchen. I think you learn on the feet quickly, otherwise you end up with an empty kitchen with just you in it."

He stayed for about five years, making a go of it, until being poached by D&D as Executive Chef of South Place, where he was asked to run Angler. "D&D gave me a blank canvas. They said I could cook what I wanted and told me to just go for it." It was time to step up and go for it on his own.











Winning his own Michelin star was something that Gary had set out to achieve. "I wanted to get the star for myself. From early doors I wanted to do that. To get there was great. I wouldn't say it was the biggest moment of my life but it was truly fantastic. You are getting recognised by the people who you want to recognise you."


His philosophy at Angler is simple: serve exceptional fish and don't mess around with it too much. "It's such a beautiful ingredient, it's very seasonal, you can eat it raw, cure it, steam it, roast it, poach it, slow cook it. You're never short of fresh ideas to do something

with it." There's a turbot dish he loves, which says everything about his style of cooking. He brines the turbot, roasts it and dries it on kombu. That imparts a strong umami flavour. Then he seasons it a little and cooks it at 78C. It took forever to figure out the right % of salt required, but over time he nailed it.

He's looking forward to normality not just so that he can spend time in the kitchen, but mostly so that he can spend time out of it. "Travel is a huge thing for me. We travel a lot. Wherever I go I find inspiration and bring that back to the restaurant. A lot of chefs can spend too much time in the kitchen and that kills the creative

spirit. You can get stuck in a rut of getting in at 7am and turning on the stoves. If you take a step back you see the bigger picture."

And that – seeing the bigger picture – is the biggest lesson he's learned. "I've learned to look at things slightly differently, as opposed to just being in the kitchen all the time. My food was progressed much more quickly than if I'd stayed in the kitchen all the time. Being away has also given the team chance to grow, it's created opportunities for them."

His passport is ready, his bags are packed. Mr Nice can't wait for his next road trip. 

# RECIPES

STEAMED CORNISH TURBOT WITH  
LINE-CAUGHT SQUID, JAPANESE  
MUSHROOMS AND BONITO DASHI  
BY GARY FOULKES

GARIGUETTE STRAWBERRY  
& BASIL TART  
BY GARY FOULKES

MACKEREL TARTARE  
BY GARY FOULKES

AVOCADO WITH SEA FENNEL  
DRESSING AND PINK PEPPERCORN  
SEA FENNEL  
BY FRANCK PONTAIS

ROASTED FENNEL WITH WHITE  
BEANS SAUCE  
ATSINA CRESS, ROCK CHIVES  
BY FRANCK PONTAIS

SEAFOOD AND SAFFRON RISOTTO  
BLINO BLOSSOM, APPLE BLOSSOM,  
ATSINA CRESS  
BY FRANCK PONTAIS

PASSION FRUIT, CHERRY AND  
AMARETTI  
ATSINA CRESS, ADJI CRESS  
BY FRANCK PONTAIS



# STEAMED CORNISH TURBOT WITH LINE-CAUGHT SQUID, JAPANESE MUSHROOMS AND BONITO DASHI

By Gary Foulkes



## FOR THE DISH:

### INGREDIENTS

- 100g nameko mushrooms
- 100g golden enoki mushrooms
- 100g white shimeji mushrooms
- 100g brown shimeji mushrooms
- 25g sliced, cleaned squid
- 6 x 120g portions of Cornish turbot
- 1 pinch of salt
- 100g rock samphire
- 80g monk's beard
- 1 squeeze of lemon juice

### METHOD

Carefully snip the caps off the mushrooms with a small pair of scissors and put to one side. Thinly slice the fresh squid and keep it in the fridge.

Place the Turbot on a piece of seasoned greaseproof paper and lightly season with salt. Steam the turbot for 5 minutes at 78 degrees, or until just cooked.

In the meantime, poach the mushrooms in a small amount of the dashi until they are soft and slippery. This should take around 3 minutes. Drop in the samphire and then the squid.

Quickly blanch the monk's beard in some boiling, salted water and dress in lemon juice. Put to one side.

Place the mushrooms in a bowl and carefully set the steamed turbot filled on top. Then place the monk's beard on top of the fish.

Serve immediately with a little of the dashi on the side.

## FOR THE DASHI:

### INGREDIENTS

- 375ml water
- 35ml soy sauce
- 20ml mirin
- 9g bonito flakes
- 9g wakame flakes

### METHOD

Bring the water to the boil and add in all the other ingredients. Leave the mixture to infuse for 10 minutes then pass through a muslin cloth.

# GARIGUETTE STRAWBERRY & BASIL TART

## By Gary Foulkes

Serves 6

### PASTRY:

#### INGREDIENTS

- 625g butter
- 225g icing sugar
- 1kg Plain Flour
- 80g cornflour
- 2 whole eggs

#### METHOD

Cream sugar and butter in a kitchen aid, add the plain flour followed by the cornflour and then slowly add the eggs to mix until the pastry is formed, chill slightly and then roll between two sheets of silicon paper until around 2 cm thick. Rest and chill in the fridge.

Cut out the pastry into discs and line the moulds with the pastry, the pastry wants to be as thin as possible but not so thin that they are so fragile to fill.

Bake in a 160 degrees oven for 12 minutes or until crisp and golden brown.

### BASIL CREAM:

#### INGREDIENTS

- 500g whipping cream
- 100g whole milk
- 1 bunch of basil
- 100g egg yolks
- 80g caster sugar
- 3 soaked gelatine leaves

#### METHOD

Slightly warm the cream and milk in a pan and then add the basil. Leave to infuse for 30 minutes.

Pass out the basil from the milk/cream mix.

Lightly whisk the egg yolks and sugar and then pour on the warmed basil milk. Cook out to a temperature of 82 degrees to make custard.

When the mix has thickened add gelatine and pass through a fine sieve. Leave the custard to set in the fridge.







#### **STRAWBERRY PURÉE:**

##### **INGREDIENTS**

- 1kg Gariguet strawberry purée
- 100g caster sugar
- 50ml water
- 1 split vanilla pod
- Juice of one Lemon

##### **METHOD**

Make a light caramel with the sugar and water, vanilla and lemon zest.

Add the Gariguet strawberry purée and cook down to a jam like consistency, blitz and pass through a fine sieve.

#### **WHITE CHOCOLATE CREAM:**

##### **INGREDIENTS**

- 280g whole milk
- 4 leaves of gelatine
- 350g white chocolate
- 400g soft whipped double cream

##### **METHOD**

Boil milk and add gelatine. Melt the chocolate over a bain marie and slowly add the milk and gelatine. Pass through a fine sieve.

Leave to cool slightly and then fold in the cream and set. Whip the chilled mixture with a spatula and place in a piping bag.

#### **ASSEMBLY:**

Place a spoonful of the strawberry jam into each tart case and add small dice of fresh Gariguet strawberries. Pipe the basil cream on top, just enough to fill the tart case.

Pipe the white chocolate cream on top of the basil cream. Finish each tart with Greek basil leaves and white basil flowers.

Serve immediately.

# MACKEREL TARTARE

## By Gary Foulkes

Serves 4

### INGREDIENTS

- 480g of diced raw mackerel
- 2 finely diced banana shallots
- 60g of finely chopped pickled pink ginger
- 50g of chopped chives
- 1 Granny Smith apple
- 5ml of white soy sauce
- 10g of crème fraîche
- Zest of one lemon
- 250ml of oyster cream
- 1 punnet of purple shiso cress
- 1 punnet of green shiso cress
- Wakame powder to finish

### METHOD

#### OYSTER CREAM:

Place three opened oysters into a high-powered blender with the juice of two lemons and a little salt. Blend until completely smooth and emulsify with grapeseed oil and finish with a squeeze of lemon. Pass through a fine sieve, place into a squeezable plastic bottle and set to one side.

#### MACKEREL TARTARE:

Place the diced mackerel into a bowl and add the shallots, pink ginger, white soy and crème fraîche, chives, lemon zest and mix together. It is important to taste the mix as you can add more of each ingredient should your palette desire.

#### TO FINISH:

Place a circular mould on the plate and carefully place the correct amount of mackerel into each. Gently smooth the mackerel down with the back of the spoon before placing five equal size dots of the oyster cream on top of the mackerel. Finish the dish with batons of the apple, shiso cress and wakame powder.



