

Photo By: James Higgins



### Background:

Born in Tallow, County Waterford; apprenticed at Dublin College of Catering and qualified in 1982; worked in London and Germany; moved to New York in 1984, where he is a chef, at Fitzpatrick's.

### As a child, did you want to be a chef when you grew up?

I knew I wanted to work in hotels. The chef thing came later.

### Why did you move to New York?

Mike Prendergast, owner of the Jolly Tinker in the Bronx, invited me out.

### What's your specialty?

I consider seafood my specialty because it's so versatile.

### Irish food has a reputation as being stodgy, bland, and fairly tasteless. Is that accurate?

As the old saying goes, 'there's no smoke without fire.' It must have been disappointing at one time but now food standards in Ireland are very competitive.

### Are Irish people particular about their food?

I've always found Irish people easy to please when it came to food.

### Are Irish chefs valued around the world?

Definitely. Irish hotel management in general is valued very highly.

### After a hard day in the kitchen, what do you do for dinner at home?

Stop at the local 7-11, buy a sandwich and a six-pack.

### What did you have for dinner last night?

Grilled salmon with Irish bacon, shitake mushrooms, savoy cabbage and red wine, prepared by Geraldine, one of my cooks. It was commendable.

### Why pay \$100 for a meal when a slice of pizza satisfies hunger just as well?

Paying \$100 for a meal hopefully will satisfy my imagination; I go to a restaurant to get ideas and as a critic.

### If you have \$5 and an empty stomach, what will you eat?

A slice of Bedford pizza and a beer.

### When you're going out to eat, what kind of restaurant do you choose?

I prefer oriental restaurants, and Thai more than anything else. Their food is so innovative.

### Are chefs artists or just pretty good cooks?

Cookery is not chemistry, it's an art. It requires instinct and taste rather than exact measurements.

### Top three reasons to become a chef?

Interest, commitment and travel.