

New Kid on the Block



NEW SEASON

Say hello to **Christophe Arcalis**; he's only the head chef at The Inn For All Seasons

So, Christophe, you're obviously doing well – but when and where did your cooking journey begin?

My first kitchen job was back in 1983, as an apprentice at a pizzeria in a town south of Paris.

And before you ever got into a pro kitchen, what was your fondest foodie memory from childhood?

I used to love watching grandpa cooking away. He was a chef too, and it was he more than anyone who inspired me to start cooking professionally.

What's the toughest job you've tackled so far?

Every job I've been involved with has had its own challenges, and that's one of the reasons why I love this job – every day is so very different!

Proudest career achievement?

I'm proud every time I send the last plate of the night and it's done with the same passion and determination as the first plate was. So every day, I suppose!

Where else locally might we know you from?

A few years ago I worked around the Cotswolds for quite a while, so you may remember me from places like Lower Slaughter Manor, Cotswold House, Coach & Horses in Bourton-on-the-Water, and a few others...

How would you describe your style of cooking?

Classical, rustic and seasonal – but, overall, tasty.

How many of you are there in the kitchen team at The Inn For All Seasons, then?

Three. For now...

And how have you approached the menu?

Using local and seasonal produce is really important to me, so I've been looking around for as many locally sourced suppliers

as possible, and then basing my menu around what they have for me.

What local restaurants do you rate?

Since I have been away in France for the last eight years, and just came back recently, I'll reserve my judgement on that one for a bit longer!

What are your favourite ingredients right now?

There are lots of lovely fish about at the moment, plus root vegetables, some game... Anything, as long as it's fresh!

Do you grow anything yourself?

Not for now, sadly, but Eddie and Melanie – the new owners at The Inn – are looking into having a bit of a garden, so watch this space...

Do you have any favourite suppliers you use for the restaurant?

We pride ourselves on choosing our suppliers carefully, so we can give our customers the very best, so we use the likes of Channel Fisheries and M&J Seafood for the fish, Castle Butchers for meat, and Upton Smokery for all our smoked products.

And what kind of meals do you like to cook at home?

Whatever the fridge dictates! Jokes aside, my cooking at home is very similar to my cooking at work – classic, but with a bit of a twist. To be fair, sometimes it works – but not always...

Which piece of kitchen equipment couldn't you live without?

My own knives, as some of them have been passed down from my grandfather.

What and where was the best meal you've ever eaten?

Back in 2003, and after saving for a while, we went to The Ritz in Paris for a lunch, and that was brilliant.

Top 5-a-day?

Avocado, cauliflower, parsnip, pineapple and banana.

Favourite cookery book?

Larousse Gastronomique, a French encyclopedia of gastronomy,

Foodie heroes?

I like Tom Kerridge, both for his culinary skills and his persona.

Finally, what is your current favourite flavour combination?

I love Jersey Royal potatoes and black truffle, chilli, lemon and herbs. 

*** THE INN FOR ALL SEASONS, The Barringtons, Burford OX18 4TN; innforallseasons.com**