

The Marsh Cat, Parkgate



James Ryan
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Tuesday 13th January 2015

The Marsh Cat's talented chef James Ryan is on course for a top award in a prestigious culinary competition.

James, 22, has been nominated as a finalist for the title of 'Wirral Young Chef of the Year'.

His skills will be showcased tonight when you, the diner, will score him on his menu, expertise and knowledge of the food he has prepared. James and the other finalists will then compete in a cook-off in March at Wirral Metropolitan College where they will be judged by renowned chefs.

James is a truly home-grown chef in that his talent and inspiration for the dishes he creates have not been influenced by the ideas of celebrities in the food industry-but from home.

The role model that's given James the ambition to become a top chef is his brother Matthew who, in his eyes, makes some of the best food he has ever tasted.

And James' success in the workplace is down to learning the craft of cookery from a young age as well as sheer hard work and enthusiasm for the food he produces for customers.

James never originally wanted to become a chef as his first love was sport. But while still at Birkenhead Sixth Form College, he took a job as a kitchen porter at a Wirral gastro pub and developed a passion for 'proper' food-the kind he was eating at home.

At work, he wanted to learn more about cooking techniques and sourcing the ingredients. At home, he had his brother showing him the practicalities of cooking good, wholesome food with a modern take.

With his family background as inspiration, James then decided on a career as a chef and, after school, he started full-time work at the pub, moving to the Marsh Cat seven months ago as a chef de partie.

James' favourite food is Thai based but he relishes his work here at the Marsh Cat where he is preparing dishes from all over the world including Creole, Spanish, French and Italian cuisine. He loves it here as the menu changes every week so he's constantly learning new dishes and new techniques.

Marsh Cat owner Ben Russell said:

"I am so proud of James' achievement in reaching the finals of the Wirral Young Chef of the Year competition. With his youth comes a maturity that's due to starting at the very bottom of the career ladder, having a willingness to learn and using all his knowledge to be a creative chef who can back up his menu ideas with a solid background gained in the kitchen."

"James is an exciting member of the restaurant team in that he has his own ideas about food, not influenced by celebrity chefs but by what he believes are good, honest plates that are a delight to eat. He is a genuine home-grown talent and produces food that inspires him to become a top chef and, most importantly, food that the customers enjoy eating."

James' Menu

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To Start:

*Black Pudding Spring Roll served with
Cumberland Jam*

Main Course:

*Loin of Lamb with Herb Stuffing, Parsnip
Purée, Roasted Baby Vegetables
and Pan Jus*

Dessert:

*Sticky Toffee Pudding with Apple Crust
and Coconut Clotted Cream*

£18.95pp