**By Lorraine Mallinder**

**Luke Selby**

London chef Luke Selby doesn’t do grandiose. The quietly confident chef has worked his way to the top of his fiercely competitive profession without any song or dance.

Yet his doll-sized new restaurant in the heart of Chinatown is all about performance. At Evelyn’s Table, he and his two brothers cook British produce with Japanese techniques in a tiny kitchen, in front of a handful of guests.

It’s extremely intimate, to say the least. Not to mention stressful!

But the chef takes it all in his stride. He and his brothers enjoy an almost telekinetic working relationship, having worked together at two Michelin-starred restaurants - Raymond Blanc’s Manoir aux Quat’Saisons and Hide Above on Piccadilly.

‘We move and flow together. We know what each other is thinking,’ he says. ‘We all cope. And we have some nice moments together.’

The brothers come from humble beginnings. They grew up in a village near Brighton, where their Filipino mum would take them foraging in the wilds. It left them with a ‘love and respect for nature’. ‘We would pick blackberries and get mussels. It helped us understand where things come from,’ he says.

Luke is the big brother, who led his brothers into the trade. There was no ‘big bang’ moment. He’d simply been obsessed with cookbooks and cookery programmes for as long as he could remember. He got a job aged 14, cooking breakfast at a local hotel. And then, aged 16, he entered a prestigious nationwide contest that would change everything.

Judged by celebrity chef Raymond Blanc, the Rotary Young Chef competition was a step above the greasy hotel kitchen. Young Luke turned up with ingredients bought from the local supermarket, serving up an open ravioli of smoked haddock, roasted duck breast with blackberries and a dessert soufflé.

He didn’t win – the supermarket ingredients saw to that. But Blanc pronounced the cooking technically perfect, inviting the lad for work experience at the Manoir aux Quat’Saisons. He ended up spending 6 years there, as a sous chef.

Throughout his career, Luke has learned from the best, but a scholarship from the famous Roux brothers opened the way to his most formative experience - at a top-notch restaurant in Japan. Inspired, he dreamed of opening a restaurant of his own.

‘I had in mind exactly what I wanted – really small covers, with high quality food, made from the freshest produce,’ he says. ‘The small set up brings a lot of authenticity.’

His advice to aspiring chefs? ‘Stay true to yourself and what you believe in. Pass on knowledge and treat people well.’

In life, as with his food, Luke Selby is keeping it utterly real.

**INGREDIENTS**

**Cinnamon sugar**

200g Caster sugar

1tsp Cinnamon powder

**Custard**

500ml Milk

½ Vanilla pod, cut in half and seeds scraped

160g Egg yolks

75g Sugar

25g Corn flour

25g Plain flour

100g Double cream

25g Icing sugar

**Dough**

500g Plain flour

60g Sugar

10g Salt

15g Dry yeast

200g Eggs

120g Warm water

125g Soft butter

**METHOD**

**Custard**

Bring the milk and vanilla to the boil and set aside.

Whisk the eggs and sugar in a bowl, then add the flours and whisk well again.

Add half the milk and beat until smooth. Add the rest of the milk and then place back in a pan.

Cook on a medium heat until the mixture becomes thick and smooth. Chill.

Whip the cream and sugar until soft peaks form and fold into the chilled custard base.

Transfer into a piping bag and keep chilled.

**Dough**

Mix all the ingredients apart from the butter together for 10 minutes on the slowest speed, using a mixer with a hook attachment

Slowly start to add in the soft butter until all ingredients are incorporated.

Increase the speed of the mixer to a medium speed and continue to work for 5 more minutes.

Place in an oiled bowl and prove in a warm place until doubled in size - roughly 1 hour.

Knock back and refrigerate for 1 hour to make the dough easier to work with.

Cut into 50g balls and leave to prove again on a well-oiled tray until doubled in size. Cover in clingfilm to stop them drying out.

Fry in vegetable oil at 160°C for about 2-3 minutes on each side until golden and cooked through.

While warm roll in the cinnamon sugar.

Make a hole in the side of the doughnut with a small knife and using a piping bag fill with the custard mixture.