

Delicious dishes for Gefiltefest

Hannah Worrall rounds up the sizzling hot chefs and cookery writers at this year's foodie fest

COOKING has not always been the first passion of East Finchley's Rachel Davies.

It was during a year volunteering in Zambia that the mother-of-one first discovered her love for all-things-cookery.

"I had no idea how to cook at all," admits the chef, who is taking part in a game show-style contest at Gefiltefest Jewish Food Festival later this month.

"I thought I wanted to get into international development and couldn't cook at all. I had to start there and I found that I loved it."

Rachel, who now runs Rachel's Kitchen cookery school, started baking her own bread, making granita from the lemons in her garden in Zambia and learning as much as she could through any recipes she could lay her hands on.

And her love of local produce has stayed with her from her time in the African country, where she could only cook with whatever was grown nearby as the village she was staying in had no supermarket.

When she returned to England, Rachel waited a year before pursuing her new-found dream of becoming a chef.

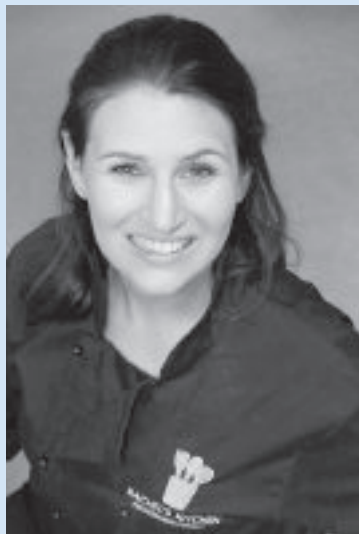
The former West Hampstead resident trained at Le Cordon Bleu, graduating in cuisine and pâtisserie, before going on to work with respected chefs at Galvin Bistrot de Luxe in Baker Street and Lanka Patisserie in Primrose Hill.

But in 2010 she decided it was time turn her hand to teaching others and opened Rachel's Kitchen based in East Finchley.

"I like sharing experiences through food basically and creating these experiences teaching people and just the whole process is really food fun," explains Rachel, who enjoys cooking different dishes from all over the world.

She continues: "I feel like people come together over food and they learn together and they eat a meal together, and people meet each other though my classes – I feel like there are ripples that come from it."

Now the award-winning cook is gearing



Rachel Davies will take part in a fun event at Gefiltefest this month

up for Gefiltefest, where she will battle it out against fellow foodie Alan Rosenthal, who runs Stewed! one-pot meals business.

A familiar face at the festival, this year Rachel is excited to appear on the line-up alongside respected chef Claudia Roden and Daniel Young of the popular *Young and Foodish* blog.

"It is a great food festival, there are some amazing people who are involved," says Rachel, who grew up in a Jewish family, surrounded by traditional cookery.

She adds: "I do not specialise in Jewish cookery at all but I think there is such a wealth of different traditions, it is really exciting."

● **Gefiltefest, Finchley Road, Hampstead, Sunday, June 28, from 10.30am. Details: 020 7433 8988, jw3.org.uk**

Lisa Roukin

Cordon Bleu chef and cookery teacher, Lisa is a firm fixture at Gefiltefest.

This year she will demonstrate new twists on dairy-free desserts. Coming from a family of excellent cooks, the West Hampstead resident's passion for cuisine started at a young age. She has since worked at some of London's finest restaurants.



Claudia Roden

The doyenne of Jewish cuisine – who is also patron of Gefiltefest – will be in conversation with Michael Leventhal, the festival's founder.

Learn about Claudia's life in food and the origins of the pivotal

dishes in her career. Best known for her cook books of Middle Eastern food, the Golders Green resident has also presented cookery shows for the BBC and is a patron of HIV charity The Food Chain.



Emma Spitzer

Finalist in this year's *Masterchef* contest, East Finchley's Emma will speak at the festival about her love of cooking and her time on the hit TV-competition.

While cooking is one of her main loves, Emma also runs her own business – Tots Too – which specialises in finding holidays for families with young children.



Photo comp prize



An image from the Fugue State project

WINNING an award for composure can only be a good thing for an up-and-coming photographer. Middlesex University photography graduate and former Hendon resident Robin Lambert has just won the inaugural Graduate Photographers Award 2015 for a collection of images titled *Fugue State* created for his final year degree project.

"I was surprised to win actually," admits the 24-year-old, who as part of his prize in May had the chance to exhibit his pictures at the popular Photo London fair, held in Somerset House.

"The award is good exposure for me at this stage in my career and I'll continue building my personal work and shooting more editorial portraiture."

Robin was picked from 100 entries by a panel of experts to win the prize.

Robin's work is particularly influenced by crime scene photography.

"I guess I didn't really know what I wanted to do," remembers the artist, who has taken photos for the *Financial Times' Weekend* supplement.

"It seemed like a really natural step just to do it about photography itself. I learned how to sequence photographs together. I took a lot of inspiration from



Robin Lambert
PICTURE: PETER TAINSH

old crime scene pictures."

Fascinated by the pared-back focus on single objects and the use of the flash in crime-scene photography, Robin wasn't interested in focussing on the crime itself in his work.

"The ones that are nicer are the really

Robin's prize picture

quiet ones the ones that suggest the story," he explains.

Raised in Abbots Langley, his interest in photography was piqued when he was given a camera to take on a Year Six trip. And the future's looking bright for Robin, who wants to explore portraiture in photography.



Former Fleet Street cartoonist stages local show

BARNET artist Renos Lavithis has put on a new mini-exhibition of paintings depicting local scenes.

The colourful series of paintings and drawings are inspired by the artists' time living in Hertfordshire.

However, the exhibition also features a selection of Renos' general pieces, including picturesque sea scapes, flowers and boats.

The collection is on display in Coffee Seeker, in North Finchley, and was recently visited by Theresa Villiers, MP for Chipping Barnet.

"The cosy environment of Coffee Seeker is the ideal venue for this mini-exhibition," says Renos, who works with local art societies such as the Barnet Collection. "I'm very pleased with it."



Renos Lavithis



St John The Baptist Church in High Barnet

Many of Renos' drawings are created using pen and Indian ink with a touch of pencil work and a watercolour wash. A picture can take him up to 30 hours to complete, depending on the level of detail.

Before taking early retirement, Cyprus-born Renos worked as a graphic artist for the *Daily Mail* for 30 years.

Since leaving work, he revisited his old Fleet Street haunts and painted all the pubs the journalists used to visit, before moving on to capture all the major landmarks of London.

When he's not painting local scenes, Renos is inspired by idyllic scenes of the Mediterranean and Aegean sea which he remembers from his childhood.

Later this year, Renos, who has lived in Barnet for 28 years, hopes to publish a book of his work, which includes more than 120 images of London.

● **An exhibition of Paintings and Drawings, Coffee Seeker, Ballards Lane, North Finchley, until July 10, Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm and Saturday, 8am to 4.30pm. Details: 020 8449 5938, renosart.co.uk**