

Family cookbook is the main feature at Jack O'Bryans

With a business transition on the way, plus new décor & new dishes, a successful Dunfermline restaurant is promoting Acorn finalist young chef, Jack Coghill, as “the future of our family business”.

“Come and taste our family cookbook” is the message from the family run restaurant, Jack O' Bryans in Dunfermline.

The business is owned and run by experienced hospitality veterans, Bryan & Michelle Coghill, where Bryan, a chef for 38 years, heads up the kitchen with his 23-year-old son Jack, also a chef – and his soon-to-be wife, Sarah, who is in charge of front of house with her future mother-in-law, Michelle.

Before opening Jack O' Bryans, Bryan and Michelle operated the Black Pig & Oyster in Leith, where they established a reputation for good food.

The couple had owned other restaurants and hotels in the UK, Spain and Portugal, which instilled in them an enduring love of classic Iberian and Mediterranean cuisine, which has carried through every one of their establishments to the present day at Jack O' Bryans.

More than willing to continue the family's culinary heritage, the future of the business is now in Jack's capable hands. Having been trained by his dad Bryan and also Mark Tilling in pastry, he covers every section of the restaurant, and is also

a skilled pastry chef and chocolatier, with both his handmade desserts and luxury chocolates regularly wowing diners.

A finalist in the prestigious Acorn Awards – affectionately known as the “30 under 30” in that they recognise & reward thirty of the brightest and most talented prospects in the UK hospitality industry, Jack is now looking to capitalise on his success and potentially break into TV work. He is being encouraged in this by leading pastry chef and chocolatier Mark Tilling, who is godfather to his young daughter.

Jack met Mark, who has won UK Chocolate Masters twice and was the winner of the first edition of Bake Off Crème de la Crème, at Squires Kitchen in Farnham, Surrey, during his pastry training, and has credited him with providing valuable mentoring as he further establishes his professional credentials.

Jack said: “Mark is a trusted family friend as well as an incredible pastry chef.

“He has helped me grow in confidence as a pastry chef and chocolatier, and I’d love to do some TV like him if the right opportunities came along that can be balanced with my commitments both here in the restaurant, and at home as the father of a young child.

“It’s an exciting transitional time for us all at Jack O’ Bryans,” he continued. “We have no shortage of news and happenings at the restaurant to interest both foodie media and potential customers alike.”

Jack is pleased with the new interior look at the restaurant, designed by Bryan, with a wooden wall, new furniture, and atmospheric shots on the wall of the proud father and son together in the kitchen.

New dining concepts such as the Tapas Sunday sharing lunch, together with a “cost of living busting” Chef’s Lunch Menu,

which offers small plates such as Prawn & Octopus Tacos, Morcilla Black Pudding, & Burnt Ends Roast Beef, at £18 per person, have been introduced at lunch time.

The à la carte menu includes dishes such as Roast Monkfish & Crab Gratin, served with sautéed potatoes and a tomato and chive sauce, Steak & Lobster Picanha, a delicious dish which is chargrilled medium-rare, consisting of a half lobster tail, hand-cut skin-on fries and aioli, and the Spanish Fish Supper, a dish of Roast cod, garlic, lemon, sautéed potatoes, chorizo, chimichurri & batter scraps.

One stand out dish which can be considered “signature” is the traditional Iberian black Pig House speciality – Iberian black pig with red onion salsa & sautéed potatoes. A variation of it is chargrilled meat with salt and pepper and barbecue sauce, served with apple slaw.

Bryan Coghill said: “We’re excited for Jack with all that he has going on, not least getting married.

“We’d love to see him breaking through into TV as we think he would come across really well. It’s not every young chef that has as many strings to his bow as Jack including his expert chocolate work.

“There’s also the concept of our “family cookbook”, a “taste it, read it, share it” type of idea I am now developing, utilising our favourite recipes and influences.

“I’m going to be taking a bit of a step back, leaving Jack to do what he does best. I’ll be concentrating on this idea to deliver a cookbook in a completely unique and different way from what is the norm.

“It may take me a year or so to fully develop it, but I am really excited by it.”

Bryan went on to say that, once ready, certain aspects of the

new cookbook would feature in Jack O' Bryans Restaurant and the website.

"Favourite recipes will be on there, with information on how they have evolved, and what tweaks, if any, Jack is making to them, for example.

"We've even thought about changing the name of the restaurant to "Jack O' Bryans Cookbook", although we haven't made a firm decision on this yet as it is probably going to happen as the project develops further. We just want our customers to know that this is something very personal to us."

If he had to describe the cuisine at Jack O' Bryans, Bryan would say that it's "a fusion of Iberian cuisine with influences of South America and Asia – all prepared with amazing Scottish produce".

"A fitting example of this would be our Iberian Pig Char Sui, where we take the succulent pig and flavour it with Chinese spice, honey, sesame, ginger, spring onion, and crackling. This dish features on our tapas menu and is a very popular starter," he said.

"It's this type of fusion we have honed and perfected over the years."

As for chefs themselves dictating what their customers should eat, with their extensive tasting menus, he commented: "It's not like that here at Jack O' Bryans. We go with what the customer wants to eat. Our menu is full of the food we like to eat ourselves, it doesn't follow fads or trends."

Outlining a Venezuelan as well as Spanish influence in Jack O' Bryans food, Bryan said: "Spanish cuisine certainly crosses the Atlantic over to South America. This can be seen in the cuisine of the Canary Islands too. Our tapas dishes represent this fusion too and, with them being so popular, we decided to extend the concept to Sunday Lunch. Here everyone can sit

round the table and share small plates which include all our Mediterrean favourites, but also include traditional Yorkshire Puddings served with gravy – what did we say about a fusion?”

“Needless to say, it’s going down very well as it’s a very relaxed and sociable way of eating together,” said Bryan.

He finished by saying how proud he and wife Michelle were of Jack, who first joined his dad in the kitchen aged only six.

“We wish him well in the next phase of his life as a married man and are all looking forward to the wedding later this year. Together with Sarah, they make an unbeatable team.”

“Many opportunities for young chefs were put on hold due to Covid, but we’re hoping they will all be bursting back into life,” he said.

“For the time being we would like to invite customers old and new to come in and see our new look and sample our food,” he said. “We’re always interested in feedback, and welcome diners getting in touch about their favourite family recipes, and what they enjoy eating together. We are certainly one family that has put ourselves on a plate, and, with Jack poised to have a long and successful career, will long continue to do so!”

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